

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Octagon AP Academy
School Address:	Commerce Road, London, N22 8DZ
Hub:	London Special Schools & AP

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Unique Reference Number:	140665
Local Authority:	Haringey
Type of School:	Academy
School Category:	Alternative Provision
Age range of pupils:	7-16
Number on roll:	43
Head teacher/Principal:	Interim Head of School – Patricia Wright Executive HT – Angela Tempany

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	Predecessor PRU – 11-12 June 2013
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Inadequate – Special Measures

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	5-7 December 2016
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies:	Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils is:	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:	Good
Area of Excellence: Reintegration of pupils back into mainstream education	Confirmed and valid for 3 years
Previously accredited Areas of Excellence: Attendance	

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Octagon AP Academy appears to have moved beyond the Inadequate (Special Measures) grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report and is working at the top of the Good grade moving towards Outstanding.

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 Octagon Academy is part of the Tri-Borough Alternative Provision Multi Academy Trust. It converted to an academy in April 2014 after being placed in special measures in November 2013.
- The school provides education for primary and secondary learners from 7 to 16 who have been permanently excluded, or who are at risk of permanent exclusion, from the London borough of Haringey schools. A number of referrals are received via the local authority's in-year fair access panel for learners who are highly vulnerable. The school receives a high number of referrals from the special educational needs panel for learners with statements/EHCPs.
- The local authority commissions 58 places at the school but the roll varies throughout the year, with high levels of mobility. In July 2016 the roll reached 75 with current numbers at 43.
- The length of placement varies from a minimum of 6 six weeks to 2 two years. All placements in the secondary provision are permanent and primary places are offered as interventions to mainstream schools for 7 seven weeks, which is negotiable dependent on need and progress made. The school aims to re-integrate learners at KS3 and Year 10 back into mainstream. Year 11 learners are not re-integrated, but may be placed at a local college or work-based training centre.
- Learners have a wide range of needs, including social, emotional and mental health. A high number proportion of learners have had considerable breaks in their education and/or multiple school placements.
- The ethnic backgrounds of learners varies; of the current roll 19% are black Caribbean, 16% black African, of the other ethnic groups 7% are white British, 2% Irish and 2% of Asian backgrounds. 28% of learners have English as an additional language and 9% have a statement of special educational needs or an EHCP. The majority of learners are boys with approximately a quarter girls.
- The school works closely with a range of services to support learners, including the education welfare service, safer schools' officers and the local authority's Children's Safeguarding Board.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- Leaders make very good use of the Trust-wide opportunities available to them to facilitate and accelerate school improvement.
- There has been a rapid and continuous journey in school improvement since being placed in special measures in June 2013 and following each Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review. During a period of change in senior leadership the school

has maintained the focus on school improvement, both sustaining and developing improvements and planned actions.

- There is a high quality approach to the recruitment and retention of staff at all levels, which has provided opportunities for both teachers and learning support professionals to develop an increasing range of skills to support school improvement.
- There is a collegiate and professional climate among staff which contributes to the positive, purposeful ethos in the school.
- The calm, settled and structured start to the beginning and end of the school day is facilitated by the daily briefing for staff, which is both solution-focussed and good-humoured.
- Learners value the provision at the school and understand how they are supported to make progress.
- There is a detailed and comprehensive student induction programme. This includes baseline assessments in a variety of areas, close liaison with parents/carers as well as taking account of the views of learners.
- There has been a highly positive drive to develop an increasingly purposeful and widened curriculum alongside further accreditation opportunities. Tailored bids for appropriate resources to the TBAP Foundation have enhanced and deepened curriculum development.
- Alongside other TBAP Trust staff, the development of the Progress Five measures has been detailed and thorough.
- The wave intervention programme and therapeutic interventions extend and enhance progress for learners.
- Data informs the local continuing professional development offer, which compliments the Trust-wide CPD offer. These two strands maximise opportunities for staff development. There has been a programme of development opportunities for middle leaders who are able to articulate their role in school improvement and the progress of learners.
- Senior leaders encourage other staff to develop their own areas of interest and to further their expertise, enabling them to contribute fully to whole school actions.

Even Better If...

... leaders created a learner profile of the TBAP progress 5 measures using data from individual starting points, which allows for the tracking of progress, and which is then adapted for various audiences.

... the skills of self-evaluation and improvement planning were further developed at all levels of leadership, in order to deepen leadership capacity throughout the school.

