



**VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP QUALITY
ASSURANCE REVIEW**

**REVIEW REPORT FOR
WILLOWBROOK MEAD PRIMARY
ACADEMY**

Name of School:	Willowbrook Mead Primary Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Marie Collins
Hub:	East Midlands South Hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	The Mead Education Trust

Date of this Review:	10/05/2021
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Leading
Date of last QA Review	12/12/2020
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	29/03/2011

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 Not applicable

School Improvement Strategies Not applicable



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Approach to recovery and remote learning	Not applicable
Area of Excellence	None submitted for this review.
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	Removing barriers to learning. 12/12/2020
Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate	Not applicable

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

1. Context and character of the school

Willowbrook Mead Primary is a two-form entry school with 464 pupils on roll located on the outskirts of Leicester City. It serves a community with high social deprivation and associated challenges. The on-entry profile data for both the nursery and reception reflects that the vast majority of pupils start the school at significantly below age-related expectations.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is significantly higher than that found in schools nationally and these pupils achieve exceptionally well. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) has notably increased in recent years and is above the national average. The school's motto of "Brighter futures, learning together", effectively sums up the inclusive and aspirational approach taken by all staff to enrich the lives of the pupils. The school has an unwavering commitment to support and nurture the mental health and well-being of all pupils.

Willowbrook Mead converted to academy status in 2016 and is an active member of The Mead Education Trust. The school has national support school status, and the principal is a national leader of education. The school was inspected prior to academisation in 2011 and was judged to be outstanding.

2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- The headteacher has established a strong, cohesive and dynamic leadership team, which has demonstrated an aspirational vision to raise standards by enriching the lives of all the pupils. Alongside this relentless drive and through high expectations, leaders have maintained an inclusive culture in which, as one leader said, 'has made school unmissable.' Communication is a strength and results in staff, parents and pupils being clear about what is expected of them, leading to consistency, trust and respect.
- All staff have clearly defined roles and are given both the autonomy and support to lead areas. They are provided with the time to seek and adopt best practice, and have the authority from the head teacher to 'make brave decisions' to ensure that the very best practice is maintained. Leaders at the school support new leadership by pairing up new leads with a coach. As a result of these opportunities for distributed leadership, Willowbrook Mead is an exciting place where all staff are both team leaders and team players.

- Subject leaders make a significant impact within the school. They follow a cyclical process of school improvement, where needs are identified, through purposeful monitoring activities and a well-established culture of continual professional dialogue. They provide regular support through coaching and mentoring which enables staff to work together to inspire each other. A typical comment describing the positive impact of subject leaders was, 'they are incredibly passionate and knowledgeable and are always willing to help us think outside the box!' Staff spoke confidently of how their suggestions are invited and valued by leaders. For example, their anxiety about professional development during lockdown encouraged leaders to provide additional training on the use of digital platforms. Responding to pupil feedback is also a strength of leaders who, for example, take regularly opportunities to modify learning resources to ensure appropriate engagement and progression.
- Leader's implementation of a robust character education programme ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is aligned with future expectations of society. Pupils articulate and debate their opinions in a mature and considered way, and have regular opportunities to learn from visiting role models. Older pupils also attend careers events, where they talk about post-16 education, which is beginning to break the barrier of generational low expectations for them.
- Inclusivity is one of the school's key drivers. Equity and equality are supported by the school's vision that the needs of vulnerable pupils are everybody's responsibility.' Strong leadership of the provision for pupils with additional needs, and those who are disadvantaged, ensures that every pupil has the right resources. Provision for SEND pupils is also strong because phase leaders manage support staff, which ensures that their professional development needs are quickly identified and addressed.

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

- ...all subject leaders built upon their knowledge of the progression of skills in their subjects and ensured that this was shared with the wider with staff through professional development and planning support.
- ...leaders continued to use trust wide continuing professional development (CPD) to develop the expertise of vice principals, who then ensured that high quality CPD was transferred to all levels.

