



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR LINDEN LODGE SCHOOL

Name of School:	Linden Lodge School
Headteacher/Principal:	Deborah Rix
Hub:	The SEN Hub
School phase:	3-19 Years
MAT (if applicable):	Southfields

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	31/01/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	This the school's first review
Date of last QA Review	Not applicable
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	31/01/2017

1. Context and character of the school

Linden Lodge school provides specialist provision for pupils aged 3-19. Pupils at the school have specialist sensory needs based around visual impairments (VI), hearing impairments (HI) and multi-sensory impairments (MSI). All of the pupils have a place at the school backed by clinicians. Pupils either have an education health and care plan (EHCP) or are undergoing assessment.

The school campus is on a three-acre site in Wimbledon based around a manor house. Linden Lodge started as a school for the blind in 1903. As a residential specialist school, the school has a provision for 24 residential pupils. Linden Lodge attracts pupils from 33 separate local authorities across England.

The school has 143 pupils on the school roll. It has a nursery and sixth form provision. The school is organised around seven departments with four curricula models based on formal, semi-formal, pre-formal and multi-sensory impairment strands. Pupils can be grouped by ability, age and/or cognitive stage.

The school has 297 staff including 26 NHS therapy staff through a CCG agreement. Each resource base has an allocation of a speech and language therapist (SALT), an occupational therapist (OT) and a physiotherapist (PT). Within this team there are four SALT dysphasia specialists. Almost 20% of the pupils at the school have specialist feeding plans.

All of the pupils are baselined on entry into the school using a range of assessments. This provides teaching colleagues with a rich range of targets to be written into each pupil's bespoke Personal Learning Goals (PLG).

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The inspirational headteacher has been on a developmental journey from the point where the school 'required improvement' (Ofsted 2015). The headteacher has led a wide range of changes from curricula to management and organisation structure, to specialist professional development pathways for all of the school's staff. This also included the integration of the NHS therapy teams onto the school site and into the Linden Lodge fold.
- All leaders are able to articulate the impact of the departments and provisions they lead and explain how they are able to evidence the progress they are making.
- Many of the classes at the school have high levels of staffing. This includes a wide range of specialists and therapists working in class to increase pupils' exposure to their learning. Where possible staffing is 'grown from within' through

performance management and continuing professional development. This has been further structured with the school's 'Building Capacity Strategy'.

- Leaders are planning for the needs of the pupils to come to the school against national and regional trends. The school is part of the National Sensory Impaired Partnerships pilot, tracking pupils' needs coming into specialist schools nationally.
- Leaders at Linden Lodge understand the importance of research and training to drive the quality of provision and outcomes at the school. To achieve this, they have an understanding with teaching staff that all teachers joining the school will undertake postgraduate studies with The University of Birmingham and Manchester in the specialist areas of VI, HI or MSI.
- The school staff works with Professor Adam Okleford at The University of Roehampton developing the Sounds of Intent programme. They also work at a research and development level with the British Institute of Learning Disability.
- Leaders have a vision that all members of staff are invested in and have the opportunity for development. This reflects the diversity of the workforce, their starting points and their potential. This further drives staff retention and their impact on pupils' progress within the curricula.
- Leaders have made a substantial commitment to support families through the family partnership. This links directly to clinical support from South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. This support reaped dividends during the pandemic lockdowns, building on the strengths of these relationships with each family having a key worker contacting them on a daily basis. This practice has been retained with tele-therapy and remote access which has created another dimension of high level engagement.
- Leaders also created a parent teacher association, 'community@lindenlodge'. This was undertaken with class groups and wider networks and included a daily newsletter, parents' own website and pointers for support. This work has been recognised by Parent Kind. They awarded the school two awards; 'National PTA of the Year' and 'Changing The Life of The School Community' in July 2021.

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

...when working with outside agencies, specialist leaders from within the school were chosen to articulate the narrative of the school's work as 'lead professionals'.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well...

- Teachers write detailed Personal Learning Goal maps (PLG) that are bespoke to each pupil's distinct needs. These can include targets on accessibility, English, mathematics, self-advocacy, habilitation, care and independence.
- Pupils have a huge range of physical support for their learning, from specialist chairs and switches, through to Braille and sensory technology to support their sensory and communication needs. For example, in one lesson pupils had the

support of the use of a Braille, a Braille technician, enlarged text (printed and online) and a SALT delivering a personal programme for one pupil in the lesson.

