



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR ABBEY MEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	02/02/2023
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Effective
Date of last QA Review	07/03/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Not yet inspected since academisation
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	Predecessor school 15/02/2011



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ABBEY MEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

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	Effective

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	Not applicable
Overall peer evaluation estimate	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 is a larger than average sized inner-city primary academy in an area of high deprivation in Leicester. The principal is proud to be part of TMET (The Mead Educational Trust) which is comprised of eight primary schools and five secondary schools. Leaders and staff embrace the vision of TMET; 'Together we make a positive difference', and promote a close working relationship with other primary and secondary schools within the trust. This growing partnership of academies brings access to a world-class education network. The school is a happy, stimulating and caring place where high standards of behaviour and good manners are cultivated and expected.

The vast majority of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL) and are of Asian heritage. The main two languages spoken at home are Hindi and Gujarati. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above the national average although the percentage of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils designated as disadvantaged is indicated as being below the national average. However, as many families live in homes with multi-generational occupancy, the level of deprivation is often hidden.

2.1 Leadership at all levels – What went well

- The principal is clear that pupils get one chance for a high-quality education. Leaders at all levels demonstrate a driving determination to ensure that pupils and adults reach their full potential. Leaders wish the pupils to have special and happy memories of their time at the school and value highly the positive relationships built between children, parents, staff, governors and the neighbouring community. Well-attended parent workshops and class Dojo have increased parental engagement with approaches to reading.
- There are high levels of collaboration in the trust and schools have many opportunities to share practice with other schools. Within the trust, schools work in trios although autonomy is also a feature. For example, all schools are able to choose their own phonics scheme.
- Lots of opportunities for support and high-quality professional development ensure that all staff become lifelong learners who want to continually improve their knowledge and skills.
- Subject leaders are keen and enthusiastic and are always seeking ways to develop their leadership skills. Those with responsibility for the foundation subjects have put their unit plans in place, along with a three-point assessment plan. Prior knowledge checks and low stakes quizzes are being implemented. Planned mid-unit checks and a final summative assessment will contribute to a clear understanding of where pupils are in each subject. Currently, this is at an

early stage of development. Mathematics leaders across the trust meet termly and bring back ideas to enhance their own subject area. The subject leader has therefore enjoyed a team approach which has enabled a variety of further developments to take place.

- Senior leaders are now much clearer about disciplinary knowledge and cognitive learning. Subject leaders are now members of professional organisations. INSET days have focused on the curriculum, for example, composite compound knowledge in cognitive science. Pupils are more motivated because they are more aware of the separate subjects through, for example, teachers articulating subject context more clearly – talk like a geographer – focusing on the subject specific vocabulary.
- School leaders are not afraid to challenge underperformance and put clearly formulated support plans in place to support teachers in developing their practice. The instructional coaching model in place is appropriate for the academy's stage of development. Staff are paired with a senior or middle leader which provides a clear structure. Provision is strong and the outcomes and implementation of the curriculum in classrooms demonstrates the impact.
- Since the last Challenge Partners review, the 'Partnership' approach to phonics has been implemented which has had a clear impact on the fluency of pupils' reading. Bug Club resources enable the matching of taught sounds to books which ensures that they are fully decodable. Phonics is now taught from the beginning of the Reception year; plans are also in place for the next academic year which would see phonics taught in Nursery. Staff have benefitted from the 'Phonics and Early Reading morning' which helped staff have the component knowledge necessary to support their delivery of phonics. Leaders monitor the quality of phonics regularly and children move to the next phase when appropriate.
- Pupils' views are considered. The 'Pupil Leadership Team' have regular meetings to discuss their opinions. Pupils were not happy with the food so they negotiated directly with the catering company, undertaking a taster activity. Their campaign to improve snacks resulted in plans for the establishment of a new snack shack.
- Attendance is above the national average. Leaders' actions, including clear messages for parents and the need for a signed charter, have seen improved attendance and a significant reduction in persistent absence.

