

Written Report

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	The Family School London
School Address:	1-15, Bradley Close White Lion Street N1 9PN
Hub School:	London Special and AP

Telephone Number:	0203 6934911
Email address:	admin@thefamilyschoollondon.org

Unique Reference Number:	141130
Local Authority:	Islington
Type of School:	Special and alternative provision academy
School Category:	Free School
Age range of pupils:	5-14
Number on roll:	31
Head teacher/Principal:	Stephen Taylor

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	Not previously inspected
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Date of Quality Assurance Review:	25-27 May 2016
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies: Good

Outcomes for Pupils: Good

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Good

Area of Excellent Practice: Confirmed
Parental engagement and training in family mental health.

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that The Family School London appears to be at the top of the Good grade but it has not yet been judged by Ofsted.

¹ 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.

Information about the school

- The Family school was founded in September 2014 as a specialist alternative provision academy. Families, teachers and health professionals work as a community to bring about positive change in classroom behaviour and learning.
- It is sponsored by the Anna Freud Centre.
- It admits pupils in Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 from across North London, currently working with 7 boroughs, some of which commission a number of places.
- Its core value is to work with the whole family. There is a parent and carer curriculum and learning programme that parents follow while their child is at the school. Pupils follow the national curriculum.
- There are currently 31 pupils on roll: The proportion eligible for pupil premium funding is much higher than average, as is the proportion of pupils who are looked after.
- Around 62% of pupils have EHCP plans.
- Around half of all pupils have previously been permanently excluded from mainstream and special schools. A number have been out of education for a period of time.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- The vision for the Family School is that it is definitely a school. It is a unique one that fully recognises the needs within the whole family and fully involves parents in understanding their role in their child's life. The core purpose is to support parents and children so that the child can return successfully to a mainstream setting. This vision of the founders of the school and all the staff is maintained continually.
- There is a strong and cohesive senior leadership team within the school who work seamlessly with the other professionals who provide the training and support for the carers and families.
- The school ensures that it works as closely as possible with the sending school especially when pupils begin to reintegrate. Each individual pupil has a bespoke re-integration programme, and family school staff support this extremely well especially in the initial stages.
- There are excellent systems to ensure that the attendance, progress and behaviour of each individual child and their carer are monitored.
- The school has a very accurate view of each teacher's performance and there is continual development for them through support from outstanding practitioners. Teaching is continually improving through regular observation, monitoring and coaching.

- There is a very clear and continually evaluated school development plan and the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. This is supported by regular external review from the DFE. The key strand of mental health and well-being, in addition to the four Ofsted areas, is also clearly planned for.
- There is a clear programme for teachers' professional development and teachers are held to account for pupils' progress through performance management. They are a highly skilled and dedicated teaching team.

Even Better If...

... there was a stable team of support staff who have well-planned professional development opportunities.

... the new staff structure continued to embed so that leadership and administration was widely distributed.

...senior staff had even greater impact on the strategic development of the school.

Outcomes

51 pupils have attended the school since its foundation. There is re-integration planned as soon as each pupil is ready. School data shows that 49% of all pupils who have attended the school have returned successfully to mainstream provision.

- There is marked improvement in attendance for individuals; many of whom have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools or had extremely poor attendance records.
- The school tracks progress of the pupils well. It has devised comprehensive ways of doing this within the new national curriculum assessment system and is working with sending schools to provide an accurate starting point. Any slowing of progress is quickly identified and acted upon. In-school data shows that pupils are making good progress towards age related expectations with some making accelerated progress in core subjects.
- The school has devised a range of assessment tools for measuring child and family success. These tools link clearly with those provided by health professionals and much of this work is also continually evaluated by research projects (see area of excellent practice).
- The course of parent learning is externally validated and there are bespoke qualifications for parent to improve their own literacy and numeracy skills. Parents say how life changing the school has been for them. Many have had previous difficulties in maintaining a dialogue with schools. It has empowered them to be confident adults who are clearly articulate about mental health and learning. There

are progress measures in place for the mental health of parents and pupils and these are the same as those used by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

