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**CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report**

<b>Name of School:</b>	<b>Northfield House Primary Academy</b>
<b>School Address:</b>	Northfield Road, Leicester, LE4 9DL
<b>Hub:</b>	Rushey Mead Educational Trust

<b>Telephone Number:</b>	0116 2767761
<b>Email address:</b>	office@northfieldhouse.leicester.sch.uk

<b>Unique Reference Number:</b>	120020
<b>Local Authority:</b>	Leicester
<b>Type of School:</b>	Primary
<b>School Category:</b>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	3-11
<b>Number on roll:</b>	421
<b>Head teacher/Principal:</b>	Alex Curran Executive Headteacher Sarah Ridley

<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Not yet inspected
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	N/A

<b>Date of Quality Assurance Review:</b>	7-8 March 2017
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## **QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES<sup>1</sup>**

**School Improvement Strategies:** Outstanding

**Outcomes for Pupils:** Good

**Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:** Good

**Area of Excellence: Early Years Foundation Stage** Confirmed

### **Overall Review Evaluation**

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Northfield House Primary Academy appears to be firmly within the Good grade. The school has not yet had an inspection as it converted to academy status in 2015.

1. 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.

## **Information about the school**

- Northfield House Primary Academy is a new school that became a sponsored academy within Rushey Mead Educational Trust in November 2015.
- It is a larger-than-average primary school situated in the eastern area of Leicester City.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average as is the proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language.
- The catchment is mostly social housing with many families arriving and leaving the area. This results in high mobility rates within the school.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for special educational needs is below average, although those with a statement of special educational needs or an Education Health Care plan is above average.
- The school has recently achieved the PSQM Silver Science Award and Sports Bronze Award as well as a Bronze Eco School Award.

## **School Improvement Strategies**

### **What Went Well**

- The school has made rapid improvement under the direction of a strong, passionate, hard working and creative leadership team. Expertly led by the Executive Headteacher, the leaders have implemented an outstanding range of school improvement strategies which are rooted in enquiry-based research led by teachers. These are having a significant impact on pupils' outcomes especially in writing, phonics, science and Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The inspirational Executive Headteacher, through her dedication to developing all aspects of distributive leadership, has won the hearts and minds of the whole community and has brought about rapid improvement. This has been accomplished by ensuring that there is consistency among all staff in implementing systems aimed at raising standards and developing a mindset that, in spite of the many challenges that the school faces, pupils will achieve their full potential.
- The Executive Headteacher has created a 'can do' culture within the school. She has ensured that her team of highly experienced practitioners, coach and support current staff. This has had an excellent impact on accelerating the progress of all groups of pupils.
- All staff are empowered to lead and have a common purpose in raising standards. Leadership is distributed effectively across the school. Senior leaders provide strategic direction and middle leaders are developed well over time. This has resulted in a dynamic leadership team that confidently challenges and supports learning across the school.

- The school has a very strong and evident culture of implementing the 6 R's (resilience, ready, reflective, responsible, risk-taking and resourceful), which effectively underpin the school's ethos from Early Years to Year 6. This results in pupils doing their very best, taking risks in learning and becoming confident learners. All pupils are well supported in an extremely happy, caring, supportive, respectful and safe environment in which they flourish and develop high levels of self-confidence.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are regularly monitored and any areas for improvement become the focus for staff's continuous professional development. The school is a learning community seeking best practice to improve outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- The school has invested in technology (Iris) to monitor teaching and use it as a starting point for coaching staff to improve their performance. This is having a very positive impact on raising standards.
- The curriculum is exceptionally well planned through using high quality texts as starting points for learning. This has already shown an improvement in pupils' reading skills. Staff have access to well documented plans devised by senior leaders outlining curriculum coverage which enable them to develop a consistency of approach in planning lessons.
- Senior leaders have successfully established a thriving culture of high expectation throughout the school. Displays are of an exceptional quality and have a positive impact on igniting pupils' curiosity and improving reading. The school's focus of developing a book-based curriculum has ensured that all groups of pupils have access to high quality vocabulary, which they increasingly use well in their writing.
- School development planning is thorough, accurate and is grounded in evidence gained from rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. Performance management is robust and senior leaders regularly check up on staff's targets for improvement offering support when needed.
- Leaders have produced very clear, relevant, time-limited, strategic development plans based on realistic and rigorous self-evaluation. These plans drive forward school improvement, pupil progress and staff's continuous professional development.
- The school is outward looking, collaborating very well with other schools in the Rushey Mead Educational Trust on curriculum planning, moderation of standards and improving teaching and learning.

### **Even Better If ...**

... all developmental plans identified how objectives would be achieved and the impact that strategies identified would have on the performance of different groups of pupils.

