



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR ABBEY MEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

<b>Name of School:</b>	Abbey Mead Primary Academy
<b>Principal:</b>	Gary Aldred
<b>Hub:</b>	East Midlands South Hub
<b>School phase:</b>	Primary
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	The Mead Educational Trust

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Effective
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	07/03/2022
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Effective
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	04/03/2020
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	The school has not been inspected since academisation. The last inspection in 2011 resulted in an outstanding judgement.
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	15/02/2011



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR ABBEY MEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

#### Quality Assurance Review

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

<b>Leadership at all levels</b>	Leading
<b>Quality of provision and outcomes</b>	Effective

**AND**

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

<b>Area of excellence</b>	Accredited
<b>Previously accredited valid areas of excellence</b>	N/A
<b>Overall peer evaluation estimate</b>	Effective

***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**

Abbey Mead Primary Academy is a much larger than average, three-form-entry primary school located in a socially deprived area of Leicester city. Almost all pupils have English as an additional language, with Hindi and Gujarati the main home languages spoken; 98% of pupils are of Asian heritage. The proportion of pupils in the disadvantaged group is statistically below average although this does not truly reflect the deprivation in this area since many pupils live in homes with multiple occupancy. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is broadly average, while the number with an education, health and care plan is below.

The school is part of the Mead Educational Trust which comprises seven primary schools and four secondary schools. The vast majority of pupils at Abbey Mead transfer to two of the Trust's secondary schools, Rushey Mead and Castle Mead, to continue their educational journey. The school's vision is based on 'Learning every minute of every day', which is promoted by all staff, as are the school's values, aimed at developing socially aware, responsible young people.

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

- The senior leadership team, led by a highly passionate principal, is a skilful, cohesive unit. Leaders' combined expertise ensures that the provision for all pupils meets the highest standards. The education and welfare of pupils are at the forefront of everything leaders do and because they lead by example, they inspire all staff to buy into the vision.
- Teachers new to the school are seamlessly inducted because they are immediately aware of the support mechanisms that are available to them, which leads to universal acceptance.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and robust, leading to a coherent school improvement plan (SIP). Leaders have designed a SIP where leaders at all levels oversee an area that aligns with their expertise. The intervention of Covid has resulted in a plan that enables staff to celebrate the breadth of the curriculum. All actions form integral parts of the SIP so that strategically, all staff are focused on making the plan work through continuous monitoring. The principal is now proposing that the SIP covers three years to ensure that actions become fully embedded.
- Senior and middle leaders receive appropriate time to carry out their responsibilities to monitor and evaluate the impact in their areas, highlighting the school's proactive approach to staff workload and wellbeing. The collaborative, supportive culture of the school also ensures that teachers are not overwhelmed, leading to all staff adopting the school's philosophy.

### REVIEW REPORT FOR ABBAY MEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

- Middle leaders work closely with all colleagues in this group to ensure that there is consistency across the school. Because of the size of the school, core subjects have two leaders so that all phases have shared responsibilities which aids the driving of key priorities. Leaders from within the Trust work together so that strategies are uniform across the schools. This has been very beneficial and, as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) leader stated, 'I find the work with other EYFS leaders in the Trust extremely valuable.'
- Middle leaders ensure that there is consistency in their assessment in the foundation subjects based on a three-stage model – working towards, at the expected level and exceeding. This enables them to recognise exactly where each pupil is in terms of progress from their individual starting points, and thus they can provide the necessary interventions to continue their progress in a linear fashion. In-house moderation starts a quality-assurance programme and accuracy is further intensified through moderation with other Trust schools.
- The curriculum at Abbey Mead is a major strength. Novels that are used reflect a culturally, racially and gender-based diversity which ensures that pupils become immersed in a rich blend of curriculum content. Leaders are very particular in selecting texts that reflect the cultural mix of pupils in the school whilst making sure that these books are of high quality.
- The curriculum is progressive and builds on prior learning. Progression maps were constructed to ensure that the pitch of learning was aimed at the right level, allowing opportunities to re-visit and reinforce areas that require it. Currently, this is personalised and exclusive to subject leaders at Abbey Mead with the intention of expanding this process across the Trust.
- The oracy strategy that was introduced this academic year instantly resonated with all staff so that it was swiftly embedded into everyday practice.
- The wellbeing of staff is taken very seriously in the school. As the deputy principal commented, 'everyone has issues at some time in their life' and to counter these issues, the caring culture that emanates from leaders helps people through difficult times. The principal added, 'I think credibility is important – we all lead by example and staff know we will support them.'

