



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW  
REVIEW REPORT FOR  
FIVE ACRE WOOD SCHOOL

<b>Name of School:</b>	Five Acre Wood School
<b>Principal:</b>	Peggy Murphy
<b>Hub:</b>	London Special and AP
<b>School type:</b>	Special
<b>MAT:</b>	N/A

<b>Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	23/11/2018
<b>Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	06/12/2017
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	13/05/2015

## Quality Assurance Review

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

<b>School Improvement Strategies</b>	OUTSTANDING
<b>Outcomes for Pupils</b>	OUTSTANDING
<b>Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment</b>	OUTSTANDING
<b>Area of Excellence</b>	Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS) across the curriculum. ACCREDITED
<b>Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence</b>	Distributed leadership 11/10/16
<b>Overall Estimate</b>	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. Context and character of the school

- Five Acre Wood School (FAW) is a large special school for pupils aged 2-19 with a range of complex needs. These include autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and moderate learning difficulties (MLD).
- It is rapidly expanding. In January 2009, there were 119 pupils and by September 2018 this had risen to 426 pupils. Staff numbers have risen from 206 in September 2016 to 294 in September 2018.
- 32% of pupils are disadvantaged. 8% have English as an additional language.
- It is a confident, outward looking school. It is part of KSENT, the Kent Special School Cooperative Trust, taking a lead role in school support. It has designated Teaching School status, working with local mainstream primary schools focusing on SEND provision.
- Since 2016, the school employs and manages The Maidstone Specialist Teaching and Learning Service which supports pupils with SEND in mainstream schools in Maidstone.
- The school is based on three sites. The main site has 331 pupils plus 7.5 full time equivalent nursery age pupils; the East Borough Key Stage 2 satellite caters for 14 primary age pupils; and thirdly the Holmesdale secondary satellite for Key Stage 3, 4 and post 16, currently accommodating 85 pupils.
- The percentage of boys to girls is 69% to 31%.
- The leadership structure consists of the principal, two heads of school, four assistant heads, a head of human resources and a business manager.
- The school is organised into six learning approaches based on pupils' needs. Each of these approaches is led by a middle leader and as the school expands, their role expands too.
- The school has a well-established link with Canterbury Christchurch University through Teaching School Alliance, research modules and Initial Teacher Training immersion days.
- The school employs its own therapy team including two speech and language therapists, an occupational therapist and a therapy assistant.

### 2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Progress from previous EBIs

Documentation now more closely reflects and celebrates the achievements of the school. For example, each learning approach now has a clear development plan. External accreditation from organisations such as Investors in People, The Inclusion Quality Mark and Rights Respecting Schools Award are updated and readily available.

Leaders now promote what the school does more widely. For example, a fundraising website for Friends of FAW School has been set up, a Leading Education and

Achievement For All (LEAF) training school in was established in May 2018 and the school's social media profile has been developed.

## 2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- Leaders have a clear vision. It has been agreed across the staff team and is used to underpin whole school planning.
- The school has a comprehensive system for monitoring teacher performance. Clear expectations for teachers at each stage of their career have been agreed.
- The school has a well-established coach who is deployed to provide support in particular to new staff. As a result, new members of staff understand the non-negotiables of their learning approach, followed by a deeper understanding by the end of their second term.
- Senior leaders strike a very good balance between close monitoring and empowerment. As one person said, 'the head says what are your skills, what are your ideas? Go and get on with it.'
- Leaders encourage creativity, risk taking and innovation.
- Middle leaders (who each lead one of the six learning approaches) increasingly have a good grasp of the strengths and areas for development in their respective areas. The school has invested in their professional development through the National Professional Qualification in Middle Leadership (NPQML). Each has a 'go to person' on the senior team. As the school grows, this tier of leadership is well placed to play a key role in school improvement.
- Leaders' promotion of wellbeing, for both staff and pupils, is central to the school's approach. It is explicitly promoted, for example through the document '12 ways to boost your wellbeing'.
- Induction arrangements for the large number of new staff are comprehensive. Staff turnover and absence are low with high numbers of applicants for both teaching and support staff roles.
- The school actively nourishes a 'can do' positive ethos. A group of 13 staff representing different roles meets regularly to discuss aspects of the school's culture with a view to addressing any issues promptly. The staff team have agreed a set of guidelines for staff relationships which are used to clarify expectations. All staff are considered to be leaders of learning. As a result, there is a strong culture of supportive teamwork in classes.
- The school places great emphasis on staff development. Each day there is a training session which is linked to the training needs that have been identified in the learning walks and lesson observations. Within the practical learning approach, for example, following focused training, visual supports are being used consistently (and staff understand why they need to be used) to scaffold pupil learning.
- Ambitious standards for the very large team of teaching assistants have been agreed. There are three levels which offers the team clarity about their role as well as some professional progression routes.

