



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR ST CATHERINE'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

<b>Name of School:</b>	St Catherine's CE Primary School
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Karen Graham
<b>Hub:</b>	Aspire
<b>School phase:</b>	Primary
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	Mulberry Tree Church of England Trust

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	12/07/2021
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Effective
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	24/01/2019
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Good
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	15/05/2014



## **1. Context and character of the school**

St Catherine's is an average-sized primary school situated in the town of Horwich near Bolton. The school converted to academy status on 1 January 2018. It is a standalone single academy trust.

Most pupils are White British. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is average. The proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below average, but the proportion with an education, health and care plan is above average.

The school's early years foundation stage (EYFS) provides part-time education for Nursery-aged children and full-time education for children in the Reception Year.

The school has a close working relationship with a group of eight local schools. The headteacher is a local leader of education and the chair of the local school-centred initial teacher training group (SCITT). The school has gained a number of national awards, including Healthy Schools, Active Mark, Sports Mark (Bronze) and Music Mark.

### **2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well**

- The highly experienced headteacher leads the school exceptionally well and is supported by a knowledgeable and committed senior leadership team.
- Leaders have high expectations. They are uncompromising in their drive to provide a stimulating curriculum that empowers pupils to 'live life in all its fullness'.
- This drive is a tangible feature of leadership at all levels and has steered notable improvements since the last review. All EBIs have been fully addressed.
- Subject leaders now make an extremely valuable contribution to the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils. They have strong subject knowledge and have benefited from thorough training in the cognitive science principles that underpin the school's knowledge-rich curriculum.
- High quality coaching from senior leaders has further increased subject leaders' confidence and skills so that they now plan and lead staff training. Subject leaders regularly check that the implementation of the curriculum is following the intended sequence. In visits to lessons they check that teachers are using the agreed strategies to embed key knowledge and vocabulary in pupils' long-term memory. Monitoring activities now also include a sharper focus on provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs.

- Leaders have embedded a collaborative approach to school improvement that includes staff and governors. Honest and rigorous self-evaluation generates well-defined priorities for improvement. The actions to accomplish these, for example, in relation to developing coherence and depth within the curriculum, are now clearly specified in school improvement documents. This enables leaders and governors to monitor the school's improvement journey more closely.
- Leaders are committed to increasing pupils' cultural capital to secure their future success as citizens. They have designed a curriculum that provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to learn about human creativity and achievement. The introduction of Latin is unlocking a world of vocabulary and enriching pupils' knowledge across the curriculum.
- The school's Christian values permeate its work and contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. Pupils have many opportunities to engage in thought-provoking topical discussions. Recently, they contemplated what life-lessons can be learned from football, and why footballers are 'taking the knee'. The curriculum enables pupils to understand British values and the importance of respecting people's differences. An example was the recent event planned by Year 6 pupils to show that gender stereotypes are not accurate.
- Pupils have plentiful opportunities to show leadership qualities. These include leading collective worship and acting as art ambassadors. A heartwarming example is the 'Gardners & Seeds' initiative, whereby each Year 6 pupil supports a Reception child through their first year in school.

## 2.2 Leadership at all Levels - Even better if...

...leaders further enriched the opportunities pupils have to learn about the full range of diversity in modern Britain.

## 3.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - What went well

- The school's ethos is reflected in the industrious buzz of activity and positive relationships between pupils and adults. Teachers' strong subject and pedagogical knowledge supports learning very effectively.
- Throughout the school, there is a strong and consistent focus on developing pupils' language and communication, reading, writing and mathematics.
- From the EYFS onwards, teachers model good speaking and listening and continually expand pupils' store of words. In the EYFS children's language develops through hearing stories, listening to their teachers 'think out loud' and in the numerous back-and-forth interactions that occur each day.
- Vocabulary development remains a high priority in Key Stages 1 and 2. It is a key component of knowledge organisers, embedded across all subjects and promoted well in all lessons.

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- Direct references to the Latin origins of words increase pupils' understanding of unfamiliar words. Year 3 pupils, for example, were better prepared to understand the idea of seed dispersal after finding that 'dispersal' came from the Latin word 'dispers' meaning 'scattered'.
- Reading is the bedrock of all learning at St Catherine's. Pupils' love of reading is motivated by teachers' own passion and the ready availability of quality texts in classrooms and the well-stocked library.
- Phonics is taught daily in the EYFS and Key Stage 1. Historical data shows that pupils achieve well in this aspect of reading. However, leaders want all pupils, and particularly disadvantaged pupils, to be fluent in phonics as early as possible. This has prompted the recent introduction of a new phonics scheme.
- All teaching staff have been trained in the new scheme and its implementation is going well. Pupils are grouped for teaching according to their needs. Teachers monitor pupils' progress closely so that any barriers to learning are quickly identified. Pupils falling behind receive swift intervention to ensure that they catch up quickly. This solid foundation primes pupils for greater progress in attaining comprehension skills in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' developing competency as writers begins in the EYFS and is built upon systematically as they move through the school. Working walls support pupils' grammar, punctuation, and spelling, and distinctive features of different genres.
- Provision for mathematics is driven by high expectations for pupils' achievement and enjoyment. A strong curriculum and quality teaching ensure that from the EYFS upwards, pupils gain confidence and excel in this subject.
- Beyond English and mathematics, leaders have used the National Curriculum as a framework to write a bespoke curriculum for science and the foundation subjects. This is an area of excellence.
- Around the school, arresting displays reflect the richness of the curriculum. The stunning clay sculptures of demon-dog heads, inspired by the folklore tale of Black Shuck, exemplify the impact of excellent provision for art and design. Achievement of the national Music Mark reflects the high quality of provision for music.
- There is no recent end of key stage performance data. However, leaders have convincing information to show that pupils continue to achieve well in English and mathematics. This was reflected in learning explorations, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work.
- Pupils' attendance remains high.

### **3.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - Even better if...**

...minor inconsistencies in the implementation of the new phonics scheme were addressed.

#### **4.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well**

- Leadership of the provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs is first class. There are excellent systems to identify, help and manage the provision for pupils with SEND. The SENDCo is tenacious in procuring specialist support where this is needed.
- Teachers adapt work and allocate additional support to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers include pupils with SEND well in lessons. They celebrate pupils' input and the work they produce, so pupils develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Removing barriers to learning is at the heart of the school's ambitious curriculum. Making disadvantaged pupils 'knowledge-rich' was the starting point for leaders re-design of the curriculum. Leaders know that disadvantaged pupils often have a deficit of prior knowledge. Consequently, they have ensured that reading, widely and often, has a high profile. This supports pupils in gaining necessary background knowledge and vocabulary to understand new ideas.
- Teaching assistants undertake a range of training to support them in their roles. They are committed and make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning.
- Leaders pay close attention to the impact of the curriculum and teaching on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. School information reflects that both groups of pupils are achieving well. Leaders also check that the take-up of extra-curricular activities for these groups of pupils remains high.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs benefit from a rich and varied range of extra-curricular clubs, including sport. Both groups of pupils also profit from an extensive programme of experiences they might not otherwise encounter. Examples, include 'bringing the West End into school', extending the range of public transport used for educational visits, and discussions with people of different professions. Additionally, the school funds specialist music tuition for viola and cello. This all serves to enhance pupils' cultural capital, build character, and promote pupils' physical and mental well-being.

#### **4.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...**

...the professional development of teaching assistants were further enhanced through a focus on assessment for learning.

## **5. Area of Excellence**

### **Knowledge-Rich Curriculum: Developing a Curriculum for Long-Term Learning**

#### **Accredited**

#### **5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?**

Three years ago, leaders started to question the impact of the wider curriculum on pupils' outcomes. They identified weaknesses in pupils' knowledge of place and recognised that pupils were not remembering or applying what they had been taught across year groups or subjects. Leaders also noted that the vocabulary gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils was growing wider. This prompted a significant curriculum review. Leaders were determined to make the curriculum more meaningful, memorable, and richer in vocabulary. They immersed themselves in research and embraced the findings of cognitive science about memory, forgetting, and the power of retrieval practice.

Leaders identified science, history, and geography as main curriculum drivers and thought deeply about what they wanted pupils to know and remember. This included a specific focus on developing pupils' knowledge of their locality. Leaders systematically planned vertical, horizontal, and diagonal links within and between subjects to help pupils make meaningful connections about key concepts and vocabulary. For example, when pupils come to learn about Ancient Greece in history they will already have learnt about where Greece is, its climate and coastline in geography. Similarly, while the concept of invasion is regularly revisited in history, pupils also meet this idea in science and physical education. These connections strengthen pupils' existing knowledge, making it more durable and transferrable.

The curriculum is meticulously planned and sequenced up to the point of teaching. At this point the knowledge-rich curriculum comes alive. Pupils are excited about their learning. Teachers skilfully prompt pupils to retrieve previous learning. They introduce new content clearly, in small steps, so pupils' working memory is not overloaded. Teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions. Lessons include a strong focus on embedding key knowledge and vocabulary through repetition and meaningful use. In the Nursery, for example, children understand what the teacher means when she asks them to 'represent' numbers in different ways, because the teacher has previously used this word repeatedly and meaningfully.

Knowledge organisers are central to the teaching and learning process. These informative and attractive documents have been written by leaders to match the bespoke curriculum. They identify the key information pupils must know by the end of a unit of work. Pupils use knowledge organisers well in lessons to help remember key dates, people, events, concepts, vocabulary, and definitions.

## **5.2 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?**

Leaders' regular visits to lessons, workbook scrutinies and discussions with pupils about their work show that pupils know more and are remembering more. A 'Big Quiz' occurs at the end of a unit of work. This tests pupils' recall of key knowledge. Scoring criteria is clear and results in data about the proportions of pupils meeting, exceeding, or scoring below the school's expectations. A 'Super Quiz' occurs at the end of the summer term. This comprises questions on what pupils have learned during the year and in earlier years. Data from this quiz reflects the knowledge pupils have retained in their long-term memory.

## **5.3 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?**

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Title: Headteacher

Email: [grahamk@st-catherines.bolton.sch.uk](mailto:grahamk@st-catherines.bolton.sch.uk)

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

None has been identified at this stage.

**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.**



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**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.**