

Name of School:	Riverside School
Head teacher/Principal:	Martin Doyle
Hub:	North London Special Schools Hub
School type:	Community Special
MAT (if applicable):	NA

Estimate at this QA Review:	Good
Date of this Review:	19-21 February 2018
Estimate at last QA Review	Replaced by Autism Review
Date of last QA Review	28-29 June 2017
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	12 October 2016

Quality Assurance Review

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

School Improvement Strategies	Good
Outcomes for Pupils	Good
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Good
Area of Excellence	Extending provision to develop active independence. ACCREDITED
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	NA
Overall Estimate	Good

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.

1. Information about the school

- This special school shares a campus with Woodside Academy, a mainstream secondary school. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education and health care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much higher than average.
- Most pupils are from black and minority ethnic groups,
- Pupils are aged 11-16. The school is piloting provision for 16-19-year olds.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Follow up from previous review

- The previous Challenge Partner review was in November 2015. The team identified many areas to improve. These have all been successfully implemented. Senior leaders have ensured that there are links between self-evaluation and school improvement planning. Success criteria are identified.
- Senior leaders have ensured that lesson observation strategies drive improvement planning and are moderated effectively. The whole school was restructured into three teams from September 2016, and the three team leaders have joined the leadership team. All leaders make sure that teaching and learning is now evaluated using a wide range of evidence. The school evaluates students' progress across its own 'progress 8' subjects.
- Senior staff have continued to develop the online assessment and tracking system. Staff teams use it well to provide effective information on individual student's progress and to analyse the progress of groups.
- After the previous review the school had a focussed autism review through Challenge partners and has since gained National Autistic Society Accreditation.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- Team leaders are responsible for the teaching and students' progress within their teams of six classes. This has been successful in planning specific curriculum provision for each team and in developing leadership expertise in team leaders.
- Senior leaders have successfully mentored the team leaders to expand the leadership team and execute specific improvement projects. For example, the communication project has dedicated, trained and experienced staff working with speech therapists to implement a wide range of communication strategies to support students; these include Makaton, picture exchange communication system (PECS) and pragmatic organisation of dynamic display (PODD).

- Senior leaders ensure that training needs are identified and are allied to the school improvement priorities. The current priority for developing staff knowledge of communication, particularly for autistic students, contributed to the successful autism review. The team leader who leads this area has ensured that the communication and sensory development plan is continually reviewed and the follow up of actions is built into the training provided.
- School staff have been at the forefront of ensuring there is a comprehensive curriculum offer for students that meets needs and prepares them well for life beyond the school. School staff are establishing accreditation for work experience for the Year 11 students.
- Senior leaders have employed consultants to support the development of teachers' skills in the teaching of mathematics to GCSE level. This involved support for the assessment and curriculum design in mathematics, and for functional skills in mathematics throughout the school. This successful implementation is now being used as a model for the English curriculum and its assessment.
- Senior leaders have employed specialists to support all staff in 'reflective supervision'. As a result, staff are more confident in evaluating their work. They are making increasing contributions to school improvement within an effective learning community.

2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...

...key performance indicators were clearly defined so that success can be measured, and the sharper focus was articulated to all staff.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Follow up from previous review

- Senior leaders now use a comprehensive range of measures to evaluate teaching and learning. Teaching assistants have effective knowledge about individual pupil's strengths and the targets they need to work on. Pupils more frequently demonstrate their knowledge of what they have achieved in lessons.

3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well

- Teachers plan lessons well using their comprehensive knowledge of each student's targets and capabilities, particularly regarding communication skills. Teachers use Aided Language Display (ALD) effectively. This enables a student to make choices and provides effective models of language structure. A wide variety of other examples used to support communication include, supporting students understanding of a story effectively with good illustrations and using symbols to help students understand the sequence of activities in lessons and through the day.

