



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH MEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

Name of School:	North Mead Primary Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Alex Curran
Hub:	East Midlands South
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	The Mead Educational Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	28/02/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Outstanding
Date of last QA Review	28/02/2018
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	03/07/2018

1. Context and character of the school

North Mead is a larger-than-average primary school. It caters for pupils aged between three and eleven. Currently, there are 446 pupils attending. This means that the setting is full for the first time in its history.

The early years consists of a morning part-time Nursery and two full time Reception classes. In each of the other year groups there are two classes. Two members of staff are early career teachers.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is approximately 40%, which is well above the national average. North Mead serves a locality of high deprivation. Pupils speak a total of 28 different languages at home. Mobility in and out of year groups at non-standard times is high. White European and Indian pupils represent the largest ethnic groups. Approximately one pupil in every ten has a special educational need and/or disability (SEND).

The bespoke curriculum is influenced by the locality, including the nature of disadvantage. For example, the values 'CARE CARE' (character, aspiration, relationships, equity, community, accessible, results, enriched) and the '6Rs' learning behaviours are evident around the school and in day-to-day teaching and learning.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Senior leaders and governors, together with subject and phase leaders, work harmoniously to support North Mead pupils and their families. All leaders are committed to the school. This is evident through the academic excellence all staff strive for and the drive to ensure that all families benefit from health and well-being provision. Leaders have created a bespoke curriculum offer that benefits the North Mead pupils very effectively.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. This is owing to leaders' work in developing a holistic approach to character education. An example of this is the 6Rs 'character muscles' (with pupils being ready, responsible, resourceful, resilient, reflective and willing to be risk takers). This development over recent years has led to pupils both accessing the curriculum offer and thriving in their studies.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the right staff are in the right leadership posts. This is seen in the way that subject leaders show passion for their responsibilities, being willing to learn themselves. An example is their desire to gain recognised accreditations, such as the national professional qualification for senior leaders. In

order to empower subject leaders, senior colleagues model well, including how to monitor provision effectively. Further, frequent personal development reviews include a focus on leadership aspects.

- Leaders and governors have considered the curriculum carefully, grounding their thinking in how pupils can thrive in their learning. Pupils have achieved strong academic outcomes in recent years. This is in part owing to how leaders ensure that all pupils gain important first-hand experiences, such as visiting a theatre. This means that when pupils are required to talk or write about such things, they can refer to their experiences and draw on what they remember. Such provision also supports pupils in acquiring and securing a broad vocabulary.
- Leaders know what pupils need in order to become fluent readers, writers and mathematicians. In English, for example, leaders have created a comprehension progression map. Each year group uses this to ensure that pupils build on previously taught skills slowly and securely. This results in pupils being better able to infer and give opinions. In mathematics, leaders have worked with teachers to devise sequences of learning that enable pupils to develop better conceptual understanding.
- Early reading is prioritised. Consequently, leaders recognise the importance of phonics and matching books with each pupil's competence in decoding words accurately. Working with teaching colleagues, leaders know which pupils are vulnerable in this respect. A range of specific strategies can be drawn upon to support pupils, including those new to the English language, to catch up quickly. Reading underpins the curriculum offer.
- Leaders understand the importance of being aware of and supporting all staff to enjoy a healthy work life balance, with mental health and well-being central to this. A 'no fads, common sense' approach is adopted which means that topical themes which lack benefit to North Mead are not considered. As a result, professional development is carefully selected to support school improvement priorities and staff development needs. Staff are further supported via frequent line management meetings, where staff can voice concerns and be subsequently supported.

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

...leaders considered how they might further strengthen their monitoring and evaluation, for example, by tracking a sample of pupils through a unit of study.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Pupils co-operate and collaborate effectively in lessons. These attributes are evident in range of subjects. Subsequently, pupils share ideas and build knowledge collectively, which in turn supports them in developing independent opinions. This is a direct outcome from the character development work, pioneered a few years ago.
- Pupils are able to articulate their learning well. One pupil stated, 'I feel more confident reading and answering questions'. This is testament to the impact of the current drive to support pupils in retrieving previously taught skills and knowledge.
- High quality provision is embedded. Staff and pupils know what is expected in terms of routines. Subject planning and subsequent pedagogy are securely in place. This means that teaching staff do not have their own working memory overloaded in lessons. Consequently, they are able to think about how best to support pupils when misconceptions arise.
- All staff recognise the importance of oracy in the curriculum. Staff are skilled and show this through asking well-considered questions of pupils. This leads to pupils being required to think carefully about their replies. Pupils are well supported in developing their own language techniques as they rehearse frequently.
- Pupils benefit from reading and listening to quality, challenging class texts. These books present pupils with progressively more complex language features. Together with genre which challenges stereotyping, this enables pupils to develop character well.
- Positive, trusting relationships– between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves– are evident at North Mead. Children in the early years listened to staff and each other in order to build with bricks, willing and confident to take risks to see what might happen. These relationships promote a safe place in which learning can flourish.
- Pupils are well supported in their learning by teachers and support staff. Staff know when it is best to intervene in learning and when to leave pupils alone. The effective balance struck helps pupils become independent learners which stands them in good stead as they use their acquired understanding to tackle unfamiliar tasks.
- Staff have created learning environments in which pupils can easily draw on information. Working walls and knowledge organisers contain pertinent vocabulary and knowledge which pupils need to acquire in order to gain a secure understanding of the topics being studied. These devices enable pupils to overlearn pivotal aspects of study which leads to these aspects becoming embedded in pupils' long-term memory.
- Staff use a range of teaching strategies to help pupils secure subject specific knowledge. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher modelled how pupils could use vocabulary (such as 'vertices) in sentences to convey their

