



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR ST. CATHERINE'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Name of School:	St. Catherine's CE Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Karen Graham
Hub:	Aspire Hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Mulberry Tree CE Academy Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	12/01/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Leading
Date of last QA Review	12/07/2021
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	The school has not been inspected since becoming an academy. The last inspection grade was Good in 2014.
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	N/A



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Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers, agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all levels Leading

Quality of provision and outcomes Leading

AND

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

Area of excellence Not submitted for this review.

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence Knowledge-rich 3D curriculum – 12/07/2021

Overall peer evaluation estimate Leading

The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.

1. Context and character of the school

St. Catherine's CE Primary School is a one-form entry primary school situated in Horwich, Bolton. The school became a stand-alone academy in January 2018 and is the founder member of the Mulberry Tree CE Multi Academy Trust. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with very few pupils who have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils in the school who are disadvantaged is broadly average while the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below. However, as a result of the school's growing reputation for supporting those young people, the size of this group is increasing. The proportion with an education, health and care plan is above the national average. Pupils enter the school from a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

The Christian values of 'compassion, honesty, fairness, love and respect for God's world' are at the forefront of the school's vision and ethos. Staff go the extra mile to promote and encourage these values.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The highly experienced headteacher and her deputy lead by example. They promote the school's vision which all staff, pupils and parents 'buy-in' to. The senior leaders are ably supported by two assistant headteachers and, collectively, they form a highly cohesive unit to drive the school forwards.
- Staff are very passionate about the school. The headteacher stated, 'No matter at what point a pupil joins our school, we guarantee a great experience'. The motto of Learn Together, Shine Together is evident in all aspects of the school. She added, 'We live it every day – it's how we do things here!'.
- Leaders go above and beyond to engender trust with parents. This was particularly powerful during lockdown periods. Social media has been developed extensively to maintain communication with parents, who really appreciate this means of keeping in touch with school life. This communication has continued successfully since pupils have returned to in-school learning.
- In a one-form entry school, all staff fulfil leadership roles. Subject leaders make a constructive contribution to school improvement. Close liaison with leaders at all levels ensures that the curriculum in each subject area aligns with whole school priorities. As a result, curriculum rationale and sequencing form logical steps.
- The school offers innovative opportunities. For example, selecting Latin as the chosen language. This has really captivated pupils' curiosity and interest.
- Continuing professional development (CPD) has a high profile in the school and where leaders identify a need, training is organised to upskill staff. Training linked

to Read, Write, Inc has had the most impact recently. All staff have received this training so that pupils of all ages can be supported if necessary. Guidance via Teams and the school's YouTube channel also provided help for parents to support their children with phonics development.

- All staff are included in self-evaluation. Training for governors enables them to contribute to whole school development planning in an informed, knowledgeable way. This leads to governors, leaders and other staff collaborating and formulating appropriate and innovative actions for the school. Governors fully appreciate this process because it provides them with greater insight into school life, in order that they can hold leaders to account with confidence and precision.
- British values and diversity are important issues at St. Catherine's and are skilfully woven into the curriculum. For example, the local MP was invited into school to talk to Year 6 about democracy. The deputy headteacher commented, 'everything we do in school is based around respect'. While the school is a Church of England school, teachers ensure that pupils are widely taught about other cultures and religions.
- Speaking and listening have been significantly improved. Younger children in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) make rapid progress through increased encouragement to use talk-partners. Responding in more depth to questions is also a key feature, for example answering in full sentences. Vocabulary is extended through conversations during free-flow activities and between 'Gardeners and Seeds' (Year 6 pupils who 'buddy' younger ones).

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

...leaders identified the specific training needs of all staff to accelerate pupil progress in reading and writing.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- The quality of provision is undeniably and consistently strong at St. Catherine's Primary School. Teachers create an environment that is highly conducive to learning. This motivates pupils and generates exciting experiences.
- Questioning is a strength because it deepens learning. For example, in a Year 3 English lesson, before embarking on a new class reader, the teacher's probing questions enabled pupils to make very relevant predictions about the fiction book. In a Year 2 history lesson, the questions the teacher posed opened debate about abdication and pupils confidently and enthusiastically related this concept to current political issues. One pupil posed the question, 'should the Prime Minister resign?'
- Reference to prior learning highlights the impact of the successful sequencing of

the curriculum because this provides plentiful opportunities for pupils to build on their knowledge and understanding. As a result of work covered in past lessons, Year 6 pupils were able to accurately identify why Bolton was a target for bombing in World War Two. Similarly, visits to Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 mathematics lessons indicated how adroitly teachers reinforced previously covered concepts.

