
CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

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

Telephone Number:	0208 829 9846
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Unique Reference Number:	140665
Local Authority:	Haringey
Type of School:	Mixed
School Category:	Alternative Provision
Age range of pupils:	5-16
Number on roll:	42
Exec.Head/Principal:	Seamus Oates/Angela Tempany

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

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	18-20 November 2015
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES

School Improvement Strategies: Outstanding

Outcomes for Pupils: Good

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Good

Area of Excellent Practice: - “Attendance” - Confirmed

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that The Octagon AP Academy appears to have moved beyond the Inadequate (Special Measures) grade, as judged as a result of the previous Ofsted inspection of the predecessor PRU in June 2013, and is now working within the Good grade.

Information about the school

- The Octagon AP Academy is part of the TBAP Trust. It converted from a PRU to become an academy in April 2014. An HMI inspection in November 2013 placed the PRU in special measures, following a judgement of Inadequate by Ofsted in June 2013.
- A Challenge Partners review in November 2014 indicated that although the school was still likely to be judged by Ofsted to require improvement it was clear that many historical issues were being successfully addressed.
- The Octagon AP Academy provides education for primary and secondary learners from age 5 to 16 who have been permanently excluded or who are at risk of permanent exclusion from Haringey mainstream schools. A number of referrals are received via the Local Authority's In-year Fair Access Panel for learners who are highly vulnerable (children moving into Borough from secure institutions, children referred by the Youth Offending Services, PRU to PRU transfers, and children with multiple care home placements). In the absence of SEMH provision in Haringey, The Octagon receives a high number of referrals from the SEN panel for learners with statements/EHCPs.
- The Local Authority commissions 58 places at the Octagon for alternative educational provision. The roll varies throughout the year, with high levels of mobility. In July 2015 the roll reached 75. Current numbers on roll are 42. 28 learners have moved off roll since September 2015. Length of placement varies from 6 weeks to 2 years.
- The school aims to re-integrate learners at KS3 and Y10 back into mainstream schools. Year 11 learners are not re-integrated, but may be placed at a local college or work-based training centre. Primary places are offered as interventions to mainstream schools for a period of 7 weeks. The Local Authority currently has 2 primary learners at the school who are without named primary schools.
- Learners have a wide range of needs, including social, emotional and mental health. Many of the needs are linked to family trauma, displacement and substance misuse. A high number of learners have had considerable breaks in their education and/or multiple school placements. A number of learners have affiliations with local gangs. A significant number of learners and their families are known to the local police and Haringey Youth Offending Service. 50% of learners are known to agencies. These include Child Protection, CIN, CYPS assessment, CSE and Early Help teams.
- The ethnic backgrounds of learners are many and varied. Of the current roll, 27% are Black Caribbean, 27% Black African, 24% other ethnic groups, 12% White British, 5% White Irish and 5% Asian. 51% of learners are entitled to Free School Meals. 7% of learners are LAC. 29% of learners are EAL. 34% of learners have Statements of SEN/EHCPs. 24% of the school's population are girls. There are currently no girls in the primary provision.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- The school shares the '20/20 Vision' of TBAP and works closely with the other member schools to share and develop best practice.
- Senior leaders have carefully and systematically addressed all the issues raised during the last Ofsted inspection and the last Challenge Partners review. This is immediately obvious on first reading the following documents that outline the targeted actions taken and the well measured outcomes:-
 - A comprehensive self-evaluation report is well structured. It is easy to digest and clearly shows that leaders have analysed outcomes and identified WWWs and EBIs. Most of the EBIs have sharp success criteria.
 - The improvement plan does not have the same format as the self-evaluation report but it is equally well structured. This too is easy to digest and the intended outcomes often have sharp success criteria.
- The school works very closely with a range of services to support young people and their families. These include weekly on-site support from the Education Welfare Service, Families First, and Safer Schools officers. Termly meetings are held with the local police, integrated gangs team and child sexual exploitation teams to ensure a multi-agency response is in place for learners at risk of radicalisation or CSE. The Designated Member of Staff for Safeguarding attends all Child Protection, Core-group and TAF meetings for learners, and works closely with the Local Authority's Children's Safeguarding Board.
- The Director of Access and Inclusion (DOAI) ensures that support and assessment from Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist and CaMHS are available for all learners with learning and mental health needs. The DOAI also maintains strong links with all mainstream schools in Haringey through the re-integration process.
- Support for families is prioritised through regular communication from learning guides and multi-agency support provided through TAF meetings.
- The quality of teaching has improved significantly during the last year. This is because senior leaders are evaluating teaching in terms of pupil progress from starting points and gathering evidence through a range of activities such as lesson observations, work scrutinies, analysis of pupil progress information and learning walks.
- Pupil outcomes have improved significantly during the last year. This is because teaching is increasingly focussed on prior learning and building on this in carefully targeted steps.
- The management of behaviour is a key strength of the school as this is often the primary reason for pupils having failed in other schools. An analytical and measured approach is extremely effective.

