

Name of School:	Five Acre Wood School
Head teacher/Principal:	Peggy Murphy
Hub:	London Special and AP Hub
School type:	Special
MAT (if applicable):	N/A

Estimate at this QA Review:	OUTSTANDING
Date of this Review:	6 -8 December 2017
Estimate at last QA Review	This is the school's first review.
Date of last QA Review	N/A
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	OUTSTANDING
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	March 2015

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	OUTSTANDING
Outcomes for Pupils	OUTSTANDING
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	OUTSTANDING
Area of Excellence	ACCREDITED
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	N/A
Overall Estimate	OUTSTANDING

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

- Five Acre Wood is considerably larger than the average special school. The number of pupils is growing steadily. This term seven additional classes were admitted and there were 70 new members of staff.
- It is a district provision for pupils with moderate, severe, profound and complex learning difficulties and autism. Classes are determined by pupils' age and the learning style that they require, based on the nature and severity of their learning difficulty. All pupils have an education and health care plan (EHCP).
- The school is situated across three sites. Pupils on the main site cover the full age range. In addition, there is a Key Stage 2 satellite class at a primary school and a Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and four sixth form classes at a satellite secondary school.
- Almost half of all pupils are in Key Stages 1 and 2. There are 27 children in Reception and all of them attend full time.
- Pupils represent a range of ethnic backgrounds, although White British pupils form more than half of the school roll. Two thirds of all pupils are boys.
- One third of its pupils are disadvantaged which is higher than the national average. There are 24 looked after children (LAC) from six counties.
- Two heads of school are responsible for primary and secondary respectively and each of these is supported by an assistant headteacher. There are two more assistant headteachers. One has responsibility for teaching and learning and one for the secondary satellite class.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Follow up from previous review

- This is the school's first Challenge Partners review.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- Five Acre Wood School is a dedicated learning organisation which demonstrates a determination for continual school improvement. This is evident in the culture of high trust, high expectation, challenge and accountability which gives leaders autonomy to create and innovate according to their expertise. Reflection and evaluation play a significant role in leadership activities.
- Senior leaders have articulated a clear vision centred on the learning and best possible outcomes for all pupils. They take decisive action when change is required. Personalisation and a concern for the whole child are evident in planning at all levels; for example, through teachers' individual lesson planning, systems to track progress against EHCP outcomes and within all focus areas of the school development plan.
- The continual review of the curriculum and provision for pupils ensures that teaching and learning is responsive to pupil progress and meets their sensory, cognitive, emotional and physical needs.
- Communication is a strength at Five Acre Wood and the headteacher believes in

honesty and openness. Staff appreciate this approach and, as a result, strong relationships have developed. Staff, including teaching assistants, feel valued and care is taken to ensure staff wellbeing.

- The school prioritises continuing professional development. All members of staff benefit from personalisation of their training, with phase leaders auditing the skills, needs and opportunities for colleagues within their teams. A wide range of professionals with specialist expertise contribute to the training provided. Leaders have responded effectively to the growth of the school and are wise to balance new initiatives with the thorough induction of new colleagues. Succession planning is strong.
- Collaboration is a salient feature of professional learning at the school. Staff use lesson study, coaching and mentoring and, with support and direction from the research lead, they are guided by research in making their decisions around pedagogy and curriculum. Sharing best practice is evident and middle managers are fostered and developed well.
- The school is engaged in many research projects which are used to benefit pupils at the school directly. They are involved with the Teaching and Learning Academy and a local teaching alliance and have submitted a bid to become a teaching school.
- The school provides special educational needs outreach work for the local authority. It is strongly positioned to influence and advocate for learners with special needs within the county.

- **2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...**

...documentation more closely reflected and celebrated the achievements of the school.

...leaders promoted what the school does more widely.

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

- This is the school's first Challenge Partners review

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

- All staff have very high expectations for both the social and educational development of all pupils. They model these expectations for pupils and encourage participation. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy their work, are fully engaged and take pride in their achievements.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are highly trained and highly skilled. They work together seamlessly as a team which teachers lead effectively. Staff are very well supported by the daily training sessions and the very effective continuing professional development programme.

- The very strong relationships built up between pupils and adults enable learning to take place. All staff know the pupils really well and are able to anticipate their needs and physical requirements. Teachers set tasks that are appropriate to the needs of the pupils. For example, in a sixth form lesson, students were being prepared for their swimming lesson by being taught to recognise different types of signs. Another student who would like to work as a builder was learning about signs seen on a building site. Learning was being extended for the more able students by asking about colour and context for the signs.
- Excellent classroom management and the establishment of clear and consistent routines and structures mean that pupils feel safe and secure. They are able to concentrate on their learning in a calm and purposeful environment.
- Staff develop and promote child-led, self-regulation activities for pupils based on their deep knowledge of each individual. Any incidents which occur are rapidly de-escalated so that a calm working atmosphere prevails. Teachers use targeted praise effectively to raise standards.
- Staff use a range of communication techniques effectively, including Makaton, on body signing, symbols and switches to ensure all pupils have access to the curriculum.
- A highly personalised curriculum meets the needs of individual pupils. In the best lessons pupils are given plenty of choices and independent learning is fostered.
- Staff use a diverse basket of assessment tools to check progress across the wide range of pupils' needs. For example, learning journeys are used to assess individual progress towards personalised targets for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) in the pre-formal curriculum.
- An appropriate marking policy is in place and clear evidence was seen of focused feedback and next steps marking.
- Therapists are well integrated into the classroom. A therapist is responsible for communication across the curriculum and regularly leads one of the weekly training sessions.
- Careers education and guidance is a strong feature. Staff use personalised approaches to support next steps and help older pupils move on to college or other locations.
- The excellent quality of teaching and learning is maintained by regular and robust monitoring and evaluation, carried out by phase leaders and the senior leadership team.