Pupil Outcomes

- There has been a significant improvement in outcomes for learners in the first two years of the sponsored academy, with school leaders and other Trust staff working relentlessly and rigorously to accelerate progress for learners.
- In 2015/2016 the average points score at GCSE at the end of Year 11 was well above the national average. The average for the local authority for alternative provision, and the percentage of learners achieving an accreditation, were double the national average.
- The performance of disadvantaged learners at the end of Year 11 was significantly above the national average and the local authority for alternative provision.
- The key areas for improvement at the end of Year 11 include increasing the percentage of learners achieving both 5 A*-C and 5 A*-G, as well as raising achievement in mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- At the end of 2015/2016 learners in KS3 made expected or better progress from their individual starting points in English, mathematics and science. The data cycle has been recently replaced across the Trust with Pupil Asset, where baseline data will be recorded using the progress 5 measure. Scrutiny of books and other work shows at least expected progress, and often better, so far this academic year.
- In 2015/2016 all learners in KS2 achieved or exceeded their predicted targets in reading and mathematics. A scrutiny of exercise books in English and mathematics showed that progress from their starting points on admission to the school was lower than expected. Leaders are planning actions to investigate this further in order to plan for improvement.
- Attendance has improved year on year since the school became part of the Trust and is currently well above the national average for alternative provision.
- Rates of reintegration are very high and this is an area of excellence for the school.
- The percentage of learners in 2015/16 who left the school at the end of Year 11 and went into employment, education or training was high compared to national data for alternative provision.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- Calm, resilient and patient staff work extremely well together to provide a climate that is conducive to effective learning. Relationships between staff, between staff and learners, and between learners are very positive. This facilitates very good behaviour management and strong partnerships for learning.
- Knowledgeable learning support professionals are well deployed throughout the school, supporting both individual and groups of learners.

- Behaviour for learning is good and the management of behaviour is often excellent. Disruption to learning is minimised and the focus on effective learning is maintained despite disruptions that may occur. Learners are resilient to potential distractions.
- Learners work hard in lessons to complete tasks and they make good progress because of their level of engagement.
- The learning environment, both in classrooms, specialist rooms and communal areas is calm, attractive and welcoming. The work of learners is carefully displayed to inspire and enthuse others.
- Learners value and appreciate the guidance for learning that they receive from the school, because it helps them to know their current attainment and how to make further progress. They value enrichment opportunities such as the positive impact of the therapeutic offer.
- In lessons a range of strategies facilitates good progress, including clear learning objectives and success criteria, and effective questioning by staff.
- Clear evidence of prior attainment is apparent and learners are supported by teachers who have strong subject and specialist knowledge.
- Learners' profiles are shared with staff to support planning for the next steps in learning and to provide support programmes to address areas requiring development. The newly launched Pupil Asset recording system is already being used to support assessment of individual achievement and progress.
- Curriculum development opportunities are maximised and well utilised to provide additional support to learners so that their progress is accelerated.
- Wave interventions, led by confident learning support professionals, are structured to maximise their impact on closing gaps in learning. They are communicated well to mainstream schools so that support can be continued through dual placements and transition.

Even Better If...

... leaders continued to support staff to develop teaching pedagogy to improve creativity, engagement and the learning environment in the primary phase.

... teachers continued to develop extended questioning to deepen understanding and facilitate progress in lessons.

Quality of Area of Excellence

Reintegration of pupils back into mainstream education

Why has this area been identified as a strength?

Reintegration has been identified by the school as an area of excellence because of the very high proportion of learners who are reintegrated back into mainstream schools.

Reintegration is a key focus for the school and is consistently being embedded into the

ethos of the school. In 2015/2016, 98% of KS2 learners were reintegrated back into mainstream, 35% of KS3 learners and 43% of KS4 learners. If learners require extended support during reintegration into mainstream school, this is provided for up to six weeks during transition.

The school has established a very clear and comprehensive programme, which staff follow to ensure each step to success is followed. Once learners have attendance of at least 95% they can be considered for reintegration into mainstream by the dedicated reintegration team. Learning guides complete a 'ready for reintegration' form and a learning support professional is assigned to the student for the entire reintegration period. This includes addressing key areas for development, close liaison with parents/carers, continuous discussion with the learner and liaison with the mainstream school.

What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

The process is overseen by the Director of Access and Inclusion and managed discreetly to minimize the impact on peers and to normalize the process as part of the learning journey.

During the reintegration process, learners work on key areas for development. These are identified from a comprehensive readiness scale, including profiling a learner's self-control, social skills, confidence and self-awareness. Staff work relentlessly to address these issues before mainstream schools are approached. Wave intervention staff liaise with the identified school to ensure the support for learners continues.

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

The impact of the reintegration programme is demonstrated by the fact that no learner returned to Octagon Academy after transferring to mainstream school last year. This clearly shows the success of the process.

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

Following discussion with the headteacher, the school would like to reflect further about what support they might like.

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.