The Link School – SEF Summary - (June 25)

OFSTED grading Link Primary school November 19		**OFSTED grading Link Secondary school January 22**		**Self Evaluation The Link School June 25**
Overall effectiveness- Outstanding Quality of Education – Outstanding Behaviour and Attitudes- Outstanding Personal Development – Outstanding Leadership and Management -Outstanding		Overall effectiveness – Good Quality of Education – Good Behaviour and Attitudes- Outstanding Personal Development – Good Leadership and Management –Good Sixth form provision - Good		Overall effectiveness – N/A Quality of Education – Outstanding Behaviour and Attitudes- Outstanding Personal Development – Outstanding Leadership and Management – Outstanding Sixth form provision - Outstanding

Context – The Link Primary and Secondary school were formerly separate non- maintained schools under The Link Trust. They joined the Orchard Hill College and Academy trust (OHCAT) in July 2017. The Primary and Secondary school amalgamated under one head teacher with the Primary DfE number in September 22. The school caters for children and young people aged 4-18 with speech, language and communication needs. A large proportion of children have a diagnosis of ASD. Since joining the Academy, in line with the overall OHCAT strategy, the school has concentrated on supporting local children predominantly. The school has been through a period of rapid growth, from 40 children on one Primary site in 2017 to 158 children across 4 different sites currently. At Primary site a new cohort of children (pathway 1's) with more complex ASD needs have driven a carefully adapted curriculum, pedagogy and specialised learning strategies. In recent years the school has expanded to meet the needs of children with ASD with a demand avoidant profile (PDA – pathway 4's). The school is a forerunner in meeting the needs for this unusual cohort and is a flagship provision within the Sutton Local Authority and increasingly nationally.

The school has a strong personalised learning philosophy with embedded values that support the overarching vision – "digging deep to aim high". There is an integrated educational and therapeutic model that enables children and young people to overcome their learning barriers and make substantial progress through an adapted national and specialised curriculum framework. PfA outcomes are a focus from school entry and result in positive personal, social and academic outcomes for school leavers.

Quality of Education – Outstanding
The curriculum in all subjects is designed to **build on former learning** and within this there are **structures for individualised learning.** The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of a wide ability range. Teachers have **good subject knowledge** and work across the curriculum is of a high quality. Appropriate **accredited courses and qualifications** are in place for all abilities and students are prepared well for their next stages. The school development plan has recently moved us to **outstanding,** as we have strengthened sequential planning consistently via middle leadership development. Also, at the Satellite sites next step progression has developed well through

structuring the **backdoor learning approach** as the most effective strategy for bringing **breadth to the curriculum** for PDA learners so that this is understood by **accountability groups.**

Behaviour and Attitudes- Outstanding

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 or ALSUP, 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. This is particularly true at the Satellite sites where young people who have formerly had limited access to education now access school regularly with increased attendance levels. The **School Councils** make 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**.

Personal Development - Outstanding

There is an embedded extension to the academic and vocational curriculum that emphasises the **development of the whole student.** There is high quality **pastoral support** with proactive development of **active lifestyles** and **positive mental health**. Learners have good opportunities to **develop their interests** and to be **responsible and active citizens** within the school community. The school have dug deep with the **personalised opportunities** offered to learners ensuring that the strategies and activities with the most impact are used to overcome personalised barriers and promote strengths. This is **embedded through all age groups**. The Personal Development Assessment structure assesses qualitative developments in a quantifiable way so that **impact can be measured** and shared with accountability groups and others as exemplary practice. The Personal Development Assessment tool (**The Link Priorities**) has been refined with the addition of **key learning steps** to ensure new staff can quickly capture young people's strengths and barriers in this area and **be responsive** to the challenges young people face as they arise.

The school has worked hard to show how **democracy** and i**ndividual liberty** can be understood in a **special school context** and this has been developed by gaining the right balance between managing individual pupil need and the needs of the majority. Effective development of **British Values** over time ensures there is open celebration of **diversity**. There is a tangible awareness and respect for **religious, cultural and disability differences.** This has been developed through a focus on Spiritual Development, one of the key elements of "The Link Priorities" on the Primary site and through the "Pictures of Me" diagnosis support programme across all age groups, part of the RHE Curriculum. There has also been a pro-active response to any possible discrimination issues.

Leadership and Management – Outstanding

Leadership and Management has recently moved to the outstanding category in school self-evaluation. There is a **strength and cohesiveness** within the **senior leadership team** that impacts at all other leadership levels. The commitment to middle leaders and new/ less experienced teachers through **strong mentoring and coaching** has maintained an **effective curriculum** and prepared for good succession planning. The recognition and support for staff **well- being is valued** and produces **high levels of commitment to the school** and to **overcoming the challenges** that the community faces. Improvements through the school development plan over the year have brought greater consistency and knowledge of how the curriculum builds across the different sites and pathways and has improved the quality of communication across sites so that everyone is aware of the **important role they play** and their responsibility to **solution focussed development.**