



**VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP QUALITY  
ASSURANCE REVIEW**

**REVIEW REPORT FOR  
SWISS COTTAGE SCHOOL,  
DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH  
CENTRE**

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Name of School:</b> | Swiss Cottage School, Development and Research Centre |
| <b>Principal:</b>      | Vijita Patel  |
| <b>Hub:</b>            | London Special and AP                                 |
| <b>School phase:</b>   | Community Special                                     |
| <b>MAT:</b>            | Not applicable  |

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this virtual Leadership Quality Assurance Review:</b> | LEADING     |
| <b>Date of this Review:</b>  | 07/07/2021  |
| <b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>  | LEADING     |
| <b>Date of last QA Review</b>  | 02/03/2020  |
| <b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>  | OUTSTANDING |
| <b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>   | 03/05/2017  |



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#### Quality Assurance Review

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

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Leadership at all Levels</b>                        | Leading  |
| <b>School Improvement Strategies</b>                   | Leading  |
| <b>Approach to recovery and remote learning</b>        | Not applicable   |
| <b>Area of Excellence</b>                              | Personalised Supported Internship Pathway for Sixth Form Pupils – EmployMENT Pathway - Accredited  |
| <b>Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence</b> | Technology Research to enhance Communication, Independence, and Innovation in Special Educational Needs – March 2020<br><br>Integrated Therapeutic Provision - March 2019. |
| <b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate</b>                | Leading  |

*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.*



## VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR SWISS COTTAGE SCHOOL, DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH CENTRE

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

The school has 260 pupils on roll, with education, health and care plans (EHCPs) from Camden and other boroughs. Pupils have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) including severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism spectrum conditions (ASC). The proportion of pupils with complex needs, including significant medical needs, is increasing. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than average and almost half of pupils have 'child in need' plans. Pupils follow one of five curriculum and assessment pathways according to their needs. The school has a very diverse population with pupils coming from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The school is community based, integrating national health service specialists, a teaching school and the research and development centre. The school delivers a wide range of specialist training for SEND provision and initial teacher training. The school uses its extensive local, national and international partnerships with community and educational bodies, to engage in research and development to promote innovative practice to improve holistic outcomes for all.

Swiss Cottage is a warm, inclusive, professional learning community, providing a values led, positive learning culture with partnership at its heart.

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

- Passionate and skilled senior leaders have a clear vision and high expectations, which are well understood and acted upon across the school. Relationships are based on understanding and respect.
- The highly motivated, well informed and skilled governor team have a strong presence in school, giving leaders a high level of challenge and support.
- Leaders have established a professional learning culture using knowledge of pupils and their families, well developed pedagogy and a commitment to reflective enquiry. This continues to produce excellent holistic outcomes for pupils and their families.

- Senior leaders are highly effective in developing and supporting leaders at all levels across the school. The culture supports research and innovation. Leaders understand that trusting staff and pupils to try new things and learn from risk taking is a key feature of a healthy learning community.
- Leaders have developed a culture of 'reflective enquiry,' based on peer collaboration in 'nests,' involving teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs), supported by teaching mentors and leadership mentors.
- Enthusiastic, committed middle leaders are self-aware, skilled practitioners who consistently live the school's vision and values. They collaborate with each other and support teaching staff informally and through high quality continuous professional development (CPD), developing skills and resilience. They value their skilled support and reflection time with accessible senior leaders. New middle leader roles are created to respond to changing need. For example, a new post has been created to lead the 'spiky profile pathway.'
- Daily, protected team planning before, and reflection after, school is a strong feature, resulting in excellent team work, planning for pupils and learning from what has gone well and what needs to change. Leaders 'drop in' virtually and in person, to support and monitor the process. Reflection time after school is supportive of staff well-being, where staff can understand what has happened and be debriefed if necessary.
- Positive behaviour support (PBS) is being systematically implemented across the school. The behaviour policy is values based, comprehensive and clear, promoting empathy for pupils and the meaning of their behaviour.
- Trauma informed practice is in its infancy at Swiss Cottage. However, it fits well with the schools vision and values and PBS approaches. The well thought out implementation plan, with realistic timescales has been developed with CAMHS and the borough PBS team. School leaders engage with families in the early years to better understand and support them, promoting acceptance and understanding.
- Careers education and preparation for adulthood is a strength of the school, fully meeting the Gatsby benchmarks. The school has recently achieved the 'quality in careers standard.' Pupils on the formal pathway usually leave to join mainstream colleges after Year 11. Leaders have used their long term tracking of leavers to adjust the curriculum. Most pupils join the Sixth Form and undertake relevant, personalised, life skills based learning.

