



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR SAMUEL RHODES SCHOOL

<b>Name of School:</b>	Samuel Rhodes School
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Cerys Normanton
<b>Hub:</b>	London Special and AP
<b>School phase:</b>	Special
<b>MAT:</b>	Not applicable

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	01/02/2023
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of last QA Review:</b>	31/01/2022
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	24/05/2022



## **1. Context and character of the school**

Samuel Rhodes is a special school in the Local Borough of Islington for pupils aged 4-19. The school is oversubscribed and continues to grow. Currently there are 142 pupils on roll from eight London boroughs. The primary and secondary sites are approximately one mile apart, both co-located with mainstream schools. Some sixth form pupils access a purpose built classroom, a life skills area, 'the flat' and access the sixth form common room on the mainstream site.

All pupils have education, health and care plans (EHCPs). Although the school is designated as a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), the cohort is rapidly changing to include many more pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and increasingly complex needs, including autistic spectrum conditions (ASC). Three quarters of the school come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and many access multi-agency support. The ratio of boys to girls is approximately two to one. Most pupils join the school in Year 7. However, pupils also join mid-year in other year groups. Pupils often join the school following a difficult experience in mainstream education.

Samuel Rhodes is outward looking, using their membership of the Islington Futures Zones Network, Islington Special School Network and Challenge Partners, to support and develop provision beyond the school.

### **2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well**

- Leaders, ably supported and challenged by a skilled and experienced governor team, have a clear vision for all stakeholders at Samuel Rhodes. Their drive for school improvement is unrelenting and highly effective. As a large proportion of pupils and their families are vulnerable and are living in challenging times, leaders ensure that all relevant support is in place from inside school and leaders support and encourage other agencies in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- The school supports pedagogical development across the borough through continuing professional development (CPD), teacher support, clinic workshops, assessment support and provision planning and setup. For example, the Downs Syndrome support leads on effective strategy implementation and provides ongoing comprehensive training across the borough. The school provides intensive and individualised support for external agencies and organisations to enable them to meet the needs of children and young adults with special educational needs and disabilities. The school is a highly effective member of local and national networks and makes the most of extensive opportunities to improve outcomes for learners with additional needs in all settings.
- Leaders creatively use well-established curriculum pathways to support but not constrain pupils, many of whom have 'spiky' profiles. Leaders regular monitoring enables them to track and improve progress. The engagement model is being trialled to support assessment and planning with more complex learners.

- Middle leaders significantly improve outcomes. The Humanities team have planned a curriculum, building on pupils' experiences, with well thought out topics and links to pupils' communities. Science leaders' clear vision supports knowledge and skills development from the Early Years Foundation Stage. The new Key Stage 5 Level 1 science option was requested by pupils
- Preparation for adulthood is an exceptional feature of the school. This is shown by strong achievement of the Gatsby benchmarks. Leaders constantly encourage and build aspiration. The curriculum now incorporates a pre-apprenticeship curriculum. Pupils gain credible industry based qualifications such as Food Hygiene Level 2 and develop employment skills and learn to build their CVs. In July 2022, the proportion of pupils entering supported internships increased with the other pupils gaining college places. All pupils were in education, employment or training.
- Staff understand that behaviours of concern mean that something isn't right. Leaders support behaviours of concern highly effectively. This is based on delivery of a creative highly relevant curriculum, Zones of Regulation, with personalised communication, sensory integration and trauma-informed approaches. Leaders use restorative practice to rebuild relationships. One page behaviour management plans are linked to the Zones of Regulation, describing what each zone looks like and what staff can do to support the pupil. Parents access Zones of Regulation training. Leaders use functional assessment scatterplots and carefully monitor relevant data.
- CPD is well organised and highly effective, enhancing subject knowledge. The impact of sensory integration, total communication and Zones of Regulation is clear to see.
- Leaders prepare pupils for life in modern Britain by their example, alongside a highly relevant Personal, Health and Social Education (PSHE) and life skills curriculum. Sometimes boys and girls are taught separately. Assemblies and a variety of well thought out modules develop kinder, resilient pupils, with a growth mindset.
- Pupils were thoughtful, enthusiastic and clear that the school has helped them. They talked about excitement, feeling safe in school and developing friendships. Pupils appreciated the experiments and active learning in science. A pupil who had recently joined the school said that he felt safe now. One pupil had one word to say about the school, 'Outstanding'.

