



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 type:	Academy converted
MAT (if applicable):	The Mead Educational Trust (TMET)

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	LEADING
Date of this Review:	12/02/2020
Overall Estimate at last QA Review (if applicable)	OUTSTANDING
Date of last QA Review (if applicable)	28/01/2019
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Not applicable
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	Not applicable



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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 LEADING

Quality of provision and outcomes LEADING

AND

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

Area of Excellence Removing barriers to learning
(RB2L)

**Previously accredited valid Areas
of Excellence (if applicable)** A whole school approach to raising
aspirations for all pupils 15/01/2018
Curriculum 2017

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate LEADING

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 Academy is a larger than average two-form entry primary school in Leicester City serving approximately 470 children between the ages of 3 and 11. The school has its own nursery.

The school aims to make learning fun and make the most of its resources. The curriculum is constructed so that learning is connected through the different exciting subjects. Leaders aim to provide a welcoming, safe and supportive environment where children become self-disciplined and self-confident. The school seeks to promote awareness, understanding and respect for diversity in the world.

The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average. Pupils represent a wide range of minority ethnic groups alongside those of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) has notably increased in recent years and is above the national average.

Willowbrook Mead Primary Academy converted to academy status in 2016 and is an active member of The Mead Education Trust (TMET). The school has national support school status and the principal is a national leader of education. The principal and her staff team are committed to using their skills and experience to support other schools facing challenging circumstances.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- This is a truly harmonious and inclusive school. The principal and other leaders have created a happy and friendly atmosphere that enables pupils to achieve exceptionally well both academically and socially. Leaders at all levels strive to make sure that pupils get the very best possible all-round experience of education. The energy, enthusiasm and personal interest shown by leaders are highly motivational, creating a culture of initiative, innovation and success. Staff contribute strongly to the shared vision for pupils.
- Senior leaders have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are highly reflective and use the individual and collective strengths of the team well to address priorities swiftly but thoughtfully. School improvement strategies are based on an in-depth analysis of every aspect of the school's work. Leaders focus on making 'marginal-gains' to ensure continuous improvement.

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- Leaders have created a curriculum where pupils are hungry to learn. Leaders ensure that curriculum plans are the starting point for the very high quality of education pupils receive. The wide and varied curriculum enriches the pupils and provides them with bountiful opportunities to experience an impressive range of trips and activities. This includes musical presentations, chances to compete in sport at local and regional levels and visits to places of interest, for example, the National Space Centre.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is innovative. Senior leaders have recently introduced a 'live feedback' approach to evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. This is providing leaders with a better understanding of the day-to-day quality of teaching that pupils receive. Senior leaders are also able to respond immediately to any areas of concern.
- A diverse programme of support for staff meets the needs of individuals and drives forward school priorities. Research-supported strategies form the bedrock of teaching and learning. Leaders take time to identify activities with proven success, and they adapt them for use in school. Teachers are given practical strategies that can be easily implemented into their practice. For example, the new process of pupil feedback is easy to implement, praises pupils when appropriate and helps to move their learning forward.
- The school is very outward-looking and provides extensive support to other schools within TMET and beyond. Leaders work very well with other schools, providing support and training, and sharing best practice and valuable professional development opportunities for staff. Leaders at all levels ensure that the school is at the leading edge of educational development by researching current best practice and actively seeking out other institutions that may support and challenge Willowbrook Mead in equal measure. As a result, the school is highly effective in all it offers to pupils.

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

...leaders refined the school improvement plan to ensure a clear, and more succinct, focus on the key priorities.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Whatever a pupil's background, pupils make exceptional progress during their time at Willowbrook Mead. Children start in the nursery class with skills and knowledge significantly below those expected for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment is above and often well above average when compared with a wide range of national benchmarks. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of education.

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- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start in school. This is because the curriculum is firmly rooted in ensuring that children master the key skills at an early stage. This makes sure that children are more than ready for the next stage of their education. Pupils continue to make strong progress during Key Stage 1.
- In 2019, by the end of Key Stage 2, both girls and boys made exceptional progress compared to their peers nationally. Disadvantaged pupils attained and achieved much better than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported. This help enables them to make significant improvements in their learning, despite the challenges they face.
- Leaders ensure reading is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils are encouraged to take home a levelled reading book that is matched to their current reading ability and a book that can be read to them by an adult at home. As a result, pupils across the school develop quickly into mature, independent readers. Pupils develop their love of reading by listening, reading, watching and experiencing a variety of stories.
- Pupils have the opportunity to play tuned and untuned instruments and develop an understanding of musical composition. High quality art work is evident throughout the school. Pupils' work in geography, history and religious education is of a high standard. Pupils know about different places and can order events chronologically. The quality of their written work is super and their story telling is exquisite.
- The development of pupils' character is embedded in all aspects of the school. Pupils listen carefully and respond in a considered fashion to what others say. They question and thoughtfully build on each other's ideas. Pupils support each other's learning.
- Teaching activities are focused well on knowledge, skills and understanding, and expectations are high. The range of activities on offer is extensive. Pupils build on what they have learned before. They take on new challenges. Highly motivated, confident pupils delight in the opportunity to discuss their learning.
- Subject leaders have made sure that the curriculum is planned and sequenced in a way that helps pupils to learn. The content pupils learn grows in depth and complexity over time. Pupils revisit what they have learned and build on their knowledge and skills further. In mathematics, teachers introduce new concepts only when pupils are ready, which paves the way for future success.
- The development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is amazing. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about the wider world. Pupils are proud of their achievements in singing, dancing, art and sport. They speak knowledgably about current affairs. For example, older pupils are able to describe the impact that the Coronavirus outbreak is having on the travel industry.