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

- ...the school made more explicit in its analysis of pupil outcomes, what skills and knowledge pupils in each of the 6 learning approaches have learnt.
- ...the school streamlined its self evaluation and school improvement planning, in particular further developing the skills of middle leaders to evaluate the quality of their respective learning approaches.

## **3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Progress from previous EBIs**

In the 187 formal observations or learning walks during 2017-18, leaders identified strengths in pupils leading more aspects of their learning in lessons, where this was appropriate.

The school has continued to strengthen its standardised approach to the assessment of learning based on the different needs of the pupils.

The school's 'non-negotiables' (a list of expectations of teaching and learning practice across the school) are now in place for all six learning approaches. All planning is held centrally on the school network.

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

- A definition of good and better teaching practice has been agreed across the school. This covers the environment, teaching and learning and has been tailored to each of the 6 learning approaches. It contributes well to the consistent approach in evidence across the school.
- There are effective and personalised systems in place to support pupils' wellbeing and emotional regulation (including zones in classes for this to take place), underpinned by the use of SCERTS. In addition the school has developed an effective system to promote mindfulness. For example, a mindfulness session is delivered every morning at the Holmesdale site, to support the pupils' mental health and prepare them for learning.
- The school has a culture of continuous improvement in classroom practice. For example, the SCERTS framework is regularly scrutinised and adapted as part of striving for best practice.
- There is a positive learning environment which enables pupils to feel safe, understand expectations and develop their own self regulation.
- Transitions between tasks and classes are well managed and as a result breaks

in learning are minimised.

- Support staff consistently promote pupils' independence. For example, staff provide pupils with manageable choices and are skilled at waiting rather than doing tasks for the pupils.
- Some good use was made of the outside learning environment, such as the garden. For one class, this made for a seamless learning experience between the inside and outside environments where apple and pear trees fostered a curiosity in the pupils.
- Teachers make good use of specialist approaches such as Attention Autism, On Body Signing, Thinking Hats or communication in print key words to meet the different needs of pupils in each learning approach. Each activity is linked to pupils' needs, which are clearly understood across the class team. Technology is used well to support these varied approaches. Devices include iPads and voice recorders.
- The school adopts a total communication approach which is dictated by pupil needs. Staff are skilled in its delivery. This, coupled with a good range of visual cues to promote learning, leads to pupil engagement and progress in their communication and interaction Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) targets.
- Zones of regulation are well used, for example to help pupils make good choices and adopt calmer behaviour.
- The school has an effective system for measuring pupil progress. It contains several different components including traditional subjects as well as wellbeing, communication skills, EHCP targets and independence.
- The school reviews pupils' progress five times each year. Where targets have been achieved, more challenging ones are set. In 2017-18, 68 pupils had their targets raised during the year.

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

...teachers used more challenging and open questions to elicit pupils' prior learning and current skills more consistently across the school.

...more consistent use of visual cues and prompts to aid communication and understanding was made across the school, especially outside the classroom.

## **4. Outcomes for Pupils**

- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is moderated across the county's special schools through the Pupil Asset framework. This system enables the school to conclude confidently that in the academic year 2017-18, about 95% of pupils made expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics and about

50% exceeded expectations. There was no significant variation in the progress made between subjects or between boys and girls.

- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is only slightly below that of their non-disadvantaged peers.
- During 2017-18, there was a slight slowing of the rates of progress for the more able pupils in Key Stage 4. This was a result of increased accreditation and a more functional application of English and mathematics due to the greater breadth of the curriculum which requires further time to embed mastery.
- The progress of pupils in the sensory learning approach is assessed using Mapping and Assessing Personal Progress (MAPP). Pupils' individual targets are carefully monitored and assessed. The analysis suggests that pupils make excellent progress with developing increasing control of their environment through a total communication approach.
- The key skills framework, introduced in 2016, focuses on how well pupils develop skills, rather than acquire knowledge. Analysis indicates that pupils are making very good progress with the development of their independence, wellbeing and communication skills.
- The school is in the process of developing a potentially powerful assessment tool. This is designed to evaluate progress made in achieving targets, and the impact of interventions, outlined in each pupil's EHCP. As a result, by the end of this academic year, the school will have this further rich source of pupil progress information.
- Over 100 pupils have been assessed using the SCERTS framework. Assessments indicate that pupils' have made excellent progress in developing their emotional regulation and social communication.
- In the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) children make good progress, on average making 1.2 stages of progress each year. Children make particularly strong progress in developing communication, personal, social and emotional skills.
- In 2017-18, accreditations were achieved in;
  - AQA Entry Level and Level 1 qualifications
  - ASDAN Personal Progress and Life Skills challenge
  - Functional Skills (Entry Level 1-3 and Level 1)
  - BTEC Land Based studies, Home cooking skills, sport and active leisure and Art and Design at Level 1
  - Home Cooking Skills Level 2
- The school is particularly proud of the nine pupils who achieved the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award and four who are working towards the silver.

## 5. Area of Excellence

SCERTS across the curriculum.

## Accredited

### 5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?

- SCERTS has been developed and is being embedded across the curriculum through joint working between the speech and language therapist and other school staff.
- Over 100 pupils have been fully assessed and have targets set from the SCERTS framework. These targets are currently being put into EHCP provision plans.
- There has been intensive training for all staff. This includes three days of training, for all teachers and Senior Teaching Assistants, run at FAW for the past three years. The training has been led by Emily Rubin (co-creator of the SCERTS framework). Emily also works with FAW for an additional two days each year to help develop the school's action plan.
- FAW has hosted parent forums and talks from experts in the field.
- A whole school SCERTS action plan is in place to continue to develop and improve the provision for pupils across the full range of the six learning approaches at FAW.

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

- The school has created a SCERTS excellence network for Kent special schools that shares best practice and resources. The network also shares research projects and professional development opportunities
- The school has participated in research, for example through the Institute of Education, focusing on transactional support and active engagement.
- FAW has set up a 'champions of SCERTS' network in schools.
- The school's 'non-negotiables' (the school's expectations of practice in each class) in each learning approach fits under the SCERTS umbrella to enable pupils to access learning in all areas.
- FAW worked with the six team leaders in the school to adapt SCERTS for their respective learning approaches.
- Objects of Reference within the learning approaches are embedded as appropriate.
- Lead teachers have responsibility for devising a training package for their area to meet the needs of the staff, taking into account respective strengths and areas for development.
- Emotional regulation zones have been set up across the majority of classrooms with occupational therapy support to develop sensory circuits to improve readiness for learning and regulation strategies.
- Action plans across learning approaches feed into the whole school development plan.



- Several schools have visited FAW to see SCERTS in action making use of the open days. The school provides outreach support to seven schools currently (with more planned) to develop their own practice.

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

#### Achievement data

- Each pupil that has had a full SCERTS assessment has targets in place for each area which are reviewed throughout the year.
- Full assessment baselines are completed and an end of year assessment to demonstrate progress across the full SCERTS framework.
- Initial analysis indicates that there has been a particularly strong impact on pupils' social communication skills by staff developing their knowledge of transactional supports.
- SCERTS has led to increased engagement and readiness for learning.

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

Tim Williams – Head of Primary [twilliams@five-acre.kent.sch.uk](mailto:twilliams@five-acre.kent.sch.uk)

Kelly Davies – TLR SCERTS [kdavies@five-acre.kent.sch.uk](mailto:kdavies@five-acre.kent.sch.uk)

Beth Solman- Speech and Language Therapist [bsolman@five-acre.kent.sch.uk](mailto:bsolman@five-acre.kent.sch.uk)

Matt Jones – Phase lead functional learning approach [mjones@five-acre.kent.sch.uk](mailto:mjones@five-acre.kent.sch.uk)