What Went Well

- Lessons are highly engaging and motivating. Teachers plan and adjust work as students become more ready to learn, even within a lesson.
- There are highly positive staff/pupil relationships. Staff are passionate and enthusiastic and there is highly cohesive team across the whole school. All staff manage behaviour exceptionally well so that learning is not interrupted. Behaviour management strategies are subtle and consistently used and all staff have an excellent understanding of the mental health needs of the pupils. Behaviour for learning targets are specific for each pupil. They are agreed with parents and teachers, and are reviewed each lesson.
- The learning environment and classrooms are arranged very well to celebrate learning.
- The curriculum, while ensuring the maths and literacy are core throughout the day, engages pupils' interest, for example, building models of volcanoes.
- Weekly assessment meetings between teaching staff and the lead for teaching and learning evaluate each pupil's progress against national curriculum expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. These ensure good progress is maintained for pupils and any gaps are quickly identified.
- Staff are well deployed so that any pupils who are not ready to learn for any part of the lesson do not interrupt the learning of others and are re-engaged as soon as possible. The close working relationships between teacher therapists, teaching staff and support staff ensure this. The parents and family members on site or in the classroom are also therefore acutely aware of any disruption so that they too have an accurate view of the causes.
- There is a consistent marking policy across the school. Pupils know what to do to improve. Verbal feedback is continuous in lessons, especially if pupils arrive during a lesson, due to appointments, therapy, or late arrival. Observations during the review show that staff are highly skilled at managing individual learning programmes.

Even Better If...

... questioning of pupils in all lessons gave them more opportunities to develop and demonstrate higher level thinking skills.

... there was always sufficient challenge for pupils.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

Parental engagement and training in family mental health.

The school was founded with the core purpose to fully involve families and to provide family therapy. There is a firm belief within the school that raising the academic performance and improving the mental health of children is best done within the family. The school provides high quality teaching for pupils and brings parents and other family members into the school to provide and demonstrate an innovative model for providing child and adolescent mental health services. Alongside this, the school provides multi-family group therapy, which is an established and proven model for bringing about substantial, long lasting improvements in re-integration into mainstream schools and successful and empowered parents that can maintain this.

The school has a team of experienced teachers who are also qualified consultant psychotherapists. Support for medical and mental health consultation is provided by the medical and clinical directors of the Anna Freud Centre.

The school has developed validated parent and carer training. This knowledge, skills and mental health innovation enables all parents and family members to support pupils' well-being, social cognition and successful education as well as to gain a qualification for themselves. Close co-operation with the Child Outcomes Research Consortium at the Anna Freud Centre ensures that all practice is continually evaluated to bring about high quality outcomes and establish best practice.

The Family School is now establishing a handbook and microsite to enable other settings to receive training and support for setting up multi-family group therapy.

There is a personalised care and learning plan for each pupil which drives progress toward re-integration, and the school makes sure this is compatible with the current mental health framework from referral, through thriving and re-integrating to sustaining. Researched and statistically evaluated outcome data for improving mental health, using the Strength and Difficulties questionnaire and academic progress measures, shows there is a good correlation between the two.

The school psychotherapists already work with the 800 schools in the School in Mind network and are mental health experts for The Key. The school works with 7 London boroughs, several of which commission places at the school. There are already discussions with other local authorities who are interested in replicating the Family School model in their own areas.

Partnerships

How have you used Challenge Partners schools to address your previous 'Even Better Ifs'?

This was the school's first Challenge Partners review.

How have you worked with, or supported, other schools in Challenge Partners?

The school is a member of the London AP hub. Two members of staff have received training to review but have not yet been on a review.

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.

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

Following discussion with the headteacher, the school would like to reflect further about what support they might like.