
CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Highshore Special School
School Address:	135 Farmers Road, Camberwell, London, SE5 0TW
Hub School:	London Special and AP Hub

Telephone Number:	020 7708 6790
Email address:	headteacher@highshore.southwark.sch.uk

Unique Reference Number:	100872
Local Authority:	Southwark
Type of School:	Special
School Category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	11-17
Number on roll:	130
Head teacher/Principal:	Eileen Ollieuz

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	February 2013
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	28-29 March 2017
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies:	Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils are:	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:	Good
Area of Excellence: Work experience and work related learning including enterprise education	Confirmed and valid for 3 years
Previously accredited Areas of Excellence:	N/A

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Highshore School appears to be at the top of the Good grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report and is working towards Outstanding.

1. Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

Information about the school

- Highshore Special School provides education for pupils who have moderate or severe learning difficulties. Since the last inspection a much higher proportion of pupils has severe learning difficulties (now half) and an increasing proportion has additional difficulties such as medical needs (about one in five) and autism (about a quarter).
- All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an Education and Health Care plan.
- Around three quarters of the pupils are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium. This proportion is well above average.
- Around three quarters of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a higher proportion than average have English as an additional language.
- The school makes use of alternative provision off site, with pupils and students accompanied by members of the school staff.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- School leaders share set of aims and a vision for school improvement. They want pupils to develop communication, self-help skills and independence and have consulted and shared this with a wide range of stakeholders. Leaders know their school and the pupils well and make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching.
- The leadership team have developed a positive, calm and purposeful culture of learning that benefits all. This is demonstrated by the very high quality of display and pupils' work around the school.
- The school development plan draws upon the voice and expertise of all stakeholders including pupils' and parents' perspectives. A range of quality marks, such as Investors in People, have been carefully used to monitor and inform the school improvement process.
- Highshore works closely with parents through regular forums to develop pathways for pupils and the feedback from them is positive. Home school links are strong as a consequence.
- Staff well-being is important to the leadership and management of Highshore and all those spoken to report that they enjoy working there and feel listened to and valued. The leadership team foster an open dialogue with staff and mechanisms are in place to enable this, for example, the Well- Being Breakfasts and access to the Work/Life support service.

- Value is placed on training staff through professional development. For example, Highshore is actively seeking routes for some teaching assistants to gain Qualified Teacher Status.
- Teaching assistants are actively encouraged to develop expertise in areas of interest such as business and commerce. Opportunities for enterprise education are increasingly useful in providing exciting contexts for pupils to learn within.
- Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are deployed creatively and the impact is tracked to help evaluate and inform future practice.
- The leadership team have developed an extensive enrichment curriculum that has personalised pupils' learning and strengthened engagement.

Even Better If ...

... data about pupils' progress was readily available to all staff and they were supported to use it to plan lessons

... the many achievements of the school were communicated more clearly to visitors.

Pupil Outcomes

- Pupils make exemplary progress from their low starting points. They join the school with increasing severe levels of difficulty but when they leave most are mature, friendly and confident young people who can deal with the outside world.
- Observations from lessons and books show that pupils make rapid progress over time. Handwriting has improved since the previous inspection and some pupils are producing extended pieces of writing.
- Attendance has improved and is now above the national average for special schools and improving further. Persistent absence has been addressed through effective multi-agency work. Fixed term exclusions are very low, only one pupil this academic year, and improving. There are no permanent exclusions.
- Excellent and timely interventions, such as the higher level language group, and the work of the speech and language team, are effective in raising achievement for identified pupils.
- Pupils behave very well. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their time in school. They develop self-confidence and are able to act independently and communicate their needs to others. Any incidents are dealt with calmly and confidently by staff. An excellent system of tracking pupils' personal development and communication skills has been developed that clearly explains progress and identifies where interventions are necessary.
- Over the past seven years, the school has enabled four pupils to successfully return to a mainstream setting.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve the same levels of progress and attainment as their peers.

