



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR FIVE ACRE WOOD

Name of School:	Five Acre Wood
Principal:	Peggy Murphy
Hub:	London Special and AP
School phase:	Foundation Special
MAT:	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	03/11/2021
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Leading
Date of last QA Review:	30/10/2019
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	11/04/2019

Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising of 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 Bespoke approaches to well-being and resilience, using performance preferences (mindset and behaviour) and drawing upon the 'Spotlight' profiling tool. Accredited

Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS) across the curriculum, 23/11/2018

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.

1. Context and character of the school

Five Acre Wood (FAW) shares a campus with a secondary and primary school, a private nursery, a local church and a gym. All sixth form classes, formal learning approach secondary classes and two primary formal classes, are based at satellite provisions. There are approximately 740 pupils on roll, from two to 19 years old. The school's provision continues to grow.

FAW caters for a wide range of special educational needs: profound and multiple learning difficulties; severe learning difficulties; moderate learning difficulties; complex needs; challenging behaviour; sensory impairments and autistic spectrum conditions. FAW currently operates six learning approaches – Early Years, Practical, Sensory, Formal, Structured and Functional. All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHCP), except those in the observation and assessment nursery provision. Over 60 new staff have recently been recruited. The school is supported by an NHS school nursing team. FAW has its own therapy (speech and language and occupational therapists) and family liaison team.

FAW operates training and development for outside organisations in many ways, including through Leading Education and Achievement For all (LEAF). The school employs the local specialist teaching and learning service (STLS). FAW has achieved numerous awards, including Investors in People, UNESCO Rights Respecting School and is an Inclusion Quality Mark Flagship school.

2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- The passionate and innovative leadership team have a clear and unrelenting focus, built on an enquiry culture and psychological safety, which is highly successful in improving opportunities and outcomes for the ever-growing school population and their families. FAW staff liaise with families to raise aspirations for pupils. Leaders rightly talk about developing 'new possibles.' At FAW, everyone is a learner.
- Senior leaders trust each other and staff at all levels to be innovative in the best interests of the pupils. School leaders have a 'magical touch' when it comes to engaging with individuals and companies from a wide range of backgrounds to secure funding for resources and for inspiring enrichment experiences for pupils, including the amazing Woodstock festival and the school's pupils partnering with Nathan Grisdale in the 2020 Christmas number one single, 'Don't give up'.

- FAW continues to be remarkably generous and 'outward facing,' supporting innovative practice in education locally and nationally, including Initial Teacher Training, hosting the Leading Education and Achievement For all (LEAF) conference in 2021 and work within KSENT, a special schools network of Kent special schools.
- Well-being is at the heart of FAW, using well researched methodologies but grounded in respect. The school dogs are well utilised to contribute to the well-being of all!
- FAW employs a team of speech and language and occupational therapists. This team works strategically and highly effectively, embedding exemplary practice in classrooms and around the school, with skilled teaching teams at its heart.
- Leaders continue to refine and develop curriculum learning approaches to ensure that they are fit for purpose for the wide range of pupil need.
- FAW uses positive, pupil-centred, eclectic approaches to supporting positive behaviour. The prime responsibility for positive conduct lies within teaching teams, utilising expert support from therapists and leaders. There currently seven pupils in two nurture groups with clear referral, exit strategies and progress evaluation measures in place.
- Leaders are highly effective in supporting new staff and Early Career Teachers. They are reflective and research better systems when needed, rather than following any given model. The training and development of teaching assistants (TAs) is robust and comprehensive. Leaders have developed a group of TAs who work flexibly alongside their colleagues to coach and support TA practice.
- Senior leaders use information from tracking leavers to modify the curriculum, liaising and supporting the local FE college, and setting up 'Grow 19', a specialist post-19 provision. There has already been a significant increase in leavers securing paid employment. There are excellent links to local businesses, including market stalls and food outlets. FAW is about to set up a coffee shop off site and a variety of volunteer placements, including a pilot project with a well-renowned private bank.