- There is a consistent high level of engagement by pupils. Within the pre-formal lessons this supports incremental steps in pupils' learning. For example, by creating a sensory story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' with red lighting, red material, red hats, red slime and red playdough transitioning into a green lit forest with tactile leaves swishing and forest smells. For the teaching professionals in class the engagement model was clear because the teacher modelled exceptional practice for the team. The new member of staff and a SALT worked together to develop their understanding of one pupils' communication needs.
- Each curricula strand has a mix of grouped and individual activities that is bespoke to the pupils PLGs. Leaders are clearly seeing the translation of the aims of each curricula strand into classroom provision.
- The high quality of deep relationships that the teaching and therapy team have developed fully supports pupils' learning. By reducing their background stress and creating a safe and caring environment pupils are able to open up in their learning. For example, during a PE lesson led by a specialist teacher for pupils in the MSI curriculum (chosen by stage, not age) two trained intervenors undertook body tactile signing using the deafblind manual alphabet. One physiotherapist supported the teacher, and a trained healthcare assistant supported a pupil with specific health needs.
- Across the resource bases and curricula, specialist staff demonstrate exceptional knowledge and understanding. For example, a discussion about well-being across the school was detailed and leaders clearly articulated the planned strategy in action. A leader said, 'Mental health and well-being is the responsibility of everyone.'
- Assessment for and of learning is gathered from a range of activities. These assessments are recorded in a number of ways using a 'basket of indicators' to show pupil progress in a way that is pertinent to the pupils' curricula strand. This could be on Earwig or Tapestry in the pre-formal curriculum or in Entry Level and GCSE work in the formal curriculum. This means that leaders are able to share each pupil's bespoke journey from their baseline assessments into the next stage of each pupil's employment, education or training. Last year the school had 22 leavers and no pupils were NEET. The lead for the sixth form tracks pupils' success at the next stage of their provision and this links back into the quality assurance of the school's CIEAG.
- The therapy support and specialist support in lessons at Linden Lodge is exceptional. The headteacher has built a CCG funded provision that is 'best in class' and is open to sharing how this was achieved with the wider specialist school community across the country.
- Teachers and leaders show real ambition and enjoyment of the pupils' success in their learning. At times this success is shared across the wider therapeutic team 'in the moment'.

- At Linden Lodge the personalised approach to teaching and learning means that every pupil has a slightly different curriculum diet. As the fairly new lead for the Pre-Formal Curriculum shared, 'At this school, differentiation means different'.

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

...when new members of staff join the school, they have more frequent reviews and support from leaders to quickly enable them match the high collegiate standard at the school.

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

- Pupils at this school have specialist sensory needs that need a wide range of professional support. Much of this support is available at the school on a bespoke basis. This includes TAs; HLTAs; subject specialists TAs; habilitationists; in class SALT, OT and Physios; Positive Behaviour Support Champions and functional behaviour accessors, accredited by the British Institute for Learning Disability; Team Teach specialists; SENSE intervenors; Braille technician; BSL and Makaton signers; deafblind tactile signers; rebound therapists; and health care assistants.
- The specialist support provided by the school to the pupils is not fixed and is a continuing project. Consequently, this list is not exhaustive and is being further developed and refined year on year by leaders.

5. Area of Excellence

The Linden Lodge Interdisciplinary Curriculum

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 headteacher and leaders at the school have developed collaborative interventions by specialist teams. To achieve this the school has a refined understanding of the roles of health and care colleagues and how best to engage them to support pupil outcomes.

This means that at times the language and project approach of colleagues in the

aspiration and delivery of EHCPs is exceptional because it stands out as unique practice against the aspiration of the 2015 SEND Code of Practice.

This includes a planned change to practice, resulting in clinical commissioning group funded therapists on site and in class (SALT, including dysphagia specialists, OT and Physio) employed by Linden Lodge School at no cost to the school's education budget.

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

All pupils make expected or exceeding progress against a 'basket of indicators' linking to their bespoke needs. Pupils sustain deeper and more prolonged levels of progress due to a curriculum drawing on the expertise and combined perspective of specialist teachers, therapists and creative therapeutic arts.

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

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

To build a collegiate group of special school leaders to share data and evidence in relation to specific pupil groups (for example pre-formal pupils in Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) on data that is not available nationally (for example attendance and persistent absence).

Also, to build the capacity for special school partners to discuss the specific safeguarding context of the special school sector.

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.



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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 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.