



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR ALDERWASLEY HALL SCHOOL

<b>Name of School:</b>	Alderwasley Hall School
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Sara Forsyth
<b>Hub:</b>	Ash Field
<b>School type:</b>	Independent Special
<b>MAT:</b>	Not applicable

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	LEADING
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	05/12/2019
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review:</b>	OUTSTANDING
<b>Date of last QA Review:</b>	13/11/2018
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	GOOD
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	10/07/2018

## 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** LEADING

**Quality of provision and outcomes** LEADING

**AND**

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

**Area of Excellence** Not offered at this review

**Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence** Developing therapeutic and sensory strategies to enhance the attendance and behaviour of pupils with autism and/or anxiety, 14/03/2018

**Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate** LEADING

*Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed peer evaluation estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.*

## 1. Context and character of the school

Alderwasley Hall School, part of the SENAD group of schools, is an independent co-educational special school. It caters for young people with complex speech, language and communication needs, including autistic spectrum disorders and speech and language impairment. Almost all of the students have additional diagnoses, including attention deficit hyperactive disorders, opposition defiant disorder and pathological demand avoidance.

Almost all students attending the school are funded by a wide range of local authorities. Most students attend the school as a result of an educational tribunal. All students have an education, health and care plan.

Three quarters of students had poor school engagement and attendance before entering the school. Many have lost at least six months of education, with extremely low rates of attendance.

Alderwasley is made up of a site for students from five to 16 years of age, a sixth form and registered children's homes.

The school is registered for up to 138 students. Currently there are 87 students on roll, of which 73 have day placements and 14 have residential placements.

The seamless delivery of integrated education and therapy is a unique feature of the school.

The school never stands still in developing their bespoke and highly personalised offer to students. Alderwasley produces stunning academic and social development outcomes. Students leave the school well prepared for the next phase of their lives.

### 2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The passionate and highly experienced senior leadership team has an accurate understanding of the school and of each student. Senior leaders clearly identify and act upon any areas for further development.
- Staff really understand students' communication, sensory and emotional needs. Staff use the excellent educational and therapeutic support to improve students' mental health and well-being.
- Staff feel valued. The staff forum, senior leadership surgeries and an open-door policy, contribute well to staff wellbeing.
- Staff at all levels take up the supportive challenge of leaders to develop their skills and knowledge. For example, Professional Learning Communities, led by staff at all levels, share excellent practice. Leading Excellence study groups develop the

culture of learning about learning.

- Leaders have developed their excellent approach to managing and changing students' behaviour. They use their experience and knowledge, alongside a commercial behaviour management and change system, which is aligned with the Restraint Reduction Network Training Standards. The school approach is based on clear boundaries and improving quality of life, asking the question, what makes life worth living?
- Senior leaders share practice in many and varied ways. Alderwasley provides special educational needs and therapeutic support for two mainstream schools who are in need of improvement. The school delivers leadership and coaching days and mental health and emotional well-being days for the Ash Field Challenge Partners hub. They deliver lectures on the initial teacher training course at Derby University.
- Leaders carefully plan quality assurance. Leaders take swift and appropriate actions, to make changes or improve practice where required. Leaders ensure that learning walks, drop ins and work scrutiny are well used by staff at all levels, to measure progress and improve outcomes.
- The performance of all practitioners, including therapists, teachers and learning support workers (LSWs), is measured against and supported to achieve, the Alderwasley Hall School standards. Leaders set challenging performance management targets and use coaching supervision to support and develop best practice. LSWs have opportunities to lead learning, for example in drama and the delivery of driving test theory.
- Each year the school plans a wide variety of educational trips and visits in two main categories, to develop skills and to widen students' experiences. Pathways pastoral visits increase life skills and independence. For example, in the primary phase there are regular shopping trips. Curriculum trips are linked specifically to one or more curriculum area. These include visits to Auschwitz. The well-planned, personalised trips lead to significant improvements in skills, knowledge and attitudes.

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

...the profile of the school was further enhanced with CAMHS provision, other similar services and local services, to broaden the offer for students' increasingly complex mental health needs.

## **3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well**

- The curriculum at Alderwasley helps students to become independent, literate, numerate, creative and problem solvers. Teaching staff deliver the curriculum in ways to play to the strengths and interests of students where possible. The

curriculum continues to expand to meet the ever-changing needs of students. Leaders ensure that cross-curricular links are maximised. Each pathway document shows students' possible career options at the end of their pathway to inform and inspire students, by showing how their current learning connects with their aspirations.

- Alderwasley employs speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, a psychotherapist, and a clinical psychologist, to meet the identified specific needs of students and improve their mental health and wellbeing. The provision of therapeutic input is delivered seamlessly, in partnership with educational and residential staff.
- Students are encouraged to make a contribution to the school and the wider community. This includes litter picking by the Green Team, the design of a stained-glass window for a local library and tidying the local railway station. This develops their sense of being part of a community.
- Teaching staff know their students and their subjects exceptionally well. Relationships and trust between staff and students build across the school, leading to a vibrant learning culture.
- Reading and phonics are well delivered. Many students have voracious appetites for reading. Students are not over supported. In individual reading sessions, LSWs allowed students to correct themselves. One student, who previously disliked reading, said, 'reading is now my fifth favourite activity...but I can read now!'
- In a primary music lesson, the teacher kept students engaged with a rapid and exciting start to the lesson. She slowed the pace in places to check understanding and to give students time to think and reflect on their learning.
- In a primary English lesson, the teacher and the speech and language therapist shared responsibility for learning. All students received their therapeutic input, enabling skills learned in therapy sessions, to be generalised to other parts of their lives.
- Teaching staff are encouraged to challenge students. In a primary English class, students worked with a challenging text, 'The Twits' by Roald Dahl. In a music lesson, students, some of whom find reading aloud challenging, were encouraged to be brave and read aloud.
- Environments are carefully designed to meet students' learning needs. In a Key Stage 3 lesson, the students worked in dimmed lighting with mainly bare walls and a variety of adapted furniture, to allow them to function well. The class devised instructions for visitors, to minimise disruption to learning.
- Teachers use a variety of methods to assess students' learning. These include incisive questioning and the use of whiteboards for students to write on who are anxious about communicating verbally.
- Teachers skilfully use students' interests but ensure that the learning intentions of the lesson are achieved. In a Key Stage 4 science lesson, a student respectfully challenged the teacher on a question of fact. In the same lesson the teacher used the students' interest in Harry Potter to re-engage them in their learning. In a Key

Stage 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher skilfully steered the students back to the lesson objectives.

- In 2019, SATs results were strong, with students making rapid progress towards the expected standard for their ages in core subjects. GCSEs were taken in eight different subjects, with over half of them were passed at Grade 4 and above. This follows the two previous years of exceptionally strong outcomes, given the starting points of the students.
- Current school data from mock papers, show that, currently, three quarters of students are in line to reach the expected standard in English, and a slightly smaller proportion in mathematics.
- Since September 2019, from work scrutiny, content, presentation and student subject knowledge show clear and rapid improvement.
- Students are well prepared for life after school. Almost all students move to mainstream colleges, specialist colleges, training and employment. Over the past three years, the proportion of students going to specialist colleges has decreased while those going to mainstream college, with many students taking higher level courses, has increased.
- Attendance is a major challenge for the school. Student attendance before arriving at the school is extremely low. Attendance is currently 66.1%, slightly below the 2019 figure.
- All staff contribute to the exemplary behavioural practice, which leads to significant improvements in student behaviour. There is a continuing trend of reduced fixed term exclusions. Individual students made clear reductions in the frequency and severity of their behaviours. The number of restrictive physical interventions required remains very low.

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

...Feedback and marking in all lessons, whether verbal or written, was more consistent with the best practice seen, with acknowledgement and PRIDE time marking further developed in line with school policy.

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

The school is considering developing a tier 4 step down resource, for students with ASC to access education in a less secure setting. They would like to make contact with other schools or education establishments working in this area.

**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.**