2.2 Leadership at all Levels - Even better if...

...No even better ifs were identified.

3.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - What went well

- Staff at all levels really get to know and understand pupils and their families. Warm and trusting relationships between staff and pupils are an exceptional feature of the school.
- Due to clear, high expectations, well planned and relevant learning activities, employing a range of approaches and stimuli, pupils have very positive attitudes and consistent engagement in their learning.

- Pupils have a strong moral compass, based on equality and care for each other, the school community and making a contribution. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary.
- A well thought-out and executed approach to 'total communication,' enables pupils to take increased control of their lives. Pupils are supported to understand and communicate using their chosen method in both classroom and informal settings. Pupils are given time to process information, initiate actions and support their peers. For example, in a Key Stage 2 practical approach classroom, during an 'Attention Autism' session, pupils independently made suggestions to each other to better complete the activities.
- Pupils learn to use a variety of visual supports to promote understanding, expression and independence. In a Year 5-7 structured approach class, pupils used TEACCH, now and next boards and 'jigs' to complete tasks independently. The teacher skilfully used questions to minimise prompting. For example, "go and check your schedule," as opposed to "do the next task."
- TAs are a vital and skilled part of the workforce. They have great relationships and understanding of pupils and are trusted to take the initiative as leaders of learning. Class teams work together exceptionally well. They seamlessly and intuitively support the pupils and each other.
- Attendance compares favourably with schools with broadly comparable pupil needs.
- Staff at all levels promote an 'every moment matters' approach to school life. TAs and teachers develop clear break time and lunchtime targets. Snack time in a sensory approach class was well organised to maximise choosing and communication with a purpose.
- In the early years foundation stage (EYFS), there is a purposeful 'learning buzz.' Children in EYFS take opportunities to develop independence in well-planned, self-directed activities, for example, independently using the den and the swing to self-regulate.
- Preparation for adulthood is a strong feature of the school. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is being further developed to increase the focus in this area. Teaching staff in EYFS clearly articulated how the targets met in the early years fit into a long-term learning journey for pupils to develop the skills required for adulthood.
- The post-16 phase of FAW, including a farm, an allotment and a market stall is purposeful, providing highly relevant learning experiences. Pupils see how their learning equips them with skills to meet their future aspirations. Pupils discuss their aspirations with each other to enable comparisons and to inform each other's choices. Pupils develop an understanding of how enterprises work. For example, how sales of woodwork items generate funds for reinvestment in further enterprises.
- Holistic progress, carefully measured against progress towards challenging, moderated targets, is strong across the school. Assessment systems are tailored to each learning approach.

- Evidence for learning is replacing previous assessment systems, which parents are more able to contribute to and share learning between school and home. Progress is measured using a variety of tools, according to the learning approach, including SCERTS, Key Skills, Boxall and MAPP.

3.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - Even better if...

...planning were further refined to highlight the key learning skills and how pupils see the relevance to their lives of the formal secondary curriculum.

4.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- As a special school, all pupils have additional needs and at FAW there is a significant proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils within the formal secondary learning approach has increased over time and continues to rise. Senior leaders continue to have high ambition for all pupils and in this review chose to spotlight the 'more cognitively able' pupils to ensure that this group of pupils is challenged sufficiently.
- Leaders have reviewed and further improved their assessment systems and curriculum offer for this group of pupils to better equip them for adult life. This includes 'soft skills' and well-being measures. This group of pupils, due to their community presence, is especially vulnerable to exploitation in many ways. The curriculum includes sex and relationship education and 'drug education.' The school involves the police and magistrates to better understand risks and promote staying safe in the community.
- Teachers subject knowledge is strong, as many are formerly mainstream teachers. They have developed their pedagogy to ensure the highest teaching standards for this group of pupils.
- Leaders have reviewed and modified the accreditation offered to pupils, to ensure it is most relevant to pupils and credible to prospective employers. The most able older students are challenged through college groups and higher entry level courses. The accreditation offer at FAW includes BTEC, City and Guilds, AQA and ASDAN as well as the Duke of Edinburgh Award at bronze and silver level. Leaders use their extensive networks to provide enrichment, for example in the arts and music.
- Pupils have access to increased and more varied work experience, much of which has continued throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, with rigorous safety measures in place.

