

Name of School:	Watergate
Head teacher:	Aine Ni Ruairc
Hub:	South East London
School type:	Foundation Special

Estimate at this QA Review:	Outstanding
Date of this Review:	31/01/2018
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	07/04/2017

Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising of host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

School Improvement Strategies	Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Outstanding
Area of Excellence	Accredited
Overall Estimate	Outstanding

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.

1. Information about the school

- Watergate school is a special, primary school. It caters for pupils whose chronological ages are from statutory school age through to Year 6.
- Pupils' attainment on entry is always well below that expected for their age.
- All pupils have severe learning difficulties (SLD). 50% have autism. Approximately 20% have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).
- All pupils have either an education, health and care plan (EHCP) or a statement of special educational needs.
- There are currently 109 pupils on roll, learning in 12 class groups. More than two-thirds are boys. Watergate is currently oversubscribed.
- Pupils are grouped according to their age and their specific needs.
- Approximately 75% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- One third of families have a first language other than English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- Many pupils transfer from Watergate to Greenvale (a local special, secondary provider).
- The headteacher has been in post for five years and has been associated with the school since 1994.
- There are 15 teachers and approximately 65 classroom-based staff.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- The school culture is constantly changing as the nature of pupils' needs change. There is a determination to provide the very best provision for the pupils the school serves.
- Leaders strive to learn about and share best practice. They provide training for PGCE students from Greenwich University. Students receive specific input from Watergate staff on autism and a range of learning difficulties and disabilities.
- The rationale for professional development is to draw on relevant expertise. As such, leaders seek out and use external expertise in special education. They also utilise mainstream personnel, for example when exploring effective, generic teaching and learning. This is recognised as one of the best training examples as staff reflected what best teaching practice looks like at Watergate. This is one reason why Watergate joined the mainstream Challenge Partners hub, as opposed to special.
- Leaders have carried out a skills audit and analysis for support staff. All staff can view the analysis, which reflects the open culture at Watergate. Support staff engage in annual performance management processes, as do teachers.
- The school invests in succession planning. For example, five middle leaders are currently aspiring to senior roles. Models, such as the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders, are used to develop both individuals and specific projects in school. One example, 'make a move', is now built into physical objectives across the school.
- Watergate's curriculum was revised in 2014. Subject leaders researched schools

which had demonstrated effective practice in their subjects. Leaders are now considering another review in light of the Rochford review. As a result of their evaluation of the curriculum, leaders have learned about how some groups of pupils benefit more or less from the curriculum than others. Changes have been made to pupil groupings.

- Intervention work is an area of best practice. Pupil case studies demonstrate positive impact from such intervention, reflecting on targets written on individual education plans. The leader of this provision is free during interventions to observe and monitor the teaching and learning.
- A common theme during the review was the drive to make a difference to pupils' lives. Recently purchased resources include developing technologies, such as portable 'eye gaze' devices. This example enables pupils to make more frequent use of the product, including at home. As a result, pupils are better able to communicate their feelings.
- Leaders make pupils' social communication and emotional regulation a priority. Hence their implementation of SCERTS (social communication, emotional regulation and transactional support) provides additional social challenge for pupils when communicating. An effective example was seen at snack time. Here, pupils were expected to use more advanced pictorial strategies, stating which members of staff they needed to communicate with in order to receive food.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...

...leaders conducted a skills audit for each teacher and reflected on subsequent analysis to inform professional development.

...leaders considered how best to measure the extent to which pupils are developing through their learning.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well

- Leaders' evaluation of teaching performance over the past twelve months indicates the following strengths: questioning and allowing sufficient time for pupils' response; maximising learning time in lessons; frequent provision of over learning; appropriate challenge for different abilities and immediate feedback for pupils. There are no generic areas for further improvement; rather bespoke aspects for individual teachers to consider.
- Classroom staff demonstrate secure subject knowledge and understanding of pupils' strengths and barriers to learning. Tasks are designed carefully to motivate pupils well. Staff are flexible in lessons, changing the provision according to pupils' responses. An example was seen in a music lesson, where instruments which had best impact evoking pupils' response were selected and played.
- Teachers are leaders of their classrooms. They facilitate effective engagement between support staff and pupils. In essence, this is true professional development. Developing skill sets in adults as well as pupils is a complex skill to master. Empathetic relationships between support staff and pupils promote

learning effectively.

- Lessons observed demonstrated teachers' skilful variation of pace. This provided time for pupils to respond and to enable suitable transition between activities. For example, one pupil accessed the trampoline very quickly due to clear routines understood by all adults. This example helps to illustrate the submitted area of excellence.
- Watergate has a positive whole school ethos. The climate in classrooms is healthy, due to effective non-verbal communication between staff. There is clear respect for each other, both pupils and adults. This results in trust, which is very important given the potential distraction from the number of visitors in classrooms through a typical day.
- The school invests heavily in its support staff. This is because leaders understand and value this resource. Watergate enjoys relatively high adult to pupil ratios when compared with other similar schools. Support staff facilitate and lead learning effectively.
- A significant number of pupils need to regulate their emotions in order to access learning. Teachers and support staff know what how to engage with individual pupils to ensure this occurs. Potential challenging behaviour is defused skilfully.
- Teachers convey learning as being fun. They use humour appropriately with colleagues and pupils. This, coupled with a minimum use of language, contributes well to a positive learning ethos. There is a 'lightness about learning', with staff demonstrating a 'relaxed state of alertness'. Pupils are secure in their learning environments as they know what to expect day-to-day. Strategies designed to support pupils are often invisible, as they are embedded in routines. Effective examples were seen at lunchtime, where pupils were selecting foods and disposing of waste with a minimum of fuss.
- Learning environments have been effectively created to support pupils with differing needs. Staff are skilled at finding pupils' preferred methods of communication. They make effective use of technology to give pupils a voice, for example headswitch. Therapists, including speech and language, contribute well to this provision. Such work ensures that Watergate provides equality of opportunity.