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

- ... all leaders articulated the school's journey towards excellence.
- ... some subject leaders spoke more clearly about the leadership of their subject beyond their own year group.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- The strategy to develop oracy is working efficiently. Work has been done with staff to provide them with skills in linguistics which has had a clear impact in the classroom. For example, pupils in Year 6 were reading 'The Explorer' and could summarise and speak clearly about the main points of the book so far. One said, 'I am enjoying the book because I am finding it very interesting'. Pupils were able to articulate their prediction of what might happen next. Oracy is planned into the curriculum; units of work show a planned focus.
- Teaching assistants are competent and contribute well to learning through, for example, suggesting ways that pupils could improve their use of sentence construction to support their writing or asking pertinent questions. In Year 5 mathematics, pupils were learning about fractions and equivalent decimals and were well supported by the teaching assistant who prompted their thinking.
- Early career teachers (ECTs) have a mentor to support them which has enabled improvements to their practice. Mentors pop into lessons and suggest ways to improve teaching, such as through the development of questioning. ECTs praised the quality of continuing professional development (CPD). Recent writing training, which included diagnostic assessment, was described as 'fantastic'; 'we know what we need to work on'; 'this was thrilling for me!'
- The new phonics scheme was seen in action in Year 3 for readers in the bottom 20%. Staff have received training so that there is consistency in delivery. Year 3 pupils have benefitted through consolidation work in teacher-led sessions with an emphasis on sight words – 'taming tricky words'.
- Year 1 phonics across all three classes demonstrated a high level of consistency. This showed that all pupils receive the same quality teaching. Teachers' knowledge of phonics was high-quality, which resulted in pupils being appropriately supported.
- The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is excellent. In Nursery, there is a well-defined curriculum in place which is very well organised. Some children sat with their teacher while others participated in continuous provision. Clear routines were in place to develop oracy and children were surrounded by a language rich environment which was calm and purposeful. In Reception, the theme of dinosaurs saw an exciting array of activities which children engaged in enthusiastically. One boy carefully cut out a cone to make his volcano, other children could name their dinosaur pictures and confidently pronounced words such as pterodactyl, stegosaurus and T. rex. Outside, others were occupied with a 'Shoot the Volcano' game with water pistols.
- Pupils remember what they have been taught. In Year 2, pupils were actively involved in their history lesson about Samuel Pepys and the Fire of London and could articulate several complex facts. They could speak clearly about where the fire started and why it spread, explaining that the houses were too near to each other.

- Much work has been done to ensure that all communities are served within the academy and unconscious bias eliminated. The EDI calendar, produced by the school, highlights significant dates across cultures and religions which has raised awareness of the range of cultures within the community. One parent thanked the school and said that they now felt more included in the school community.

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

- ... the progression of skills within oracy was built into subjects across the curriculum.
- ... teaching assistants were able to visit other settings to gain an even broader sense of a range of practice.

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

- Work has been undertaken to develop planned interventions which are matched to the four areas of learning. CPD has taken place with the teaching assistants and teachers who deliver interventions so that they are able to adjust the planning to suit the pupils' needs more closely.
- The SENDCO is part of deep dives which take place in the school. She drops into lessons to see how well pupils are doing which highlighted the need for more support for the higher-level, more needy pupils.
- Staff are clearly informed about the individual needs of SEND pupils. All these pupils have a pupil passport which are regularly updated with new targets. The impact on achievement and behaviour is evident in the classroom.
- Much preparatory work is undertaken to check that provision in place breaks down the barriers to learning. Trauma issues, including those centred on social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), are identified so that more appropriate intervention can be provided to support pupils' access the curriculum. All staff are trauma informed so that they are aware of individual barriers, which in turn, enables them to create a healthy, safe environment for all. An eight-week mental health and wellbeing programme, Flourish, has been devised for Year 6 pupils which focuses on overcoming anxiety.
- The money spent to promote pupils' cultural capital indicated in the 'Pupil Premium' plan promotes the building of relationships and the provision of opportunities across the school for both disadvantaged and SEND pupils. Fully funded, non-negotiable visits and sporting events are in place. The trust has provided a significant amount of money to support enrichment.
- Pupils with speech and language needs benefit from support from the local authority. Practitioners visited the school and undertook 'Colourful Semantics' training whereby aspects of it have been used to support pupils.

- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and perform better than the national picture. This is because they are identified and tracked by year group to ensure tight monitoring. Staff target questions in class and mark books belonging to disadvantaged pupils first. This is a discrete process and is very supportive.
- A significant proportion of pupils with EAL are new to the country and speak no English on arrival. 'Flash' academy intervention helps with translation and parents are able to learn alongside their child. ESOL courses are offered to parents to support their learning of English. 'Chai and chat' help parents to make positive links with the school. Pupils are fully immersed and support is provided in the classroom through physical resources.

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

... the 'Removing Barriers to Learning (RB2L) approach was clearer about specific barriers for particular groups of pupils through pupil pursuit.

5. Area of Excellence

None submitted.

Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

For further support following your QA Review, 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 (SLP) 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.



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Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website. (<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)