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):	N/A

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	02/11/2026
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Leading
Date of last QA Review:	28/02/2024
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	19/09/2023

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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	Leading
Quality of provision and outcomes	Leading
AND	
Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and/or pupils with additional needs	Leading
Area of excellence	SEND school - Interact Like Me: A Whole-School Framework for Relational Communication and Engagement Accredited
Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	SEND school - where curriculum and meaningful (age-respectful) learning meet, 28/02/2024
Overall peer evaluation estimate	Leading

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' safeguarding 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.

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REVIEW REPORT FOR THE CHILDREN'S TRUST SCHOOL

1. Context and character of the school

The Children's Trust School is a non-maintained special school and part of The Children's Trust charity. Located in Tadworth, Surrey, the school occupies part of a beautiful 24-acre site alongside specialist residential, medical and therapy facilities. The school is registered for 49 pupils and currently educates 41 children and young people aged 2 to 19, including a nursery provision. Twenty pupils access residential care through the children's homes on site, with the remainder attending as day pupils.

The school serves pupils from 17 local authorities across England. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and have prodound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), alongside complex health, communication and care needs. A significant proportion of pupils are looked after children.

A defining feature of the school is its integrated multidisciplinary approach, with education, health, therapy and care professionals working collaboratively to support each pupil. The school's mission is 'To support children to live the best life possible; achieving excellence in education, health, therapy and care.' Its vision is to be a growth-centred national centre of excellence for children and families through innovative, integrated education, health and therapy care practice.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The school's mission to secure the best possible life for all is embedded throughout its work. Consequently, pupils and families benefit from an integrated approach that extends beyond education. This is evidenced by initiatives such as the SEND focused parent and toddler group (Taddies), rehabilitation music offer and the 'Think Family' approach demonstrating the school's commitment to supporting the whole family.
- Leadership at all levels is a significant strength. This creates a strong culture of collaboration, accountability and continuous improvement. Notably, governors are actively involved in school improvement, while distributed leadership is evident through staff-led training, co-produced pupil passports and the development of the ImPACTS (Individualised, meaningful, Profile, Assessment, Curriculum, Target, Setting) curriculum.
- All staff see themselves as leaders of learning. This is exemplified by class leaders modelling effective practice to the wider class team. As a result, pupils are engaged in their learning.
- Leaders implement a structured approach to professional development that is responsive to staff need. Consequently, staff are increasingly skilled and confident in supporting pupils with complex needs. For example, continuing professional development (CPD) is supported by use of the National College platform and tracked through SchoolIP (School Improvement Platform).
- Leaders use complementary assessment frameworks to provide a clear understanding of pupil progress while supporting staff wellbeing. This enables progress to be celebrated and next steps identified effectively. Annual reviews draw together assessment information, while initiatives such as 'Flexi-Hour' training and flexible PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) arrangements have been implemented in response to staff voice.
- Leaders have developed a strong Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) curriculum rooted in real-life, age-respectful, sensory experiences. This helps pupils develop greater independence and readiness for life beyond school. Notably, careers education is embedded through sensory Gatsby benchmarks and enterprise opportunities.
- The curriculum is highly personalised, sequential and developmental. This allows pupils to be appropriately challenged and make strong progress towards their individual targets and EHCP outcomes.
- Leaders promote consistency through a highly skilled multidisciplinary team and shared expectations across education, therapy and care. Consequently, pupils benefit from a coherent and personalised approach that meets their individual needs and supports strong progress from their starting points. For example, protected time is allocated for Team Around the Child meetings to maintain a clear focus on EHCP outcomes, while education, therapy and care teams work closely together to plan and deliver bespoke interventions.

- As one parent commented, 'The school is like a second home for our family; my child is safe and valued. Communication is proactive and joined up across all multidisciplinary teams.'

