

Name of School:	Willow Dene School
Head teacher/Principal:	Rachel Harrison
Hub:	London Special and AP Hub
School type:	Academy
MAT (if applicable):	Compass Partnership of Schools

Estimate at this QA Review:	Outstanding
Date of this Review:	28/01/2019
Estimate at last QA Review	N/A
Date of last QA Review	N/A
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good (prior to academisation)
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	23/10/2012

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	Pupil Voice - Developing
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. Context and character of the school

- Willow Dene is a special school, which serves the London Borough of Greenwich and surrounding local authorities. It is part of the Compass Partnership of Schools. The pupils have significant learning difficulties and all have, or are undergoing assessment for, an education, health and care plan. The school has specialist provision for two year olds with complex needs in addition to an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) phase and Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4. Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils are accommodated in a nearby separate site.
- There are 235 pupils on roll with the majority of these in the EYFS and primary phases. The intake has grown by almost 50% over recent years mainly because of the addition of Key Stage 3 and 4. Over two thirds of pupils have autism, identified as their primary learning need. About a third have complex needs, which may include physical and medical needs as well as sensory impairment.
- There is a ratio of two boys to every girl. Around a third of pupils are of Black African heritage, a quarter of White British heritage with the remainder from many different ethnic groups. Nearly a quarter of pupils come from families where English is not the first language and almost half are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The school has National Autism Society accreditation and is a Movement for Learning and Life (MOVE) centre of excellence. The school works with a number of other settings, universities and hospital trusts.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Progress from previous EBIs

This is the school's first Challenge Partners review.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- Leaders have created a very positive and purposeful ethos. They are ambitious for the development of the school and have high expectations of both staff and pupils. They have successfully encouraged staff to have a voice in school improvement.
- Leaders are insightful and skilled and their strengths are very well used to drive forward school improvement. There is an excellent balance between leaders who have many years of expertise and experience and newer leaders

who are being supported and developed to fulfil their roles successfully.

- Leaders plan for succession and capacity building extremely well. Career progression for wider leadership is evident, as well as the development of trainee teachers into skilled practitioners.
- Comprehensive staff training and continuing professional development (CPD) supports and develops staff at all levels. It can be evidenced in the high quality and personalised provision.
- School self-evaluation and school development planning are expertly evidenced, integrated and well linked. Monitoring and evaluation are multi-layered and rigorous. Their findings are shared with all staff. The 360 degree approach to monitoring permeates the school.
- Leaders have an excellent track record of highly successful school development and improvement. This ranges from the expansion into key stage 3 and 4 and the inclusion of two year olds, to the year-on-year improved outcomes for learners of all profiles of need.
- Leaders have excellent relationships with the multi-academy trust. They have relished the opportunities afforded to them for strategic planning. Leaders are now supporting schools in the trust with specialised training, support and advice on provision for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. They have developed strong links with external providers and specialists ranging from the health service to the Jack Petchey Foundation. They are increasingly outward facing and look for further opportunities to work with external providers and specialists.
- The school runs very smoothly and the routines established through shared protocols and practices give every opportunity for learning to be maximised.
- Leaders have used the opportunities afforded by the new school building and the excellently refurbished secondary site to maximise opportunities for learning. They have created specialised spaces for bespoke and personalised provision. Leaders ensure that the use of space is under continual review to add capacity and flexibility.
- Leaders know their pupils and their families very well. They strive to provide access for pupils and families to integrated services through the good relationships they have developed with external providers and their knowledge of what is available.

2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...

...leaders developed school documentation that captured the school's journey of rapid change and sustained improvement.

...leaders gave an overview of key aspects of teaching, learning and assessment and how these triangulate.

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

This is the school's first Challenge Partners review.

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

- There is very positive team working to support engagement of all pupils in differentiated ways. Pupils across the school are highly engaged in learning. Challenge and pupil choice are built into lessons and personalised as appropriate. Adults support pupils in making choices in their learning.
- Behaviour for learning is excellent. Staff manage learning behaviour when appropriate. Strategies for self-regulation and choice are built in and pupils encouraged to recognise this in themselves. Peers are encouraged not only to interact with adults, but also with each other.
- Throughout the school, the high quality classroom learning environments are designed to be appropriate to the learning profile of each group of learners. They are attractive, well organised and pristinely maintained. Engaging and stimulating displays are beautifully showcased and reflect the high expectations throughout. Every opportunity to create spaces for learning, sometimes specifically targeted for groups of pupils and for personalised provision, is taken and appropriately used throughout the day.
- There are extremely positive relationships between class teams and pupils. During learning, adults skilfully give differentiated support, allowing pupils to step in and step out of learning as they need to. Class teams successfully work together to try to ensure that learning is maximised with no 'down time', especially for learners with very complex needs. Staff give practical empathy, for example, when a pupil was unwell she was cared for but led back into learning when the time was right for her.
- Resources, whether commercially made, or made by staff for the lesson, are excellent. They are very well used to enrich, develop, deepen and personalise learning.
- The holistic needs of pupils are met throughout the school with a very strong sensory focus to lessons that is part of the school day. For example, music and pleasant smells welcome pupils into their classroom learning space each morning. Staff are very well trained as a result of joint working with integrated therapy services.
- Total communication strategies are in use everywhere. Communication boards are used effectively and attention autism principles are very well used throughout the school
- Teachers have high expectations of subject-specific learning in the broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum, differentiated expertly for different profiles of learners. For example, music is integral to the learning planned for