- Teachers are highly skilled at managing students' behavioural needs. They predict and remove potential barriers to students learning so that lessons are focussed, and students make effective progress. Class teams of teachers and teaching assistants know individual students really well. Teachers deploy the well-trained teaching assistants effectively.
- Most teaching assistants have a good understanding of individual needs and how to carry out specific sensory programmes. They are highly accomplished at knowing exactly when and how to intervene so that learning is not interrupted.
- Teachers plan well-structured, interesting lessons with imagination and creativity. Students therefore are motivated and fully involved in learning. For example, in cookery, students know exactly how to proceed and how to ensure safety. In English students extended their vocabulary effectively when studying 'Oliver Twist'. They gained an understanding of 'smog' and 'pickpocketing' from illustrations and symbols.
- Teachers use questioning effectively. They address precise questions to individual students to determine their understanding and provide effective opportunities for students to explain, whether students are able to communicate verbally or non-verbally.
- Students work well with each other. Teachers create many opportunities for students to support each other's learning because of the highly skilled way they manage student interactions. Students communicate and respond enthusiastically to each other and to questions from teachers. There are high quality relationships at all levels.
- Most teachers use assessment accurately to enable individual students to make effective progress. The online system has useful descriptors to enable teachers to check progress well. Teachers then plan lessons to provide opportunities for students to practise skills and learn new ones.
- Teachers and all school staff use all parts of the school day effectively for learning. Recreation times at break and lunch times are well structured and enable students to continue learning, particularly in developing their communication and social skills.

3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if...

- ...all teachers precisely identified the next steps in learning to provide sufficient challenge for each student.
- ...all teachers in all subjects ensured that all support staff know the precise next steps for individual students.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- All students who left the school in 2017 went on to other educational provision. A number of them achieved a GCSE in mathematics. Current students in Key Stage 3 can identify and use different combinations of coins to make a given amount of money. Following a practical session with weights and measures, students in Key stage 4 accurately estimated the weight of packages and knew how grams relate to kilograms.
- Students with moderate or severe learning difficulties follow a curriculum of 'progress 8' subjects, these are English, mathematics, science, PE, music, art, personal social and health education, and for more able students, computing. School assessment information shows that the vast majority make expected progress in these subjects. For example, in English the more able students could understand and use a thesaurus to support independent learning. In a science lesson students with severe learning difficulties were able to communicate effectively with symbols to formulate a sentence to express their understanding of what they had seen
- Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress in the four areas of cognition & learning, communication and interaction, social, emotional and mental health, and sensory and/or physical development. The students with multiple disabilities, were able to communicate effectively with adults because staff are highly skilled at picking up small physical responses and assessing the progress of these.
- School data shows that in language and literacy last year almost all students made expected or above progress with a fifth making above expected progress. In mathematics most made expected or better progress showing the impact of the improvements in teaching of mathematics and communication A slightly greater proportion of students made below expected progress in specialist subjects, such as Art, Music and Food technology.
- Specific adaptations of lessons, for example, giving responsibilities for moving the power point display, help students who find it very difficult to sustain attention within a group.
- A larger proportion of boys than girls make above expected progress in English, mathematics and science. Senior leaders addressed this by forming a 'Girls' group' The girls involved say this helps them gain confidence and that everyone treats them with respect.
- Students who travel to school independently and participate in work experience know how to keep themselves safe outside school. They are able to articulate what they have learnt on placement about communicating with others and carrying out specific tasks.
- In music, students understand how to participate and perform due to the careful use of symbols. Class groups lead school assemblies, successfully demonstrating a wide range of presentation and other skills. The school community listens attentively and shows respect and encouragement, despite the fact that sitting in such a situation is very difficult for them.
- All disadvantaged students make expected or above progress in core subjects because of the well-targeted and specific support they receive.

- Almost a fifth of students with moderate learning difficulties make above expected progress from their starting points because the teaching enables them to overcome barriers to learning.

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

The school would like support in improving its overall effectiveness from good to outstanding.

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.