

Name of School:	New Rush Hall School
Head of school: Executive headteacher:	Jeanette Maynard John d'Abbro
Hub:	London AP Special
School type:	Special

Estimate at this QA Review:	OUTSTANDING
Date of this Review:	28/02/2019
Estimate at last QA Review:	OUTSTANDING
Date of last QA Review:	18/01/2018
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	OUTSTANDING
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	09/11/2016



Quality Assurance Review

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

School Improvement Strategies	OUTSTANDING
Outcomes for Pupils	OUTSTANDING
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	OUTSTANDING
Overall Estimate	OUTSTANDING

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.

1. Context and character of the school

New Rush Hall is a special school for pupils aged 4 -16 years with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). Pupils, except for those in Reception and Key Stage 1 who are still being assessed, have education, health and care plans (EHCPs). Piccolo (Reception and Year 1 and 2) is a part-time provision linked with mainstream schools. The school roll varies around 70 pupils. About half are disadvantaged. The number of boys on roll is much higher than girls. Pupils travel to the school from a wide geographical area.

All classes are taught in small groups. There is some mixing of ages within the key stage, according to pupils' prior attainment and current progress. The adult to pupil ratio is high; one to four in secondary classes and three to eight in primary.

The school follows a subject curriculum adapted to the needs of pupils, supplemented by practical projects and a range of outside visits.

The outreach team attached to the school provides considerable support for behaviour in mainstream schools and supports pupils transitioning to or from New Rush Hall. The executive headteacher oversees several settings besides New Rush Hall and acts as an external consultant in his role as a national leader in education. He has announced his retirement.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Progress from previous EBIs

Evaluation documents, including the development plan, refer to measurable evidence and goals.

Assessment data on individuals extends to an analysis of the progress of different groups, such as disadvantaged pupils and more-able pupils.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- Effective succession planning is ensuring a smooth transition in the executive headship role. A leader from the New Rush Hall group has been appointed to take over when the current leader retires.
- The head of school has ensured that the development plan is precise and evidence-based. Progress, tracked and measured at regular intervals, shows that key priorities are improving steadily. A notable focus in the plan is attendance, as irregular attendance in previous schools has caused pupils to fall far below age-related expectations academically. Recorded attendance is regularly well above national figures for SEMH provision.
- The heads of primary and secondary phases lead with confidence and strength. They know their staff and pupils thoroughly. They are very watchful of pupils' personal and academic development. They know the strengths and development points in teaching.
- All three leaders are positive role models for staff. They know how to reassure and gain positive responses from pupils when they are having difficulties in regulating their behaviour. Pupils will quite often refer themselves to leaders at

times of trouble. Leaders are very supportive of staff morale and well-being. Staff in general are supportive of each other and the team atmosphere reinforces their resilience and patience with pupils.

- Middle leaders carry out their roles conscientiously, maintaining records of pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and in other subjects. One member of staff provides effective back-up responding to behavioural incidents when head of secondary is not available.
- The key purpose of New Rush Hall is to have a transformative effect on pupils' behaviour. Day-to-day calmness prevails. Strategies to secure this desirable goal are multi-layered. All contact with pupils helps them to understand the high standards of behaviour expected. There is a clear focus on equipping pupils with strategies for self-regulation. Praise and rewards follow when pupils apply such strategies. When things have gone wrong, some degree of restorative action is compulsory. A daily record card enables staff to keep track of emerging patterns or concerns in pupils' behaviour.

2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...

- ...leaders were to check out the relevance of the Muntham House system for measuring emotional and social development, as compared to some of the newer systems in use by special schools following the Rochford review
- ...with a view to improving pupils' prospects of employability, leaders further developed work-related learning in the secondary curriculum, beginning careers advice and guidance earlier and exploring work experience opportunities
- ...leaders sought to increase the provision of discreet one-to-one literacy and numeracy in primary to proportionately match the level of interventions in secondary phase.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Progress from previous EBIs

The new marking policy aims to support pupils making rapid progress. The emphasis on frequent verbal feedback does not always provide in-depth evidence of progress.

3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well

- In many lessons there are good links made between subjects and learning is strongly related to real-life contexts. In food technology, pupils used mathematics to budget, weigh and set heating temperatures. They used produce gathered in the horticulture lesson. Being able to bring different elements of their learning to bear in achieving a real-life task gives pupils a sense of empowerment.
- When teachers use a variety of resources to enable pupils to engage with learning, one or more of the resources helps pupils make the right connections. This happened when learning vocabulary in Spanish. The teacher used pictures

and gestures to illustrate the displayed Spanish words. Pupils could win 'Euro millions' by holding up the right choice card.

- In a lesson introducing a new class book, pupils first learned and clapped a rhythm to accompany the incantation heard by the narrator. They sorted cards to understand the characteristics of a village. As the teacher gathered ideas about Africa, the confidence of more withdrawn pupils increased as they joined in and their answers gained them praise. The variety of activity meant that pupils with different SEMH needs joined in one or more responses to the book.
- Working with a pupil who has a constant need to talk randomly, the teacher skilfully maintained his attention. She did this by keeping dialogue going, no matter what digression, while always drawing the talk back to the task in hand.
- When pupils have to move between lessons they do so in an orderly manner, demonstrating understanding of the conduct expected.
- Pupils are very aware of how their emotions affect others. There is a strong culture of discussion about emotional intelligence throughout the school. Noticing a girl who could not get the chair she wanted, a boy offered her his place nearby. Praising his behaviour, the teacher asked what quality he thought he had shown. "Empathy!" he replied.
- Teachers and learning support assistants challenge the small number of pupils in class to think and learn independently by continuously asking questions and getting them to take decisions. Pupils see this as supporting them in making progress. They gain confidence that they are thinking for themselves, not being told what to do.
- Teachers often work together in lessons, sharing good practice and strengths with one another to develop professionally and enhance pupils' progress. An example of this occurred when food technology and mathematics joined for 'messy maths'.
- Pupils are proud of their work and say that teachers' verbal feedback motivates them to try to constantly improve.

3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if...

...all teachers were to provide, as in the best lessons, multiple, varied approaches to learning based on real-life contexts

...teachers' progress checking (learning ladders) was standardised through their engagement in more moderation with similar schools.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- Except in Piccolo, tests on entry establish a baseline for measuring progress. Whatever age when they join, pupils arrive with skills and knowledge that are below age-related expectations. Previous poor attendance and exclusion have

disrupted progress. SEMH needs disturb concentration on learning and affect processing, remembering and expressing learning.

- Pupils make strong progress from these baselines. This is because they settle quickly in to the consistent routines and expectations at New Rush Hall.
- Invariably, there are episodes of disruption or reluctance, but school strategies minimise the time that it takes for pupils to refocus on learning and make progress.
- About half of pupils in Piccolo continue into Key Stage 2. Most pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 continue into secondary, although transfer to mainstream is a possibility at any stage. By the end of Year 11, all pupils transfer to further education or training.
- Progress in mathematics has risen through strategies in the school improvement plan. The gap is closing with English which has been a strength for some time.
- Pupils' books in all key stages show that they complete a substantial amount of work to the best of their abilities.
- Potential high achievers are identified and a flexible curriculum at Key Stage 4 allows for GCSE entry.
- Recognising the needs of learners, a recently extended range of ASDAN qualifications offers practical courses for pupils. After just six months, ASDAN moderators complimented the school with respect to the high quality of pupils' responses. They are recommending New Rush Hall as a centre of good practice for other schools to visit.
- The school is considering further ways to engage pupils in more work-related learning. New AQA units link with potential careers and leaders are considering how to secure some work experience placements.
- Pupils enjoy and learn best in practical lessons. Progress in art, computing and food technology, for example, often exceeds other subjects. Learning from this, 'messy maths' in Key Stage 3 is improving progress well. Talented teachers in some lessons in English, science and Spanish are finding ways of helping pupils to make better progress.
- Progress in personal development and self-regulation is one of the most important benefits of learning at New Rush Hall. The school uses the Muntham House system to measure this formally. The system is under revision externally and the school is managing without reference to its central database.
- Reviewers witnessed impressive outcomes in personal development. A pupil withdrew from a lesson and directly self-referred to the head of school. Having the time to explain resettled his mind for a return. Another pupil made an apology in assembly to the whole school for inappropriate behaviour that fell below the standard expected.

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

The school does not require further assistance at this point.



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR NEW RUSH HALL SCHOOL

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.