

# Watergate School Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) 2025-26

## Context...

- Watergate is a primary special school in the London Borough of Lewisham, for pupils aged 4 -11 years, presenting primarily with severe or profound learning difficulties, and associated complex needs, including autism spectrum condition. The school is currently based on two sites, one at Bellingham and a temporary site at Ladywell. All 186 pupils on roll have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), and come from across Lewisham and surrounding boroughs.
- The school is supported by a multi-disciplinary team including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and specialist teachers for visual and hearing impairment.
- Watergate has a diverse pupil population. As a majority of pupils are socially disadvantaged, Watergate aims to provide an “equity” of offer, developing cultural capital to facilitate their progression into secondary provision and beyond.
- 41.3% of pupils are in receipt of Pupil Premium. 37.1% of pupils are currently are in receipt of Free School Meals.
- The ethnicity of pupils represents the diverse demographics of this part of South East London.
- Watergate have adopted a low-arousal approach to supporting behaviour, we believe that all behaviours are a form of communication. We use Relational Support Plans and are part of the restraint reduction network.

## Our Strengths...

### Safeguarding

- ✓ Extensive experience and excellent procedures to recognise and act on any concerns related to the welfare and wellbeing of pupils
- ✓ Staff are confident that concerns raised are investigated and acted upon
- ✓ A wide range of communication methods gain the voice of pupils
- ✓ Our welcoming, calm environment and low arousal approach to behaviour supports pupils to feel safe, happy and relaxed in school
- ✓ We proactively teach and support our pupils to develop the understanding and skills they need to safeguard themselves
- ✓ Families are confident to seek support from our Family Support Worker, Leadership Team and teachers

### Inclusion

- ✓ We recognise that all pupils, regardless of their setting, deserve the right to have their needs met, lead happy and healthy lives and meet their full potential
- ✓ We provide positive behaviour support for staff and families and work with multi-disciplinary colleagues to provide holistic and bespoke support for individual pupils
- ✓ We help outside sporting organisations provide access for our children to sporting activities and community holiday schemes
- ✓ We are part of the Lewisham SEND Strategic Board
- ✓ We have robust transitions for pupils joining and leaving Watergate
- ✓ We work with Attendance & Welfare, Social Services and Multi-disciplinary teams to support all pupils to attend school

<b>Curriculum &amp; Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Our bespoke curriculum facilitates exceptional progress for all pupils from their starting points, academically, physically, socially and emotionally, equipping them for lifelong learning, positive wellbeing and inclusion within the wider community.</li> <li>✔ We are a centre of excellence for MOVE</li> <li>✔ Communication is embedded throughout the day; our total communication approach recognises and values all forms of communication.</li> </ul>
<b>Achievement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Pupils make exceptional progress from their starting points in their learning, communication, understanding, behaviour and wellbeing.</li> <li>✔ Pupils are very well prepared for transition into their secondary provision and later life</li> <li>✔ We are proud of our pupils' achievements and celebrate these in a variety of ways</li> </ul>
<b>Attendance &amp; Behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Attendance is consistently well above the national average for SEN primary schools</li> <li>✔ Our low arousal approach has a positive impact on attendance, engagement in learning and behaviour</li> <li>✔ Our Relational Support Plans focus on building positive relationships and the strategies which support pupils to manage their regulation</li> <li>✔ We are part of the Restraint Reduction Network and we do not implement restraint methods</li> <li>✔ <i>"Staff recognise that all pupils' behaviour is communication, understanding that any distress or inappropriate action is a pupils' way of telling them something. Staff do not use sanctions but skillfully build trusting relationships with pupils, altering their responses accordingly. This is highly effective and the school is very calm and orderly."</i> Challenge Partners May 2025</li> <li>✔ We work closely with colleagues from health, SEND and Social Care to quickly identify and provide a multi-agency approach to address any potential barriers to attendance</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Development &amp; Wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ We understand and support our pupils different learning, physical, emotional and social difficulties to ensure that their needs are met, they feel safe and secure and take risks in the next steps of their learning and development</li> <li>✔ We understand the often immense effort required by pupils to organise themselves and engage purposefully in learning opportunities</li> <li>✔ Pupils demonstrate exceptional resilience and determination to achieve and overcome any barriers which may inhibit their progress</li> <li>✔ Tailored learning opportunities for to children develop skills and understanding related to healthy, positive, safe relationships. Where appropriate, highly individualised learning related to personal development and sex education is created and implemented</li> <li>✔ All pupils have personal development targets reflected in their learning intentions and IEPs</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership &amp; Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Leaders have a broad range of skills, are forward thinking, reflective and seek to improve the practices of other local schools and provisions</li> <li>✔ Our Governors have a balance of skills and ensure that the school maintains high quality provision and looks for innovative ways forward</li> <li>✔ The Challenge Partner review, May 2025, found <i>"Leaders have a strong, aspirational vision and exceedingly robust 'can do' attitudes, providing a highly effective foundation for pupils' independence, confidence, communication and life-long learning."</i></li> <li>✔ Leaders have high expectations for all members of the school community and hold staff to account for pupil progress and behaviour</li> </ul>

<b>Early Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Our curriculum, practices and policies are fully adapted to meet the needs of pupils starting Watergate in Reception</li> <li>✔ Our holistic curriculum ensures children have access to learning opportunities across all 7 areas of learning and development, underpinned by a foundation of communication</li> <li>✔ Children routinely reach the expected levels of progress against their identified strengths and needs</li> <li>✔ We are ambitious in our expectations for pupils</li> <li>✔ Children's well-being and regulation is supported by all staff with a focus on developing relationships and providing a secure base. This ensures that children are able to develop independence and confidently access all learning opportunities.</li> </ul>
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**School improvement priorities...**

<b>Safeguarding</b>	→ Focus on proactively teaching pupils to develop the understanding and skills they need to safeguard and reduce the risks of harm and abuse to themselves
<b>Inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Expand outreach offer to mainstream schools to support pupils with SLD</li> <li>→ Review topic planners termly to ensure our curriculum reflects Watergate's diverse community</li> <li>→ To audit the curriculum to ensure Watergate's diverse community is reflected in all areas of the curriculum</li> <li>→ Further develop inclusion opportunities for Watergate pupils and mainstream peers</li> <li>→ Provide more opportunities for pupils to become part of the wider community locally and borough wide</li> <li>→ Increase opportunities for engagement within our community for parents/carers of children with SEN from other schools through workshops and coffee mornings</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum &amp; Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Refine the curriculum to ensure it remains meaningful for all pupils</li> <li>→ Map Educational Visits to ensure they enhance the school's curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>Achievement</b>	→ Provide an assessment system to capture the progress of pupils who are working beyond the school's curriculum
<b>Attendance &amp; Behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Support for families whose children are absent from school</li> <li>→ Continue to promote our low arousal approach within and beyond school to provide strategies to support the children at Watergate and in other settings</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Development &amp; Wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Further opportunities for pupils to have their say and play an active role in their learning, health, safety and wellbeing.</li> <li>→ Outreach work providing training to support the personal development and wellbeing of SEN pupils in mainstream</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership &amp; Governance</b>	→ Continue to ensure that all SLT have a consistent coaching approach
<b>Early Years</b>	→ Review EYFS continuous provision for with a focus on communication and independence