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

...leaders further developed measures to reflect quality of life improvements and restriction reductions to show progress for individuals and the school in their PBS approach.

## **3.1 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs- What went well**

- The school has comprehensively addressed EBIs from the previous quality assurance review, including further enhancing staff well-being, the efficacy of new TAs and using benchmarking to support TAs to balance health and learning needs in the moment.
- Self-evaluation and school improvement planning are accurate and inclusive, with all stakeholders having direct or indirect input. The 2019-2020 SEF was split into pre- and post-COVID, as a more meaningful way to aid reflection and school improvement.
- The school has a strong commitment to partnerships with families to promote attendance, lasting outcomes and well-being for pupils. The family inclusion team, teacher and TAs are at the heart of building trust and skills. The well-established Evidence for Learning tool captures and assesses learning. Learning from home and from school is shared to promote cooperation and pupils' progress. Families clearly value this: almost all families use it.
- Five curriculum pathways are well developed to meet pupil needs. Pupils are not constrained by the pathways and adjustments can be made to accommodate pupils with 'spiky profiles.' Each pathway has a comprehensive handbook, detailing intent, impact and implementation. The school is part of a borough-wide early years network to assess pupil needs. TAs from the school support mainstream providers to support mainstream inclusion.
- Teaching is well planned and delivered by skilled teaching teams. Due to well thought out structures and routines, pupils make effective transitions. Resources are matched to need and stimulating, resulting in high levels of engagement and learning behaviours.
- Environments for learning are well thought out to meet diverse pupil needs. In a lower school, mainly semi-formal curriculum lesson, teaching staff seamlessly cut distractions by the use of a screen.

- TAs make skilled contributions to learning. In an informal upper school lesson, the TA understood the difference between pupils making 'random' and intentional choices. In the same lesson the teacher's modelling to TAs was exemplary, resulting in consistently high level practice across the class.
- Teaching staff have high expectations of pupils. In a well-planned Key Stage 5 employability lesson, pupils contributed to product development using a 'task carving' approach. Teaching staff used well-directed questions with language, feedback and verbal prompting used sparingly. Some pupils were allowed to experience natural mistakes at first and learn from the process.
- The quality of teaching is monitored using a combination of learning walks, peer and formal observations. Pathway leads play a leading role in defining and supporting pedagogy in their pathway. TAs are well developed to support learning as opposed to task completion. Peer focused observations in the spring term within pathways are complemented by 'lesson study.' Teacher mentors and leadership mentors provide additional support for new teachers at the school and early careers teachers.

### **3.2 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs - Even better if...**

.....teaching staff expertise and best practice were more widely shared across pathways and the local community.

### **4.1 Approach to recovery and remote learning - What went well**

- As a reflective school, the post COVID self-evaluation analysed learning from the process in a cycle of continuous improvement.
- The complex situation of lockdown and in-school learning were sensitively addressed by engaging with families and staff so that they felt safe.
- The virtual school was carefully planned including pre-recorded lessons, face to face 'live' teaching, and resources sent home. TAs alongside teachers had key roles in supporting learning. The music leader devised a 'brushing teeth song,' to increase tolerance of the toothbrush for a pupil suffering from complications due to COVID-19.

