

Name of School:	Northfield House
Head of school: Executive Principal:	Alex Curran Sarah Ridley
Hub:	East Midlands South
School type:	Primary
MAT:	Rushey Mead Educational Trust

Estimate at this QA Review:	Outstanding
Date of this Review:	28/02/2018
Estimate at last QA Review:	Good
Date of last QA Review:	07/03/2017
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Not applicable
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	Not applicable

Quality Assurance Review

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

School Improvement Strategies	Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Outstanding
Area of Excellence	Accredited
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	Early Years, 07/03/2017
Overall Estimate	Outstanding

Please note: owing to adverse weather conditions, the review did not continue into the third day. This means that this report has been written with a limited evidence base. For example, a work scrutiny scheduled for the final day did not take place. The wording of the report and estimates have not been agreed with all relevant leaders.

Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

1. Information about the school

- Northfield House is a two-form entry primary school. There is a Nursery provision in the Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS).
- There are 421 pupils on roll. The school is larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English (EAL) is three times the national average. There are more than thirty different languages spoken in pupils' homes. Many pupils join the school with weak English language skills.
- The catchment area contains mostly social housing. This means that many families do not stay in the area for prolonged periods of time. This results in high pupil mobility at Northfield House.
- The school joined the Rushey Mead Educational Trust in November 2015. It is yet to receive its first inspection.
- Around 20% of the school population is from the Slovakian / Roma community.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Follow up from previous review

- Leaders have changed the way they analyse data. This includes a specific focus on pertinent groups of pupils. This was evident in documentation presented during the review. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) is reviewed four times over the course of the year. The principal's reports capture the impact of objectives.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- The effectiveness of leaders' strategic approach is very evident. This links to the EBI from the previous review. Now that pupils are making stronger progress, key groups can be identified as being vulnerable. In all discussions, it was clear that senior leaders are relentless in their drive for improvement. They understand the importance of being insistent, consistent and persistent in their day to day work.
- Leaders and staff have a variety of responsibilities. For example, the EYFS leader is also the behavioural leader in Key Stage 2. This helps secure a positive learning culture and strong work ethic in classrooms, also adding to a collegiate ethos.
- The data manager is a statistician. This means that information is presented in a statistical way. Leaders reflect on this information. They then interpret this in terms of the impact seen as a result of different work identified in the SIP.
- Moderation meetings occur twice every term. Dialogue between staff, facilitated

by knowledgeable leaders, ensures there is accuracy in pupils' attainment levels. Information gleaned from these meetings feeds into pupil progress meetings the following week.

- Leaders are rigorous when working with teachers to identify any pupil not making sufficient progress. Leaders have a very clear understanding of pupils' achievement information.
- Senior leaders consider succession planning carefully. Aspirational and potential leaders are identified and supported in their development. EYFS and SEND leadership illustrates this well.
- Case studies are being developed to illustrate how well the curriculum impacts on the progress (academic and other) of pupils with SEND. Leaders expect these pupils to make the same amount of progress as their classmates. Entry and exit assessment information is used effectively to evaluate progress.
- Leaders benefit from their collaborative work with Trust schools. There is a variety of forums for both leaders and staff to share their work and discuss generic and bespoke ways forward. An example is the development of character muscles and learning behaviours as part of the 'route to resilience' programme.
- Leaders have developed an effective system of supporting teachers in identifying pupils' needs and then selecting resources and strategies to best meet requirements. This links with a curriculum focus regarding the consolidation of key skills.
- Phase leaders pair up with senior leaders for monitoring activities. This enables senior leaders to quality assure the work of others, which helps ensure that there is consistency of 'judgements'. The executive principal's work with all primary schools in the Trust enables her to bring helpful information back to benefit Northfield House.
- Each experienced teacher leads a 'coaching crew' of about five teachers. Teachers bring their own pertinent issues to the crew meetings. These are then discussed and ways forward agreed. This has enabled senior leaders to gain greater appreciation about work across the school. This contributes well to ongoing professional development and strong staff morale.

2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...

...leaders ensured that teaching improvement is sustained by sharing current teaching strengths across all year groups.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Follow up from previous review

- School leaders have refined their marking and feedback policy. This has led to more efficient marking and a reduction in teachers' workload.
- Children's progress in writing through the EYFS and beyond has improved since the last review.
- Challenge for pupils with high prior attainment is effective. Leaders recognise that more work could be done to improve this aspect of provision further.

3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well

- Teachers are adept at introducing and reinforcing learning behaviours (the 6Rs). This reflects the work of the school over the past three years. The behaviours enable pupils to develop more positive attitudes to learning. During the review, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 collaborated well and developed secure mathematical reasoning as a result. In Reception, teachers referenced character muscles through their teaching of phonics. This enabled children to reflect on their learning.
- Typically, teachers are providing pupils with activities which provide appropriate challenge. This ensures that pupils are required to think hard in their learning. This effective practice is seen both in lesson planning and also fluidity within the lesson, with teachers adapting work and pupil groupings.
- Teachers know pupils' backgrounds well. This, coupled with secure knowledge of pupils' achievement, leads to teachers planning activities which build on prior learning and motivates pupils well. An example to illustrate this is the specific use of technically correct language to extend and reinforce pupils' vocabulary. Such work is pivotal to pupils' academic success, given that many pupils' come into school with limited English language skills.
- No time is wasted. In the early morning, before lessons begin, pupils engage immediately in planned activities. These include tasks which require pupil to read. Teaching assistants (TAs) often facilitate the activities. Pupils gain well from such provision, most notably those who do not speak English as their first language at home.
- Leaders deploy staff effectively. They think carefully about how to maximise learning opportunities. For example, the Year 5 and 6 cohorts benefit from staff leading three groups every morning.
- Staff have worked to ensure that pupils are more active learners. They are keen to see if pupils work well independently, which will provide evidence of impact of their work. Observations of learning during the review confirmed this to be the case. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, different tasks were set out. The teacher was able to be confident that she could work with specific pupils, knowing that their classmates were learning effectively without her involvement. Teachers make what they are looking for in the learning explicit to pupils.
- All staff care for pupils. Staff understand the importance of providing an environment where pupils feel valued and welcome. As a result, trusting relationships and mutual respect are key features of classrooms.