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

...pupils led more aspects of their learning in lessons, where this is appropriate

...the school continued to strengthen its standardised, phase-specific approach to the assessment of learning.

...core elements, the non-negotiables, of planning were immediately accessible in all the classrooms.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- The school's self-evaluation analyses provide a comprehensive set of evidence to support excellent achievement. The majority of pupils make very rapid progress relative to their starting points using the Kent assessment tool. This is in English, mathematics and reading as well as in their social emotional development and communication skills.
- Leaders are able to articulate outstanding progress across the school and the range of curriculum pathways. Challenging targets are set based on 'Pupil Asset Points' that vary relative to pupils' starting points.
- The school uses the Kent Special Educational Needs Trust (KSENT) to compare progress against other similar schools. Leaders make effective use of this tool to support self-evaluation and target setting, as well as celebrating pupil progress.
- Leaders also use a range of indicators beyond traditional methods to evaluate outcomes. They are refining the range of assessment tools to capture outstanding progress across all phases.
- The wide range of tools assesses progress across a range of indicators, not just academic measures. For example 'MAPP', 'MOVE' and the 'Engagement Profiles' are all used to good effect.
- Moderation processes have demonstrated that staff have a shared expectation and understanding of the wide range of assessment tools used. Leaders are establishing a bank of exemplar tasks from moderation to support this and are introducing a wider range of accreditation opportunities for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Sixth form students have access to a wide range of accredited courses. Average point scores have increased from 34.4 in 2014/15 to 90.3 in 2016/17. These courses include 'Step Up' qualifications in English and mathematics alongside 'ASDAN' awards, BTEC qualifications in sport and leisure, home cooking, art and design and horticulture.
- Emphasis throughout is given to personal and social development with, for example, sixth formers completing their bronze and silver Duke of Edinburgh's award. All sixth form students complete a successful work placement annually. Students are very well prepared for the next stage in their lives.
- The school is developing an innovative "*ProgressSEN*" web based tool to capture a wide range of outcomes from pupils' EHCPs.

5. Area of Excellence

Distributed Leadership.

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?

With 364 pupils over three sites, the need for distributed leadership is evident and has been highlighted as a strength by the local authority through the school improvement advisor.

Staff at all levels are encouraged to explore possible projects, as well as being given responsibility to review impact and potentially take a project forward. Staff have commented on the amount of professional trust they receive and they grow and develop within this. Distributed leadership has increased opportunities for staff to take a lead in an area about which they are passionate and this has made a positive difference to standards at Five Acre Wood.

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

The school has used an external provider to coach their staff team to develop problem solvers and build staff relationships in order to create trusting and open dialogues between colleagues. Responsibilities are spread across all levels and are shifted according to need. Job descriptions are regularly reviewed and updated.

A special 'culture team' has been established, drawn from representatives across the school community. This work has inculcated habits of flexibility and innovation and contributed to the achievement of the Investors in People Award (Gold). Staff embrace new ideas, take risks and are not resistant to change. For example, the decision taken to change the timings of the school day to enable 45 minutes training each morning led by class teacher, phase leader or therapists. This has provided staff with the ability and knowledge to take on more responsibility and lead within their own areas.

A strong network with Kent Special Schools and members of the KSENT has provided opportunities for staff to access coaching and mentoring and school support. Promotions within school have enabled Five Acre Wood to grow their own leaders. A number of teachers began their careers as teaching assistants at the school. Many of the leadership team were teachers at the school.

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

Phase leaders work alongside teachers to develop innovative strategies to respond to pupils' needs. They develop personalised approaches to create a curriculum that meets the diverse and complex learning needs. Pupils make excellent progress from their starting points as a result.

The school encourages their staff to be outward looking in searching for new ideas to support their growing population. Many systems have been researched, trialled and launched to support and record teaching and learning, safeguarding and behaviour. An example of this is a member of the wider leadership team who is developing a nurture group and applying for a wellbeing award.

The senior leadership team meet weekly to update on accountability and to ensure their phase leaders have an understanding of both operational and strategic tasks that further

supports the development of learners at Five Acre Wood.

Phase leaders take a professional lead within their phase to develop a weekly, bespoke training programme, with a focus on teaching and learning. Staff who attend this training report back to review and comment on the value and quality of the training using Google Poll. An assistant head quality assures this process by ensuring it is relevant for pupils in their phases.

The school supports the progress of pupils in other special educational needs settings and in mainstream schools through outreach work and KSENT. This provision has been recognised by the local authority school improvement advisor who has suggested these leadership skills should be shared.

5.4 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?

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TITLE: Headteacher

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

The school would like to establish links with other school about the Rochford review on pre-key stage standards and engagement scales and how to move further towards this system.

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.