

REVIEW REPORT FOR  
WILLOWBROOK PRIMARY  
ACADEMY

<b>Name of School:</b>	Willowbrook Primary Academy
<b>Head teacher/Principal:</b>	Marie Collins
<b>Hub:</b>	East Midlands South Hub
<b>School type:</b>	Primary
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	Rushey Mead Educational Trust

<b>Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	15-17/01/2018
<b>Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	23-25/01/2017
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	29-30/03/2011 as predecessor school

**Quality Assurance Review**

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

<b>School Improvement Strategies</b>	Outstanding
<b>Outcomes for Pupils</b>	Outstanding
<b>Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment</b>	Outstanding
<b>Area of Excellence</b>	A whole school approach to raising aspirations for all pupils - Accredited
<b>Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence</b>	Curriculum, 23-25/01/2017
<b>Overall Estimate</b>	Outstanding

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

## **1. Information about the school**

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Provision for the early years includes a Nursery class and two Reception classes. Typically, around three-quarters of children who attend the Nursery continue their education at the school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder come from a range of ethnic groups, the largest minority being from Asian backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is broadly average.
- More pupils than typically found join or leave the school at times other than the usual points, often in Years 4 to 6.
- The school became part of the Rushey Mead Educational Trust (RMET) in June 2016.
- The school appointed a new deputy headteacher in the week prior to the review.

### **2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Follow up from previous review**

- Succession planning within the trust is transparent and mutually supportive. This allows the school to provide opportunities for progression that align with both school priorities and the interests of staff. The school has developed staff from within, which has had a positive impact on improving the quality of leadership, provision and outcomes, particularly in mathematics.

### **2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well**

- The school is a learning community where leaders invest time and nurture talent in staff at all levels. Continuing professional development for support staff has allowed the school to train and appoint, for example, its own sports coach and reading recovery specialist. Teaching assistants are fully involved in school improvement and know the school improvement priorities as well as teachers.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of provision. This allows them to take rapid action where information from observations, tracking and data analysis shows that it is at risk of falling below the required standard. Monitoring is frequent and supports regular professional dialogue. Teachers are used to visits from senior leaders, who drop in to lessons or undertake learning walks every day.
- They also develop proactive and creative plans in response to potential issues. For example, they are working to ensure that the development of spelling skills is not restricted by pupils' relatively impoverished language, vocabulary and life

experiences. This is supported by the school's use of pupil premium funding to close the experience gap. Every school trip is free for every child.

- Rigorous and intense pupil progress meetings, led by phase leaders, challenge teachers to account for the performance of each individual and group of pupils in their class. This allows leaders to take swift action to support change and improvement. Teachers support these processes because the whole staff subscribe to the school's culture of aspiration for all and philosophy that only the best will do.
- Leaders have successfully implemented a strategy to engage boys in reading through a novel-led curriculum. Boys are better able to talk about their developing preferences because both teachers and pupils are passionate about the books that have been chosen.
- Leaders have made changes to the personal, health and social education curriculum, having identified where the existing provision was not meeting the needs of the school. The resulting structure has been welcomed by staff, who report high levels of enjoyment and engagement in lessons. Leaders attribute a reduction in instances of bullying to pupils' improved ability to resolve conflict more constructively to the revised, more holistic content.
- Attendance continues to improve steadily. The school's family support worker and behaviour mentor work with families address wider family issues and instil a culture of positive attendance. Part of this work has been to establish two 'walking buses'.

### **2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...**

...the school's intended development of a bespoke coaching model for the school included an appropriate focus on moving from being a skilful classroom teacher to becoming an effective leader.

### **3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Follow up from previous review**

- The school has made strong progress with all of the suggestions made during the previous review. These are now considered to be aspects of practice which are having a positive impact on learning.

### **3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well**

- The school has an enthusiastic staff who care about the pupils and help them to be confident, articulate and friendly. There is a strong focus on developing character, resilience, curiosity and a risk-taking mentality.
- The school's teachers are highly skilled professionals. They plan carefully

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structured lessons without placing unnecessary restrictions on how pupils might engage with learning. It is often clear that individual lessons form part of a coherent sequence of learning.

- