

Name of School:	Drumbeat School and ASD Service
Headteacher:	Marie Neave
Hub:	London Special and Alternative Provision
School type:	Community Special
MAT:	Not applicable

Date of this visit:	21/06/2021
Estimate at last QA Review:	LEADING
Date of last QA Review:	30/10/2019
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	GOOD
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	19/03/2019

1. Information about the visit

In place of a QA Review, Drumbeat School and ASD service was visited by a Lead Reviewer who spent 1.5 days reviewing the following areas with them:

- **Area 1: How does the curriculum meet the diverse needs of all pupils?**
This includes: What impact does it have on progress? How do leaders ensure a broad balanced and sequential curriculum? How did leaders ensure delivery during lockdown (adaptations and impact)? What does a recovery curriculum look like? How are leaders closing any gaps as a result of the pandemic? How does Pathway 3 best meet the needs of more able pupils?
- **Area 2: How are middle leaders aware of standards within their own area?**
This includes: What impact do they have on teaching and learning? What is happening that is exceptional in their area? What are their challenges? How are they supported and developed? What training has been received and given?

2. Information about the school

Drumbeat School and ASD Service caters for 212 pupils, between 4 and 19, on two sites. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND), a diagnosis of autism and an educational, health and care plan (EHCP). There are 151 pupils on the Downham site in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) and Key Stages 1-3. The Brockley site is attended by 61 Key Stage 4 and 5 pupils, 43 of whom are in the Post 16 provision.

The school population is diverse. Almost half of the pupils are from families where English is spoken as an additional language. A high proportion of pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Drumbeat is expanding to meet the growing demand for places in the area, alongside its highly effective outreach and consultancy support to mainstream and special schools.

Leaders are committed to and applying learning from national and international research. Drumbeat does an exceptional job in preparing pupils for life, inside, outside, and after they leave the school.

3.1 Area 1: How does the curriculum meet the diverse needs of all pupils? – What went well

- Drumbeat offers a broad, progressive curriculum which meets the learning needs and aspirations of all pupils. The curriculum is personalised so that each pupil achieves their potential, fully utilising their interests and passions, addressing their barriers to learning.
- The new curriculum arrangements are highly effective. This is shown in strong progress in core and non-core learning. Behaviour management and change is a strong feature of the school, incorporating a 'no restraint ethos'. Behaviour support plans are based on functional analysis, resulting in reductions in the frequency, severity and intensity of behaviours of concern. There are rare occasions where positive handling is necessary to keep a child or others safe, so all staff are trained in the TeamTeach approach. Gains generalise to home settings and pupils develop improved self-regulation.
- Pupils have many opportunities for character development and contribution to their community, including participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Pupils visit care homes and have provided inspiring artwork for the local emergency and health services. They have been involved in providing donations to local food banks.
- Careers education is well developed, matched to the Gatsby Benchmarks. The 16-19 curriculum is differentiated into three pathways, developing a range of accreditations from functional skills to employability and additional academic qualifications. Enterprise projects include a one-off 'enterprise day' and placements in a local café, internal work placements and work on the school allotment.
- A wide range of creative activities include Shakespeare for Schools workshops, and art, music and dance projects with Trinity Laban conservatoire.
- Transition to school, between phases and leaving school is well thought-out and highly effective. A parent of a child who recently joined the school felt that getting their child into Drumbeat was 'like winning a Golden Ticket'.
- Parents value the bespoke, personalised approach to learning, resulting in excellent progress made by their children. A pupil, joining the school from a mainstream setting in a highly anxious state, has made great strides and was 'master of ceremonies' at a school show. Other parents recognise significant improvements in conversational skills.
- Pupils become confident communicators. Pupils across the school enthusiastically answered questions about their school experiences, with sensitive staff support and appropriate visual supports.
- During lockdown, leaders used staffs' knowledge of pupils and families to deliver remote learning and curriculum adaptation, with highly personalised content. Teaching staff developed the use of Google Classroom. All staff supported each other and parents, so that everybody could use remote learning tools.

- Home learning packs and sensory resources provided excellent support to families and pupils. Teacher well-being was recognised, giving each teacher half a day to plan and to communicate with parents. Transitions back to school were carefully managed, resulting in pupils coping well with minimal disruption and little obvious anxiety.
- Leaders used the Department for Education 'Reviewing Remote Education Provision (2021)' tool, to review their delivery of remote learning. They showed a strong and thoughtful approach, resulting in strong support for pupils and their families and staff, with learning delivered in a 'no excuse culture.'
- The recovery curriculum, based on Barry Carpenter's 5 levers model, strongly promotes well-being. There is positive evidence of progress against the 5 levers. On return from lockdown the school day included additional physical activities and was divided into assessment activities in the morning and well-being activities in the afternoon.

3.2 Area 1: How does the curriculum meet the diverse needs of all pupils? – Even better if...

- ... leaders used learning from remote and lockdown learning to continue to generalise skills across settings.
- ... there were further enrichment for learners in pathway 3 through widening employment opportunities, including internships.

4.1 Area 2: How are middle leaders aware of standards within their own area? - What went well

- Phase and subject leaders eloquently described their roles and involvement in delivering the curriculum and their crucial roles in improving teaching and learning. They value the 'faith and trust' invested in them by senior leaders and recognise that they get support when they need it.
- Middle leaders value continuous communication and collaboration with each other and their colleagues. Twilight sessions and team meetings are well used to ensure that planning crosses subject boundaries to promote holistic learning.
- During Covid-19 restrictions, middle leaders were part of a creative whole school response, sharing information, developing whole school thinking. For example, art sessions have been delivered on the online platform and video tours of classroom supported transition for pupils. Yoga and fitness sessions delivered online promoted the social element, allowing pupils to see what was happening on each of the sites.

- Middle leaders collaborate across the school to ensure that the pupils effectively build on previous learning without unnecessary repetition.
- Senior leaders use appraisal well, blending school priorities with the passions and interests of middle leaders, resulting in a highly motivated and effective leadership team. Leaders are encouraged to complete national qualifications, alongside visiting schools with outstanding, to adapt and adopt innovative ideas.
- Middle leaders develop networks beyond school. The mathematics lead is an active member of a south-east London mathematics group. The school has linked with Hayes, a mainstream secondary school, to adapt and adopt lesson study at Drumbeat.
- Middle leaders ensure that the important role of teaching assistants (TAs) is recognised. When they have useful ideas for development and training, they are acted upon by senior leaders. Middle leaders have an active role in delivering high quality continuous professional development, including in-service training.
- Middle leaders have played important roles in developing and delivering lockdown learning. They have used the school's knowledge of pupils and their families' needs to develop personalised interventions, both academic, practical and social.
- Some pupils have made exceptional progress, resulting in middle leaders setting them new starting points. Learning packs were well received by parents, leading to increased engagement with the school and their child's learning.
- Phase leaders had an important role in maintaining communication logs, a log of supportive conversations with families, building a clear picture to meet pupils' and family's needs. They are also used to show where more or different support is needed or possible safeguarding concerns. Formal and informal support for parents improve their skills and resilience, which directly improves outcomes for pupils.
- Lesson observations, delivered and organised by phase leads, demonstrated many aspects of excellent practice. Pupils were highly engaged, showing curiosity and a love of learning, with highly effective, well-deployed teaching assistants. Teaching staff involved showed high levels of subject knowledge and pupil understanding. In a Key Stage 3 English lesson, resources were well planned and on hand resulting in 'no fuss' transitions. There were excellent examples of 'purple pen marking,' pupils reflecting on their work and using personalised checklists.
- The EYFS lead built on well thought-out routines, based on aspects of attention autism, engaging his pupils to build their phonics knowledge. The teacher expertly used the pupils 'spiky profiles' and interests to make learning irresistible.

4.2 Area 2: How are middle leaders aware of standards within their own area? – Even better if...

... middle leader roles were even more strategic in developing and using research to improve pedagogy and curriculum knowledge and outcomes, within the school and beyond.

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

- Drumbeat school is well connected locally and nationally to the Challenge Partners network and seeks and shares support when needed.

This visit will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings may be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities. Schools can also 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 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.