



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR THE CHILDREN'S TRUST SCHOOL

Name of School:	The Children's Trust School
Headteacher/Principal:	Launa Randles
Hub:	London Special and AP Hub
School phase:	Special
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	28/02/2024
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Leading
Date of last QA Review:	21/03/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	19/09/2023

Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all levels Leading

Quality of provision and outcomes Leading

AND

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

Area of excellence Accredited

**Previously accredited valid areas
of excellence** Personal development opportunities
that develop cultural capital for
children with complex and multiple
barriers, 21/03/2022

Overall peer evaluation estimate Leading

*The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades.
The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is
developmental not judgmental.*

1. Context and character of the school

The Children's Trust School is unique in so many ways. It is a non-maintained, special school operating as part of a registered charity 'The Children's Trust'. The school occupies three of the many buildings on the 24 acres of grounds. The site includes a registered children's home and medical and therapeutic facilities run by the charity.

The school is registered for 44 young people. Currently, there are 40 on roll with 29 staying in residential housing, with the remainder visiting the setting each day. The age range of young people is 2 to 19. All have complex education, health, therapy and care needs, resulting in multiple barriers to learning.

The school specialises in the education of young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). The school includes a nursery provision.

The charity provides support both nationally and internationally for young people with acquired brain injuries and neurodisability. Each young person comes from one of 18 local authorities.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- This is a thinking school. Leaders demonstrate ambition in their day-to-day work. This ambition has been realised in various ways. One example is how the holistic curriculum offer (integrating all aspects of provision, from education, health, therapy and care) has led to staff and young people developing fluency and automaticity in their teaching and learning. Further, various straplines are heard and seen, such as *invitations to success* and *sustainability of quality*.
- The ImPACTS curriculum has five key skill areas, namely communication, cognitive skills, environmental control technology, personal, social and emotional well-being and physical skills. This curriculum is well considered, with various threads running through the offer. The communication book project is an example of the drive to give each young person the best means to develop their own voice - *Everyone has a right to a voice*. This generic approach is then used to develop bespoke provision for each young person.

- The staff training plan aligns with the school development plan. Leaders learn about what staff need by being informed through various means. This includes curriculum groups ('MUSST' - *making us subject specialist teams*) and professional development reviews for individual staff. Priorities for the whole school are identified, as well as more specific aspects for individual or small groups of staff.
- Leaders engage at a national level to promote a wider understanding of PMLD learners. For example, published articles within PMLD Link and collaborative work with The Royal Opera House raise the awareness of the school and the young people.
- Leaders offer staff synchronous (live learning) and asynchronous learning. The latter enables staff to learn at times that suit them, for example watching recorded video excerpts or presentations. This approach helps staff embed their own learning, as they can go back and look again at particular aspects. This school does not subscribe to a 'tick box' approach. Leaders continually reflect on provision, considering how to refine it to enable each young person to thrive.
- Therapy staff model therapeutic expertise to teaching staff. They help staff to recognise and remove potential ceilings or barriers that could be put on learning. The ambition is to share expertise, not keeping it in the domain of therapists. This is the *cultural glue*. As young people progress through the school, careers and work experiences are considered. Leaders promote innovation, finding ways for PMLD learners to experience the sense of being in a workplace. All deserve the opportunity to experience, if not necessarily to gain, employment.
- Everyone at the school is a leader of learning. There is a shared language of learning. Given the size of the organisation's staff team (400 are named on the single central register) not all can attend school training. It is important, therefore, for everyone to rehearse and apply common terminology. Leaders support staff by rehearsing and modelling language in their day-to-day conversations. Often this is about minimising language, for both staff and young people. The pupil charter is adhered to, including all young people having the right to always be included in conversations about 'me'.

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

...all leaders, notably therapeutic staff, verbally articulated their coherent strategy.

...the school maximised the use of the pupil charter.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Supportive qualities have been identified and implemented. A range of inspirational illustrations were seen during the review. These included staff giving sufficient time for the young person to respond and only giving enough support rather than too much. As one leader put it, 'As much support as needed, as little as necessary'.
- Positive, warm, trusting, safe relationships are evident around the school site. Staff know the specific needs of each young person. Moreover, they plan learning and respond appropriately during lessons. Learning is genuinely tailored to support each young person in respect of what they need to do to progress.
- Staff advocate and implement a meaningful curriculum which is age respectful. For example, younger children were learning about the farm, exploring different animals and their characteristics. Whilst older learners used real archaeological resources, such as tents, brushes and hammers, to learn about fossils. Dignity is about how learning is considered, incorporating language and resources.
- Learning is meaningful. Staff think carefully about how best to make learning accessible. They plan diligently, considering how each young person is likely to respond to what is presented. During lessons, they consistently look, listen and respond to the young person's *voice*. In a music session, staff gave a young person time to check out a range of instruments before making a preference.
- Through carefully planned sequences of learning, teaching is well paced. If a young person would benefit from more time to think or respond then this time is given. Silence is acceptable. Staff know when it is wise to intervene and when to resist. Staff know what they want each young person to do to show that they are progressing in their learning. One member of staff discretely moved a young person away from distraction in order for her to concentrate.
- Staff are innovative when placing the young person at the centre of their decision making. They recognise the importance of helping learners grasp as

much knowledge about their world as they can, in an accessible and creative delivery. Consequently, staff make sure that they think about what is to be learnt before considering activities. In order to develop a conceptual understanding of floating, bubbles were blown for learners to experience. This contrasts to young people simply enjoying bubbles. Similarly, to maximise the learning from sensory stories, lighting was dimmed and torches used to create a sense of awe and wonder as 'aliens' appeared in the sky.

