QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR OAKLEY SCHOOL

Name of School:	Oakley School
Headteacher:	Sam Perryman
Hub:	London Special and AP
School Phase:	All through special
MAT:	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	08/11/2023
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Leading
Date of last QA Review:	13/06/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	28/10/2019
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	Good

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Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all levels	Leading
Quality of provision and outcomes	Leading
AND	
Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs	
Area of excellence	Not offered at this review
Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	Not applicable
Overall peer evaluation estimate	Leading

The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.

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1. Context and character of the school

Oakley is a special school serving the Tunbridge Wells district. It is situated on three sites, for pupils from the ages of 4-19, with education, health and care plans (EHCPs) denoting profound, severe and/or complex needs. There are currently 220 pupils on roll. There is an observation and assessment nursery on the Tunbridge Wells site. Additionally, Phases 1 to 3 are located on the Tunbridge Wells site. The Phase 4 provision for 15-19 olds is in Tonbridge. Satellite provision for ten pupils is located in a mainstream primary school. Over a third of pupils are socially disadvantaged.

Oakley is an outward facing contributor to education excellence. Numerous initiatives include being an active contributor in the Kent Special Educational Needs Trust (KSENT) of 26 special schools in Kent; specialist teaching and learning service; local inclusion forum team; university partnerships with Christchurch and Buckingham Universities; and Oakley was the first special school to achieve the SMSC gold award in 2018, successful again in 2022 and has become a beacon school. Oakley is an accredited school for the Leading Parent Partnership award.

At Oakley school, children and young people are at the heart of everything they do. Pupils learn to work hard, be kind, have fun and stay safe.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The cohesive and highly effective extended leadership team have the highest aspirations for Oakley pupils, families and staff. They are visible, accessible and lead by example. They have a clear and realistic understanding of where the school is and its future direction. Previous EBIs have been fully addressed.
- Leaders are discerning in developing new intitiatives, using research and small scale pilot studies, thoroughly evaluated, before initiatives are introduced school wide.
- Continuing professional development (CPD) is carefully thought out and fully aligned to school priorities. CPD draws on external resources, specialist input, collaboration and training within KSENT and internal expertise. Impact is carefully evaluated.
- The highly effective curriculum prepares pupils for life beyond and after Oakley. The Oakley Learning Journey (OLJ) framework enables leaders to track pupil progress from Nursery to Year 14. It has been adapted from the Early Years Framework, the National Curriculum and relevant accreditation frameworks.

- The Creative Curriculum is delivered through three learning pathways - engage, explore and discover - to take account of differing cognitive strengths and needs, but recognising 'spiky learning profiles.' There is clear focus on real life learning and independence. EHCP short term targets fit well with the OLJ and Creative Curriculum.
- The school has trained 'Thrive' (social and emotional assessment and programmes) and Forest School practitioners. 'Zones of Regulation' is fully embedded. Interoception has been introduced, adapted to individual needs and abilities, enabling pupils to make links to bodily sensations and feelings and act upon them. Video reflection of staff practice encourages self-reflection and improved practice.
- Leaders use their knowledge and relationships with families to raise aspirations and develop their knowledge and skills, for example in using Zones of Regulation and Thrive.
- Leaders understand what pupils need, to take the next steps in their journey, continuing to review accreditation, ensuring fitness for purpose. Pupils and their families are proud of pupils attaining the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. Leaders use Kent data collection and evidence from families and former pupils to track futures and inform Phase 4 arrangements. The purpose built life skills room has been set up on domestic kitchen lines, reflecting the changing destinations of the more complex pupil cohort.
- Reading skills and a love of reading are underpinned by bespoke pre-phonic and phonic programmes. Libraries and various initiatives including the 'Summer reading challenge,' are complemented by an online reading scheme.
- Leaders recognise staff as their greatest resource. Well-being is a high priority. Staff are trusted and enabled to do the best job, with high quality induction and CPD. Leaders lead with humanity and respect. There is a culture of appropriate 'give and take'.
- School councillors are excellent Oakley ambassadors. They fully appreciate the teaching staff and the learning on offer at Oakley, demonstrating high aspirations for their future. Pupils value friendships within the school. A striking feature of the meeting was their kindness and strong moral compass.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if…