- Robust systems for pastoral oversight were in put in place. Vulnerable pupils and their families were well supported in partnership with relevant external agencies. Learning did not stop, and leaders carefully tracked positive holistic progress during and after lockdowns.
- Part of the school pupil premium strategy ensured that families received the technology they needed with support to use it. The school leader of technology had a key role in this. Leaders used a combination of DfE, social services, charity funding and engagement with technology providers to support this process. The family inclusion team engaged with families where English is not their first language.
- The transition 'recovery' curriculum is based on the following themes: connection; routines and expectations; health and well-being; communication; feeling safe; happiness; and cognition. Pupils transitioned back to school successfully and re-engaged with the wider curriculum. Case studies and 'evidence for learning' shows the positive impact on the well-being of pupils and their families.
- The school will continue to use remote meeting platforms in school and to engage with families and outside agencies. The external careers adviser was able to attend all of the relevant annual reviews by using the online platform. Pupils with complex health needs, who have time out of school due to illness or operations, can access high quality bespoke remote learning.

#### **4.2 Approach to recovery and remote learning - Even better if...**

...the school shared best practice more widely in acquiring technology and equipping families to use it, in order to improve pupils' communication and as tools for learning.

### **5. Area of Excellence**

#### **Personalised Supported Internship Pathway for Sixth Form Pupils – EmployMENT Pathway - Accredited**

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



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The school developed work experience partnerships in the local community with local businesses and charities before the pandemic. Leaders wanted to include a wider range of pupils who would not usually access off-site work experience.

Leaders engaged with Project Search and trained with the British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) to support the development of the EmployMENT pathway model with three distinct enterprises on site: Card & Design, Venture Café and Event Hosts. This resulted in all sixth form pupils undertaking real work-related learning and transferable skills.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, no off-site work experience was possible. The EmployMENT pathway became the focus for work experience and work-related learning at Swiss Cottage. The Enable Arts ceramics enterprise developed. Leaders used 'task carving' and systematic instruction to set up clear job roles and production lines enabling pupils with a wider range of learning needs to contribute to the process.

It is exciting that other schools around the country and beyond could use this relatively low cost and simple approach to allow a wider range of pupils to use and learn skills and make discernible contributions to enterprises and be recognised for their abilities and skills.

The school is compliant with all Gatsby Benchmarks and has recently gained the 'Quality in Careers Standard' status.

School leaders are developing opportunities for supported internships with a local hotel, part of prestigious national chain.

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

The EmployMENT Pathway approach has developed skills and improved opportunities for work-related and vocational learning for a wider group of pupils within school.

Pupils have developed increased competence, confidence, self-esteem and happiness. They have achieved accreditations linked to vocational learning and the world of work: Ascentis, Certificate in Using Employability Skills – OCR, Life & Living Skills.





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The Vocational Profile, embedded in the curriculum, reflects pupil voice. Pupils are able to try different tasks and make choices based on their experiences, which are recognised, recorded and acted upon.

Through the teaching and learning observation cycle, staff in the sixth form have developed enabling environments for independence in the work place. Leaders have used evidence of skills development in sessions, to match them to work experience placements in the community.

The EmployMENT Pathway department model has supported pupil engagement and success in job tasks based on skills and preferences. The EmployMENT Pathway has promoted high aspirations for pupils to gain paid employment in the future, which is reflected in pupils' attitudes to learning and pride in their work.

Leaders have shared the excellent pupil work-related skills, products and services on social media platforms. This is raising the profile of the pupils and increasing awareness within the wider community, businesses and employers. By being visible in the work place through work experience opportunities, employers and businesses have increased their confidence in understanding and supporting people with SEND into work. This should in future increase opportunities for pupils in the school and more widely.

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

Name: Matt Maguire and Roseanna Gooder

Title: Assistant Principal Upper School and Leader for Work Related Learning/Vocational Learning across the school

Email [head@swisscottage.camden.sch.uk](mailto:head@swisscottage.camden.sch.uk)

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

Swiss Cottage remains an active participant in and is well connected outside of the Challenge Partner network. Given that this review was virtual, the school would welcome the same review team to review the school in future to see the school as a face-to-face review and jointly review the school's progress.



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**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 also 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 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.**