- Teachers systematically develop pupils' grasp of subject-specific vocabulary and insist on its use in writing and oral contributions in class. In a Year 2 history lesson, pupils quickly grasped the meaning of 'abdication' and 'empire.' Grammatical terminology is also included; in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils were able to identify formal text because it contained no slang terms and contractions.
- Routines are extremely well embedded particularly when teachers require the attention of pupils, for example, after a session of pair talk. In addition, the 'no hands-up' approach during teacher questioning was observed in most classes. This ensures that pupils are always 'on their toes', in readiness that they may be asked the next question or to expand on the current one.
- Resources are used highly effectively to enhance learning. A most notable example occurred in a Read, Write, Inc lesson in Year 1, where the teacher who was self-isolating had prepared her own resources. She resolutely conveyed these to the covering teacher via Microsoft Teams and the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the 'think out loud' activity.
- Where behaviour for learning is exemplary, pupils are hungry to learn. Hence high levels of engagement are the default mode in most classrooms. Pupils are enthusiastic and inquisitive in equal measure, which makes for a highly positive climate in which to learn.
- Teachers exhibit sound subject knowledge. Thus, they bring learning to life. The exaggerated use of facial expressions by the teacher in Reception expertly explained words and emphasised meaning. He also made the learning fun, which the children not only enjoyed immensely but deepened their learning too.
- Teaching assistants (TAs) play a vital role in supporting pupils with additional needs, both in the classroom and/or in small group interventions. As one leader commented, 'TAs are very important to us. We haven't got many, but they are a powerful force'. They are well-trained and very knowledgeable, so they aid learning effectively while instilling independence in the pupils. This was highlighted in the Nursery, where the TA accurately assessed children who were sorting 2D shapes and enabled them to use the correct vocabulary to identify them.
- Teachers ensure that the curriculum is inclusive for all learners, especially for disadvantaged pupils or those with SEND. They ensure that content is scaffolded effectively so that there are no misconceptions and all pupils, regardless of their needs, are enabled to make valued contributions to whole class learning. For example, a Year 5 pupil with complex needs was delighted to join in the whole class discussion in a mathematics lesson.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes – Even better if...

...all teaching staff deployed a range of strategies to ensure that no time is lost during the teacher input phase of the lesson.

...all teachers had consistently high expectations of learning behaviours.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs – What Went Well

- The highly experienced SEND coordinator leads this provision with knowledge and expertise that provide exciting learning experiences for all pupils with additional needs. Her excellent support and the encouragement for all staff to demonstrate high expectations extends to parents so that they know how best to support their children. Because staff at the school know the parents well, this results in positive dialogue and contributes constructively to providing the appropriate support.
- Pupils with SEND and/or who are disadvantaged have full access to the curriculum because it was designed with inclusivity at the forefront. Where necessary, adaptations and scaffolding ensure that pupils are always fully involved in class.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are monitored closely and are meticulously discussed in the half termly pupil progress meetings. Training for all staff on mental health and wellbeing has been valuable so that staff can swiftly identify any issues and seek the appropriate support. The headteacher stated, 'staff are fine-tuned to their classes' so that they can notice any changes in the demeanour of each pupil in their class.
- Interventions are used astutely and staff ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same activities each week. Leaders 'cherry-pick' the most appropriate interventions and time-phase them to ensure their impact and effectiveness. For example, staff avoid withdrawing pupils from physical education or arts subjects, where possible, because leaders acknowledge the benefits of participation in these areas.
- Disadvantaged pupils constitute a small number of the school population but provision for this group is well-organised and highly successful. This was particularly evident in lockdown periods where staff frequently supported home learning through phone and video calls. They conducted home visits to overcome technical problems.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

...there was a continued focus on raising standards of writing for disadvantaged pupils.

5. Area of Excellence

Not submitted for this review.

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

Nothing at this time.

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.

Schools can 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.