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if…

… leaders at all levels consistently recognised and communicated the significance of 'personal best' progress, particularly where lower scores reflect meaningful and important gains for pupils with PMLD.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Sensory-based learning experiences are expertly planned to maximise engagement and participation. As a result, pupils are highly engaged and access learning in meaningful ways. For example, in a sixth form sensory drama session, the creative use of props and sensory stimuli, including a large boat, map, sky scene and water spray, brought the story to life and sustained pupils' engagement throughout.
- Pupil voice is actively promoted through strong self-advocacy opportunities. As a result, pupils know that their views are valued and can influence meaningful change within the school community. One pupil used eye gaze technology to communicate to the school council, and subsequently the Trust, that the environment was too hot, leading to the installation of air conditioning.
- Creative resources are used effectively to adapt learning experiences to meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils are highly engaged, enjoy their learning and are supported to express their preferences. In Green Class, a range of imaginative resources brought the Arctic to life, enabling pupils to participate fully and demonstrate their individual preferences.
- All pupils were observed to be engaged and prepared for learning, with staff confidently using clearly identified targets to inform their interactions and tailor support for everyone.
- The 'Sounds of Intent' practitioners knew the pupils exceptionally well. In Pink Class, staff responded to pupils' individual interests and preferences, including the use of rap music on an iPad and a touch-responsive switch, ensuring that every pupil could make a meaningful contribution to the shared musical experience.
- Skilled practitioners model and share effective strategies that enhance the quality of pupil experiences across sessions. As a result, pupils are supported to remain engaged and gain maximum benefit from learning opportunities. During a yoga session in yellow class, the leader skilfully intervened when a pupil became disengaged, modelling the use of body tapping to staff. This prompted the pupil to become alert, engaged and smiling, while also strengthening the practice of other adults.

- Staff carefully resource learning opportunities to ensure a meaningful and real-life experience for sensory learners. In Pink Class, the resonance board session covered the topic of fireworks with visual representation and sound. In another class, pupils were immersed in an office environment to bring their learning to life with real life objects.
- Leaders of learning provide pupils with sufficient time to process and respond. As a result, pupils' voices are valued and participation is strengthened. For example, during an EYFS yoga call-and-response activity, the teacher respected processing time and silence, leading to laughter, engagement and meaningful pupil responses.
- The focus on continuing professional development (CPD) and specialist training is evident in the leadership of learning across the school. As a result, pupils benefit from highly skilled practice and consistently effective support. For example, in one learning opportunity observed, the facilitator could clearly articulate the purpose and impact of each movement, enabling adults to implement strategies confidently, resulting in pupils anticipating and providing verbal responses. The school's impact on raising the quality of education beyond the school is also securely evidenced through the sharing of this specialist expertise.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if…

… the school continued to provide dedicated resources to ensure the full implementation of the updated ImPACTS curriculum.
… the focus on the 'Adult Engagement Scale' is maintained and further enhanced to capture the practice of all leaders of learning.

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

- Learning environments are carefully adapted to meet pupils' emotional, sensory and physical needs. As a result, pupils are well regulated, relaxed and able to engage fully in experiences that support their wellbeing. During a 'soundbath' session, all learners were appropriately positioned, including in wheelchairs, on mats or lying down, which supported regulation, grounding and sustained engagement.
- Staff skilfully integrate educational support and health interventions into learning experiences. Pupils remain at the centre of practice, feel safe and well cared for, and can engage fully in learning. Staff in Blue Class managed health and care interventions sensitively and seamlessly, minimising disruption while maintaining pupils' dignity, wellbeing and participation.

- ImPACTS data is used effectively to identify strengths and drive improvement. As a result, pupils benefit from targeted support that promotes stronger engagement and progress. For example, residential pupils and those under Section 31 arrangements demonstrated particularly strong progress, reflecting the positive impact of consistent support, strong relationships and continuity between education and care.
- Leaders have developed a nuanced understanding of vulnerability, analysing pupils through both traditional and school-specific groupings. Support is tailored to pupils' individual needs, helping to promote inclusive communication and engagement. Leaders have now moved beyond broad categories to create more forensic pupil groupings, enabling a deeper understanding of barriers to learning.
- Parents and carers are actively engaged in their child's learning through targeted workshops and regular communication. As a result, families are increasingly equipped to support pupils' learning, emotional wellbeing and regulation beyond school, contributing to improved outcomes. Workshops delivered through the parent forum have helped parents develop effective regulation strategies, while ClassDojo provides regular learning updates and practical support, strengthening home-school collaboration.
- The school celebrates each pupil's 'personal best' through a highly individualised approach to progress and achievement. Consequently, pupils are recognised and valued for their unique learning journeys, regardless of the barriers they may face. For example, staff spoke passionately about one pupil whose progress paused following major surgery and another with a degenerative condition for whom maintaining existing skills represented a significant success.
- The school has established strong, trusting relationships with families through proactive communication and effective multidisciplinary working. Parents and carers feel confident that their children are safe, well supported and thriving. Parents spoke positively about the calm and professional communication surrounding seizures, which reassures families and enables them to manage work and family commitments with confidence.

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

… outreach work is further enhanced to include all aspects of the school's specialist core offer, thereby extending its impact and sharing expertise more widely.

5. Area of Excellence

SEND school - Interact Like Me: A Whole-School Framework for Relational Communication and Engagement

Accredited

5.1 Please describe the Area of Excellence and how expertise has been developed.

'Interact Like Me' is a sector-leading, whole-school framework developed at The Children's Trust School that brings together relational interaction, adult engagement scales, special yoga and 'soundbath' to strengthen communication, engagement and wellbeing for pupils with complex needs.

Developed over a significant number of years, the approach has evolved through multidisciplinary collaboration between education, therapy, healthcare and residential teams. Expertise has been built through specialist training, coaching and the use of adult engagement scales, which provide a structured framework for staff development and quality assurance. The process of adult development explicitly links the supportive qualities that staff need to show and the impact that this has on how the pupil feels in their learning.

The model enables leaders to monitor practice, identify training needs and ensure consistent, high-quality interactions that maximise pupil engagement, connection and readiness for learning.

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

Evidence demonstrates that 'Interact Like Me' has had a significant impact on pupil outcomes, particularly in communication, engagement, regulation and readiness to learn. Through exceptional multidisciplinary collaboration, pupils with complex needs, including those with dystonia and PMLD, have been supported to move from heightened states of stress to calm, regulated states, reducing barriers to participation and learning. Pupils have developed greater body awareness, explored communication through rhythm and sound, and increased engagement with their environments.

The impact extends beyond school, with families and carers adopting key strategies at home, enabling them to connect more meaningfully with what matters most for the child.

5.3 How has the Area of Excellence been embedded and sustained over time?

It has been successfully embedded through the refinement and codification of longstanding intensive interaction and adult engagement scale practices rather than the introduction of a new initiative. All staff, including education, residential care and medical teams, receive training and contribute to delivery, creating strong ownership and sustainability. Expertise is monitored through SchooliP, enabling leaders to track training and address gaps. A dedicated specialist space (The Rainbow Room), multiple trained practitioners and widespread staff advocacy ensure the approach remains consistent across settings and continues to evolve while maintaining a sharp focus on communication, connection and engagement.

5.4 How has the Area of Excellence been used to support practice across other areas in your school and beyond your school?

'Interact Like Me' has strengthened practice across education, therapy, healthcare and residential provision by establishing a shared, communication-centred approach that supports consistent interactions and high-quality relational engagement for all pupils. The approach has created a common language across multidisciplinary teams, ensuring that communication, connection and regulation remain central to pupils' experiences throughout the school day and beyond.

The school has actively shared its expertise through training events, practical workshops and collaborative partnerships with other settings, including work with the Royal Ballet and Opera House and professionals from Southampton, Wandsworth and Croydon. An online documentary is available which further extends the reach of the work, providing an accessible introduction to the principles and impact of the approach and encouraging greater engagement with the training and support on offer.

The quality and innovation of the practice were evident to reviewers, several of whom expressed a strong interest in enabling colleagues from their own schools to visit, observe and learn from this highly effective model.

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

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Communication Lead
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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 partnership of schools and trusts 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 partnership 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).