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

... leaders ensured there is increased clarity for pupils and staff when teaching individual subject disciplines.

## 3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Teachers know their pupils well and tailor the content of lessons appropriately to meet their needs. Skilful planning leads to optimising learning opportunities, as

### REVIEW REPORT FOR ABBAY MEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

was evidenced in a Year 2 English lesson where pupils collaborated enthusiastically in their exploration of imperative verbs.

- Teachers employ assessment for learning strategies effectively, for example, using talk-partners frequently to allow pupils to share and discuss their learning. Questioning is strong and in a Year 1 English lesson, resulted in deepened understanding so that later in the lesson, pupils' writing was of high quality.
- In most lessons, the pitch and challenge are appropriate, leading to pupils tackling the lesson content with gusto; they can barely contain their enthusiasm during teachers' input! Closely linked to this is teachers' insistence on pupils developing and using higher- order vocabulary. In a Year 5 art lesson based on the work of Peter Thorpe, pupils were routinely using terms such as 'perspective' and 'abstract' to describe his, and their, work. This stimulates pupils' interest significantly. When asked to describe Thorpe's work, one pupil remarked, 'it's not like real life - it gives a different vibe!'
- The school's drive to improve oracy was evident in the majority of classes. In Year 2, the use of sentence stems encouraged the use of imperative verbs. Also, in PSHE lessons in Years 3 and 6, pupils could express and articulate their knowledge eloquently. Furthermore, in the EYFS, the positive use of oracy strategies by all adults convinced pupils to copy them successfully.
- Teachers' use of resources brings learning to life and boosts pupils' understanding. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the use of money at the three different levels of physical, pictorial and abstract helped pupils of all abilities to reach the correct solutions.
- Pupils are encouraged to work independently whenever possible. This was a strong feature in Reception where children were able to sustain their phonics knowledge, resulting in them writing in full sentences.
- Engagement in lessons is universal, from the youngest children in the EYFS who eagerly meet teachers' high expectations. The culture for learning that pervades the school leads to positive attitudes to learning.
- Positive relationships, rooted in mutual respect, abound across the school. This enables teachers to take risks and introduce a fun element into the learning. In a Year 2 English lesson on persuasive writing, pupils found it hilarious when their task was to write a sentence to encourage a dragon to eat only fruit and vegetables!
- Pupils love their school and are very proud to play an active role in the school community. They are fully aware of the cultural and religious diversity that imbues the character of Abbey Mead. They openly state, 'we have a diverse community at Mead and everyone is equal.' Another added, 'everyone is everyone's friend at Mead.'
- The knowledgeable, enthusiastic cohort of teaching assistants (TAs) make an invaluable contribution to learning in all classrooms. They implement the exact techniques and strategies that support pupils' learning without diminishing their curiosity and independence.

- A major focus on writing has resulted in significant improvement. A new scheme that has a novel-led approach, has led to a stronger emphasis on vocabulary and developing writing skills. Teachers increasingly match lesson content to pupils' abilities so that they have a greater understanding and, as one leader stated, 'pupils are now writing as a reader.' This has led to a commensurate increase in the quality of writing. Moderation locally has corroborated the improvements that are now being seen.

### **3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...**

...there was a more dogmatic approach to the teaching of phonics to ensure that any inconsistencies are eradicated.

... oracy opportunities were maximised for all learners, especially the most able.

... pupils were able to consistently articulate their learning intentions and intended outcomes.

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

- The emphasis on oracy across the school has benefited disadvantaged pupils. This ensures that they are given a voice in class because they are encouraged to articulate their thoughts at every opportunity. This has resulted in less passivity in this group because these pupils are fully involved in the learning.
- Targeted interventions have a marked effect, for example, the Flourish group run by a mental health practitioner, has been successful in reducing anxiety in Year 6 pupils in preparing them for transition to secondary school.
- Enrichment opportunities across the school challenge disadvantaged pupils and they are encouraged to participate in STEM activities and the more academic clubs, for example, the coding club. They are also guided towards arts-based activities to extend their cultural capital. As the principal stated, 'we say don't simply judge us on our data (which is strong), judge us on what we can offer.'
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving because the strategies the school utilises are working. For example, staff picking up pupils or dropping them back home for a very needy, small minority has improved attendance of pupils from some hard-to-reach families. Attendance at Abbey Mead is the best in the Trust, highlighting the success of the strategies that have become embedded.
- Most children transfer from the school's own Nursery into Reception. Leaders have built a strong rapport with the other settings so that their introduction is trouble-free. The information that accompanies children is accurate so that the SEN leader is able to swiftly apply the most appropriate strategies to support

them. Early recognition leads to the most effective support.

- Pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. Adaptations are minimal and are only used in the best interests of the pupil. Leaders recognise that nothing is better than quality-first teaching in the classroom, so interventions generally take place in the room as opposed to individuals or groups being taken out.
- Staff who apply interventions comprise teachers or TAs from within that year group. Familiarity with the adults that pupils are accustomed to gains the greatest success. Because TAs are well-trained, it is easy for the teacher and TA to switch roles, guaranteeing that pupils do not solely work with TAs. This contributes strongly to pupils with SEND making accelerated progress, often surpassing that of other pupils in the school.

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

None emerged on this review.

### **5. Area of Excellence**

A personalised approach to promote personal development

#### **Accredited**

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

- Over time, leaders have invested significant attention on establishing and fostering a school-wide approach to personal development that has resulted in a nurturing, caring culture where every pupil is important. Relentless work with parents has transformed their understanding and appreciation of the lengths that staff go to in supporting their children. Staff have a strong awareness of the school's location in a highly deprived area. Due to the barriers faced by children before they even enter the school, the approach at Abbey Mead has been designed and tailored to limit and wherever possible remove barriers so that pupils are not prevented from reaching their potential. The school community is ethnically diverse with 98% of pupils speaking English as an additional language. As a result, levels of pupils' communication and language, personal and social

development are well below national expectations upon entry. Throughout the pandemic, these barriers were only further exacerbated, spotlighting the importance of minimizing the impact of these.

- To overcome barriers to learning, a tiered approach which took account of universal and targeted approaches was designed and implemented:  
Tier 1 - Universal support – an equitable curriculum offer and opportunities for all pupils  
Tier 2 - Low level tailored intervention  
Tier 3 - Bespoke and targeted support coordinated by the Removing Barriers to Learning (RB2L), SEND and DSL teams.  
The first two levels speak for themselves, but the latter requires further explanation. In Tier 3, staff apply targeted and responsive measures to identify individual pupils who require additional support alongside vulnerable groups. Through the effective collaboration of multiple teams in school (DSLs, family support team, SEND team and RB2L team), individual pupils and wider families receive the support they require. Approaches are highly individualised for each pupil, fully taking account of barriers they are facing. The team has evolved significantly over the past two years. This has included the Inclusion and Wellbeing advocate working with a range of pupils across the school focusing on one-to-one sessions on emotions, self-esteem and social skills.
- In addition, the success of sibling groups that encourage brothers and sisters to get along better and communicate more effectively has been significant. The attendance officer and the pastoral support leader work closely together with key families to ensure that their children are in school and, when support is needed for the family, it is provided. In a meeting with parents, they emphasised the value they have gained from the school. They were highly praiseworthy of the time and attention they have received when difficulties have arisen.

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

- Staff audited the wellbeing of pupils at the beginning of the autumn term and were able to baseline pupils and use this information to create a vulnerability index. This has enabled the accurate assessment of the impact of a range of factors which affect pupils' outcomes. These assessments, along with a number of other key performance indicators have then been used to ensure bespoke practices are then deployed.
- Despite the challenges faced nationally over the past three years, the school has continued to make positive steps to reduce both general absenteeism and persistent absenteeism. The school's attendance figures are above Trust, local and national averages, taking account of the detrimental impact of COVID-19 and

coding changes introduced this year. Case studies demonstrate improved attendance figures for pupils who have previously had poor attendance.

- Other areas that have seen an impact include:
  - Low level anxiety
  - Behaviour records and exclusions
  - Individual and sibling work
  - Transition
  - Outreach work with parents
  - COVID outreach

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

Gary Aldred  
Principal  
galdred@abbey-tmet.uk

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

Investigate the curriculum offer and assessment of foundation subjects in other settings.

**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.**