- There are many curriculum enrichment opportunities in place. These provide positive experience for pupils who often have limiting personal circumstances.
- There is a big emphasis on pastoral support and therapeutic interventions. These address the poor emotional well-being and social skills that for many pupils are substantial barriers to learning. The school correctly recognises that progress in these areas is sometimes of far more importance than anything else.
- There is a major commitment to CPD. There is a wide range of opportunities available within the TBAP Learning School programmes and other arrangements are made on a bespoke basis according to needs identified during the evaluation of teaching.
- A daily morning briefing contributes hugely to the rapidly changing culture within the school. This is because besides covering practical issues arising the briefing also includes discussions about achievement, behaviour and attendance, things that have improved and things that require attention. A strong feature of the briefing is the contributions made by all members of staff.
- In discussions pupils are generally very positive about the overall ethos of the school. They single out the relationships with staff, class sizes and individual attention. They speak a great deal about behaviour but are less well informed about their personal targets and what helps them to learn.

Even Better If...

...the excellent work already done to shorten and clarify the self-evaluation report and improvement plan is continued so that the two are clearly part of an integrated process and provide an even more explicit summary of the targeted improvements.

...the work already done to focus on the central importance of pupil progress from starting points is continued. This could include a greater use of peer observations followed by professional dialogue and learning walks that focus on particular types of evidence of pupil progress.

...the work already done to define The Octagon Curriculum continues so that a basket of indicators can be used to show progress across the full breadth of areas of learning that are of central importance to pupils at this school. The school is already looking at Progress 8, that is now the key measure of progress within secondary schools, and considering an alternative AP version. Besides including some academic subjects this could also include progress towards removing the barriers to learning that are a central part of the school's role. A difficulty here may be to adjust the nature of this overall measure to suit the different needs of individual pupils.

...the self-evaluation report and improvement plan clearly address pupil progress across the curriculum.

...staff from mainstream schools are asked to validate progress targets and moderate assessments.

Outcomes for Pupils

- **KS4 -2015**
 - 54% of Y11 achieved 5 GCSEs at A*-G compared to 0% the previous year.
 - 15% of Y11 5 GCSEs A*-C compared to an inner London PRU benchmark of 1.8%.
 - APS of Y11 rose from 34 to 134.
 - 30.7% of Y11 achieved Grade C in English IGCSE.
 - 33% of Y11 achieved C in ICT GCSE.
 - 83% of Y11 achieved Level 2 in B-Tec Sport.
 - 70% of Y11 achieved Level 2 in B-Tec Home Cooking
 - 85% moved on to FE, employment or training.
- **KS3 – 2015**
 - 60% are meeting or exceeding expectation in English.
 - 40% are meeting or exceeding expectations in maths.
 - 60% are exceeding in Science.
- **KS2 – 2015**
 - All pupils met or exceeded expectations.
 - 75% of Y6 achieved NC level 4.
 - 75% of Y6 made successful transitions to high school.
 - 100% of Y3-5 are working on or above expected levels.
- **Across The Curriculum**
 - School information shows that pupils make good progress in a range of subjects and that this tends to be better in non-core subjects. For example, 100% of KS4 in 2015 achieved Level 2 in B-Tec Food Technology. The information also shows that there are no significant differences between groups.
 - Improvements in behaviour are reflected in:-
 - A general behaviour points record shows that positive points awarded now exceed negative points in a ratio of 3:1.
 - Progress in behaviour for learning is tracked and this shows that there has been a 31% improvement in KS1 and 2 this year so far.
 - Emotional well-being is assessed on entry and subsequently tracked. The records show substantial year on year improvement, for example a 43% improvement in feelings about school from last year to this.
 - 20% of pupils have been re-integrated into mainstream school so far this school year. This is set against a TBAP annual target of 35%.
 - The number of exclusions was reduced by 39% last year.
- **Progress This Year**

