QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR THE GROVE SCHOOL

Name of School:	The Grove School
Headteacher/Principal:	Lucia Santi
Hub:	London Special & AP Hub
School phase:	Special 5 -19 years
MAT (if applicable):	The SEARCH Education Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	N/A
Date of this Review:	14/05/2025
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	N/A
Date of last QA Review	03/05/2023
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	28/02/2023

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Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all levels N/A

Quality of provision and outcomes AND Quality of provision and **outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs**
N/A

Area of excellence N/A

Previously accredited valid **areas of excellence**
N/A

Overall peer evaluation estimate N/A

Important information

- The QA Review provides a peer evaluation of a school's practice in curriculum, teaching and learning, and leadership. It is a voluntary and developmental process, and the peer review team can evaluate and offer 'peer evaluation estimates' based only on what the school chooses to share with them.

- The QA Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.

- The QA Review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. If you choose to share this report, or extracts thereof, externally (e.g. on your website or with parents), please ensure that it is accompanied with the following text:

  Challenge Partners is a charity working to advance education for the public benefit.

We are not a statutory accountability body. The QA Review does not audit schools' safeguarding or behaviour policies and practices. However, Lead Reviewers and visiting reviewers are expected to follow Challenge Partners' safeguarding policy and report any concerns as set out in the procedures.

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REVIEW REPORT FOR THE GROVE SCHOOL

1. Context and character of the school

The Grove is a free school for pupils aged 5 to 19 years in Haringey. It is one of two schools within the SEARCH Education Trust. All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) with a primary diagnosis of autism; many pupils have co occurring diagnosis including Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD); Speech Language Communication Needs; Social, Emotional and Mental Health barriers to learning and/or obsessive-compulsive disorder. Several pupils present with significant challenging behaviours.

The school serves a diverse community with most pupils coming from the London Borough of Haringey. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is in line with the national average. Just under half of pupils are disadvantaged which is well above the national average. Most pupils are working significantly lower than their age expectations. The school has significantly grown in pupil numbers since opening in 2018.

The Grove's vision is 'To make a difference and change lives for the better' through their mission to 'Inspire Excellence, Challenge Potential and Empower Learning.' Everything is underpinned through the core SEARCH values of 'Support, Empathy, Acceptance, Resilience, Compassion and Honesty'.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Leaders have created a culture where adults and pupils feel valued and flourish. Leaders are proud of their pupils' achievement.
- Leaders at all levels are ambitious and driven to secure the very best outcomes for all pupils. Leaders' decisions put pupils at the centre and are based on research and evidence-based practice. Leaders are passionate and determined that their Sixth form pupils are ready for life beyond The Grove.
- Leaders have developed an excellent, sequenced curriculum that aligns with national frameworks and entitlement across all 'phases' and 'pathways'. The Grove curriculum is shaped with a golden thread of knowledge and skills woven throughout the 'pathways' and has repeated opportunities to revisit and overlearn key information.
- Recent restructuring within middle leadership roles has resulted in new faculty

leads leading areas of the curriculum. Senior leaders ensure that leaders and teachers have the time and support to fulfil their roles. Faculty leaders' aspiration for every pupil ensures that the curriculum is broad, balanced and

participative. As a result, pupils access and achieve appropriate accreditations alongside being able to follow their own strengths and interests. ● The Grove curriculum has been developed with all staff and is regularly reviewed, refined and adapted. For example, leaders have recently added key vocabulary and project teams are currently revising the 'informal pathway'. ● Senior leaders have structured an extremely well-planned professional development programme for all staff, including introducing an 'instructional coaching culture'. Faculty leads facilitate whole school targeted sessions using analysis from their quality assurance activities. For example, promoting a consistent standard of literacy across the curriculum.

- Using the information from walk throughs and/or instructional coaching develops both autism practice alongside pedagogy, which are bespoke for teachers, trainee teachers and aspiring teachers. For example, use of attention autism principles and use of core boards. Weekly class meetings help ensure that class teams understand expectations.
- The Grove bespoke Assessment Framework tracks pupils' progress. It is aligned precisely to the planned curriculum. Leaders are committed to ensuring that their system tracks progress and identifies 'gaps'. The assessment information is used to plan future learning and ensure security and fluency within foundational knowledge.
- Moderation activities, including professional dialogue and work scrutiny, ensure that teachers are confident using The Grove Assessment Framework. Information is shared with families through their child's annual review process and termly reviews.
- Leaders have recently implemented their phonics programme within the primary phase/model. Phonics sessions are taught at the same time, enabling pupils to be taught in targeted groups, including exploring environmental sounds within Phase 1. Pupils are making progress with their early reading skills.
- Staff value pupil voice. Pupils say that they are listened to. School council members make a positive contribution to school life, in particular improving activities in the playground, including a large snakes and ladders board and shade canopy. Pupils shared that they are 'proud of their school', that 'staff are caring, friendly and help us out especially with our mental health.'

