



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR SAMUEL RHODES SCHOOL

<b>Name of School:</b>	Samuel Rhodes School
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Cerys Normanton
<b>Hub:</b>	London AP Special
<b>School phase:</b>	Community Special
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	NA

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	31/1/2022
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Effective
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	7/10/2019
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	7/3/2017



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

Samuel Rhodes is a special school meeting a range of special educational needs for pupils aged 4-19. It is on two sites one mile apart. Both the primary department and secondary department are co-located with mainstream schools. There are 135 pupils on roll and there has been a steady expansion over the last few years.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). The school is designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties but the needs of the cohorts has changed significantly in the last few years and those with a diagnosis of autism has increased to a third. Three quarters of pupils are disadvantaged. A much higher proportion than average is supported by children's services and a further significant proportion are monitored by the school because of vulnerabilities and ongoing concerns.

Staff have organised three curriculum pathways dependent on pupils' cognitive abilities, these are Explorer, Discoverer and Voyager. There is an autism 'hub' class that provides a model for this practice for staff and supports pupils.

During the review a third of staff were absent due to Covid-19 illness or isolation and one class was learning remotely from home.

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

- Leaders are highly ambitious to provide the best possible educational opportunities for pupils that enable them to live a fulfilling life after school. Working closely with governors, they are continually improving all aspects of the school. Leadership responsibilities are distributed widely amongst staff and there is strong, collegiate teamwork. For example, middle leaders support class teaching teams, working together to ensure that a provision is personalised for each pupil and all vulnerabilities are continually monitored.
- Leaders have firmly established a clear purpose of the curriculum. This is to enable pupils to live as independent a life as possible, advocate for themselves and contribute to their community. Middle leaders and staff from both sites have worked together highly effectively to map the knowledge and skills to teach pupils in each subject. Sixth form pupils, for example, work in the school 'Independence Cafe' and can explain how these skills help them in their ambitions to learn carpentry or work in security.
- The curriculum is planned to provide rich experiences through a wide variety of subjects. The life skills coordinator has ensured these essential skills are built into many subjects. The personal social and health education, (PSHE) curriculum is highly valued and taught discretely so that pupils have a comprehensive knowledge. This enabled pupils to understand how to care for animals and older

- pupils to learn about sexual health and seek advice from appropriate local clinics.
- Leaders continually update teachers' knowledge and skills through comprehensive continuing professional training and development. They ensure new staff learn how to deliver the structured phonics and reading programme and use the total communication systems. Staff are encouraged to pursue further training and some teaching assistants have become teachers and developed highly effective leadership skills.
  - Senior leaders work with a wide range of professionals to support the individual and therapeutic needs of all pupils. They work together to set challenging EHCP targets which pupils achieve. For example, occupational therapists have helped write a sensory profile and 'diet' for each primary pupil which facilitates the continual individual adjustments to provision and practice.
  - Leaders work with other providers to offer rich meaningful experiences. Partnership with the National Youth Theatre, for example, has resulted in pupils making video personal profiles that have been used to give accurate information and training to businesses and others providing work experience.
  - Leaders are working with the local authority and mainstream schools to set up additionally resourced provision for autistic pupils. Leaders provide training and ongoing support for these colleagues to make the necessary adjustments so that the placements are successful for the pupils.

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

- ... leaders continued to capture all the advantages of technology to support parents to maximise extended learning at home.

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

- Staff carefully manage the transition from bus to school as pupils arrive each morning. Pupils' individual needs, particularly for emotional regulation and sensory input, are met extremely well. Staff are emotionally available for pupils and support them as they talk about home and access the sensory room and other equipment. Primary pupils are escorted up the stairs to the fourth floor, enjoy breakfast and settle quickly to learning activities.
- Staff teach all reading skills highly competently. Pupils therefore really enjoy reading, are aware of the importance of it for their future lives and know and understand texts. Pupils enjoy the drama in the plot of Romeo and Juliet, predict what will happen in other texts they have read and retrieve information accurately from non-fiction texts.
- Teachers continually evaluate pupils' progress against assessment criteria. Pupils make excellent progress. Any slight slowing of this, particularly for reading, results in pupils receiving the additional individual scaffolding that they need. These

programmes not only enable pupils to learn reading skills but raise their self-confidence and self-esteem considerably.

- The curriculum is adapted and personalised for individual needs. Pupils whose progress is slower on the school wide phonics programme receive teaching for alternative effective reading skills. They enthusiastically sign responses when they recognise the same word for example.
- Key Stage 3 pupils use their mathematical skills well to solve problems. They understand values of coins, calculate accurately and use them precisely in shopping exercises. Staff continually emphasise the practical application of numeracy skills and pupils enjoy mathematics, one pupil saying that he wanted to study it at college.
- Teachers question pupils precisely and carefully to enable pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and reasoning skills. Key Stage 5 pupils explained the value of their interests when writing their personal profile. Key Stage 4 pupils identified four categories of sentences used as story starters before they wrote their own. They challenged each other's answers and explained the reasons why one was action rather than dialogue.
- Staff organise learning activities into small steps. Younger pupils receive a reward as they complete these and take necessary sensory breaks that help to maintain learning. The well structured learning in lessons support older pupils' understanding extremely well.
- Many pupils arriving at the school have experienced feeling 'failure' or long periods not in school. Staff have the highest aspirations for pupils and ensure that pupils are continually challenged to achieve all that they can. This often exceeds their parents' expectations.
- Pupils understand the purpose of 'curriculum vitae' and know that they need to record their knowledge and skills so that colleges and employers know what they can do. Staff have planned for relevant and purposeful careers knowledge and life skills to be sequenced and built into the whole curriculum throughout the school.

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

...staff continued to develop the curriculum and assessment for the changing cohort of pupils who operate at very early stages of cognitive, physical, social and emotional development.

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

- As all pupils have additional needs and the majority are disadvantaged, school leaders asked the review team to focus on those with the most complex needs

and the significant proportion for whom there are additional vulnerabilities and safeguarding concerns.

- Staff are continually updating their pedagogical knowledge and skills to meet the needs of pupils new to the school. This results in individual personalised learning and flexibility for reading and sensory programmes, for example.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled. They quickly and sensitively check pupils' emotional regulation. They know pupils extremely well so they can intervene quickly to co-regulate and support pupils. They know pupils' individual targets and programmes and incorporate these into lessons. During the start of the day activities in the autism 'hub' class they questioned pupils about pets which linked with the animal welfare topic being taught in the next PHSE lesson.
- The curriculum is adapted and personalised even more for pupils who need specialised care when facing significant emotional disturbances. Staff are highly sensitive to these pupils, providing support, counselling and opportunities to play and express themselves.
- School leaders know the families of pupils exceptionally well. They appreciate the challenges they face and do all they can to support them. They started to provide food parcels, working in partnership with a charity, during the first lock down and are continuing to do so. The school community work together to provide practical support for certain individuals facing acute disruption to their family life.

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

... leaders continued to work with the local authority to transition those with most complex needs to purposeful opportunities/provisions that lead to employment.

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

To work with colleagues on assessment in the engagement model.

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

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.



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**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.**

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