- The progress tracking system shows that most pupils are making at least expected progress in a number of subjects other than English and maths.
- **Overall**
 - Benchmarking against national AP provision shows significantly better outcomes.
- **Groups – English & Maths**
 - KS4 EAL and statements made good or better progress.
 - KS4 PP made less progress.
 - KS4 girls made less progress.
 - KS3 boys and statements made good or better progress.
 - KS3 PP and girls made less progress.
 - KS2 some statements and PP made better progress.
- **Attendance**
 - Last year the overall attendance rate was 80.8%. This was a 16.1% improvement on the previous year.
 - The upward trend in attendance is continuing this year and there is already an improvement of 3.2% so far this term
 - There are no significant differences in the attendance of groups.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- Significant features of the school are the positive ethos and extremely warm and supportive relationships that clearly exist throughout the day between staff and pupils.
- A range of activities is undertaken in order to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. These include lesson observations, work scrutinies, learning walks and pupil progress information analysis. The school states that 87.5% of teaching was good or better during the last school year. This compares to 57% in the previous year.
- Teachers are individually graded once per year as part of the performance management arrangements. The overall evaluation of teaching is entirely focussed on pupil progress from starting points as seen in other lesson observations and taking a range of other evidence into account.
- Joint observation of 10 lessons took place during the review. Co-observers often had very similar views about WWWs and EBIs.
- The most effective teaching observed during the review was characterised by planning based on prior learning and individual next steps in learning that were clearly understood by pupils and other adults in the classroom. In these lessons, skilful questioning and specific and positive re-enforcement led to good behaviour for learning as well as independent learning. In addition, learning often occurred at a good pace because pupils were engaged by creatively presented subject matter.
- Some teachers make excellent use of feedback to pupils and ensure that they respond positively.

- Learning programmes for KS3 and 4 pupils are based on an internal baseline assessment on entry and progress from hereon is well tracked.

Even Better If

... lesson planning always focussed on prior learning and precise next steps for individual pupils. This information should be clearly shared with pupils and other adults in the classroom so that there is a shared common understanding of what progress will look like.

...workbooks consistently indicated what level of achievement pupils are starting at and what are their precise next steps.

...the school's marking and feedback policy was applied consistently so that feedback is meaningful to pupils and that they respond to that feedback.

...lessons consistently modelled answers and provided scaffolding and key word lists for less able pupils.

... less use was made of instructional teaching and teachers used skilful questioning to engage all pupils.

.. internal baseline assessment for KS1 and 2 wss introduced.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

Attendance

Evidence of substantial and sustained impact on pupils' outcomes within the school.

- The improvement in attendance last year was remarkable. A 16.1% improvement was achieved because of a range of well thought-out strategies. The overall figure of 80.8% for 2014-2015 compares extremely well with the national PRU average figure of 68.1%. The improvement is clearly continuing this year.
- The school has analysed the degree to which better attendance has influenced pupil progress and there is a significant correlation.
- Improved attendance is one of the conditions imposed by mainstream school for re-integration and because of the improved attendance of individual pupils 16 of them were able to be re-integrated in the last school year.
- Records indicate a significant increase over the last year in pupils' attitudes and feelings about themselves; there was a 29.5% improvement in pupils' attitude towards attendance and a 43.2% increase in feelings about school.

Evidence capitalising on the area of excellent practice within the school.

- An emphasis on attendance has been incorporated in the planning done with parents, and other agencies, during the induction of pupils. This has had a positive effect and in turn has strengthened the quality of relationships with parents. This process has been shared with other TBAP schools.
- The links with other agencies have been strengthened as a result of the planning done on admission and have supported the development of a well co-ordinated, ongoing and constructive multi-disciplinary approach to agreed targets.

- The school has better motivated pupils by offering rewards in recognition of improved attendance and showing them the links between attendance and progress.

Partnerships

How have you used Challenge Partners schools to address your previous 'Even Better Ifs'?

- The school has worked with other TBAP schools to improve the self-evaluation process and report.
- The school has worked with other TBAP schools in considering a clear basket of indicators.
- The school has worked with other TBAP schools, and taken part in Challenge Partners training, to improve assessment and develop assessment beyond levels.

How have you worked with, or supported, other schools in Challenge Partners?

- Because the school required improvement it has not been in a position to offer advice and support elsewhere. However, this is no longer the case and the school is now able to offer support. The school has already worked with TBAP schools on attendance, which is now a confirmed area of excellence, and this is certainly practice that other schools would benefit from studying.

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.

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 some additional support with...

- Assessment without levels.
- Marking and feedback.