… leaders further extended the Oakley universal offer, through wider collaboration and external partnerships, to support ambitious special educational needs outcomes for all.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- High staff expectations, empathy and understanding, lead to a clear understanding of pupils' needs. Exemplary trusting relationships are a consistent feature at Oakley.
- Well thought out routines and structures underpin exemplary and innovative provision. As a result pupils are consistently engaged and are confident learners. Transitions around school are calm and effective. Attention Oakley is well used, where appropriate, to start lessons, stimulate learning and link to the main lesson.
- Learning support assistants (LSAs) are an exemplary feature of the Oakley learning story. They use their strong pupil knowledge and positive relationships to provide well-targeted support for pupils to maximise their learning and make progress towards their EHCP short term targets. They adapt their approaches to maximise independence. LSAs often lead learning, for example an LSA led an 'Attention Oakley' session. In a lesson about methods of payment, an LSA used her relationship with a lively pupil to subtly keep them on track, without disturbing the class.
- Teaching staff ensure that pupils take all opportunities to learn. At breaktime, LSAs support social interaction and exploratory learning. LSAs modelled and supported pupils to jump in, splash and joyfully explore puddles.
- Zones of Regulation are embedded and used highly effectively to promote self-regulation. In a school council meeting, pupils spontaneously used 'Zones of Regulation language'. In some settings older pupils modelled 'Zones thinking and talking,' to support peers who are newer to the process. In a Phase 4 mathematics lesson, a pupil commented that they were in the yellow zone and were fed up! As a result they needed a walk. On their return they explained that they were yellow, excited and rapidly became 'green' and ready for learning.
- Teaching staff use questioning well to check understanding, extend thinking and develop challenge. In many cases teachers don't accept the first response, expecting more. Pupils take opportunities to explain their thinking. In a Phase 3 mathematics lesson, pupils justified their ideas about which payment method was most effective for a variety of purchases.

- Personalised, total communication are strong features at Oakley. Intensive interaction is well developed. Teaching staff give enough processing time for pupils to respond. They model relevant communication systems, valuing and responding to what pupils say.
- Teachers skilfully develop early communication skills such as holding eye contact. For example in a Phase 1 engagement pathway lesson, the teacher's 'high 5s' caused pupils to make eye contact. Pupils rapidly learn to use their skills, for example using a symbol to request a toilet visit.
- Pupils make strong progress towards their rigorously moderated EHCP and curriculum targets. Data on individual and whole school progress in Thrive is highly impressive. Behaviour is exemplary. There are virtually no restrictive physical interventions required. As a result, Oakley pupils develop into fine young people, with significantly improved skills and a well-developed moral compass.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if…

… the ambitious and creative Oakley curriculum continued to develop and evolve, to remain relevant to the changing school intake and an ever changing world.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- Social disadvantage makes no discernible difference to pupil outcomes at Oakley School. It was agreed to examine the efficacy of personalised learning.
- It is clear that Oakley staff have empathy and clear understanding of pupils needs and who they are.
- Learning environments have been carefully planned to be low arousal, with thoughtful seating arrangements.
- Creative activities and the wider curriculum are highly valued by pupils. Teaching staff use their knowledge of pupils and the wider and creative curriculum to support pupils to bring themselves back 'on track.' A pupil who had been dysregulated in the morning, who loves music, took a leading role in a lively afternoon music session. Another pupil used his interest in PE, taking part in an additional PE session to self-regulate.

- Pupils are showing examples of how Interoception is helping them to develop independence and to prepare for the next stage of their education. A pupil in a Phase 3 engagement pathway lesson quietly picked up a tissue, used it, put it in the bin and re-engaged with the lesson. A member of staff told a pupil that their face looked red. The pupil felt their own face and said 'I'm hot, I need to take my jumper off!,' and took off their jumper.
- It is clear that Oakley pupils benefit from an exemplary holistic approach from a whole school team, who skilfully assess their needs and provide a learning environment where pupils thrive. This is due to a school team who understand pupils' needs and using their excellent subject knowledge and relationships 'go the extra mile' for pupils.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if…

… No even better if was identified.

5. Area of Excellence

Not offered at this review.

Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

For further support following your QA Review, schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice (SLP) events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.(https://www.challengepartners.org/)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit)