



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:	4-19
MAT (if applicable):	Not Applicable (N/A)

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	N/A
Date of this Review:	20/03/2025
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Leading
Date of last QA Review:	24/06/2024
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	21/03/2023

Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all levels N/A

Quality of provision and outcomes N/A

AND

**Quality of provision and
outcomes for disadvantaged
pupils and pupils with additional
needs**

Area of excellence Accredited

**Previously accredited valid areas
of excellence** Formative Assessment and
Reflective Inquiry (using EfL).
24/06/2024

Overall peer evaluation estimate N/A

Important information

- The QA Review provides a peer evaluation of a school's practice in curriculum, teaching and learning, and leadership. It is a voluntary and developmental process, and the peer review team can evaluate and offer 'peer evaluation estimates' based only on what the school chooses to share with them.
- The QA Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.
- The QA Review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. If you choose to share this report, or extracts thereof, externally (e.g. on your website or with parents), please ensure that it is accompanied with the following text:

Challenge Partners is a charity working to advance education for the public benefit. We are not a statutory accountability body. The QA Review does not audit schools' ng or behaviour policies and practices. However, Lead Reviewers and visiting reviewers are expected to

follow Challenge Partners' safeguarding policy and report any concerns as set out in the procedures.

1. Context and character of the school

Driving along the leafy streets of North London, Swiss Cottage School sits on a fairly new campus site. Over its four floors, breakout spaces and terraces (and as one pupil explained, 'Oh, I love the terraces') make the most of space and light in a bustling urban environment. Nestled between imposing gated townhouses, and futuristic architect-designed blocks, the school is a hubbub of activity with its 260 pupils, benefiting from a fully integrated therapeutic curricula model, delivered by a team of education specialists alongside health and other multi-agency colleagues.

All pupils attending Swiss Cottage have educational, health, and care plans (EHCPs). Pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding are almost double the national average. Within the cohort, the range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is huge, with many pupils having comorbid diagnoses, alongside complex health and medical needs.

Reflecting the fabulous nature of a modern multicultural city, the number of pupils where English is spoken as an additional language in the home, is more than three times the national average.

Pupils appreciate their school and are proud of their achievements. One pupil pointedly stated, 'Well, I like coming and spending time with my friends and teachers,' while another pupil shared, 'I like trampolining... I got a medal at the Camden Olympic Games!'

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- At Swiss Cottage the school's values and culture are truly lived, meaning that every member of the community has bought into the vision where Swiss Cottage is consistently inclusive, nurturing, and inspiring. As with any large organisation, staffing and leadership of the school may change over time. While in some settings this may lead to peaks and dips in performance, at Swiss Cottage standards met are consistently high, and the school's quality evaluation by external bodies has reflected this over a prolonged time. By achieving the full integration of the vision of the school, the leadership is consistently achieving highly.

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- Leaders at Swiss Cottage School have continued to refine and evolve a five-pathway model, so that each pupil joining has a curricula offer that matches their unique SEND profiles. For example, the small number of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties on the Ruby pathway have a connecting and responding curriculum, while the largest pathway, Emerald, has a life-skills based curriculum. As pupils with increasingly complex needs have joined the school, this model is agile and prepared for a changing future. Pupils and their families joining the school, know that Swiss Cottage is a school where the curricula offer will be adapted and refined, to ensure pupils' individual SEND are met, and they have great opportunities to flourish.
- There are clear systems and rigorous structures to support and enable staff to feel empowered and respected as 'lead professionals' across the provision. Middle leaders have ownership of their curricula responsibilities through carefully planned work streams. This allows for school-wide quality assurance, continuous collaboration, and professional learning to come to the fore. This year's working groups have targeted themes that align with the school development plan, such as the development of an augmentative and assistive communication library, a resource run by teachers for teachers.
- Swiss Cottage is a school with a distributed leadership model that hinges on empowering colleagues to become 'the lead professional at every level'. Walking through the school, senior leaders cannot turn a corner without sharing the latest achievement colleagues have made. With low teacher turnover going against national trends, staff thrive at this great maintained school.
- Swiss Cottage is a school that attracts exceptionally high-quality governors who understand the standing the school has amongst the specialist SEND community. As governors explained, 'It's an absolute privilege to be part of such a strategic group.' They work collegiately with the headteacher and leadership team to gain a clear understanding of the school's work, for example, the recent change of government and consequent changes to the Department for Education's approach to inclusion. The trusting symbiotic relationship between governors and school leaders ensures that the cohort and their families, alongside the staff and other stakeholders, are buffered from the eddies and whirlpools of changing pressures in education.

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

...leaders could explore Evidence for Learning, as a member of their advisory board, the opportunities to link the platform to the school's successful case study and learning walk methodology.

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...leaders used their expertise to further explore the development of specialist support in the mainstream to match the intended drive for an 'inclusion first offer' by the Department for Education. For example, providing support in areas such as specialist classroom environment set-up, training in specialist pedagogy, and a supportive quality assurance offer.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Visiting classes, it is evident that very careful care has been taken to ensure that the environment matches pupils' individual SEND. For example, in the early years foundation stage, each pupil has a visual timetable on the wall with Widgits for each activity transferring from a green to a red column as activities are completed. Pupils' termly targets are displayed alongside pupils' one-page profiles. Pupils' plans and advisory documents are displayed to support staff with delivering dysphasia plans, easy-to-chew plans, International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative fork advice, feeding plans, epilepsy plans, medication protocols, physiotherapy and occupational programmes, alongside on-body signing touch cues. With a fully integrated therapeutic offer, pupils are able to maximise their learning time alongside their peers.
- Individual learning plans and high expectations complement carefully planned routines. For example, in classes, targeted visuals add an important layer to a 'total communication' approach, enhancing pupils' confidence and understanding. Highly skilled colleagues set out environmental expectations, such as Zones of Regulation and use of assistive technology, which links directly to pupils' personalised learning outcomes. Continuous coaching happens through careful questioning and modelling of well-structured tasks, allowing pupils' opinions and understanding to be carefully captured. Pupils' engagement and behaviour are channelled within these strongly embedded routines, and each teaching team's high expectations facilitate pupils to make the most consistent progress that they can.
- The school's 'Professional Learning Communities' proactively consider and plan for next steps in each pupil's learning, on a weekly basis. Colleagues meet in teaching teams weekly, considering learners' engagement, celebrating the successes from the current week, alongside the challenges, and action planning for the next week. Class teams are empowered to carefully consider immediate priorities and actions so that all staff add their professional weight to work proactively, on the next steps for individual pupil's improvement.
- As you approach each classroom, there is pertinent information on display to help visitors understand the learning environment that they are going into. For example, on the door there is a photo display naming the pupils, the staff

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team, and the multidisciplinary team involved with the class, alongside the healthcare assistants, if the class has them. Class documents explain what learning will look like inside the class; for example, under 'speaking and listening', this may include eye pointing; under 'reading', it might be sensory stories, while under 'writing', this may well be messy play. Classroom visions created by all class teams, set the aspirations for the class for the coming year. Every opportunity is taken to ensure a shared understanding of 'what great learning looks like' within each class.

- Preparation for adulthood is integrated within each of the pathways, and is informed by pupil voice, choice and advocacy. Vocational learning is pivotal from the youngest of ages, and this is mapped out carefully across subjects and wider curriculum areas. There is a wide range of carefully considered opportunities with external partners within the wider community to extend the vocational offer and experiences for all pupils, for example, the pupil-run workspace in the London School of MOSAIC, as well as young people managing a creative 'Enterprise Stall' in the local Waitrose. These opportunities can lead to ambitious outcomes, including a former pupil who currently works in the school as part of the catering team, and exposure to purposeful activities for adult life.

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

...none identified.

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

- Swiss Cottage is a school where 'WOW moments' are part and parcel of everyday provision. For example, the school works with the 'Orchestra For The Age of Enlightenment' to work with classes developing a passion for music, as performers and content creators. This year, this includes being part of the Camden Schools Festival at the Royal Albert Hall. Visiting one class, the orchestra (that includes a creative conductor, pianist, five violinists, one woodwind and one 'cello player) work alongside staff to create, explore and develop a score for 'We Need Insects/Caterpillars v.2' in F major, linking the pupils' thoughts on gardens and outdoor life, with pupils' lyrical content and interpretive dance. By creating awe and wonder, the engagement of pupils is fabulous, and introduces them into a freeing and empowered world.
- The cohort at the school comes with a complex intersectionality of needs, and the support for pupils has had to be reinforced repeatedly. The school has invested in powerful relationships, as the basis of very strong multi-agency

working. Within the cohort, pupils known to social care are more than ten times the national average; the number of pupils who are looked after are above national averages. There is a proportion of pupils in multi-occupation housing and emergency accommodation, who have high geographical mobility. With Swiss Cottage School being a hub for multi-agency working with unified NHS services on site alongside an embedded and systematic pastoral approach, pupils and their families get a support offer that is truly exceptional in the specialist education sector.

- The 'Wellbeing Team' is provisioned to ensure that families are supported from the outset so that there is a narrative that highlights the support each family could potentially need. For example, this might range from supporting families with children and young people's disability service to access respite care, or to help speed along adaptations in the home to support wider family harmony. With this careful support, families benefit directly, and are better positioned to navigate the many and varied curve balls that life can throw at them.

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

...none identified.

5. Area of Excellence

The Wellbeing Team: Facilitating Positive Engagement for Families & Stakeholders

Accredited

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

The school has a commitment to positive family partnerships, and a history of collaborative working with multi-agencies, since the integrated curriculum model was launched in 2012.

Taking a strategic approach to culture, capacity building, and deployment, the in-house 'Family Inclusion Team' and 'Positive Behaviour Support Team' have evolved in response to needs and are collectively known as the 'Wellbeing Team'. The Wellbeing team has a specific remit for positive engagement and regulation in the classroom and at home/in the community, as well as a remit for service coordination,

and service bridging across social care, health, housing, transport, and third-sector organisations.

This has supported families, residing across 13 local authorities, to navigate a complex and turbulent landscape, pre- and post-pandemic, with the depletion of key services that they rely on for their child's broader aspirations and life outcomes. This is a team of experts who build culture and capacity within classrooms, into homes and across the wider community.

The school has identified this as a major strength in terms of the sustained impact of this provision on family and pupil engagement with learning and with the community, leading to improved life outcomes.

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

The evidence of impact on pupils' outcomes sits across a wide range of examples, including activities and review documents by other visiting professionals.

In March 2023, Ofsted wrote, 'Pupils enjoy coming to school... staff are caring and always help them deal with any worries that they may have. Well-trained staff, supported by therapists, help pupils to develop their interpersonal and behavioural skills. They do this exceptionally well.'

While in October 2024 the school improvement partner noted that, 'Monitoring of behaviours of concern is rigorous and is used highly effectively to modify the support for pupils and their families to improve outcomes. The information gathered includes qualitative measures, numerical data and informative case studies.'

This is then amplified by the testimonials of parents and carers. As one pointed out, 'Staff were incredible... they were amazing in a short period, getting social services on board.' While another explained that, 'With [their] help, they made me see the light, like with housing and respite.'

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

Anthony Doherty

Senior Leader

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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 content reports from across the hub networks including using AI tools to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector (sharing these with the partnership) each year. The QA Review reports remain confidential to Challenge Partners and the host school. This ensures that schools embrace the review as a development process, acting as a catalyst for their ongoing improvement. This is the primary purpose of the QA review. However, our aim is that the thematic analysis will demonstrate the additional value of a sector wide overview, illustrated with real-life examples.

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. The School Support Directory 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>)