	The Link Secondary School School Self-Evaluation and School Development Plan 2020 – 2023
Updated: September 2021	
Context	• The Link Secondary School is a special co-educational school that caters for students aged from 11 to 18 who have speech, language and communication needs. All students have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Just over two thirds of the student population have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The majority of the students have progressed through education in a special school or a base-type setting, with a smaller number joining the school from mainstream provisions. Some students join The Link Secondary School mid key stage when mainstream schools they have previously attended can no longer meet their needs. A few students who have complex educational backgrounds and who have not been able to access a school setting are offered outreach support so that they can continue to learn and achieve relevant qualifications. • The range of complex social and communication needs experienced by the students in the important adolescent years makes them more susceptible to high levels of anxiety and emotional well-being issues, and they can present as more vulnerable than peers within mainstream and other special school settings. In 2018-19, four students were referred to the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) because of their social, emotional and mental health needs. In 2019-20, two students were referred to CAMHS. In 2020 – 21, three students were referred to CAMHS. • 58% of current students are White British, with 42% coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. • There are currently 66 students on role, with 39 learners in Key Stage 3, 14 in Key Stage 4, and 13 in the Sixth Form. The school is at full capacity for its current physical size. The school population has doubled in size due to the school's rapid improvement over the last three years. This has brought with it increased teaching and support teams and a changing leadership model with a more distributed leadership. The school was graded 'Inadequate' by OFSTED in October 2016, but was quickly turned around under the leadership of an experienced Headteacher who joined the school in September 2017. • Approximately 50% (2021-22) of students are supported by the Pupil Premium funding, which is an above average portion. • The Link Secondary School joined Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHCAT) on 1st July 2017. The Trust consists of 14 special schools located in London, Surrey and West Sussex and is sponsored by Orchard Hill College, an outstanding college primarily for adult learners with a range of complex needs and disabilities. The Link Secondary School is part of the Sutton and Croydon Hub and it works closely with the other OHCAT schools in the locality, i.e. Carew Academy, The Link Primary School, and Addington Valley Academy. • The Link Primary and Secondary Schools have been working towards becoming much more closely aligned in order to provide a more cohesive educational and personal package of support for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs in the local area. As part of this alignment, from September 2020 the schools have shared the same Governing body. This academic year the school will be working towards full amalgamation. An Executive Principal was appointed from September 2020 to oversee the leadership of both schools. The Executive Principal has been the Principal at The Link Primary School since January 2017. The Link Primary School secured their fourth consecutive 'Outstanding' judgement from OFSTED in November 2019.

- The Link Secondary School previously worked with a number of different London boroughs. However, in line with the Academy vision and values that seek to educate children and young people with special needs within their local communities, the number of Local Authorities that the school supports is reducing over time. The main boroughs are now Sutton, Croydon and Merton.
- As a response to students' complex social, speech, language and communication needs, the school offers a structured comprehensive therapy package to support progress. All students receive onsite speech and language therapy and occupational therapy from therapists employed by the school. Further bespoke therapy packages are offered in line with young people's barriers, including Canine Assisted Learning, drama therapy, music therapy, and counselling.
- All students benefit from an Access programme which is written and delivered by the therapy staff to every class in the school. This enables learners to overcome their key barriers and make the most of the National Curriculum and Accreditation offer.
- The school's vision, or intention, through the curriculum is to promote Wellbeing, Independence, Communication and Achievement for all students through the school motto 'Aiming High'. The school has a well-defined and articulated set of daily values to support this over-arching vision. These are success, resilience, positivity, kindness, courage, charity and fairness.

Progress against previous inspection

Areas to improve	Progress			
The following three areas were highlighted for improvement: leadership and management, outcomes for students, and quality of teaching and learning.		**Ofsted – January 2017**		**School self-evaluation 2021**
	Overall effectiveness	4		2
	Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	4	**Quality of Education**	2
	Outcomes for students	4		
	Personal Development, behaviour and Welfare	2	**Behaviour and Attitudes**	1
			Personal Development	2
	Effectiveness of leadership and management	4	**Leadership & Management**	2
School Improvement Priorities – 3 year plan	By the end of the academic year 2023 we will: • Be known as an outstanding local provision for young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Autistic Spectrum Conditions (COMMUNICATION) • Have maintained a strong Educational and Therapeutic model that supports socially vulnerable and anxious young people to manage life well (WELLBEING)			

	• Have an effective personalised learning structure within a secondary school curriculum framework that enables young people to use their strengths and overcome their main learning barriers in order to fulfil their potential (ACHIEVEMENT) • Have prepared our young people for whole world learning so that they know how to relate well to others and are able to access college, work and leisure opportunities within their communities (INDEPENDENCE)

School Improvement Priorities – 2021-22	By the end of the academic year 2022 we will have:
	1) Implemented a literacy focus across the Curriculum to:
	    i. enable all teachers to work on key literacy targets within their lessons
	    ii. improve diversity and motivational reading material for all abilities
	2) Improved the quality of SOLAR curriculum targets to ensure they are skills-based rather than knowledge-based, giving a solid platform for hierarchical learning
	3) Increased the skills levels of teaching assistants to support learning in the classroom through the assessment for learning 'sandwich' model
	4) Developed a culture of 'digging deep' for students whose behaviours sit outside the range of students' usual behaviours, enabling staff to develop and use bespoke strategies that bring success for this minority group
	5) Implemented Link Priority lessons and interventions to ensure students have opportunities to generalise learning from more formal curriculum lessons
	6) Ensured learners in receipt of pupil premium funding or allocated Covid catch up funding will receive the best bespoke additional learning opportunities and resources
	7) **Edupod mental health target**!
	8) Updated the Staff Induction plan and implemented the Early Careers framework effectively to ensure the school culture and school developments are fully embedded amongst the new staff
	9) Improved our parent strategy, focusing on empowerment approaches to ensure parents have and understand information around school development, assessment and learning strategies relevant to their own child
	10) Completed the planned playground and front of school projects to ensure learners benefit from high quality outside resources
	11) Formulated and implemented a plan for the full amalgamation of the Link Primary and Secondary schools

QUALITY OF EDUCATION - GOOD

Strengths

Intent

- At The Link Secondary School, we believe in an entitlement to '**powerful knowledge**' for every student on our roll
- Our curriculum is designed to provide 'powerful knowledge' for all students as both learned **academic information** and an acquired set of **social and life skills**. The majority of our young people do not learn social skills naturally. We aim to ensure young people learn these important skills in the same way they learn, for example, algebra or grammatical structure
- The curriculum is also designed to promote our key vision of **wellbeing, independence, communication and achievement** for all. This drives our curriculum structure, implementation and any evaluation or adaptations.