4.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

...leaders and teaching staff continued to review the 'why' of their curriculum offer for this pupil group to ensure its continued relevance.

5. Area of Excellence

Bespoke approaches to well-being and resilience, using performance preferences (mindset and behaviour) and drawing upon the 'Spotlight' profiling tool.

Accredited

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

Leaders have an enduring passion and commitment to promoting and maintaining the well-being of both staff and pupils. They seek out leaders in the relevant field, using cutting edge research and use these relationships to develop competence and improve outcomes for all.

'Spotlight' was developed by the 'cutting edge' performance psychology team at 'Mindflick' as a way of understanding people's 'Behaviour Style' and 'Mindset' and combining them into what is called their 'Performance Preferences.' It enables people to better understand their self, method and mind, so that they can get the best out of themselves and others. It is a key element of the support that FAW offers to staff to build well-being and resilience.

Two senior leaders are accredited 'Mindflick' practitioners, equipping them with the philosophical understanding, skills, and knowledge of the underpinning theory and research, as well as how to successfully implement this approach.

Over the last three years, FAW staff received six days per year of bespoke input with Doctor Mike Rotheram, one of Mindflick's high performance psychologists.

He is the psychology technical lead within the English Institute of Sport, supporting success in numerous elite sports.

FAW developed a strong partnership with a well-renowned private bank, who adopted 'Spotlight' prior to FAW. This relationship has accelerated and consolidated FAW's strength in this area and forged useful spin-offs which benefit the pupils.

Leaders have strategically developed and embedded their expertise through a series of significant training and development opportunities. All FAW staff have, or are in the process of acquiring, individual 'Spotlight' profiles. 'Spotlight' is a key component of the new FAW approach to teacher's personal development. This exciting initiative places individual goals (identified through Spotlight and 360 peer review), at the heart of personal and team development, replacing traditional teacher appraisal.

FAW delivers extensive bespoke training to special and mainstream schools across Kent and beyond, as well as organisations outside of the education sector, locally and internationally.

The FAW whole-school 'Spotlight Development Plan' ensures continual development of leaders' skills in this area and supports staff well-being plans.

Leaders use 'Spotlight' in 'well-being development days' for FAW staff, and invite other schools across Kent to join. It was a key focus at the recent international 'Inspiring Growth and Development' virtual summit hosted by LEAF at FAW in June 2021.

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

Staff at all levels have developed a greater understanding of themselves, enabling them to become more effective when working with others and enhance their performance under pressure.

The framework has helped staff to recognise that their behaviour changes across home and school environments and situations, and in challenging or stressful times. Having the ability to adapt their performance preferences, depending on the situation they are in, allows staff to stay focused on a goal whilst adjusting how they go about achieving it in a more effective way.

FAW staff better understand the performance preferences of others, enabling them to be more effective at connecting with and influencing and supporting their team mates. The increased self-awareness, emotional intelligence, well-being and enhanced positive mindset impacts directly on FAW pupils. The team ethos, often without words, has resulted in consistently exemplary practice by staff and improved well-being and holistic outcomes for pupils.

The findings were clear during this review. At Five Acre Wood staff work as an amazing team and really do put pupils' needs first, supporting them to be the best that they can be.

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

Name: Tim Williams and Sarah Costain

Title: Tim Williams – Headteacher (Loose site). Sarah Costain – Deputy Headteacher

Email: twilliams@five-acre.kent.sch.uk, scostain@five-acre.kent.sch.uk

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

The school is extremely well connected within the Challenge Partners network and beyond and obtains support as required.

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.

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 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.



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Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.