

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Fairfields School
School Address:	Trinity Avenue, Northampton. NN2 6JN
Hub School:	Brooklands Farm

Telephone Number:	01604 714777
Email address:	head@fairfields.northants-ecl.gov.uk

Unique Reference Number:	122160
Local Authority:	Northamptonshire
Type of School:	Special
School Category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Number on roll:	112
Head teacher/Principal:	Karen Lewis

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	4-5 March 2014
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	20-22 January 2017
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies:	Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils are:	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:	Outstanding
Area of Excellence:	Not submitted for this review
Previously accredited Areas of Excellence:	This is the first review for the school

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Fairfields School appears to be just within the Outstanding grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report and action is required to ensure that it continues to meet Ofsted's criteria for that grade.

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

Information about the school

- The school makes provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions, visual and hearing impairment, physical disabilities and speech, language and communication needs. A significant proportion of pupils have additional complex medical needs. All pupils have an education health care plan (EHCP) or statement of educational needs. The number on roll is increasing over time.
- 28% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium and 6% of pupils are looked after by the local authority. 32% of pupils are from backgrounds other than White British.
- Fairfield's is a National Teaching School. It is networked with schools in Northamptonshire and beyond.
- Two conductors who were trained in Hungary at the PETO INSTITUTE deliver a conductive education programme.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- There is a strong drive to develop a personalised, meaningful and appropriate curriculum which equips pupils for life beyond Fairfield's. Person-centred planning and an excellent developmental skills based curriculum are being established in the school and this provides very appropriate learning and experiences.
- Parent surveys show a high level of satisfaction with the school and pupil numbers are increasing, necessitating the building of additional classroom capacity in the near future.
- The culture of the school is one of respect, aspiration and achievement. This is evidenced in pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning, staff openness and a passion for learning and development for all.
- Senior leaders have restructured classes to be more inclusive rather than disability specific in order to improve peer groups and ensure that pupils have a clear route to progress through the school.
- Well-targeted staff recruitment has increased the number and quality of full-time teachers. In addition, the teaching school is used to develop the teachers of the future and to enhance further the profile of the school.
- Impact for pupils is measured both academically and in personal development outcomes. Due to a focus on individual learning plan (ILP) outcomes to enable progress for individuals in non-subject specific learning, pupils are being better prepared for the next phase of their education. Excellent use of learning outcomes derived from EHCPs and educational statements are brought together using the mapping and assessing personal progress (MAPP) tool to evidence a personalised

journey for each pupil. Personalised provision is well organised, with a clear and appropriate provision map.

- The school is outward looking, sharing practice and accurately moderating judgements of standards in all areas of the school. This is achieved through links with other schools and access to local authority expertise in Northamptonshire.
- There is a drive to deepen learning by the development of the new skills-based curriculum with key focuses on independence, generalising skills, consistency and accuracy. This is evident in planning and observation and is likely to have a greater, longer lasting effect on the life outcomes of pupils. This increased focus on a variety of appropriate progress measures is leading to more meaningful outcomes in attainment and progress.
- The school invests in and develops its teaching assistants (TAs) well, resulting in improved practice and consistency in teams. This supports the development of enabling environments, continuous provision and personalised learning programmes, leading to improved progress and greater levels of independence.
- There is a rigorous regime of lesson observations, improved work scrutiny and learning walks. This feeds in to school self-evaluation and drives improvement via teacher appraisal and resultant continuous professional development (CPD).
- Leaders have supported teachers to develop systems to plan and record learning in both workbooks and learning journals. These are used well and show at least good and mostly outstanding progress.
- Leaders are devolving responsibility for planning learning to teachers and the core learning team for English, mathematics and communication. This new team has been in place since September 2016. Their impact has been that teachers and TAs have more time to evaluate practice, are clearer on starting points and ensure that the appropriate next steps for learning are better identified. There is a stronger emphasis on peer review and there is a shared drive for improvement in learning.
- Leaders have supported the development of vibrant learning environments. There has been a consistent use of the 'corner to learn.' Environments and resources are well organised, meaningful and stimulating to inspire learning.

Even Better If...

... the school continued to develop the process of measuring and summarising ILP outcome data, collected through MAPP, to show its impact on pupil progress.

Pupil Outcomes

- The new Fairfields curriculum supports measuring progress towards academic outcomes and around EHCP targets linked to personal development and independence.

