



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH MEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

Name of School:	North Mead Primary Academy
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:	N/A
Date of this Review:	05/02/2024
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	N/A
Date of last QA Review	19/06/2023
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:

Leadership at all levels N/A

Quality of provision and outcomes N/A

AND

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

Area of excellence N/A

**Previously accredited valid areas
of excellence** An equitable approach to the
curriculum and beyond, 28/02/2022

Overall peer evaluation estimate N/A

***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 well over 20 different 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 valuable 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, including two vice principals. Many staff are involved in national professional qualification courses.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- 'We are cared for and we are listened to' is a typical comment that epitomises the exceptional team spirit at North Mead. The school's work is underpinned by leaders' commitment to the 'unconditional positive regard' shown to all stakeholders which is modelled by the principal and the vice-principals on a daily basis. 'We have to walk the walk.' The 'open door' culture sustains trusting relationships.
- The curriculum is book-led and each day begins with a soft start, centred around reading. This practice is consistent across the school and it was wonderful to see even the very youngest Nursery children totally immersed in sharing and talking about books. Books are matched to topics and individual vocabulary-rich and immersive stories, characters and enrichment. Leaders have invested in a high-quality diverse curriculum that details clear, consistent expectations of content and sequencing, whilst encouraging staff agency to enable staff to implement the curriculum in the way it is intended.

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- The school's documentation is aligned, so provides an ambitious strategic direction which exemplifies the high expectations that leaders model so skilfully. Staff are involved in carefully sequenced continuing professional development (CPD) that builds on prior learning and impacts at individual and school level, allowing people to follow their own interests. For example, staff pedagogy clearly facilitates the detailed Teaching and Learning policy that promotes quality first teaching, targeted academic support and wider strategies. The vice-principal said that 'CARE CARE (the school's vision and values) is in the DNA of the staff'. Consequently, this is lived and demonstrated by pupils' articulation of the Team Tactics of 'ready, responsible, reflective, resilient, respectful and reciprocity'.
- The rigorous yet flexible monitoring cycle allows subject leaders to develop autonomy by selecting activities that are most aligned with their subject action plans at the right time. This empowers them and develops their autonomy and confidence. One leader said, 'Our staff meetings are continuous training which demonstrates our whole school ethos. We get the chance to work in teams and observe each other.' The PE, science, mathematics, PSHCE and EYFS leaders all articulated the impact of their work, demonstrating increasingly confident leadership. For example, the sports coach has responded well to the PE leader's support.
- Leaders are acutely aware of local risks, for example, a couple of pupils playing on train tracks outside school prompted leaders to liaise with police to run safety lessons. Pupils are aware of the protected characteristics, and 'no outsiders' starts in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS.) An abundance of purpose-linked enrichment activities form the 'Fantastic Fifty'- comprising fifty memorable visits, events and experiences that every pupil undertakes to enhance cultural capital and reinforce academic learning. Activities include visiting the Botanical Gardens to support The Amazon Rainforest topic in Year 4 and a visit from a 'Roman soldier' to bring learning to life about Boudica's Army in Year 3.
- The impressive learning environment shows diversity within the curriculum and awareness of the needs of the community. Art work to showcase 'North Mead in Bloom' includes a range of cultural artists, including Andy Warhol and Georgia O'Keeffe.
- The EYFS leader has a clear vision and has created a skilled staff team. Reflective leadership results in high quality provision.
- Pupils are proud of their leadership responsibilities, such as the primary leadership team, kindness crew, librarians, and the executive team that meets with teams from the other Trust schools. These experiences and responsibilities help pupils to be well prepared for the future and life in modern Britain.

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

- ... leaders explored further opportunities to engage parents in their understanding of the curriculum and, therefore, their children's learning.
- ... White Rose planning was reviewed and tailored to allow for greater levels of agency to enable pupils to apply their knowledge and skills more independently in mathematics.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Pupils' excitement about their learning enables them to thrive in a calm yet buoyant climate for learning and consistently achieve standards that are significantly above national averages, often from very low starting points. This demonstrates that pupils are very effectively prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Children in the EYFS benefit from skilled staff who know them well. The work undertaken on the outdoor learning environment enables children to develop crucial gross motor skills to aid their acquisition of basic skills. Fidelity to the phonics scheme, valuable CPD and close monitoring of progress and development enables children to progress well. Parents attend workshops on phonics and reading to help them to support their children's learning.
- The immersive curriculum shows defined coherence and progression. Knowledge organisers support learning, in particular retrieval and what common misconceptions might include. Language acquisition is a key feature of lessons with appropriate subject-specific vocabulary on show if needed together with curricular links to fiction novels and non-fiction material.
- The CPD relating to the teaching and learning policy is paying dividends because it is improving staff subject knowledge and pedagogical understanding. Leaders have an agreed definition of 'consistency' which means that the foundations of pedagogy and lessons are universal. Staff confidently use a range of strategies including using hand signals, 'think pair share', cold calling and quizzing, giving pupils thinking time and space to share their ideas and opinions with others. The principal said, 'We don't teach to the test. Sustaining high standards comes down to consistent, quality first teaching.' Thus, learning time is maximised.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of online resources, including Purple Mash for computing, Oxford Owls ebooks library, My On and 'Times Tables Rock Stars'. Books are everywhere! The culture of reading is a strong feature of the school, as leaders believe that reading allows access to the whole curriculum. The acronym VIPERs (vocabulary, inference, predict, explain, retrieve and summarise) drives the reading comprehension curriculum and the lowest 20% of readers are heard read every day, benefiting from expert support.

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- Staff are secure in using misconceptions to reinforce learning. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher unpicked several misconceptions to support and reinforce pupils' understanding of conversion from metres to kilometres. In a Reception phonics lesson, the child saying 'buh' instead of 'b' was swiftly corrected, with the whole class repeating the correct pronunciation.
- Teachers encourage the use of language through targeted questioning, such as retrieval. In a Year 5 science lesson, questions including 'How will you know?' and 'What do you already know about..?' encouraged pupils' independence in setting up an experiment. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils extended their learning by asking their own questions, thus enabling them to apply their enquiry skills. 'I wonder what would happen if I..?'
- Pupils appreciate an enormous variety of sports activities on offer to support keeping fit and develop social skills to increase their self-esteem. Pupils also enjoy many different clubs.
- When undertaking self and peer assessment, the message from staff to pupils is that feedback should 'be kind, helpful and specific.'

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

- ... interactions in the EYFS ensured that all adults modelled appropriate, ambitious vocabulary to reinforce basic skills and extend language, thus enabling children to have opportunities to problem solve and have greater control over their own learning.
- ... pupils could articulate how their leadership roles are preparing them for the future.

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

- The inclusive nature of the school means that it is not possible to identify any pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged in lessons. Pupils are settled, happy and learning.
- The innovative Removing Barriers team is supported by the family support worker, the attendance officer, an emotional literacy support assistant and the social, emotional and mental health leader. The team members are instrumental in ensuring that no family slips through the net and that everyone pulls together to work in the same direction for the very best outcomes. The inclusive environment ensures that the vision and values of the school are promoted consistently and that every pupil is valued as an individual, having equal access to the full curriculum offer. 'Unconditional positive regard' applies to every pupil.

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- Effective strategic planning has led to clear systems and processes. This includes the identification of next steps regarding adult deployment to take account of changing pupil needs. The SENDCo has a depth of knowledge of the pupils which ensures they are well supported and that their needs are met. This includes relevant adaptations to curriculum planning to ensure that pupils with SEND access the whole curriculum. Adaptations may include sensory breaks, visual resources, manipulatives and vocabulary support. Pupil passports and diagnostic assessments address learning gaps.
- Great strides have been made in improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND as a result of successful strategies that leave no stone unturned.
- During learning walks, the SENDCo and subject leaders include a focus on specific groups or individuals who are disadvantaged or pupils with SEND. This results in increased understanding and confidence of subject leaders in ensuring that vulnerable pupils receive the right support at the right time. This also enables them to get to know who these pupils are so that they can support the staff better.
- Support staff are highly skilled, providing appropriate scaffolding by breaking tasks into small steps. For example, modelling how to say and understand the term 'refraction' gave pupils the opportunity to repeat and practise correct terminology in context. Support staff feel highly valued, Typical comments included, 'I love my job' and 'The team around the school is all of us.' All support staff receive appropriate CPD, for example phonics, and autism, and they also have opportunities to follow their own interests such as art therapy.
- Personal development of pupils is a strong feature of the school. Leaders are proud of the bespoke PSHCE curriculum, which is well led and researched, responsive to the needs of the changing community to help pupils, regardless of their backgrounds, to understand how to be good citizens within and beyond the school.

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

... the knowledge and understanding of support staff regarding metacognition was more consistent throughout the school in order to avoid over-scaffolding and allow for greater independence.

5. Area of Excellence

Not applicable



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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>).