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if…

… senior leaders further supported faculty leaders to prioritise collaboratively so there is consistent alignment to the school improvement strategy.
… leaders and teachers further explored reading/writing approaches and strategies for Pathway 3 and Pathway 4 secondary pupils, beyond the existing targeted interventions, including the 'love of reading' and 'explicit writing expectations across the curriculum'.
… sixth form pupils had the opportunity to practise their work skills by opening their café for younger pupils.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- The incredibly calm ethos radiates throughout The Grove. Adults model calm responses, often talking through incidents. As a result, pupils remain calm too. ● Readiness for learning at The Grove is paramount. Pupils are at the centre of both decision-making and learning experiences. Explicit strategies and approaches prepare pupils extremely well for the day. For example, most pupils access personalised sensory activities on arrival at school, ensuring they have the very best start to their day.
- The consistent use of known systems and structures ensures that pupils understand the routine of the day. Typically, this includes the use of visual timetables, 'owned' personal schedules, verbal countdowns and timers. Consequently, start/finish times and transitions are actioned smoothly and without disruption. The consistent use of vocabulary boards results in high engagement and participation; pupils point to key words to increase their vocabulary in English. In physical education, pupils were able to perform hockey skills with care and increasing accuracy.
- Support staff know their pupils well. They effectively model routines, resulting in regulated, motivated pupils and seamless transitions, such as within morning routines and circle time. Adults within Key Stages 2 and 3 provide support at the right level, encouraging independence, problem solving skills and perseverance with science activities.
- The intentional, proactive and scheduled movement breaks ensure pupils maintain focus, remain self-regulated and, therefore, avoid cognitive overload. Consequently, pupils anticipate their break, independently choose strategies, spaces and resources and refocus on learning as planned.

- Class teams create a learning environment which allows pupils to make mistakes. Positive, trusting relationships between adults and pupils enable mutual regulation, such as in a Key Stage 2 science lesson following an incident with spilt water, and in enabling discussions where pupils felt confident and comfortable to speak freely.
- Teachers' deep understanding of pupils' special educational needs, positive relational approach, alongside their skilful and unobtrusive adaptations result in barriers for learning being removed for all pupils so that pupils make progress. For example, within a Key Stage 4 mathematics lesson, pupils confidently multiplied integers and decimals by ten. Teachers plan precisely, scaffold and resource activities effectively, enabling pupils to access and identify themes within a complex text. For example, in a Key Stage 4 Pathway 3 English lesson, pupils explored 'Anne Frank's Diary'. Teachers' dynamic and skilful questioning enabled pupils to respond with secure understanding to a new text, 'Treasure Island'.
- The Grove Sixth form's robust curriculum gives pupils opportunities to practise and improve their literacy, numeracy and information, communication and technology skills alongside application of personal and work-based learning skills. Pupils demonstrate a sense of belonging, enjoy their enterprise activities and links with employers. They value the additional opportunities for choice. Leaders have introduced an 'employment transition' programme supported by the local Trust secondary school, Heartlands.
- Preparation for adulthood strategies, which are grounded within The Grove vision, ensures that pupils across all pathways move to appropriate destinations including college, supported internships, community projects and/or stay at The Grove.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if…

… Key Stage 4 support staff further facilitated 'stepping back' and 'encouraging independence' in learning.

… teachers took greater risks to plan for more dynamic, participative and playful activities to help Pathway 3 and Pathway 4 pupils remember key information and deepen their understanding of more complex ideas.

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

- Leaders thoughtfully group pupils, taking account of their detailed assessment information which captures understanding of pupils' strengths and barriers to learning. For example, Social Communication Emotional Regulation Transactional Supports (SCERTS) stages, social and emotional skills and academic ability. Consequently, pupils can access their planned learning successfully.
- Working with University College London (UCL), leaders have simplified the language and made the SCERTS assessment platform more user friendly. Each assessment has a descriptor, and assessments create a strength-based image which, in turn, is used to inform a sequenced next step. As a result of this re-prioritised work, leaders have seen greater precision and personalisation within their Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs). For example, a target to 'express emotions and ask for help' is explicitly taught and modelled throughout the day using transactional support.
- PLPs are regularly reviewed and co-produced with families each term. Information within PLPs helps families engage with targets and activities at home. This increases independence in preparation for adulthood.
- Additionally, leaders facilitate family workshops to help families understand and support strategies at home and in the community. Leaders seek parental views around workshop themes and commission external professionals to lead effective sessions. For example, the ADHD Foundation. Parents feel empowered and use their new skills and knowledge to support their child at home and within the community.
- The universal adapted Positive Behaviour Strategy is embedded within The Grove. All staff are trained. Skilled leaders confidently and professionally challenge staff (and families) behaviours and/or language that may impact on regulation. As a result, there has been an increase in positive behaviours and a significant decrease in physical interventions.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if…

… leaders facilitated training for all staff to enable greater understanding of the theory attached to 'alerting', 'organising' and 'calming' approaches within sensory circuits, and ensured the consistent and effective use of visuals to support pupils' independence and self-regulation.

5. Area of Excellence

N/A

Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse content reports from across the hub networks including using AI tools to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector (sharing these with the partnership) each year. The QA Review reports remain confidential to Challenge Partners and the host school. This ensures that schools embrace the review as a development process, acting as a catalyst for their ongoing improvement. This is the primary purpose of the QA review. However, our aim is that the thematic analysis will demonstrate the additional value of a sector wide overview, illustrated with real-life examples.

For further support following your QA Review, 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. The School Support Directory can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website. (https://www.challengepartners.org/)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching learning-toolkit)