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

...leaders continued to reflect on and refine the 'big concepts' that drive curriculum development through subject leader research and monitoring.

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

- Motivational equipment is provided for all pupils including those who may be disadvantaged. Disadvantaged pupils who may have writing and presentational difficulties find using the equipment helpful. Teachers focus on 'Character Muscles' and development of character through the 'Route to Resilience' programme. Staff enable disadvantaged pupils to become more aspirational and overcome barriers to learning. Enrichment activities provide experiences that disadvantaged pupils may not have had, such as African drumming and dance. Trips and visits and curriculum based days go some way to redressing the limited experiences and world view that some pupils have. Disadvantaged pupils become more engaged in their learning. In 2019, effective strategies saw disadvantaged pupils achieving exceptionally well during their time at Willowbrook Mead. The persistent absence rate for this group of pupils has also been reduced.
- Leaders at all levels identify, at the earliest opportunity, barriers to learning for pupils with SEND. Leaders identify the pupils who are making less than expected progress through a thorough, school-wide, inclusion process. Leaders have made sure that the systems to assess pupils' progress closely match their needs. The system tracks pupils' progress according to their SEND needs. Teachers use these assessments to plan individualised work that challenges pupils to learn and develop further.
- The school runs a number of therapeutic interventions to support pupils. The school provides a caring and nurturing environment for those pupils whose additional needs sometimes provide extra challenges for the pupils. The Hygge room is specifically resourced to facilitate the needs of these pupils. Dottie, the school dog, supports those pupils who may have difficulty forming relationships.
- Staff have close working partnerships with parents and families. The school works closely with a wide range of external support agencies. Senior leaders ensure that all staff have access to training and advice to support quality teaching and learning for all pupils. An alternative support base at a local secondary school within TMET supports pupils' emotional well-being for a day.

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

...leaders continued to support the new SENCO and the new leader for pupil premium pupils so that these pupils continue to achieve exceptionally well.

5. Area of Excellence

Removing barriers to learning (RB2L)

Accredited

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

Leaders have established a highly effective 'inclusion team'. The inclusion base leader, family support worker and behaviour mentor offer support to both pupils and families as part of the school offer of removing barriers. This is reflected through all aspects of school life and is specifically evident in the success of pupils on the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) caseload. The RB2L team strives to ensure that all pupils are ready and able to commit to their learning each day and provide them with individualised support. The RB2L has been highlighted as an area of strong practice by the local authority and more recently TMET. Other schools within TMET have replicated the Willowbrook Mead team within their settings due to its success. They have liaised closely with key members to ensure thorough understanding of roles and responsibilities. Staff at Willowbrook Mead pride themselves on the work that they do to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable/disadvantaged. They would welcome other leaders into the school to see it in action. They can offer support and guidance with:

- Strategies and practices to engage hard to reach families
- An understanding of effective interventions that support vulnerable pupils and those who struggle within a mainstream setting
- An understanding of the impact of the Hygge Room in providing a safe space for pupils to talk or calm down
- Practices that can be implemented to support lunchtimes and other unstructured times that can pose an issue for some pupils
- Procedures in place to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make progress at the same rate as their peers.

Willowbrook Mead is an outward looking school that continually seeks out continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for all members of the inclusion team. Through their involvement in these broad CPD opportunities, best practice is disseminated throughout TMET and beyond. Other, more recent CPD opportunities for the inclusion team have included training in the 'Seeing Red' intervention for pupils who struggle to manage their emotions. The inclusion base leader is currently undergoing training to become a qualified emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA).

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

Despite having significantly high percentages of pupils identified as disadvantaged, a significantly high SEMH caseload and several pupils open to social care, all pupils at Willowbrook Mead do exceptionally well. This is evident through the reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions over the years since the team was created. Pupil attendance rates have increased and are now above the national average and this figure has been sustained. Outstanding progress has been sustained over time for all groups of pupils. A high proportion of disadvantaged pupils attain above the national averages against a wide range of national benchmarks. Pupils' attitudes to learning have changed significantly through consistent use and promotion of character education. There has been a significant reduction in the number of high-level outbursts. The introduction of a therapy dog has improved the mental health and wellbeing of many of the vulnerable pupils.

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

Name: Marie Collins

Title: Principal

Email: mcollins@willowbrook-tmet.uk

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

Following discussion with the principal, school leaders 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.