3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if...

- ... teachers and TAs slowed their teaching down, when appropriate, to probe pupils' mathematical understanding more fully.
- ... pupils who are capable of attaining high standards were stretched and challenged more effectively.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- Leaders have responsibility across phases of the school. Phase 1 includes the EYFS and Year 1, phase 2 includes Years 2 and 3, with phase 3 focusing on Years 4, 5 and 6. This has facilitated staff to gain a good understanding of transition aspects between key stages.
- Children's attainment on entry is captured via baseline assessment in both Nursery and Reception. In Nursery this year, the majority of children entered with skills below what is typically expected for their age. This is because many children are new to learning English. Approximately 50% of the Reception cohort arrive via the nursery provision. Owing to strong progress through the Nursery, these children enter Reception with skills typically expected for their age.
- In 2017, the proportion of children attaining an overall good level of development (GLD) was 80%. This compares well with the national figure. There has been an improving trend over the past four years. 12% exceeded their GLD in 2017. All these children transferred from the school Nursery. This year, 83% of children are predicted to attain a GLD by the end of the EYFS.
- Over the past four years, there has been an improved trend in the proportion of pupils achieving the Year 1 phonics screen standard. Last year, the figure was just below the national average of 79%.
- Last year, reading and mathematics attainment in Key Stage 1 was similar to the national average at both the expected+ and greater depth standards. Writing was slightly above the national average at both standards.
- In Key Stage 2, reading and mathematics attainment showed strong improvement from 2016 to 2017. Over the past two years, writing has been above the national average at both standards. Pupils' attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling showed strong improvement from 2016 to 2017.
- Pupils' progress scores through Key Stage 2 significantly improved in 2017 from 2016. Last year's progress for all pupils was in the top 20% of all schools nationally. Disadvantaged pupils made strong progress in relation to all and other pupils nationally.
- Documents show strong progress gains for pupils currently as they move into the final stages of Key Stage 2.
- Typically, at the time of the review, pupils' progress in writing was the strongest subject across year groups. Reading progress through the course of this year is improving well. A specific area for further improvement is to increase the proportion of pupils attaining the high mathematics standards.

5. Area of Excellence

Creating a child centred, bespoke curriculum for schools with a high level of deprivation and/or EAL.

Strong focus on:

- improving standards
- reducing teacher workload
- developing a consistent approach to teaching and learning
- using assessment effectively

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?

- In September 2013 the school had an Ofsted inspection. The overall effectiveness judgement was Inadequate.
- In September 2014, a framework for English and mathematics was written. It contained clear objectives and required outcomes. The school also created a teaching and learning policy. This resulted in significantly improved results in Key Stages 1 and 2 (July 2015).
- Six learning behaviours (6Rs) were introduced. This was to support pupils in becoming more active learners and gain confidence in learning.
- In September 2015, a framework for foundation subjects was introduced with a curriculum policy. All stakeholders were involved in creating the ethos and drivers for the curriculum, based purely on the elements that leaders felt would make the most difference for their pupils: aspiration, inclusion, learning behaviours and awe and wonder.
- The curriculum was built around these drivers, the national curriculum and giving pupils every day, real life experiences. Opportunities such as theatre trips, visiting London and museum visits were created. More visitors, including a university professor, artists and specialist dance teachers come to see pupils at the school. Every child receives a minimum of three school trips a year. Leaders believe that learning in school needs a relevant and exciting hook to encourage discussion and vocabulary-building before inspiring activities are presented.
- In January 2017, assessments for foundation subjects were introduced in order to measure the impact of the curriculum. Since then, improvements were notable enough for the school to support another school in developing and implementing their curriculum.
- In February 2017 the school had its first Challenge Partners review. The feedback was very positive. At the end of that academic year, the school achieved its best ever results, with 84% of pupils achieving ARE in mathematics, reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 2.
- By January 2018, tailored workbooks were in use for spelling and mathematics. They are tailored to the approaches favoured by the majority of pupils, including

those who are disadvantaged, and cover targeted aspects of the curriculum. This has contributed well in reducing teacher workload.

5.2 What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

Staff have developed secure teaching skills through robust organisational systems. These include:

- whole school INSET
- external training
- teacher led enquiry groups
- coaching crews (making use of Iris technology)
- lead practitioner support
- phase meetings.

The school has been outward looking and seeks every available opportunity to learn from others. The school has benefitted from Trust professional learning groups for year group standardisation, subject leader development and senior leadership. This has enabled staff to work collaboratively, learning from one another.

5.3 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?

2017 outcomes:

EYFS

- 80% GLD and 12% exceeding

Key Stage 1

- reading 75% expected+ and 27% greater depth
- writing 71% expected+ and 20% greater depth
- mathematics 76% expected+ and 22% greater depth

Key Stage 2

- reading 86% expected+ and 25% greater depth
- writing 90% expected+ and 28% greater depth
- mathematics 88% expected+ and 16% greater depth
- reading, writing and mathematics combined 84% expected+ and 10% greater depth
- grammar, punctuation and spelling 90% expected+ and 32% greater depth.

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

Ben Burpitt

Vice Principal and leader for curriculum. Email: bburpitt@northfield-rmet.org.uk

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.