- Progress towards individual EHCP targets is measured using MAPP and the school is looking to see how this can be more quantitative given the individual nature of EHCP targets.
- Judgements made by the school are robustly moderated. This occurs internally and within the local authority special educational needs data group. They have been validated by the headteacher's performance management with an external consultant.
- In the early years foundation stage (EYFS), children made sustained progress against their starting points in relation to their individual needs. Children make outstanding progress from their starting points, especially within the areas of communication and language and expressive arts and design. A significant group of children made at least one band of progress in the year.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 in English and mathematics, 94% of pupils made expected and more than expected progress from starting points between P2i-P4.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics, all pupils make expected or more than expected progress, with 40% of pupils making more than expected progress.
- In Year 1, all pupils made expected and above expected progress in reading, writing and number. In Year 2, 77% of pupils made expected and above expected progress in reading, writing and number.
- In Key Stage 2, 60% of pupils made two levels and 40% made three levels of progress. This trend of progress is improving over time.
- Current progress in Key Stage 2 is at least good due to pupils' progress in Year 4 and 5.
- There is no significant difference in the attainment and progress from different starting points between different groups of pupils.
- From the school's professional judgments, taking into account the context of each pupil, around 90% of pupils made outstanding progress in reading, writing, number and using and applying in 2015-16.
- Data from the current year shows that 10% of pupils are working towards their target and 90% of pupils are on track to achieve or exceed their targets.
- Learning journals and book scrutiny show that teachers have an excellent knowledge of pupils, leading to sustained outstanding progress over time.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- Due to a highly effective and skilled staff team there has been a continued focus on independence. This is resulting in pupils taking more responsibility for their learning.
- Staff have a clear sense of purpose and understand pupils' learning needs. Effective communication, consistently high expectations underpinned by positive

relationships and respect result in pupils showing that they are confident to learn and to take appropriate risks. Pupils are willing to try and sometimes 'fail', thus developing their resilience.

- Due to excellent subject expertise and knowledge of the pupils, questioning is highly effective in deepening learning. Empathy with the pupils results in learning at Fairfield's having appropriate challenge, pitch and pace.
- Communication is encouraged and facilitated. There are many opportunities to develop and utilise communication skills in meaningful contexts.
- Leaders and staff have developed well organised and stimulating environments, maximising the potential of the building and outdoor spaces. There are many examples of creative and enchanting environments, such as the 'enchanted wood' in Key Stage 1 and the well-equipped and stimulating drama studio. There are excellent continuous provision opportunities for pupils across the school.
- Due to carefully considered planning and support, routines and transitions are effective, with no loss of learning time. Quality music and song effectively support this process. Good examples of this are the 'Tidy up song', quality singing and the use of a drum-aided transitions. Pupils join in and engage effectively with the process.
- Music is widely and effectively used to inspire pupils to take part in learning, leading to high levels of engagement and learning. Music is most effective in supporting the 'Magic Makers' session in which pupils with high levels of medical need are tube fed. This session most effectively promotes learning for pupils who are at an early stage of development by using music and creative experiences to develop a sense of awe and wonder.
- Due to high expectations to attend, sit and be ready for learning, pupils respond well and enhance their learning. Behaviour for learning is outstanding.
- Conductive education is an excellent feature of the school. Opportunities to maximise learning opportunities across the curriculum emanate from conductive education.
- Both teachers and TAs are skilled in facilitation, resulting in the minimal use of prompts and independence being maximised. Learning is more personalised with sufficient time left for pupils to process the information and develop their learning. There are many excellent examples of specific and targeted praise to reward key learning behaviours.
- The occasional behaviour issue is managed successfully and calmly. This results in little or no loss of learning, allowing the flow of the lesson to continue. Empathetic and skilled responses were observed from TAs.
- There are opportunities for collaboration in learning and examples of effective peer learning in pairs.
- Staff are imaginative in how tasks are presented. For example, there were opportunities for exploration in a mathematics lesson by using a 'lucky dip barrel';

and a multisensory approach to learning, leading to excellent engagement in the task and resultant learning.

- Learning journals are well annotated, particularly concerning ILP targets. These show clear evidence of rapid progress for the vast majority of pupils.
- CPD is a strength of the school. The effective use of intensive interaction in a mathematics lesson and the use of a variety of appropriate communication aids during snack time (led by a TA) were clear evidence of this. Teachers and TAs are beginning to apply their knowledge of sensory diets. This is leading to more effective sensory regulation by pupils and thus improving engagement with learning.
- All staff give careful consideration to positioning and to the postural management of pupils with more profound physical needs so that pupils maximise learning opportunities.

Even Better If...

... all staff consistently and accurately recorded next steps in learning to accelerate progress in learning over time.

... the effective use of learning time was maximised through the further development of quality first teaching.

Quality of Area of Excellence

Not submitted in this review

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

Following discussion with school leaders, the school would like some additional support to link up with other special schools in a special schools' network.

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.