



## 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>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Effective
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	07/10/2019
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last QA Review:</b>	15/01/2018
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	07/03/2017



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#### **Quality Assurance Review**

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

<b>Leadership at all Levels</b>	Leading
<b>Quality of Provision and Outcomes</b>	Effective
<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate</b>	Effective

*Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed peer evaluation estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.*

## 1. Context and character of the school

Samuel Rhodes school caters for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD). Its provision is based on two sites (primary and secondary) one mile apart. Both sites are co-located with mainstream provisions. The school includes pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through to post-16.

Over recent years the cohort demonstrates increasing complexity. Many families receive high levels of multi-agency support. The school groups pupils by stage not age.

The majority of pupils arrive at non-standard entry points. Currently, there are 120 pupils on roll in total, with 22 in the primary department. There are no children of Reception chronological age. However, many pupils follow an EYFS curriculum.

Pupils represent a wide range of backgrounds and ethnicities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). Three-quarters of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, with many others disadvantaged. There are 13 classes, each having six-12 pupils, with varying levels of adult support. There are 64 staff across both sites.

The headteacher has been in post from the start of this academic year. Prior to this she worked at the school for 14 years. The senior team is made up of eight leaders and SENCO's. The chair of governors has been in post for ten years.

### 2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- Leaders are passionate about their school and the pupils they serve. They continually reflect on the quality of provision and make appropriate changes. For example, a Samuel Rhodes toolkit has been evolved which supports staff in their teaching practice.
- Leaders champion staff members in their own leadership development. Different aspects of the school's work, often included in the toolkit (such as attention builders and smile therapy), are led by staff members. This helps build leadership capacity.
- Governors have a good understanding of school performance. They have access to all parts of school life which they use to construct questions to challenge leaders. Governors have backgrounds and experiences which they use to advantageous effect. For example, one governor has relevant experience in curriculum development and uses this to check the quality of the offer at Samuel Rhodes.

- Two sites are a mile apart and the primary site is situated on the fourth floor of a building making it difficult to admit pupils with specific physical needs. Despite this, leaders get on with the job in hand admirably. Leaders working in primary and secondary pair up in order to ensure that there is coherent curriculum mapping for all subjects.
- The curriculum prepares pupils for adulthood well. Leaders use a grant, achieved two years ago, to fund a careers teaching assistant (TA). The school has developed a whole school approach, with individual pupil mentoring from Year 8 upwards. Pupils' voices are heard via this mentoring and via their EHCP reviews. Excellent community links and other local providers means that pupils and their families are well supported moving on from Samuel Rhodes.
- Senior leaders have recently begun working more purposefully with middle leaders. All leaders now have a better understanding of what effective monitoring, evaluation of the curriculum (and how to develop it further) looks like. Senior leaders are keen to develop this effective aspect of leadership even further.
- Leaders rightly place reading at the heart of the curriculum. They understand the importance of promoting a love of reading for all pupils. During the review, a post-16 pupil was thrilled to receive and talk about two new books, the content of which motivated him to read more.
- The established toolkit is also used to inform whole school professional development needs of staff. Weekly training sessions are facilitated by various leaders and outside providers. This is a good example of the inclusive practice at Samuel Rhodes ('two sites one school').
- Within six weeks of pupils arriving at the school, leaders ensure that a baseline assessment is conducted. This assessment focuses on cognition and communication. Information gleaned helps leaders and teachers identify which of the three curriculum strands is most appropriate for each pupil. Flight paths are determined based on the individual ability of each pupil. Currently, a key strength of the curriculum strands is the wealth of opportunities that all pupils have to enrich their learning and acquire knowledge.

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

- ...pupils' skills progression was mapped with the same clarity through the curriculum as knowledge.
- ...the self-evaluation form was used to help drive collegiate school improvement, by considering aspects such as its purpose, authorship and audience.
- ...senior leaders continue to work with middle leaders to ensure that they evaluate their areas of responsibility effectively.

### 3.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - What went well

- Staff promote ambition well. Currently, they encourage pupils to consider their future plans in relation to further education and the world of work. Through the extensive work experience opportunities and community links, they see this ambition in action. Staff are adept at seeing ability rather than disability.
- In terms of academic outcomes, staff are collaborating to refine their assessment methodology. Staff strive to ensure that their target setting approach is ambitious and practical.
- The Samuel Rhodes toolkit was implemented from the start of the summer term 2019. Visiting professionals, such as speech and language therapists (SALTs) have collaborated with staff to co-produce this initiative. This has been important, given the mainstream background of some staff. Leaders were pleased to see the tools being used to effectively facilitate learning in classrooms, from EYFS through to post-16. Leaders are now focusing on what progression looks like through each tool.
- Primary staff have ensured that their pupils access a suitable environment. Despite the primary department being on the fourth floor, staff have created an outdoor area in which pupils can learn and play well. Indoor areas across both sites reflect staff understanding of pupils' needs. For example, there is a balance of display promoting key vocabulary with minimal information to support pupils with autism.
- The secondary site is shared with a mainstream provider. There are linked resources, such as the dining hall. The positive staff relationships between the two sites ensure that Samuel Rhodes pupils benefit from age-appropriate inclusive opportunities.
- Leaders prioritise reading. This is seen around the two sites. Pupils read appropriate chronological age content through reading age equivalent texts. Guided reading sessions are part of the timetable. Staff have received effective training in how to effectively use this teaching time. Such work helps to ensure that all pupils are keen to read.
- A variety of reading strategies have been implemented. Currently, these have had more time to embed in primary when compared to secondary. The 'drop everything and read' approach is one such example. Reading provision is being developed well across both sites. Local library links and school library use feature prominently.
- Phonics teaching is successfully in place. A single scheme is used to structure the tailored teaching for every pupil, with additional resources used as appropriate to support pupils of all ages. Visiting professionals contribute to the teaching strategies, ensuring that pupils receive appropriate support.
- Owing to the helpful use of the Samuel Rhodes toolkit, pupils engage well with their learning. 'Individualised' learning occurs as the curriculum and teaching are tailored to each pupil's needs. Pupils with a range of different needs were able to

talk about their knowledge of Shakespeare plays. Pupils engage well with staff and collaborate well with their peers, showing effective listening skills.

- Pupils are supported well in developing self-awareness because they are encouraged to make positive choices. Many strategies, designed to empower pupils, were seen during the review. For example, pupils referred to zones of regulation which helped them make sense of choices made. They are supported to understand their own needs and develop ways to self-manage.
- Staff are skilled at facilitating dialogue with pupils. As a result, pupils learn how to communicate effectively. Dialogue is developed to meet each pupil's needs. So, for some pupils a focus on 'what would you say?' might be appropriate. This successful work is underpinned by trusting relationships.

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

...case studies were developed to enable staff to reflect on the effectiveness of provision for different pupils.

...to ensure teachers and TAs communicated clearly with each other consistently in all classrooms. This is to ensure tailored support is maximised for each pupil.

...now that gaps in pupils' knowledge have been identified, teachers need to share effective practice of how to support pupils in understanding and actioning their next steps.

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

No additional support required currently.

**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.**