Over time we want to see:
- students **gaining up to nine external accreditations** including English and Maths at their **optimum cognitive level**
- students equipped with the skills to enable them to look after themselves in the **wider community**
- students leaving school with the ability to complete straightforward aspects of **everyday living**
- curriculum content and quality of teaching that provides a **deep breath and balance of knowledge** in **formal**, **physical / expressive** and **RSE** aspects of learning.

Implementation
- Teaching is of a **high quality across the school** with no teacher working below a 'solidly good' 2b in the Academy Teacher Evaluation Schedule (TES). Many teachers are working consistently at the top end of good (i.e. 2a), and others are moving into the outstanding grading of 1c or 1b. This consistent standard ensures students benefit from teachers' **good subject knowledge across the curriculum**
- Students are grouped according to their learning ability and learning styles to match the pathways through the school, ensuring students **receive the best and most effective provision for their need**. The majority of teaching takes place through subject-specific learning with specialist subject teachers. The important place of the Access curriculum and targeted EHCP interventions led by the school therapists and the SENCO is integral to the curriculum, ensuring learners work towards understanding and overcoming their key barriers so that they can make progress through the more formal curriculum. At Sixth Form level, students receive a highly differentiated curriculum with greater opportunities for external independent learning and preparation for college
- To ensure students receive a good balance of academic and life skills learning, the curriculum is delivered through the following areas: *Formal, Physical/Expressive, RSE / SMSC, and External / Independent*

		KS3 Class-based groups **Yates, Weir**	KS3 Non-class-based groups **Tomlin, Fuller**	KS4 X/Y groups **Wood 4X, Rowsell 4Y**	KS5 X/Y groups **Johnson 5X, Johnson 5Y**	KS4 and KS5 mixed Core groups **CJ, CW, CR**
Curriculum Areas	*Formal*	English Maths Science ICT Humanities	English Maths Science ICT Humanities	Science Humanities		English Maths ICT
	Physical/ Expressive	PE Art DT Project	PE Art DT Project	DT Art	DT	PE
	RSE/ SMSC	RSE Access Life Skills	RSE Access			RSE Access
	External/ Independent	Link Priorities	Link Priorities	Link Priorities	CWL – Community Work Leisure options NESCOT College Work Experience	

- Progress through the curriculum is measured and evidenced in both **formative and summative** forms of assessment, using the assessment monitoring software **SOLAR.** We use a series of levels called '**Link Steps**' based around **Pre National Curriculum** and **National Curriculum** levels in **Formal** subjects. Other subjects are

also recorded though SOLAR, but key performance indicators have been created by our own **subject specialists** with a range of targets matched to the ability range of students within the school. We also use the specification criteria from all of the **externally accredited courses** taught in school to our Key Stage 4 and 5 students in order to assess progress towards the final outcomes at **Entry Level 1, 2 or 3** or **Level 1 or 2 qualifications**. From 2021-22, accredited courses will be introduced for learners working at **Pre-entry levels** of attainment as a small group of young people working at these levels in the school enter Key Stage 4

- The school has enough data collated over a period of three years now to be able to make judgements about the amount of progress individuals and groups of students make in subjects across the curriculum. This enables teachers and school leaders to set **challenging individual and whole school targets** and to put interventions in place for those making less than expected progress
- SOLAR progression is updated by teachers as an ongoing process and each term a **progress report** is generated and sent home to parents. This acts as a good catalyst for discussion and home/school support
- Student progress towards the key vision is also underpinned by the work of the therapy team. Therapists report termly on **Access curriculum targets** and annually on progress against **therapy targets** and **interventions** outlined in EHCPs. This contributes to the monitoring of the holistic progress of the students which is vital to inform overall progress towards the school outcomes in the vision statement – Wellbeing, Independence, Communication and Achievement for all.
- **Formative assessment** - questioning and feedback is used at regular intervals throughout lessons. We encourage a **learning dialogue** at all times. All marking and feedback follows the **whole-school marking policy** and includes Next Steps, students' comments, and codes to assess whether or not learning objectives have been met. Formative assessment is also used to understand common and individual barriers to learning which promotes the vision of being a **personalised learning** school.

Impact
- Students at The Link Secondary School are developing a good range of skills and knowledge across the **formal curriculum** and **outstanding progress** in the **Physical /Expressive and RSE** Curriculum that **prepares them well** for their next step to **further education**.
- By the end of 2020-21, we had five leavers who left with a total of 42 qualifications between them and an additional 27 students gained 44 qualification ranging from Entry Level 1 to Level 1 and one Maths GCSE from our outreach program. These subjects include English, Maths, Science, ICT, Home Cooking, Art and ASDAN.
- Students across the school made good progress through the academic and personal and social curriculum in 2020-21 despite the challenges of teaching through a pandemic. 47% of students made expected progress overall, 12% below expected and 40% above expected progress.

- Students all find appropriate next step **destinations** for their learning ability, need and attainment level. All of our leavers from 2018, 2019 and 2020-21 have gone on to various colleges and post-18 provisions. These placements have been established after several visits assessing the appropriateness of the college, course and need-specific facilities.

The quality of Education Judgement is considered to be **good with outstanding features**. This is because the curriculum in all subjects is designed to build on former learning and there are **structures for individualised learning** and support in place. Teachers have **good subject knowledge** and work across the curriculum is of good quality. Appropriate **accredited courses and qualifications** are in place for all abilities and students are prepared well for their next stages. To move to **outstanding,** we need to ensure that there is a **quality to the curriculum over time** and that the tweaks that have been made to the schemes of work to make the most of **cross-curricular links** are **fully embedded.** We also need to involve parents in the improved **personalised learning structures** so that they are able to work with the school to give learners every opportunity to overcome their key learning barriers. We will use our now established **analysis of whole school and individual data** to be sure that the

most able learners are suitably challenged and that those who are not making expected progress, particularly if they have gaps that have materialised over the pandemic period, receive the support they need to **close the gaps**.

EVALUATION KEY FOR QUALITY OF EDUCATION:

Dark Green	Light Green	Orange	Red
Target complete with proven impact 2.5/4	Target on track – some measurable impact 1.5/4	Target on track – impact to come 0/4	Not on track OR target completed without expected impact 0/4

Actions from previous year:	Impact of actions:
Quality of Education **1.1** **Update student-centred learning systems, moving from an IEP system to a provision mapping system that will ensure a cohesive approach to overcoming student learning barriers alongside targeted curriculum learning.**	*1.1* *All staff have received student-centred learning training. An audit of the current cohort's learning needs has been used to set up Link Secondary Priorities to be taught across the curriculum areas. The audit has also been used to set up small group and bespoke interventions, updating the previous RAG rated system to ensure these are cross referenced with students' EHCPs. Lesson observations and learning walks have shown that teachers have planned for person-centred targets and teaching strategies alongside Curriculum targets. Bespoke interventions implemented by the SENCO and Therapy Team now match the main interventions required by students as highlighted through observation and EHCPs. Assessment systems that monitor student progress show clear impact and have not increased staff workload. To improve this system, parents require support to understand the assessment procedures fully so they can work in partnership with the teachers and therapists.*
1.2 **Tweak the current established curriculum model to ensure that any missing links that are considered to be important or that are statutory are included.** **Timing of schemes across subjects are altered to make the most of cross-curricular links in order to maximise generalisation of learning.**	*1.2* *Subject specific training has been delivered to all teachers. Teachers have written and implemented subject plans based on an 'impact evaluation' model.* *All statutory elements of the curriculum are now covered and embedded, particularly the new Relationship and Sex Education module. Lesson observations have shown increases in learning strategies that enable young people to practise their learning in practical ways that help the learning make sense. The end of year curriculum audit has shown increased and relevant cross-curricular links between different subjects. Student progress has been excellent despite the complications of working though the pandemic period.*
1.3	*1.3*

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Ensure the key learning in the core skills subjects of Maths and English in Key Stage 4 are student-centred so that learners are continually learning new next step skills whilst still gaining the skills they need to pass their relevant qualifications at their optimum level.	*All students have been baselined or re-baselined well in the key learning areas in Maths and monitoring has shown that students are working on next steps relevant to their individual ability (this was more difficult to achieve during the pandemic period when working from home). Students who are at the stage of qualification in Maths are working on and achieving well-matched accreditation for their ability. A new maths accreditation for pre-entry learners will be introduced next academic year.*
	In English, a key skill plan has been developed to add to the SOLAR targets. This will enable students to work on key skills in literacy alongside other topic related literacy learning. It will also help other curriculum teachers to work on key English skills within their subjects. This should impact progress over the next academic year. Students are all working at the correct accreditation level to match their progress and achievement. Some more moderation is needed to ensure all of the students are covering individual weaker areas alongside the literacy topic based targets. This will be a focus of the SDP in the next academic year.
1.4 **Whole school data for the last two year's will be analysed to identify expected progress, above expected progress and below expected progress for all subjects and groups in the school.**	*1.4* *The Deputy Principal for Teaching and Learning has analysed the data, setting clear expected progress for all subjects and pathway groups from their starting points. Progress data is used well to set and work toward future targets. This now ensures those that have been underperforming are allocated additional interventions to help overcome specific barriers. This system has been explained to Governors and they can make sense of the succinct data in order to challenge leaders regarding progress. This now needs to be better explained to parents so that they have a clearer idea of the progress that their children are making and can support any interventions in the home environment.*

Areas for Development	Next Steps	Expected Outcomes

1.1 OHCAT PRIORITY 1 QUALITY STANDARDS
A literacy focus across the curriculum to:
   i.   **enable all teachers to work on key literacy targets through their lessons**
  ii.   **improve diversity and motivational reading material for all abilities**
	1.1
	    Complete and agree the literacy assessment for pre-readers, mid, higher and extension learners in reading and writing *Ensure these are included within the updated SOLAR assessments* *Training for all staff on how to teach key literacy skills* *Learning walk / observation focus on teaching literacy through additional subjects* *Feedback and mentoring support for staff based on findings* *Student audit to highlight motivations and interests for reading material*
		1.1
		    Lesson observations will show an increase in subject teachers including relevant literacy targets within their planning and lesson application – particularly opportunities to practise and embed literacy skills *There will be an increase in students using the reading library and taking books home to read* *There will be an increase in progress in literacy SOLAR scores across the three different learning abilities in the school*

	• *Purchase reading material matched to interests for school library and reading library*	
1.2 OHCAT PRIORITY 1 QUALITY STANDARDS **Improve quality of SOLAR Curriculum targets to ensure they are skills based rather than knowledge based giving a solid platform for hierarchical learning.**	1.2 • *Organise and deliver training to all teachers to review key performance indicators for their subject* • *Overall learning objectives to be broken down into skills based steps which gradually increase in terms of challenge and difficulty over the course of the Link Step levels* • *Re-write all statements as required*	1.2 • *Students' progress will be monitored more accurately as steps will have a linear method of progression* • *There will be room for individual adaptation according to unusual barriers to learning*
1.3 OHCAT PRIORITY 1 QUALITY STANDARDS **Increase skill level of teaching assistants to support learning in the classroom through the assessment for learning sandwich model.**	1.3 • *Training for classroom assistants in using the AfL 'sandwich' model* • *Teachers to give increased opportunities for teaching assistants to teach individuals or small groups* • *Learning walks to assess progress* • *Further training based on findings*	1.3 • *Learning walks will show that teaching assistants are better utilised in lessons* • *Teaching assistants will grow in confidence to teach individuals and small groups across the curriculum* • *The quality of 'green' marking comments attributed to teaching assistants will be graded an average 2b by the end of the year*

BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES - OUTSTANDING

Strengths

- Students **show confidence and self-awareness in relation to their learning and conduct**, despite their complex speech, language and communication needs, and their social and emotional needs. This is facilitated by staff who have developed excellent relationships with students and who effectively **role-model** high standards of behaviour and positive communication and conduct, underpinned by the **School Values**
- Staff and students are expected to look behind **presenting behaviours** to the **reasons for behaviour** before identifying the best supporting strategies and this is commonly understood. The school differentiates between **unacceptable behaviour** (behaviour unrelated to student barriers and needs) and **acceptable behaviours** (behaviours understood to be typical given the need of the child)
- Behaviours considered to be typical are **well managed** through a deep understanding of the effect of social communication and language barriers and the tried and tested strategies needed to overcome these. The **Zones of Regulation** strategy is used coherently across the school to enable students to reflect well on

their behaviour and make the best choices to ensure they are in a place to learn. **Social communication strategies** such as **comic strip conversations** and **social stories** are used effectively to challenge poor or confused thinking and to change thinking and behaviours to something more acceptable. The **joint Educational and Therapeutic approach** ensures that **quality training** is in place to maintain and embed the important strategies and these are seen in learning walks being used naturally across all subjects, teachers and times of the school day. The **Access Curriculum** led by the school therapists plays a huge part in up-skilling the students to learn, understand and develop r**egulation strategies** that can be self -implemented in the school and home environment. The strategies learnt are useful not just for the here and now, but help to develop a **deep resilience** to **managing challenges over time**, preparing the students for a **future of positive emotional wellbeing**

- Unacceptable behaviour in school is infrequent. All the students are aware of the expectations school holds for them. This has grown through **clearly articulated School Values** that are understood by the learners. The **seven values** (**Success, Kindness, Courage, Resilience, Charity, Positivity and Fairness**) are linked to famous local people who have demonstrated the value in their life and have been driven by the value to achieve their life goals. These values are embedded in school life though assemblies, wall displays and through the school reward system. To keep the values in mind, teachers, therapists and support staff send postcards home to reward students for work, actions and behaviour that reflect the School Values

- Students are exceptionally proud of their school and they take a **proactive approach** to alerting staff to any site concerns. The **Student Council** adds value to securing improvements in the school environment. The learning environment is well maintained and students enjoy showing visitors around, especially during the Prospective Parents' Open Mornings held each half-term

- Monitoring systems for behaviour are **robust**. Central records of behaviour incidents are scrutinised by SLT regularly to identify patterns of behaviour, particularly students who require interventions to encourage positive behaviour, and specific lessons where negative student behaviour may be a regular occurrence. This enables **effective and timely intervention** to take place. In the 2018-19 academic year, there were 23 incidents of high level unacceptable behaviours. Three of these incidents resulted in students' fixed-term external exclusions from school. In the 2020-21 academic year, there were no incidents of high level unacceptable behaviours until the second half of the summer term when one Year 7 student was responsible for nine high level incidents and one medium level incident. Of these incidents, seven were managed using positive physical interventions by appropriately trained staff. Behaviour incidents in school tend to be linked to the students' special needs, their high levels of anxiety, and their difficulties with social skills and/or in misunderstanding information

- Behaviours are managed in line with the school's **Behaviour Procedure**. As well as reporting the details of the incident, actions and outcomes, the form includes the student's recollection, which is **differentiated** with symbols and a **thinking frame**, to support their **narrative**. Senior leaders are involved with students who display behaviours that challenge and offer **coaching support** for staff on the front line and this builds staff confidence and commitment. The Executive Principal, Deputy Principal with responsibility for pastoral care, and the school SENCO work tirelessly to ensure students with the highest level needs benefit from the **latest thinking and research** to help them overcome their challenges

- **Bullying or discriminatory behaviour is rare** in the school, but when this does happen it is not tolerated and is dealt with quickly through bespoke understanding and education. **Exclusions are also rare,** but are always appropriate. In the 2018-19 academic year, there were 3 external exclusions and 16 internal exclusions – with 11 of these involving students from the same class. Interventions included allocating a full-time member of staff to be the form tutor with support from an experienced SSA. A structured morning routine was quickly established, with an immediate positive effect on students' mental wellbeing and their behaviours. We also provided induction for a new member of the support staff. In the same academic year, there were also four incidents of bullying. The main strategies to promote good behaviour included the promotion of the school values and the use of Zones of Regulation via the Access curriculum. In the 2019-20 academic year, there was one external exclusion and two internal exclusions. There were no exclusions in the academic year 2020-21. There were no incidents of bullying. One student was responsible for making two racially-motivated comments towards another student in the first half of the autumn term 2020. These were managed promptly and parents informed. There were no further incidents during the rest of the academic year.

- Annual **attendance figures** have been steady and at an average level for a special needs school for previous academic years (91%). This was an increase of 3.7% i on the annual attendance in the 2017-18 academic year. Attendance in the 2020-21 academic year is 94.2%, above average for a special school. Two students achieved 100% attendance. One student whose attendance was 27% at the end of the autumn term was supported to improve his attendance, which at the end of the academic year had risen to 46%. His attendance during the summer term was 62%. Unauthorised absences are low, at 1.3% during the 2020-21 academic year.

The behaviour and attitude judgement is considered to be **outstanding** rather than good because both **behaviour and attitudes** to learning across the whole school are **exceptional**. Students themselves have developed a **strong and positive understanding of one another's needs** despite the challenges presented by their poor Theory of Mind. Through the 'Zones of Regulation' strategy, they develop stronger **emotional regulation and self – control over time**. For the students that struggle the most with self- regulation, strategies that are implemented make demonstrable changes. The **School Council** makes a **tangible contribution** to the school and community through their role in the school development plan and through **pro-active support to school community activities and fundraising events for wider community needs**.

EVALUATION KEY FOR BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES:

Dark Green	Light Green	Orange	Red
Target complete with proven impact 0/2	Target on track – some measurable impact 2/2	Target on track – impact to come 0/2	Not on track OR target completed without expected impact 0/2

Actions from previous year:	Impact of actions:
2.1 **Staff team to gain a cohesive understanding of behaviours that fit into the unacceptable / acceptable categories in order to formulate Link Priority targets related to behaviour.**	The audit analysis identified key targets for the majority of students in the areas of behaviour and emotional regulation and these were added to the schools Link Priority targets. Teachers now include and assess Link Priority targets in lessons alongside formal curriculum targets. The Access curriculum has been adapted to ensure all common behaviour and emotional regulation strategies are included within a structured model. The annual training plan for staff included priority interventions and strategies to overcome key emotional regulation barriers, including comic strips, social stories and training on running commentary. Lesson observations have shown that support for students who demonstrate typical behaviours that challenge is outstanding. Staff feel confident that they have the skills, strategies and interventions in their behaviour toolbox to manage the common challenges that are presented in lessons and in less structured activities including lunch and leisure breaks.
2.2	

Behaviours presented by more unusual needs will be recognised and understood so that learners receive the best interventions to help them overcome their personal regulation barriers.	Training programmes for all staff have been implemented to bring understanding of the more unusual barriers including selective mutism and Pathological Demand Avoidance. Mentoring or coaching support for individuals or staff teams has been offered for situations where deeper strategies have been needed. Three learners with higher level challenges have had their placements maintained over the year showing that staff are developing the skills and confidence needed to support young people with a wider variation of need related to the growing types of communication needs and Autistic Spectrum Disorders that are being presented within the school. This will impact the school's ability to support the local authority to maintain placements for children with more complex needs within their local communities.

Areas for Development	Next Steps	Expected Outcomes
2.1 OHCAT PRIORITY 2 INNOVATION AND SPECIALISM **Develop a culture of 'digging deep' for learners whose behaviours sit outside the range of students' usual behaviours, enabling staff to develop and use bespoke strategies that bring success for this minority group whilst maintaining the successful embedded structure for the majority.**	2.1 • *Identify students that fall outside the agreed school behaviour policy* • *Use skilled staff from the Link Primary School for coaching support to identify and trial positive behaviour support plans for those that need them* • *Train teachers to write positive behaviour support plans to include pro-active, active and reactive strategies including positive handling plans for those that need physical intervention* • *Team Teach trained staff to attend regular trouble shooting training sessions with Nic and Eleni* • *Another 10 staff to receive full Team Teach training* • *Training for the whole team to know how to best support the key staff with identified learners*	2.1 • *The whole staff team will feel confident that as a team they can manage the learners that sit outside of the usual school behaviour norms* • *The school population will understand that some learners need different levels of support and that this is okay* • *The school will meet the needs of a minority of children that have a challenging school history and will build capacity to be able to meet the needs of similar children long term*

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT - GOOD with outstanding features

Strengths

• The Link Secondary School provides a strong **Personal Curriculum** that extends beyond the academic. This is made up of three elements:

1) **The therapist-led Access curriculum** that underpins all other aspects of learning and focuses on those areas of development that will support future personal success

2) **The statutory Relationships, Health and Sex Education Curriculum** (Life Skills) where key topics are re-visited through a **spiral model** at an appropriate level for students' cognitive and personal development.

3) The **Link Priority Curriculum** that helps staff to focus on individual barriers for learners in personal development from **Education, Health and Care Plans.**

- The **Zones of Regulation** programme is delivered to all class groups as part of the **Access curriculum**. Students are taught to recognise when they are in one of four zones and to develop self-supporting calming, cognitive and sensory strategies to stay in or move from one zone to another. This ensures a **consistent approach**, language and strategies to support students in **regulating themselves physically and emotionally** and **preventing escalation of low-level behaviours**.

- The **Life Skills curriculum** ensures that the following statutory topics are covered throughout both KS3 and KS4: **Mental Health, Extremism** and **Radicalisation, Careers**, **E-Safety**, **Relationship education**, **Bullying and Healthy Living**. The programme and long-term targets are updated annually to meet the needs of the school population and this ensures that sensitive topics are covered in a way that is **meaningful to the learners**. A varied Food Technology curriculum is taught to all students. Students study **nutrition and healthy eating**, and learn how to prepare a range of dishes covering many different cultures. For those students who are ready for increased independent community access, the school teaches **safer travelling** through Transport for London initiatives on trams and buses locally.

- The school's **core values** of **Charity, Positivity, Kindness, Success, Resilience**, and **Courage** are **embedded** and referenced through the reward system, displays, tutor group names and assemblies. This ensures an emphasis on values that expand to every area of school life and enables students to make the **best choices** when they are faced with difficult decisions, as well as **preparing them** for their future relationships and challenges. A new value of **Fairness** was introduced last year to bring a stronger awareness of the **equality agenda** into school and particularly the ability to know and understand **personal and peer challenges around disability**. The long-term purpose of this is to **build positive esteem** and the determination for students to **overcome their own life barriers** as well as **supporting those of their peers.**

- The Personal Curriculum structures are integrated with **SMSC** development and **British Values**. This is evident in learning walks and lesson observations. As a result, students are more aware of the **world around them and how the school values relate to it**. Consequently, they show **acceptance** of other faiths, cultures and beliefs.

- The Personal Curriculum is supported well through **assemblies** and **additional internal and external curricular opportunities**.

- Assembly themes are based on either the Link Priorities or annual calendar events and are chosen to reflect **cultural diversity** in Britain and abroad, as well as the **School Values**. Individuals and class groups lead assemblies with adult support and this helps them **gain confidence in speaking, listening and presentation skills**. Students are encouraged to support and applaud each other during assemblies. Assemblies are also used to **prepare students** for forthcoming **whole-school events** as well as **local, national or world events** that occur that are worthy of celebration or understanding. Staff are urged to use any unprepared for event as a **learning opportunity**.

- The most effective additional curricular opportunities that have been seen to meet and extend physical, social and emotional responses in the vast majority of the cohort include regular support from **Canine Assisted Learning**. The established **Project Curriculum** opens up a **wider variety of curricular opportunities** that students may not have experienced before and often establishes **personal preferences** that can later be utilised through **work projects and work experience placements**. Hence, these additional opportunities remain **integral** to the whole school curriculum offer.

- Students who have **bespoke emotional barriers** beyond the norm of the school are supported well to overcome high levels of anxiety through the work of the **school counsellor** and the **drama therapist**. These therapies have **high degrees of success** at enabling young people to **understand their own needs** and better access the **whole school curriculum offer and community learning**.

- The graduated **Contextualised Safeguarding and Wellbeing** procedure clearly outlines three categories of support for children and families under **universal, targeted** and **specialist** support. This ensures that those young people who are the most vulnerable receive the best kind of support for their need and in a timely way. The work invested in the development of this policy has been **invaluable** in ensuring that families received **pro-active** and **bespoke** support during the COVID 19 pandemic period.
- The school has an active **student council** with one selected representative from each class. They meet every two weeks in school and are co-ordinated by a middle manager. The established student voice in the school promotes a **healthy pride** in the school's achievements and also contributes well to the school's **involvement in the local community**. The school works with a range of community-based projects such as Prince William Award, Sutton Farm, Nickel Support, Sutton Food Bank, National Citizens' Service, Turf Project, Diamond Riding Centre, and The Crystal Palace Foundation for Life. The whole school community benefit from contact with two local churches and a variety of local schools.
- Some students have access to Waddon After-School Club. Last year **after school opportunities** expanded for a wider group of students through twice weekly onsite sport and creative opportunities supported by experienced members of staff. It is hoped that after the pandemic these opportunities will expand into the local area and will **enhance future opportunities** for students **within their local community** after school leaving age.
- Students' **health needs** are handled **confidentially and sensitively** by all staff. Routine medicines are kept in a locked cabinet and students are supported to take them by trained staff. The medical room accommodates one student at a time. Staff are trained in first aid and in maintaining students' dignity when administering rescue medicines and in minimising the impact on other students. Students are **sensitive to each other's needs** and seek adult help for their peers when they are concerned.
- We have a school-wide plan in action to ensure all aspects of the **Gatsby benchmarks** are implemented across all key stages. This covers life skills lesson content, visits from professionals, visits to careers fairs, enterprise weeks, work experience placements and contact with local colleges. Over the last three years all of our Year 11 and post-16 students have completed **successful internal or external work placements** and all of our leavers have gone on to **appropriate post-18 provisions**.

The Personal Development grade is considered to be good with outstanding features. This is because there is an embedded extension to the academic and vocational curriculum that emphasises the development of the whole student through the schools vision of Wellbeing, Independence, Communication and Achievement. There is high quality pastoral support with proactive development of active lifestyles and positive mental health. Students have good opportunities to develop their interests and to be responsible and active citizens within the school community. The school have recently dug deeper with the personalised opportunities offered to students ensuring that the strategies and activities with the most impact are used to overcome personalised barriers and promote strengths. The Personal Development Assessment structure has been improved to assess qualitative developments in a quantifiable way so that impact can be measured and shared with accountability groups and others as exemplary practice. To reach an outstanding judgement, the equality agenda needs to be further enhanced by offering quality residential opportunities and the changes to the Sixth Form curriculum need to be embedded to ensure all students have curricular and work experience opportunities related to their talents and interests.

EVALUATION KEY FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Dark Green	Light Green	Orange	Red
Target complete with proven impact 1/3	Target on track – some measurable impact 1/3	Target on track – impact to come 0/3	Not on track OR target completed without expected impact 1/3

Actions from previous year:	Impact of actions:
3.1 **Personal Development aspects of the Curriculum 'Link Priorities' will be owned by all and recorded in a quantifiable way to demonstrate effectiveness.**	*3.1* *The student barrier/ strength audit has identified key communal personal development targets that have been added to the Link Priorities Curriculum. Teachers now include these in planning and delivery of lessons alongside subject specific curriculum targets. Teachers and Senior Leaders have been able to analyse recordings to identify strengths and areas for development for individuals, groups and whole school targets in Personal Development. Following the pandemic, data has shown that there is a need to provide activities that will help students generalise learning into community settings.*
3.2 **Pupil Premium money will be used more effectively by targeting areas of development highlighted through the barriers / needs audit.**	*3.2* *The Deputy Principal responsible for pupil premium spending has received training on personalising opportunities for impact. The pupil premium action plan is now based on analysis from a variety of hard and soft data. Interventions based on individual barriers have been delayed because of the pandemic. However, this plan will continue into the new academic year, alongside a cohesive plan for use of the Covid catch up money to ensure the children with the largest identified gaps are targeted for additional support.*
3.3 **Embed the new value of Fairness in the school by ensuring the whole school know, understand and buy into the objectives and actions outlined in the Equality Plan.**	*3.2* *The school have considered the changes that will be required to bring more flexibility to the timetable and curriculum offer to enable students to have greater access to the community to generalise their learning. This is ready to implement from September 2021. We have written and delivered the Sex Education module in the RSHE curriculum ensuring that parents from different family and ethnic backgrounds have contributed to the process so that all statutory elements are covered in a culturally sensitive way. Appropriate after-school activities have been introduced over the last year and a residential opportunity for Key Stage 3 students has been booked for the Spring term 2022. Following a topographical survey the plan for playground renovation is ready for implementation this academic year.*

Areas for Development	Next Steps	Expected Outcomes

3.1 **OHCAT PRIORITY 1 QUALITY STANDARDS** **Link Priority lessons and interventions will be implemented to ensure students have opportunity to generalise learning from more formal curriculum lessons.**	• *All students to receive Link Priority lessons from the Autumn term, including weekly access to the local community.* • *Training and monitoring of morning registration sessions to ensure personalised interventions are systematically covered* • *Specialised interventions to be covered consistently through allocated time – including ELSA training and topic vocabulary highlighted by SALTs*	• *Students will demonstrate high levels of engagement in community-based Link Priorities lessons.* • *There will be an increase in progress for students across the school in Link Priority target 10* ***Transfer and generalise skills** – be able to apply the knowledge and skills they learn at school to different activities and environments*
3.2 **OHCAT PRIORITY 1 QUALITY STANDARDS** **Learners in receipts of pupil premium funding or allocated Covid catch up funding will receive the best bespoke additional learning opportunities and resources.**	• *All staff to be aware of PP students and to have opportunity to feedback ideas for areas in which individual students could benefit most* • *Funding to be allocated accordingly based on individual areas of need and opportunities for personal progress and enrichment*	• *Students with PP funding will gain the experience of opportunities they may not otherwise have been able to participate in* • *This enrichment and progression will be evident in assessment of personal targets, Link Priority tracking, observation and general reporting*
3.3 **OHCAT PRIORITY ?** **Edupod mental health target**!	xxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT- GOOD

Strengths

- There has been a good hand over between the previous Principal and the current Executive Principal ensuring the **clear vision and strong values** established over the previous four years have been maintained and that the school is able to work from its now overall good position to one of outstanding practice. The school vision and values **drive the decision-making processes** of the leaders and the impact of this over time has meant that these are fully accepted and **embedded** into the life of the school community.
- During the academic year 2017-18, the recruitment of an additional Deputy Principal (Teaching, Learning and Assessment) has had an impact on **securing rapid improvements** across a range of areas. Teaching across the school is typically good and, where this was not the case, a robust support and training system was put in place to rapidly enhance weaker areas. Inadequate teaching, immediately evident after academy conversion in 2017 where at least 55% of teaching required improvement or was inadequate, has been eliminated. This is attributable to the school's **robust performance management** process and teacher monitoring and support plans. There is a weekly Continuing Professional Development schedule to further support and develop all staff.
- For the start of the academic year 2018-19, the school appointed a number of new **middle leader posts** to ensure that capacity was created at all levels to drive the school forward by developing the skills of **emerging leaders**. These roles include Access Curriculum Lead, Extra Curricular Learning Lead and Student Intervention Lead. A flatter leadership model is emerging with the whole staff team being enrolled into the areas that best meet their strengths and interests.

- There is a clear focus on **developing the curriculum** and ensuring staff have the **knowledge and skills** they need for i**mplementation**. Leaders work hard to ensure all students follow an **appropriate academic pathway** as they move through the school, and thought and time goes into providing the **personalised approaches** the children need to overcome their **personal and learning barriers**. The school **SENCO and the Therapy Team** in particular drive the personalised learning approach and do not give up easily, believing there to be a pedagogical solution to all barriers.
- Senior leaders **engage effectively** with students. They are visual at the beginning and end of the school day, take a lead role in community activities and assemblies and are present in their support for learners having difficult moments. Leaders support the SENCO well in her role in the **Education, Health and Care Plan processes** and this means they know students well and can liaise with outside professionals and the Local Authorities to make the best decisions about provision.
- **School Governors** are helped to understand their role through very clear support and training from the wider **Academy Governance Team**. This enables them to fulfil their **statutory duties** through a clear **scheme of delegation** and **portfolio model**. Governors worked with the previous Principal to **define the vision, values and direction** of the school and they have promoted the school vision well over the last few years. They have also been successful in holding leaders to account for the **quality of teaching and learning** in the school and **staff well-being**. Governors are well versed in the **Teacher Evaluation Framework (TEF).** This is monitored through the Teaching and Learning Portfolio visits and data is shared with all governors in the LGB via the Principal's Report. The TEF, with consistent reporting, allows the Senior Leadership Team to pinpoint areas of concern and for improvement, which in turn informs high quality CPD and training for teaching and support staff. Performance is measured on **'typicality'** from a range of evidence bases across both teaching standards. **Summative reports** capture a range of monitoring across a term, such as **learning walks**, **lesson observations, classroom displays and work scrutiny** for teachers. Teachers are required to deliver consistently well-rounded practice and are robustly assessed against this benchmark. The result of this is that the school now evaluates the overall quality of teaching and learning to be **typically good**.
- The current Governing body was **established** in the autumn term 2020 and has been formed from members of the former Primary and Secondary Governing bodies. This combined Governing body is **rich in experience and expertise** and is in a good position to hold leaders to account at this important juncture where the two schools seek to align and in time amalgamate into one school. The members of the Governing body have been fully involved in the alignment process and are committed to the vision of a **whole through school** that can be a **centre of excellence** within the borough for children and young people with speech, **language and communication needs.**
- The **Academy CEO** plays an important part in Governance, supporting the Principal to identify, manage and action any **key risks** and ensuring these are highlighted at **Governing Board level** and fed through to the **Local Governing Body** as necessary.
- Since 2017, the Principal, working with the Senior Team and the LGB, have used a Trust based **school inspection service** twice a year to offer **quality assurance** and mark the **progress/improvements** made.
- The school has a clear weekly **CPD structure** throughout the year and offers training on a wide variety of topics from well-being, to key strategies to support young people with communication needs to particular unusual learning barriers. Staff surveys over the last few years have recognised the improvements in CPD and the resulting **growing expertise** in the school community.
- Leaders engage with **staff** effectively and take account of the main pressures of the various roles. There is support to manage workload for teachers and therapists by giving clear, well -reasoned explanations for **priorities and expectations** with a **personal freedom** to complete tasks in the way that best fits staff **personality and learning style.** Staff appreciate leadership commitment to their development and are proud of the part they play in the bigger picture development of the school. Well thought out **Academy policies** and **local procedures** support staff wellbeing and leaders use these in a **timely way** to protect staff from **bullying or harassment**.
- There is a **strong culture of safeguarding** in the school and this is owned by all. The DSL and the Executive Principal are experienced and well trained in this role and together with the **strong accountability structures** from Governors and the Academy, this ensures a **pro-active approach** so that every child and family receive

timely and **quality** support from the appropriate services. The school's **contextual safeguarding policy** has been a particularly useful tool in the safeguarding process and is **effective in preventing family crises** due to the immense stress of managing a child with complex needs.

Leadership and management is considered to be Good, as there has been a clear and ambitious vision for high quality education for students and shared values that have driven sustained improvements in the school over a period of four years. There has been a targeted focus on improving the delivery of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. The improvements since the last inspection have been vast and recognised by a variety of different internal and external accountability groups. To move to an outstanding grading the school need to embed the impact of teachers and middle leaders on school development through an effective flat leadership model. Following the pandemic, parents need to catch up on school developments so they have more opportunity to work in partnership with the school. The effective role-played by the Primary and Secondary Governors needs to transfer to the amalgamated Governing body so that statutory accountability and school development across the broad age range of 4 to 19 are covered confidently and well.

EVALUATION KEY FOR LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT:

Dark Green	Light Green	Orange	Red
Target complete with proven impact 1/3	Target on track – some measurable impact 1/3	Target on track – impact to come 1/3	Not on track OR target completed without expected impact 0/3

Actions from previous year:	Impact of actions:
4.1 **Develop the leadership skills of the teaching team through an impact evaluation model.**	*4.1* *Teachers received training on impact evaluation leadership. They wrote and implemented impact evaluation plans for their curriculum or responsibility areas over the year. Senior leaders also received leadership and coaching training from the Principal. Appraisals for teachers were shared across the senior leadership team with particular emphasis on coaching for outstanding teaching and impact of curriculum and responsibility plans.* *All teachers now lead well in their responsibility areas ensuring "buy in" to developments across the whole team and contributing to cohesive growth of school improvement.*
4.2 **Improve partnership with parents through an INFORM, ENGAGE, EMPOWER strategy.**	*4.2* *The school has worked towards and has made some progress towards an 'inform, engage and empower' parent model. This has included the introduction of a weekly newsletter (INFORM) and parent meetings based on the improved progress reports (ENGAGE). The regular parent workshops have been delayed due to the additional communication required around the pandemic period. The communication around the introduction of the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum however has been of a high quality (EMPOWER). Some soft data has come to light at the end of the Summer term 2021 to suggest that some parents have not had enough information*

4.3 **Embed the portfolio framework for the aligned Primary and Secondary Governing body.**	*about the changes to the assessment procedures and therefore this will need to be rectified over the 2021-22 academic year.* *4.3* *Governors have used the portfolio system and support to become familiar with their new area of responsibility or have used the system to up-skill in the age group that they are less familiar with. Governor portfolio reports show that Governors have intricate knowledge of development priorities and statutory responsibilities in their areas. The Governing body are cohesive in their commitment and support to school leaders and show challenge in their areas of responsibility. The next year should see an increase in challenge at full Governing body meetings in areas outside of personal portfolio responsibility.*	

Areas for Development	Next Steps	Expected Outcomes
4.1 OHCAT PRIORITY 5 NURTURING TALENT **Update the Staff Induction plan and implement the Early Careers framework effectively to ensure the school culture and school developments are fully embedded amongst the new staff.**	4.1 *Update induction plan to include training on key values and strategies as well as operational elements* *Identify key staff to implement aspects of induction* *Weekly afterschool training sessions to include face to face, video training and discussion* *Monitor and assess impact of training through OHCAT induction plan* *ECF teachers to attend monthly training sessions in their cluster groups* *Attached mentors to meet with ECF teachers weekly* *ECF lead to monitor impact of the training*	4.1 *New staff will be fully cognisant of operational and strategic practices in the school and able to confidently contribute to school developments.* *ECF teachers will be effective in their posts and will be working at least a solidly good in the Teacher Evaluation Schedule.*
4.2 OHCAT PRIORITY 1 QUALITY AND STANDARDS **Focus on parent empowerment strategies to ensure parents have and understand information around school development, assessment and learning strategies relevant to their child.**	4.2 *Principal to give parent talks on school development at parent evenings and to drip feed updates through school development circulars*	4.2 *Parent feedback will show positive satisfaction regarding communication and parent support for their young person* *Any issues in either communication or content will be picked up on in a timely way and issues*

	• *Weekly newsletter to include updates and photographs of school development plans in practice* • *Overview explanation to be sent out with termly reports* • *Re-start parent futures group for those parents that want to be more involved in school development* • *Re-start regular parent workshops and coffee mornings* • *Graduated parent support plan to be formulated and owned by the teacher and therapy team with agreed bespoke packages for individuals implemented*	*addressed well without having to go through any formal complaints procedures*
4.3 OHCAT PRIORITY 3 DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH **Complete the planned playground and front of school projects to ensure learners benefit from high quality outside resources**	4.3 • *Work with identified OHCAT lead for successful cif bid to: agree a plan for two projects, establish quotes and agree company/ies to complete the works/ establish time line for works, monitoring of works/ completions of projects and payment/sign off.*	4.3 • *The young people will have a playground area that meets their needs, including an area for team games, an undercover area for creative and quiet activities, a horticultural area with raised beds and areas for physical activity – an outside gym and sunken trampoline.* • *The front of school will have a flat durable surface for car parking with safety gates for private access.*
4.4 OHCAT PRIORITY 3 DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH **Formulate and action a plan for full amalgamation between the Link Primary and Secondary schools**	4.4 • *Senor team to meet with Lynn Barratt at OHCAT to complete official request for school amalgamation to DfE and RSC.* • *Work through all legal processes and stakeholder communication and discussion in an open and timely way – including with Governors, staff, parents and the LA.*	4.4 • *The Link Primary School and Link Secondary school will become The Link School, with one DfE number, offering a quality provision and consistent pathway for children with speech, language and communication needs from reception through to Sixth Form.* • *The new school will be in a stable position financially to offer a quality service long-term*

	Ensure clarity of vision and values and ownership of these by the school community through well-led meeting and discussion *Outline a practical plan with clear targets, timeline, actions and outcomes to ensure the school and all OHCAT services that support the school are in a position to support amalgamation systems by the end of the academic year.*	*for children and young people from the local area with additional needs*

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS- GOOD

Strengths

The school has strong evidence that they meet the good criteria under each of the judgement areas under the 2019 framework as outlined in the document above.

The hard data from the comprehensive assessment system shows that learners consistently make at least good progress across the curriculum and their personal development and soft data backs up this judgement.

There are two main developments that are required to move the school into the Outstanding criteria. The first of these in the area of Quality of Education is to embed the changes in the formal curriculum aligned with the person centred curriculum ensuring full impact. This will enable learners to overcome deep learning barriers to make optimum progress in the academic curriculum and will prepare students for future life opportunities. The second development needed is in the area of leadership and Management. Leaders need to package the changes in school development well so they are understood by parents enabling them to act as full partners in the education of their young people.

Safeguarding procedures in the school are effective. The school has regular termly monitoring visits from the Academy Safeguarding Lead. These show that all documentation for statutory requirements are in place and that the school adheres to these. Child protection incident logs are monitored well to ensure they are up to date and valid, and regular supervision enables the Designated Safeguarding Lead to feel confident that they are managing incidents and allegations effectively.

Areas for development	The areas for development are covered in the Quality of Education and Leadership and Management judgements respectively.

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT SUMMARY EVALUATION- See Accountability file's in Principal's Office