understanding of shape. Such accuracy meant that pupils could convey their understanding clearly to staff.

- Pupils receive a balanced, relevant and contextualised curriculum. Staff understand the importance and value of each subject and, further, how learning in each subject connects with learning in others. Consequently, staff ensure that all pupils learn the full range of national curriculum subjects.

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

...staff in the early years reflected on the purpose of activities presented and then engaged with children appropriately.

...teachers frequently articulated to pupils why they are learning what they are learning now, in order to deepen pupils' understanding of how it will help them secure desired end points.

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

- During lockdown periods, leaders and staff ensured that pupils and families had the support and resources needed to enable pupils to learn well. Provision during these turbulent times was very well thought through. Consequently, pupils continued to progress well with their studies. Leaders have reflected and are now well placed to support pupils again should remote learning be required.
- Leaders and staff have developed a range of effective provision over the past two years. For example, electronic books as well as those presented in traditional formats, have enabled pupils to read often. This benefits all pupils, notably those with additional needs, both in their learning at home and also at school.
- Staff use fit-for-purpose assessment processes, for both core and foundation subjects, to help evaluate how well pupils with SEND access and progress through the curriculum. Leaders support staff in their understanding of this by connecting assessment information with other monitoring such as work scrutiny and talking with pupils. Thus, subsequent decision-making about how best to support pupils is based on robust evidence.
- The SEND co-ordinator supports subject leaders well. This results in each subject leader checking that pupils with SEND receive effective adaptation to their curriculum offer. Pupils with SEND enjoy the same immersive learning experiences as their classmates.

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

...leaders further developed individual pupil case studies to help staff reflect on, and learn from, provision for pupils with SEND.

5. Area of Excellence

An equitable approach to the curriculum and beyond

Accredited

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

- North Mead leaders have tailored the curriculum and wider work to the specific needs of the pupils and community. The impact that it has had on the school has been transformational. Pupils have gone from having low aspirations, a passive attitude towards learning, showing low level disruption and having a very closed experience of the wider world to pupils who are highly engaged, achieve high outcomes, demonstrate meaningful relationships, and experience a wide range of enrichment activities. It is distinctive because it is carefully matched to the community, but the model could be adapted to different schools and contexts.
- Through the character and enrichment approach, staff have given pupils the learning behaviours and experiences to access a rich and varied curriculum, as active participants in their learning. The foundation of this is meaningful relationships with others, understanding the similarities and differences amongst people as citizens of Leicester, Britain and the world today. As a result, there are reduced notable behaviour incidents from daily occurrences to a rarity.
- To achieve this, leaders have targeted funding to enhance the curriculum and the talents of the pupils. All enrichment activities (trips, visitors, clubs, sports events etc.) are free to all pupils – this is because these form the basis of the exciting curriculum. One of the vision and value statements is equity – staff give pupils and families what they need rather than have blanket policies. This varies widely and includes help in completing forms, making appointments, furnishing houses, completing right to remain applications and accessing clothing, food and vouchers. This equitable approach extends into policies, such as behaviour, which identifies and provides a different approach for 'Plan B' children. This caring method ensures that staff have a good knowledge of the community and its needs as well as accurately pinpointing any barriers to learning. This was particularly

evident throughout the two school lockdown periods and the development of the blended learning offer.

- The impact of the approach is shown through the consistently high end of key stage assessments, particularly the progress that pupils make (which has been recognised in letters from the DfE). This alongside the development of character and relationship skills, means that pupils are in an excellent position for their next phase of education and life beyond school. A further positive impact has been the increase in the number of children on roll. North Mead has gone from having low numbers and being a last choice, to a school with a waiting list in nearly all year groups. This is due to the changed reputation in the local area and is a particular achievement this year when many schools in the city have struggled with the impact of a low birth rate.

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

North Mead leaders present a range of evidence to show impact. This includes:

- End of Key Stage attainment and progress data in all core subjects.
- Behavioural and exclusion information.
- Attendance information.
- Case studies.
- Parent and visitor testimonials.

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

Ben Burpitt
Head of school
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6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

Leaders would welcome information from other schools to help them develop provision for pupils from Eastern Europe, particularly in respect of attendance.



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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.