



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR SWISS COTTAGE SCHOOL - DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH CENTRE

Name of School:	Swiss Cottage School - Development and Research Centre
Headteacher/Principal:	Vijita Patel
Hub:	Empower
School phase:	Special
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	24/06/2024
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Leading
Date of last QA Review:	09/05/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	21/03/2023

1. Context and character of the school

Swiss Cottage School caters for 260 pupils and their families. Pupils' ages range from 4 to 19. They are taught in 31 classes. Typically, classes are vertically grouped within a key stage. The purpose-built school building also houses a range of NHS therapists and medical staff. Expertise includes speech and language therapy (SALT), occupational therapy (OT) and a nursing team.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). The school caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties, and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Many pupils have speech, language and communication needs. Just under half of the pupil cohort is entitled to pupil premium funding.

Pupils follow one of five curriculum pathways: Amethyst; Emerald; Ruby; Pearl and Sapphire. All are centred on the goal of promoting positive life outcomes. Cognition and communication are common threads through each pathway.

The development and research centre is integral to the site and influences ongoing thinking. Families, living across ten local authorities, access Swiss Cottage.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Leaders continually reflect on their learning culture, underpinning this with robust research knowledge. This enables the provision at Swiss Cottage to be connected. Everything considered connects with current high-quality provision, rather than done in isolation. For example, 'Attention Autism' work is understood and is tailored to suit the needs of the pupils in particular classes.
- Development work is research driven. All colleagues, within the setting and linked to it via external organisations, bring both expertise and an open mind to new ideas. The professional learning community (PLC) model and ethos are very evident. Conversations occur, as opposed to giving feedback. This means that all staff feel they have a voice in developing their professional practice. Well established systems underpin this work, such as 'Nests' (clusters of classes based on reflective inquiry).

- Reflective inquiry comes through strongly in various conversations with staff. During a PBS (positive behaviour support) discussion, staff reflected on how their work supporting individual pupils with their regulation led to positive outcomes, with more time being spent learning. Reflective inquiry is also evident in the engagement with multi-agency teams, such as CAMHS. Here, colleagues learn from each other and, subsequently, further develop personal practice. This trusting and trusted culture reassures staff to voice opinions having reflected on their professional learning.
- Current documentation is the result of much thought and refinement. Curriculum pathway handbooks, for example, capture specifics about teaching and learning for the pupils the pathway serves. They also make clear how the pathway integrates core themes, such as communication. Leaders with various responsibilities, including academic subject development, contribute their monitoring information into the documentation. This is another example of the connectedness of leadership at all levels.
- 'Your gems shine through everything'. This comment from a visiting reviewer sums up how leaders have focused on the right things at the right time. A coherent, values-led, strategic approach to school improvement is clear for all development work. Nothing falls on stony ground. Developing careers provision, for example, has incorporated the Head Start programme (funded via MENCAP and the local authority). Sustainable links with a range of employers have helped identify the best placements for pupils based on their interests and aspirations. Community links include work with an art hub and welcoming external speakers, focusing on specific fields such as construction.
- Leaders provide the opportunity for staff to work across multiple pathways and/or phases. Consequently, staff move across provision in order to develop a broad skill set. Given the connectedness between the pathways, such as PBS, staff develop expertise in particular fields. This contributes well to the very strong leadership capacity at Swiss Cottage.

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

None identified.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Staff collaborate well. This means that each teaching team knows how individual pupils communicate and learn best. A good example of this is how staff picked up on a fleeting eye movement from a pupil and then used this to respond appropriately. This could have easily been lost in the busyness of the classroom.
- Through the PLC, including Nest and reflective inquiry, staff are empowered to take risks. They feel secure, knowing that risk taking is encouraged as it is grounded in secure pedagogical research. Staff feed their reflections about their own learning back into the PLC.
- Classrooms find pupils highly engaged, enjoying their learning and being creative. Secure, trusting relationships between pupils and staff underpin such a dignified ethos. Staff genuinely care. This contributes to a classroom ethos where all staff lead learning. A higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) led a very creative session with PMLD learners, reflecting well on the mantra of 'thinking hard and hard thinking'.
- Leadership is evident at all levels. Multi-disciplinary teams influence day-to-day provision well. Staff's pedagogical knowledge is enhanced through their learning from, for example, NHS therapy input. 'PBS no demand zones', notably at the start of the day, find staff facilitating effective regulation provision. Pupils are supported well in getting ready for their learning. This is another positive outcome from the PLC.
- Each of the curriculum pathways is carefully sequenced. Personalisation, for each pupil, is at the core of methodology. PLIMs (personalised learning intention maps) are used to inform task design. Staff couple this information with their knowledge of each pupil's preferred communication approach. PLIMs are displayed, which enables all staff (and indeed visitors to lessons) to refer to them in lessons.
- Pupil voice, and perhaps of greater significance pupil 'choice', is abundant. There are frequent examples of pupils communicating choices to staff. In post-16 provision, for example, a pupil signed to indicate that they wanted more of a specific stimulus. The teacher followed the lead of the pupil, rather than vice versa.
- The combination of a range of expertly implemented strategies results in calm, purposeful environments at Swiss Cottage. PBS, trauma-informed provision and regulation support are included in this approach. Further, pupils

are given time to think and respond to teaching. This not only aids learning, but helps pupils understand the importance of respecting each other and learning about social conventions.

- Support staff are effectively deployed. Typically, they use their knowledge and initiative to enable individual pupils to access learning well. Often, in-the-moment modelling and coaching by teachers help teaching assistants (TAs) to hone their craft. As one teacher said to a TA, 'Be led by your children'.
- Staff and parents capture pupils' learning and experiences on a well-established platform - 'Evidence for Learning' (EfL). The school's understanding of how technology can be used to support both staff and parents' knowledge of pupils' learning is secure. All can trust the infrastructure. Together with all users being well supported in their proficient use of the platform, pupils benefit from all key partners contributing and sharing evidence.

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

...through action research from MITA (maximising impact of TAs), the school further developed best practice in each pathway.

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

- Pupil case studies are developed and written collaboratively. The studies are holistic, with colleagues contributing information relating to the wide range of provision. This includes academic rigour pertinent to subjects. Subject leaders use the case studies to inform their learning about the teaching of their subject. Pupils' voices are heard loudly via this work. As such, case studies are an important component of monitoring and evaluation at Swiss Cottage.
- Leaders are exploring how 'trauma-informed practice' can further strengthen provision. The strategic approach ensures that a range of expertise influences the development. Educational psychologists, SALT and OTs are examples of this. Senior leaders make sure that this knowledge dovetails with the already embedded work of reflective inquiry and PBS. Phrases such as 'pupil at the heart' are very evident.

- The views of pupils, staff and families contribute to the co-production of well-being provision and thinking. Leaders are determined to empower families as best they can.
- Pupils and staff benefit from external audits. Examples include environmental, pedagogical and sensory work. In-house training enables staff to use knowledge gleaned from such audits to improve their practice. Staff have enhanced the hydrotherapy environment so that pupils benefit more in terms of their sensory development. Low-arousal environmental work has carefully considered various aspects, such as lighting. Connectivity is once again very evident, for example, linking with PBS.

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

None Identified.

5. Area of Excellence

Formative Assessment and Reflective Inquiry (using EfL).

Accredited

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

Since 2012, Swiss Cottage has evolved its own means of capturing and sharing pupils' evidence, based on the EfL framework. The school is currently a centre of excellence for EfL. This area of excellence is much more than just assessment. It links directly to professional learning.

Swiss Cottage utilises one, core formative assessment software system (namely EfL). This is used:

- to capture key steps of progress building to the evaluation of progress by teachers and leaders

- to promote weekly evaluation of practice through the weekly Friday progress session between teachers and TAs
- for evidence-informed parent/carer partnership through bi-weekly release of progress information to families
- for evidence-informed practice development through the formal PLC and performance management
- for standards monitoring through EfL learning walks, case studies and reporting cycles
- for workload balance of teachers and professional dialogue of teachers and TAs on pedagogy, provision and impact
- for best practice modelling with school-to-school support led by Swiss Cottage School.

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

- Termly quality of teaching and quality of education evaluation demonstrates excellent progress for individual pupils.
- Termly case studies are presented to, and evaluated by, governing board members.
- Termly school improvement monitoring visits with Camden Professional Partners demonstrate strong pupil progress measures.
- Triad peer observations ('Lesson Study' model) complement the robust evidence base at the school.
- Developments for EfL through Swiss Cottage school 'pilots into practice', for example, defining tags for transition.
- Parent/carer ownership of progress discussions, through equal roles in bi-weekly EfL steps of progress (parents and staff upload evidence to EfL).
- Swiss Cottage is represented on the EfL national advisory board to harness best practice for systemic developments with the wider population of neurodiverse pupils.
- Swiss Cottage is represented on EfL national conferences to provide knowledge exchange with presentations integrating parent/ practitioner perspectives into demonstrating pupils' progress/outcomes.

Leadership development days would support school leaders to:



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- understand the formal aspects of the Swiss Cottage 'learning culture' at all levels
- understand the role of new technologies for formative assessment
- explore formative assessment systems for parent partnership
- use formative assessment for practitioner-led practice development
- use formative assessment for evaluation of progress and outcomes by teachers and middle leaders
- understand one system/ process for monitoring of standards by parents, educators, leaders, governors and school improvement partners
- explore the role of formative assessment to promote ownership at all levels.

The school has informed national developments for EfL and is submitted as an example for the Rethinking Assessment Coalition. It is also a centre of excellence with EfL for their 700 schools, exploring innovative use of EfL for school improvement, culture of learning and parent partnership.

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

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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>)