

Name of School:	Corbets Tey School
Headteacher/Principal:	Emma Allen
Hub:	London Special and AP Hub
School phase:	4-19 Special School
MAT (if applicable):	Not Applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Not applicable
Date of this Review:	03/05/2023
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	First Review
Date of last QA Review	First Review
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	21/03/2018

Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all levels Not Applicable

Quality of provision and outcomes Not Applicable

AND

Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs

Area of excellence Not Applicable

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence Not Applicable

Overall peer evaluation estimate Not Applicable

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

1. Context and character of the school

The school is a state maintained special school for 155 pupils aged 4-19, with 180 staff. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The school caters for pupils with complex learning needs. Provision is provided on two sites, one for pre-16 pupils based in Upminster and the other for post 16 pupils via The Avelon in Rainham. There is a split between 75% boys, compared to 25% girls. All pupils have communication and interaction needs as their main presenting need with 50% of pupils who have autism, and a small number with medical, physical and sensory needs.

Recently there have been some changes in the school's senior leadership team with the loss of an assistant headteacher, but there is a plan to add a further deputy headteacher in September 2023.

The school was awarded Specialist status in Communication and Interaction in 2007 and was redesignated in 2010.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Senior leaders have a strong vision for the school exemplified by the headteacher's mantra of '100% engagement, all day, every day,' alongside the notion that the school has very long arms to support its community.
- The engagement element was demonstrated in every classroom. It was also seen during play times, within a rebound therapy session and transitions. Staff discussion demonstrated that it was a clear priority. This has led to a calm, purposeful school where pupils love to be. They are proud of the school and willingly engage with new visitors. Pupils consistently showed respect, kindness, and appropriate curiosity, usually with a huge smile of their face!
- The climate for learning is one of mutual trust, promotion of personalised learning, and care for pupils and for staff. This has resulted in all members of Corbets Tey school belonging to a large, extended family.
- One to one staff training took place for a new member of the team. This promoted and demonstrated the care and well-being that staff have for each other, which also generated an atmosphere of self-reflection as a core element of the climate for the school and its staff development program.
- Corbet Tey delivers a comprehensive and long-established range of training programmes for colleagues beyond the school. Training has included specific courses on improving behaviour, communication and interventions, support for staff in a newly established school, sensory needs and maximising learning and progress for complex learners. By the end of this academic year,

all 66 schools within the borough will have been offered training by the school. Post training surveys have indicated high satisfaction rates, including one where all participants rated the training as excellent. This again demonstrated the long reach the school has within its own locality. The school has added capacity, knowledge and skills for staff in dealing with pupils with complex learning needs.

- Staff induction, training, and support, is of high quality and has reduced the ongoing challenge of recruiting and retaining high quality professionals within the special school sector. This has resulted in the recruitment of five Early Career Teachers (ECT) for this year and the inception of a Corbets Tey 'Recruitment Fair'. 80 interested parties attended the event, ranging from potential deputy headteachers, teachers, and teaching assistants. This took place within the last month and six staff will have started by the end of May.
- Co-production is high on the Corbets Tey agenda, using development planning for the school and curriculum plans for all subjects which has created a restless curiosity for what adaptations can be made next for individuals, classes, the school and their families.
- There is a clear route for teaching assistants (TA) to become teaching staff if they wish, which is financially supported by the school. A member of the senior leadership team has taken this route from TA to leading a team of Family Support Workers. This has created clear pathways for progression for staff over time.

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

- ... clearly documented minutes demonstrated the strong governor culture of support and challenge.
- ... there was the development of middle leader posts and training to extend the leadership capacity of the school.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- There are three pathways for students when entering the school which includes, Orchard (Key Stage 3 and 4), Forest (Key Stage 3 and 4) and Post 16. Each aspect has its own distinct flavour, with high levels of flexibility, staff support, personalisation and respect. Pupils have thrived upon this diet and have made rapid progress from starting points. This was demonstrated via a 1-1 rebound therapy session, where a child developed motor skills alongside verbal communication, as well as another pupil learning to wait their turn.
- Pupils were encouraged to take risks with their thinking in relation to a literacy lesson, and within a class where pupils were encouraged to develop

independent living skills by making breakfast in a safe and appropriate manner.

- Teaching assistants' support and passion for pupil progress are exemplified in their deep and purposeful relationships with pupils. This was seen in every lesson exploration which equated to 10 different classes, in all Key Stages.
- Behaviour for learning was exemplary amongst the student body and the strong focus on a supportive curriculum, high levels of differentiation and a vast range and use of communication tools showed this to be the case.
- Pupils make rapid progress from very insecure and challenging starting points and the school starts immediately by removing communication barriers to learning for each individual child.
- Tools that support curriculum engagement have included Eye Gaze, Symbols and Big Mac. This was highlighted during the school council meeting with some pupils using their own voice and words, others using an iPad and some using signing. They were confident in articulating their hopes and dreams and one pupil sang a wonderful rendition of Blondies 'Heart of Glass'. which left all parties in awe!
- Video evidence highlights pupils using both verbal commands and I-pad systems to communicate as required. One pupil was seen saying their very first word since joining the school, during a play session.
- A further example of enhancing communication was noted, where the school supported a parent and child to ensure the pupil could fit in with siblings. This resulted in the pupil accessing commands on his iPad at home using Alexa!
- The Deputy Headteacher provided a case study of a pupil who had only been able to maintain 10 minutes of attendance per day in a previous learning environment, but at Corbets Tey was accessing full time provision. The school's approach to using communication as a behaviour and their 'pairing' process enables quick, and when needed, repeated, 'ready to learn' support and therefore increased engagement.

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

... the school adopted a more formal coaching culture that helped to support staff in the consideration of how to maximise outcomes for pupils' increasingly complex needs

... all staff consistently promoted the opportunity to extend pupils to the next level whenever the opportunity arose.

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

- As all pupils arrive at the school with a form of disadvantage, the school focuses on the use of technology to promote inclusion and equity of access to opportunity. Video examples of pupils using a range of technology in differing situations highlights this. iPads now dominate as a communication tool with between 65% and 100% of each year group making use of them.
- Provision is extended beyond the usual curriculum entitlement for all pupils so they can experience 'magic moment' days, alongside other curriculum enhancements. These included the Key Stage Four Prom, access to local facilities such as the Cinema, supported living, and a challenging but more suitable selection of external examination routes.
- There is a consistent thread of life skills for pupils throughout their Corbets Tey school experience. This allows pupils to confidently access the community when ready, and with various levels of support. During the review, Key Stage 5 pupils arranged duvets, sorted and folded clothing, prepared lunch for the rest of the class, in preparation for life after Corbets Tey.
- Heavy investment in parent support is another core pillar of the school which creates trusting relationships and secure educational progress. One parent wrote: 'Such wonderful support from the headmistress and all the staff. You are made to feel very much part of the school at all times. You will always be communicated with about your child and the school will always have their best interests at heart'. 'As a parent I have never worried about my son during his 12 years of him being at Corbets Tey. My son has thrived and enjoys his time at school.'

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

- ... the school had greater time and resource so that support for carers and families could be extended and have more impact
- ... additional space was created to generate a wider range of provision for pupils, over time, to address their increasingly complex needs.

5. Area of Excellence

Not applicable

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 report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

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.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice (SLP) 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. (<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>)