### **Pupil Outcomes**

- The school academised in November 2015 and as a new school there is no validated data. However for the purpose of the review, 2016 data was used to gauge the impact of school improvement strategies on the current progress of pupils.
- The school's in house data shows that for the end of 2016-2017 progress is improving over time as a result of outstanding school improvement strategies. Thorough tracking is in place for all year groups to monitor the percentage of pupils anticipated to achieve the expected standard and above.
- In the Raiseonline and the Inspection Dashboard for 2016 for Key Stage 2, the vast majority of pupils reached the expected standard in writing which was above that seen nationally. This was also reflected in the proportion of pupils working at greater depth. This is as a direct result of the school's focus on 'don't expect it if you don't inspect it' mantra of monitoring and evaluation. Although reading has been an issue for the school as historically standards were below the national average for lower, middle and high attaining pupils, the leadership team has already put in place thorough systems to accelerate reading and track the progress of pupils' reading. The school is therefore anticipating 71% of children to reach the expected standard in reading for 2017. Current progress for all groups of pupils is good.
- This is as a direct result of the school's outstanding school improvement strategies aimed at raising standards. Pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 in writing in 2016 was significantly above national for all pupils with all groups of pupils achieving well in relation to their starting points. Current progress in writing is outstanding due to the high emphasis placed on handwriting, spelling and correct use of grammar.
- Although Key Stage 2 attainment in mathematics was significantly below national for all and disadvantaged pupils, the current relentless focus on developing the quality of mathematical teaching is reflected in 70% of children expected to reach the national standard for 2016-2017.
- Pupils did well in spelling, but test results were disappointing as English grammar punctuation and spelling was below that seen nationally. Current in-school information and scrutiny of pupils' books indicate that pupils are making good progress across the school as a result of improved systems of accountability, better teaching and secure systems for analysing pupil performance. Well-focused use of targeted interventions is improving pupils' learning especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Key Stage 1 attainment for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics shows that the majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points in Early Years Foundation Stage because of the high emphasis placed on teaching basic skills through play. The Year 1 phonics data is just below national average (school 76% National 81%), however currently pupils are making rapid progress due to the many changes that have been made to the teaching of phonics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress due to outstanding teaching and expert curriculum planning. Children enter with skills that

are well below what is typically expected for their age. The good level of development last year was 75%, which has increased by 25% from the previous year. This is due to the many personalised learning opportunities offered to pupils and the high quality of teaching of all staff.

- Throughout the school there is a high focus on pupils working in greater depth. This is seen through targeted questioning and the use of focused activities aimed at all groups of pupils using their reasoning skills in learning.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **What Went Well**

- Teaching is improving rapidly because staff are given support and challenge through coaching and are now clear as to what needs to be taught as a result of well analysed assessment and clear guidelines for curriculum planning.
- The impact of coaching has enabled teachers to be clear as to what it is that they want the children to learn. Senior leaders attend staff's planning meetings and help teachers formulate clear learning objectives and differentiated criteria for the different groups of pupils.
- All staff now demonstrate the highest of expectations in what they expect of the different groups of pupils. They are committed to providing a highly creative range of learning experiences, which makes lessons engaging, rewarding and fun.
- Relationships are warm and caring resulting in pupils feeling safe in learning and there is a strong ethos of supportive collaboration. The positive relationship between leaders, staff and pupils ensures every pupil has the best opportunities to achieve. Barriers to learning are identified and acted upon resulting in disadvantaged pupils and those who have disabilities and special educational needs making consistently good progress.
- Marking and feedback is effectively aligned to the school's policy and pupils are confident in knowing their own learning objectives and how to improve their performance.
- The strong culture of respect leads to an extremely effective, consistent and positive programme of behaviour support throughout the school. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable as a result of the 6 R's and the consistent application of the behaviour policy. Low-level disruption is extremely rare.
- As a result of well targeted Continuing Professional Development (CPD), questioning is a key feature of the highly effective teaching. Teachers throughout the school are skilled at using open questions to check understanding, challenge pupils to extend their learning, as well as to assess progress within lessons.
- The pace and structure of lessons ensure that there is a careful balance of teacher modelling, talk partner and written work. As a result, pupils make rapid progress.

- Teachers use assessment for learning strategies effectively, providing incisive feedback throughout lessons through high-level questioning and mini-plenaries. This constant checking of understanding enables teachers to adjust their planning to meet the needs of the different groups of pupils.
- The highly enabling classroom environment is used effectively to support learning throughout the school. Displays reflect current learning with key questions and relevant vocabulary. Every opportunity is taken to develop independence in learning. Displays are outstanding throughout the school and play a very positive role in developing pupils' curiosity. Pupils want to learn because teaching opens up a world of possibilities.
- Pupil's exercise books are very neatly presented reflecting the pride that they take in their work.

### **Even Better If ...**

... marking and feedback in all year groups was consistent and in line with the school policy, and identified next steps for learning.

... every opportunity was taken in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to model writing for all groups of pupils, especially lower attaining pupils.

... all teachers consistently used the best practice as demonstrated in Year 2 and Year 6 in offering more challenge for pupils of high prior attainment.

## **Quality of Area of Excellent Practice – Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Why has this area been identified as a strength?**

There has been rapid improvement from very low starting points in Early Years Foundation Stage resulting in children exceeding the national expectations for a good level of development.

The school's systems for excellent planning and use of assessment to ensure that starting points are built upon accurately are worthy of being shared with other schools in the Challenge Partners Partnership.

Expectations of what children can achieve in Nursery are very high and this impacts on the high standards of writing seen in the school.

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

The school has employed three outstanding teachers and highly trained support staff who are developing best practice which is shared across the school, for example, the nursery teacher is supporting interventions in Year 6.

The excellent subject knowledge within the Early Years team of how children learn is having a very positive impact on planning adult-led and children chosen activities. Staff are very adept at intervening and moving children on in their learning.

The expertise of the Early Years leader has contributed significantly to raising expectations of what young children are capable of achieving with the correct guidance and support. The school's decision to employ a data analyst to ensure information from assessment and tracking is shared with teachers has significantly helped teachers to focus their efforts on developing teaching rather than analyzing data.

The high emphasis placed on multi-sensory learning has resulted in children with limited language making in rapid gains made in all areas of learning.

As a result of the high emphasis placed upon developing parents as partners in learning the school has created a community of learners where parents are now taking a greater interest in supporting their children's learning.

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

Significant increase in GLD attainment at the end of EYFS, from 26% in 2014 to 75% in 2016.

**What is the name and email address of the staff lead in this area?**

The member of staff who leads on this area is Verity Reid

office@northfieldhouse.leicester.sch.uk

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

Following discussion with the headteacher, the school would like to reflect further about what support they might like.

**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.**