3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if...

- ...all pupils had access to 'hands on' practical resources, to reduce waiting time and increase learning time.
- ...teachers considered if pupils would gain more by working on activities distinct from the main group.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- Watergate defines expected progress as half of one P level per year, based on national progression guidance. Using this rationale, outcomes are strong. The

inclusion leader is considering how to create groups for higher functioning pupils, to challenge such pupils further.

- The school moderates with ten other special schools in the south east London and north Kent locality. These schools offer a variety of provision. Moderation is robust, as sessions are facilitated by staff from these schools who have developed their expertise. Standardised files have been created for reference. The collaborative also draws on external sources. This work is very important to Watergate, as pupils' performance in exceeding their expectations needs to be verified.
- Leaders and staff understand the importance of talking about achievement in a holistic sense. The prime focus is on pupils' academic development, but they acknowledge how different provision, such as communication support, contributes to academic progress. Leaders are always watching out for pupils who are 'flat lining', so not making the progress expected.
- Although very few in number, some pupils would benefit from mainstream provision. This is because their specific academic attainment is at national expectation.
- Leaders, staff and other professionals, such as health, reflect on pupils' progress. They work together to ensure that changes are made to teaching, where progress is not as strong as it should be. This has led to leaders understanding why there are strengths and weaknesses in current progress rates across the school.
- The Year 5 cohort is complex, with pupils working at very early cognitive levels. This group flags up as a weaker cohort when compared with other year groups. Senior leaders are carefully monitoring this group, with early signs of improved performance seen.
- Currently, pupils make the strongest progress in English. Documentation shows that pupils' progress in personal, social, health and economic education is weakest. Leaders are curious about this and are considering more appropriate assessment tools for this subject, to ensure that information is reliable and valid.
- Teachers have dedicated planning and evaluation time, in addition to their PPA entitlement. This occurs at the beginning of each term, where teachers meet with speech and language therapists to prepare teaching plans. Then, at the end of each term, they evaluate the provision. This demonstrates the commitment of leaders to both supporting staff development as well as continually improving provision for pupils.

5. Area of Excellence

The Mobility Opportunities Via Education (MOVE) programme.

The programme, from Enham Trust, targets the physical development of pupils with physical difficulties and disabilities.

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?

Watergate was accredited with the Quality Mark in January 2017. It is a centre of excellence. Since July 2017, school leaders have trained staff from other schools. The school leader for MOVE has visited other schools to deliver training. Senior leaders recognise that MOVE is an expensive, but good value for money, initiative. They have invested time and money as they understand the importance of pupils' physical development and communication. Their work is making a huge difference to pupils' and families' quality of life. This is an excellent example of helping to ensure equality of opportunity.

Pupils with PMLD and physical difficulties have benefited the most through this programme. The focus is on functional mobility. This can be missing in the provision of other settings. Research shows that pupils with PMLD require repeated teaching to consolidate an action. MOVE enables physiotherapy to be integrated into provision. Written programmes for individual pupils are implemented by all staff throughout the day. Parents also have their child's programme. This enables them to continue the provision out of school because modified language and activities are used to ensure that this is practical in the home. Realistic and ambitious goals are centred around the pupil and family. MOVE groups are facilitated by leaders for staff and parents. Photographs are presented to model what is required, for example, how to manoeuvre up the stairs.

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

- MOVE objectives are built into classroom work to enable pupils to interact with the environment.
- MOVE objectives are integrated into teaching. For example, when engaging in storytelling, pupils' posture and mobility objectives are taught.
- Leaders have supported staff effectively in gaining an awareness of the potential of MOVE. Staff are ambitious for the pupils.
- Leaders support staff in developing practical skills. Staff working with pupils with PMLD are now exceptionally skilled. Sessions are scheduled to ensure frequent and systematic provision.
- Support staff work with pupils, both in specified sessions, in classrooms and around school.
- When delivering training in other schools, the MOVE leader takes colleagues with her. This enhances expertise back at Watergate.

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

Impact is seen in classrooms as teaching benefits from MOVE. In one observation, embedded routine, clear adult roles and rapid pace all contributed to the pupil maximising learning time on a trampoline. In the session, the teacher challenged the pupil well by taking her out of her comfort zone. This resulted in the pupil developing

better balance and strength.

Experts, including physiotherapists, contribute to the writing of individual plans. Clear incremental steps are stated, for example, detailing the progression required to be able to stand at a sink. These plans demonstrate progress well.

Support staff provide a link between MOVE sessions and classroom work, as they travel with the pupils through the learning day.

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

Katie Chapman

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

Nothing at present.

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.