



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH MEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

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

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	The school has opted to not have estimates at this review.
Date of this Review:	19/06/2023
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Leading
Date of last QA Review	28/02/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	03/07/2018



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Quality Assurance Review

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

School leaders chose not to have peer evaluation estimates for this review.

Leadership at all levels	Not applicable
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Quality of provision and outcomes	Not applicable
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AND

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

Area of excellence	Not applicable
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Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	An equitable approach to the curriculum and beyond, 28/02/2022
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Overall peer evaluation estimate	Not applicable
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*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

North Mead Primary Academy is situated to the north of Leicester, in an area of the city with high levels of deprivation. The school is larger than average, being two form entry with its own nursery. As the school has grown in popularity, this has led to it being fully subscribed and mobility has reduced.

The school serves a highly diverse population, with fifteen out of the seventeen ethnic groups represented in total. Almost half of pupils are from Indian or Asian British backgrounds, with just over one quarter being of White British or any other White origin. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is just above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is considerably higher than typically found, with 23 languages spoken in total. The majority of these are first-generation EAL pupils, with many new to English.

The school became an academy with The Mead Educational Trust in 2015, which offers many opportunities for networking and shared professional development. The principal was appointed in 2022, having previously been the head of school. He is ably supported by an experienced senior leadership team, with both the vice and assistant principals having worked in the school for a number of years, albeit also being new to their respective roles.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The principal and other senior leaders speak with passion and credibility about the school's vision and their commitment to the 'unconditional positive regard' shown for all adults and pupils. Equitable relationships are key to this, with every person in the diverse community being accepted and celebrated for who they are, with their individual contributions genuinely valued.
- The high expectations of leaders at all levels are exemplified in the teaching and learning handbook they have produced. This is securing consistency across the school, with strong subject leadership and teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge evident. Leaders notably take a research-based approach, with carefully chosen summer reading informing future developments.
- The wellbeing of staff is taken very seriously, with emotional and practical support given to help ensure all adults know what they can do to maintain positive mental health. Initiatives include having fewer but purposeful staff meetings, careful workload considerations, shared lunches, counselling, a golden ticket day, and generous release time to undertake additional responsibilities. Consequently, staff retention is high and the team members collaborate well, speaking with warmth about going the extra mile for the pupils.

- The curriculum is enriched by many activities that build pupils' cultural capital and inform the wider curriculum. The key framework is encapsulated in the North Mead Fantastic Fifty, which details fifty visits, events and opportunities that every pupil will undertake. These include visits to places of worship for all the world religions, trips to memorable places such as the seaside, the national space centre and a castle, as well as heartwarming experiences including having a water fight, baking bread and touching a snake! Importantly, every one of these activities is fully funded for every pupil. Furthermore, pupils benefit from taking on leadership responsibilities, such as being elected to the primary leadership team, as members of the kindness crew, the librarian managers, or the student executive team that represents North Mead with other trust schools. In addition, Robinson's Rovers volunteer to assist the premises officer with maintaining the site, whilst Mary's Marvels support with clearing up at lunchtimes. Such initiatives are helping to prepare pupils effectively for life in modern Britain.
- The mutually beneficial relationships apparent throughout school are exemplified in the daily boost PE sessions which all pupils and staff take part in. These short-burst sessions before morning breaktime are popular and successfully promote physical activity and positive mental health each day.
- The learning environment is spacious, inviting and well maintained. Classrooms are well-resourced with consistent expectations, such as having informative working walls and topic work on display. Communal areas depict impressive artwork generated by every class in the school, which celebrates many famous artists, such as Lowry, Basquiat, Kandinsky, and Banksy. This leads to a very productive climate for learning which pupils respond to enthusiastically.

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

- ... newer members of the middle leadership team had further opportunities to network across and beyond the trust.
- ... the school's website better reflected the many positive things happening in school.
- ... further initiatives were introduced to involve parents in their children's learning to continue to raise aspirations.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- School leaders and teachers have worked proactively to develop a broad and balanced curriculum. This takes a creative, book-based approach, with carefully selected, quality texts driving each half term's work across many aspects of English, as well as foundation subjects. Leaders sum up their mastery-type ethos aptly by describing how they want pupils to 'learn a lot about a little, not a little about a lot'.

- There is clear coherence and progression across the immersive curriculum, helped by informative knowledge organisers which are used as working documents throughout each unit. High priority is given to vocabulary acquisition, with similar themes being developed across the school. For instance, a geography theme focuses on home and travel, with the key books selected gradually progressing from the concept of home in Year 1, through to exploration of refugees and economic migration in Upper Key Stage 2.
- Teachers value the priority leaders give to offering a broad range of targeted continuing professional development. Instructional teaching has been gradually introduced this year, with modelling by phase leaders and shadowing opportunities available. As a result, subject knowledge of teachers is excellent.
- The development of pupils' knowledge and skills across the foundation subjects is assessed constantly, using recall tasks to embed knowledge and inform future planning. Leaders and teachers clearly know the pupils well which helps to ensure their individual needs are met appropriately.
- Each class compiles an impressive floor book across each academic year. These provide rich evidence of the wider curriculum and the awe and wonder engendered, whilst informing pupils' retrieval skills.
- The teaching and learning of reading have high priority throughout the school, with pupils' reading journeys being based on 'stage not age'. The systematic focus on skills and reading behaviours helps to ensure that all pupils, including those new to English, make quick progress. Phonics are taught well, with a consistent delivery of the systematic programme. This is followed by a structured reading approach, with comprehension quizzes regularly used to build inference. Pupils quickly develop a love of reading, with every pupil coming into school each morning and immediately settling to read their chosen books.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) enjoy a wide range of continuous provision activities, both indoors and outside, in the engaging and thoughtfully resourced areas. There is an appropriate balance between child and adult-initiated learning in the stimulating environment. During the review, children were exploring and sustaining their interest with well-planned activities related to their key text and specific areas of the curriculum. All adults were engaging very effectively with the children, with a purposeful focus on language development.
- A mastery approach is taken to the teaching and learning of mathematics, which leads to strong outcomes. For instance, in the impressive Year 6 lessons seen, pupils showed independence and high levels of engagement in exploring problem-solving tasks related to their secondary school transition challenges.
- Outcomes by the end of Key Stage 2 are typically far higher than national averages. Importantly, progress measures are also significantly above schools nationally, and were in the highest 20% of schools in 2022. Predictions for 2023 indicate a similarly positive picture. Gaps in lower year groups, which were caused by the effects of the pandemic, have further diminished this year. This indicates that pupils are prepared very effectively for the next stages of their education.

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

... pupils embedded the use of sentence stems independently to further develop their oracy skills.

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

- The leader with responsibility for disadvantaged and EAL pupils is one of the senior leaders. She works closely with the SEND Co-ordinator who is knowledgeable and very proactive, having forged productive links with parents, other agencies and local secondary schools. The removing barriers team is further enhanced by the family support worker, the attendance officer, an emotional literacy support assistant and the social, emotional and mental health leader. The proactive team meets regularly and communicates well, clearly taking a very collaborative approach to best meet the needs of all vulnerable pupils.
- Early identification of need and prompt response are evident in the detailed case studies maintained in relation to pupils who have various vulnerabilities. These demonstrate the successful provision and the progress that disadvantaged, EAL and SEND pupils have made from their individual starting points, both pastorally and academically. Consequently, gaps in attainment for these groups are diminishing, with disadvantaged pupils particularly achieving far in excess of national averages.
- Teaching assistants and support staff are valued members of the teaching team. They demonstrate good practice and liaise closely with class teachers. Notably, the team includes competent translators for almost every additional language spoken in school.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils, including the most vulnerable, are generally very positive. This is due to the high expectations and constant reinforcement from all staff. Similarly, learning behaviours are strong, helped by the team tactics which clarify expectations.
- Leaders and the pastoral team have taken a very tenacious approach to improving attendance. Many initiatives and consistently high expectations have led to a culture shift and families now work closely with the school to ensure their children attend. As a result, attendance figures have improved markedly this year, with rates of persistent absenteeism, including for the most vulnerable pupils, reducing considerably. Pupils clearly love attending school, which they describe as their 'happy haven'.

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

... all staff members became more confident with supporting speech, language and communication needs to build on the best practice seen.

5. Area of Excellence

Not applicable.

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.

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>)