3.1 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs- What went well

- All staff at Willowbrook Mead demonstrate a shared vision to pursue the best outcomes for all pupils despite the challenges presented during the last twelve months. Underachievement and limiting opportunities play no part in this vision. As a consequence, both staff and pupils continue to be provided with a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that they thrive and prosper. One Key Stage 2 pupil said, 'the best thing about school is being back in school full time!' Mutual respect and trust at all levels create a climate of positivity and ambition, where opinions are valued, and all are encouraged to try their best in a range of curriculum areas. This culture promotes an enjoyment of learning, which was shown by a Year 3 pupil who stated, 'I like school and enjoy my learning, because I know I will be working in a nice calm space.' This positive view was reinforced by an older pupil who said, 'I like school because the teachers stretch and challenge my learning'.
- Staff know their pupils and families exceptionally well which allows them to successfully cater for the different needs of all pupils, including high attaining pupils, the disadvantaged and those with additional needs. The local community appreciates the school's regular communications and clear focus on the emotional well-being of their children.
- Confident and secure on-going self-evaluation informs a coherent school development plan, which focuses on the needs of all learners. The school's curriculum intent and vision underpin the key priorities of the plan, ensuring that an extensive range of inspiring activities are provided to meet academic needs, as well as individual talents and interests.
- Leaders are outward looking, arranging for staff to meet with colleagues from other settings to share best practice. Opportunities for joint moderation sessions with other schools from within the trust further improves the standardisation of Willowbrook's assessment judgements, which has a positive impact of the confidence and therefore well-being of staff. The use of remote learning opportunities to further develop knowledge and language for teaching mathematics has also supported this positive trend.
- On a regular basis, pupils are provided with a wealth of experiences that encourage them to respect their school's values and to become thoughtful, kind and curious citizens in society. For example, older pupils have completed work on the British electoral system and now understand how their votes can influence government policies, such as the Bill for Up-skirting. Regular outdoor learning experiences have provided opportunities for pupils to explore a wide range of

environmental topics and discuss strategies for protecting their mental health.

3.2 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs - Even better if...

- ... subject leaders ensured that the progression of skills between Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 were meaningful, sharp and precise across non-core subjects.
- ... leaders ensured that there was an effective inclusion of girls across the curriculum with an emphasis on female empowerment, thus providing opportunities for leadership and developing their voice as individuals.

4.1 Approach to recovery and remote learning - What went well

- The school's approach to recovery has been carefully planned and successfully executed. Leaders have been particularly effective at anticipating pressures and putting measures in place to mitigate them. Risk assessments and a revised timetable have been developed very effectively, with the involvement of all staff, to ensure a safe return to school. This careful planning has resulted in high attendance levels of pupils and staff.
- Leaders have established well-received and successful remote learning procedures. Pupils required to learn from home have been able to immediately access appropriate academic work. The school has provided a range of learning channels such as 'Microsoft Teams' and 'Class Dojo' that help learners to access work and maintain strong lines of communication with their teachers.
- Pupils have also benefited from pastoral support, such as virtual assemblies, access to teachers and assistance from the SENCO, as necessary. The school has successfully used a range of mindfulness activities to address specifically identified individual pastoral needs. This extra support has resulted in a clear focus on mental health and the engagement of pupils, since their return to school, has been positive.
- The school's curriculum has been successfully adapted to ensure gaps in students' learning have been addressed. The decision to use lockdown learning to support pupils' acquisition of knowledge has allowed teachers the opportunity to now focus on developing practical skills.
- Staff are continually reflecting on pupils' needs and refining provision. After focusing on PSHE, during the weeks of school reopening, they decided to offer a

more broad and balanced curriculum, which has maintained learners' enthusiasm. Staff are encouraged to incorporate successful features of lockdown learning in their current practice. For example, many have maintained their strong links with parents by continuing to share photographs of pupils' work.

- The family support officer and leadership team's relentless focus on targeting individual pupils has resulted in improved attendance of the most vulnerable.
- Professional development has been well targeted to ensure that staff feel confident to deliver all aspects of recovery and remote learning. For example, the computing leader has successfully provided professional development to staff through training videos which has helped them to feel prepared and less anxious about utilising technology effectively.

4.2 Approach to recovery and remote learning - Even better if...

...all staff continued to build on best practice of the use of digital platforms and technology to embed them into the school's blended learning offer.

...all staff ensured that gaps in pupils' learning continued to be monitored and provided appropriate activities to further close these.

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

Continue to work with partners to further develop standardisation through shared book trawls.

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 also 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.



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Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.