- An increasing range of Key Stage 4 and post-16 qualifications have been provided to support the accreditation of the pupils' many strengths. The school is looking to expand the scope of the vocational qualifications on offer to compensate for GCSE examinations no longer being suitable for their pupils.
- Annual assessments of pupil attainment have informed the design and implementation of the curriculum but assessment of attainment would be more effective if it took place more often, at least twice a year.
- All pupils benefit from aspirational targets that are reviewed half termly.
- The enriched curriculum in the sixth form, which includes work experience and links with business, enables all of the leavers to go on to further education or employment. Every student leaves with some form of external accreditation.
- Highshore now needs to move forward more quickly to develop the new curriculum and new assessment methods.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are strengths and underpin teaching and learning. Clear routines are in place which create a calm and secure environment. For instance, the day starts with a structured registration time and all lessons start promptly.
- Relationships across the school are respectful and supportive both between pupils and towards teachers, support assistants and visitors. Pupils are able to cooperate in groups and sometimes regulate each other's behaviour.
- Teachers use a variety of interesting and interactive tasks and, as a result, pupils are focused and attentive in lessons. They are fully engaged and enjoy their work. For example, in a Year 9 art lesson pupils thoroughly enjoyed creating their own Jackson Pollock painting.
- In literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers make good use of the data provided to set different tasks for different levels of ability so that all can succeed and make progress. This was a point for improvement in the previous Ofsted report.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved since the previous inspection, and the lesson on the concept of telling the time was kept relevant and meaningful to the needs of the pupils.
- Teachers have a dynamic and flexible approach and are responsive to changing situations. For example, in a Year 7 drama lesson one boy elaborated his work with an unexpected action which the teacher calmly incorporated into the lesson plan.
- A variety of different questioning styles that extended pupils' understanding was seen. Questioning from both teachers and teaching assistants is skilfully used to promote independence and help pupils think for themselves. Staff show patience and expertise in allowing pupils sufficient time to gather their thoughts and respond to questions.

- Teachers effectively deploy exceptionally well trained and highly skilled teaching assistants, who then provide seamless support for individuals and whole class work, often using signing to aid communication.
- Writing has been a particular focus since the Ofsted inspection. Pupils report that their skills in writing have improved. Teachers have received training, and a booklet on spelling, grammar and punctuation has been introduced. The quality of writing has improved and many pupils now write well.
- Work in exercise books shows clear learning taking place over time. The quantity and quality of the work demonstrates pupils' pride in their work and shows evidence of on-going self-assessment.
- Teaching in the sixth form is age appropriate and, through the development of enterprise and practical skills, helps to foster students' independence and self-esteem. Students are well prepared for their future career decisions and college placements.

Even Better If ...

... all opportunities to move pupils on quickly in their learning and to stretch and challenge them were taken

... formative marking with reference to targets was more consistent across all classes.

Quality of Area of Excellence

Work experience and work related learning including enterprise education

Why has this area been identified as a strength?

- This has justifiably been identified as an area of excellence as it epitomises the spirit and aims of the school, and is an area the school is leading on in the borough. It is an 11-19 programme and as many pupils as possible are involved across the school. Younger pupils are given responsibilities within school such as canteen and library duty.
- Enterprise is a timetabled activity for Key Stage 4. It is an opportunity to apply knowledge and skills in a functional setting and has had an impact on career education with pupils having clearer views on their futures. Sixth formers are given a day a week and they run a stall at various local markets. This gives them an opportunity to develop and apply their functional skills.
- Currently 23 sixth form students have had external work experience and four have completed internal work experience. Extensive preparation takes place and placements are assessed for health and safety. Discussions take place with employers about expectations and what might work. The employer is asked to treat the student as any other employee. Teaching assistants accompany the students but adopt a hands-off approach and do not do the job for the students. The business and enterprise officer evaluates the effectiveness of the programme by scrutinizing work experience diaries, undertaking employer reviews and student self-evaluation. It has led to paid employment for some young people, for example, two students are now

employed as quality champions for the organisation Choice Support and one is working in a cafe.

What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

- The school appointed a full time work experience coordinator in September 2014 who coordinates and plans work related learning across the school. Provision has been made for increased resources and equipment, much of this generated from bids made to the business community and local authority.
- Annual business links days and regular business lunches have enabled real and lasting links to be forged with a variety of companies and work places.
- Support staff are trained and supervised so that they have developed expertise in this area and can support students effectively.
- The school has been very successful in bidding for funds. For example, the grant of £500 from Veolia, a waste company, for students to build re-cycled planters.

What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?

- Enterprise education has developed the creative, numeracy, literacy and communication skills of the young people. Pupils learn to persevere and problem-solve, and to meet production targets.
- The programme has helped to prepare students for working life. Several have gained paid employment and many now volunteer outside of school.
- The programme contributes to citizenship and gives pupils a working knowledge of basic finance and economics.
- Selling products commercially has raised the profile of the school in the local area and one student's success on a work experience placement has been on national television. The school has hosted other schools for good practice visits.

What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

Following discussion with the headteacher, the school would like some additional support with the presentation of data and documentation for external observers.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.