## **2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...**

...leaders built on the excellent science provision in the secondary phase to further develop science in the primary phase.

### **3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well**

- As a result of well-planned learning opportunities with committed and highly skilled staff and trusting relationships, pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. All staff are aware of challenges and changes in pupils' circumstances on a daily basis, sensitively and effectively supporting pupils and families.
- The school has embedded Zones of Regulation, complemented by sensory integration support, which is visible and used in all parts of the school, appropriate to pupils' age and stage of development. Staff model Zones of Regulation language. For example, in the morning check-in routines, Teaching Assistants (TAs) described which zone they were in and how they achieved it. Many pupils use the language themselves, while others are supported with symbols suggesting how to regulate themselves.
- TAs are a credit to the school, providing highly effective, personalised support for pupils' learning and regulation. They understand when to 'sit back' to promote independence and when to intervene. They use their strong subject knowledge to enthusiastically lead and support learning.
- Pupils 'landing activities' are highly personalised. In the sixth form, pupils entered school calmly, making use of the flat to make their breakfast and socialise. A pupil who needed support was subtly supported by a member of staff with a short conversation. Pupils are excellent ambassadors of the school. They are polite, showing kindness and consideration to all.
- Teaching staff use their knowledge and judgement to decide when a pupil needs a processing break. In some cases pupils are allowed to be slightly dysregulated, giving them the time to self-regulate and build resilience.
- Samuel Rhodes prioritises raising pupils' aspirations. A sixth former shared their enthusiasm for an impending visit to Moorfields Eye Hospital. He has a clear plan to use a supported internship to follow a scientific career.
- In a Key Stage 3 science lesson, pupils responded to the well-rehearsed routines and excellent lesson structure, with clear objectives, to make predictions about and test their thinking about reversible changes.
- In a Key Stage 3 nurture group literacy lesson the teacher and TA, ably supported by pupils, modelled reading, used props, costumes and role play to enhance the story.
- In a history lesson about medieval times, the teacher skilfully built a sense of curiosity and wonder. Pupils were highly engaged, examining artefacts and had time to reflect. Pupils were challenged to think about what the artefacts might be made of now.
- In a Food Technology lesson, pairs of pupils followed carefully differentiated instructions to make muffins, measuring and problem solving together. Pupils were allowed to make mistakes so that they learned for themselves. Pupils supported each other, regularly celebrating success.

- In a primary phase science lesson for younger pupils, the teaching team used excellent early years practice to engage and support pupils to learn about their faces and take advantage of well-planned invitations to explore.
- Lunchtime for pupils is personalised. Some pupils use the lively mainstream dining room, while others sit alone or with friends in a quieter environment. Pupils make choices, developing resilience and independence.
- Interventions are highly effective across the school. Well-planned interventions in Key Stage 3 were highly personalised and creative. Pupils experienced active mathematics through various games. The teacher used pupils' competitive spirit to encourage counting, comparing their scores. Interventions are varied, including active reading, girls' PE and sessions for pupils who can't access clubs due to transport issues.
- Pupils make strong progress from their starting points. Most pupils make expected or above expected progress towards their challenging, moderated targets in academic subjects, EHCP short term targets, and achieve highly relevant qualifications. Case studies describe pupils' excellent holistic progress, in academic subjects, personal, emotional development and self-esteem.

### **3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...**

...pupils enjoyed whole school thematic opportunities in humanities.

### **4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well**

As most pupils are disadvantaged and all pupils having additional learning needs it was agreed that the main body of the report would have more detail and this section would not be completed.

### **4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...**

Not applicable.

## **5. Area of Excellence**

Not applicable.



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#### **Following the QA Review**

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

For further support following your QA Review, 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 (SLP) 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.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website. (<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)