- Ambition, evident from leaders' discussions, is seen in provision. Communication approaches, including technical resources, enable young people to express opinions. In all classrooms and sessions, young people were in frequent conversations with staff. Staff realise that they need to be careful what they wish for, as some young people express determination to do as they please!

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

- ...the high levels of supportive qualities were embedded across all areas.
- ...all staff revisited training in respect of the vision strand in the curriculum.

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

- 'Care deeply' is a promise. This applies to all staff and young people. Staff and each young person's mental health and well-being are central to development work at the school. Integrated supervision for staff is an embedded feature, with staff enjoying dedicated and protected time. Supervision-trained staff spread the culture of support and listening to colleagues. The care for each young person is palpable.
- Leaders are always on the look out for, and seeking to create, innovative practice. A recent example is how leaders are adapting *zones of regulation*. Leaders reflected on what this approach had to offer, in respect of the provision here. The model is adapted, with each young person's personality described in each of the coloured zones. This describes how the young person presents in each zone and subsequently what staff can do to support.

- Each young person benefits from the fluidity between different parts of the day. The ease of provision disguises the complex work which underpins the provision. For example, a young person's positional changes (involving medical and care requirements) are swift and so do not disrupt learning. Young people are placed in the best positions to learn. The intelligent, multi-disciplinary approach underpins this excellent work.
- The annual review process and resulting documentation are impressive. The annual review report clearly articulates a sound narrative of the young person, highlighting their strengths and needs effectively. All stakeholders contribute to the document.

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

None identified.

5. Area of Excellence

SEND school - where curriculum and meaningful (age-respectful) learning meet

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 strategically identified the curriculum and meaningful learning as a notable strength - a recognition underscored by the recent commendation from Ofsted. This acknowledgment has spurred interest among external educators, prompting them to journey to the school.

Among the distinguished curriculum features, leaders spotlight the integration of Sounds of Intent, ImPACTS and DEYO for the early years, plus the exceptional sensory career program delivered to the sixth form. Colleagues from diverse professional backgrounds, including those in health and therapy, actively participate

in open school visits, keen to observe and understand the integrated approach that seamlessly weaves through the curriculum.

The recent update to the website serves as a testament to the commitment. It provides clear evidence of how the school uses age-respectful and meaningful curricula tailored for PMLD learners.

Contrary to some assumptions, teaching PMLD is a formidable challenge that demands creative thinking beyond conventional methods. The school excels in this aspect and aspires to share expertise by guiding and supporting others in similar endeavours.

A recent online discussion on the Challenge Partner hub prompted this to be an area of excellence. The dialogue centred around the quest for many schools to precisely source a curriculum with a focus on seamless sequencing, robust assessment and tangible outcomes. During the conversation, genuine interest was expressed by colleagues which solidified the belief that this is an area likely to be in demand.

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

By using the noted curriculums, leaders can showcase substantial and sustained evidence of academic and overall development, for each young person, as outlined in their EHCP. Progress is derived from learning that is meaningful and age respectful.

The school has developed comprehensive workbooks for recording data under each curriculum - ImPACTS, DEYO, and Sounds of Intent. Notably, a Challenge Partner school has visited to explore the tracking of Sounds of Intent. All data workbooks are internally generated for each young person, showcasing their personalised progress. The designed annual review template is designed to meticulously track and celebrate their accomplishments.

While the school has already earned recognition for its exceptional creative offerings supporting cultural capital, it is apparent that a significant portion of enquiries revolve around the quest for a personalised and meaningful curriculum. These requests often seek a curriculum that not only demonstrates sequential development but also



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR THE CHILDREN'S TRUST SCHOOL

effectively addresses the diverse needs of young people facing multiple barriers to learning.

Leaders plan to leverage the Challenge Partner platform. This involves presenting talks at hubs or conducting workshops at conferences to engage with a wider audience. By doing so, leaders aim to reach educators who may not only be interested in visiting but also those who prefer discussions through online platforms to explore and discuss the unique curriculum offerings. The goal is to extend expertise beyond the confines of the physical school, providing valuable insights and support to a diverse range of educational professionals.

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

Launa Randles
Headteacher
lrandles@thechildrenstrust.org.uk

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>)