pupils and the provision is very carefully considered. The forest school provision celebrates the success of pupils.

- As well as the development of gross motor skills along the MOVE principles, the skilful development of fine motor skills is evident and built into learning.
- The partnerships with parents and carers support the excellent provision throughout, particularly in the provision for two year olds.

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

...further opportunities were developed for all staff to share and see excellent practice and engage in professional dialogue with other special schools.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- Leaders have secured increasingly excellent outcomes for all profiles of learners with no groups of pupils making less progress and, therefore, achieving less than others. The school has successfully closed any gaps that may have existed during a period of both rapid and sustained improvement. Current pupils of all learning profiles across the school are making excellent progress with no gaps between significant groups in the school.
- Leaders have created an assessment system called Learning Journeys for pupils working at early development levels through to those working at National Curriculum levels. These are Footsteps, Stepping Out, Paces and Strides. In developing them, leaders made secure and appropriate reference to both national and well-established progression guides.
- There are clear, comprehensive and embedded systems for tracking progress. These are based on the holistic view of each pupil and their provision.
- Leaders generate detailed half-termly analyses of the quality of practice, provision and outcomes, which are systematically monitored by the leadership team.
- The progress scores pupils make against the assessment criteria are given a numerical score, which enables leaders to generate progress data. Leaders then produce comprehensive sets of data. Data is produced to monitor the impact of the wide range of bespoke interventions and the impact of the integrated therapy partnership working.
- Levels of progress are validated through the rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems for assessing the quality of teaching and learning. The validation arises from the view shared by staff that excellent teaching and learning leads to excellent progress. Accountability systems are very

thorough, layered and integrated.

- Leaders use the comprehensive analyses of data to target support and interventions at classes to ensure that standards of practice, provision and outcomes are high for all pupils.
- A range of successful strategies to improve attendance and to support families has been implemented. Attendance for current pupils from the EYFS to Key Stage 4 is in line with the national average. From Year 1 to Year 10 it is above the national average. The attendance of boys and disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.

5. Area of Excellence

Pupil Voice - Developing

5.1 How is this area developing to be a strength?

At the school pupil voice refers to the way in which staff listen to, facilitate and interpret the views of pupils and how they involve them in decision making. The approach tries to ensure that when staff listen to and interpret pupils' views it is in a way that is meaningful and appropriate for each individual pupil. Pupils are able to formulate ideas and opinions on their experiences and activities in a way which is contextual and purposeful for them. The approach is embedded into everyday practice and can be seen throughout the school day.

Staff have developed an understanding of the vision of pupil voice and the positive impact that the approach has had. Pupil voice enables pupils to develop skills which build confidence in communicating and developing social skills and which enable pupils to demonstrate progress throughout the curriculum.

5.2 What actions is the school taking to grow expertise in this area?

Leaders will continue to find new, innovative and powerful ways to enable pupils to develop control and autonomy within the areas that affect them.

They will continue to develop their approach, and any new ideas that are brought into the school, by a range of CPD opportunities and ongoing support for staff teams. They will particularly target those pupils that monitoring and evaluation activities indicate need further support.

Leaders will continue to deepen and develop the skills, by coaching and mentoring, of newer middle leaders to co-ordinate and develop approaches through leadership

of the area and through leadership of their subject.

5.3 What are the next steps to work towards accredited status next year?

Senior leaders, middle leaders and class teams will visit special schools with excellent practice both to look at their approaches and to discuss these with other school leaders. They will robustly examine the strengths in other schools to see how these could develop further the vision and provision at Willow Dene.

School staff will attend leadership development days to look at their approach to how these are hosted and organised and what makes them successful or, if not entirely successful, what could have been done better. They will use their findings to consider how best to plan out a day that they will host once the area is accredited.

Leaders will consider further the title of their area of excellence to ensure that it more clearly describes and encompasses the practice that they are proud of. They will ensure that the documentation presented clearly matches the title of the area of excellence and describes the actions that the school takes to achieve excellent practice.

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

School leaders would like to reflect upon what support they may like to receive.

This report 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.



QUALITY ASSURANCE
REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR
WILLOW DENE SCHOOL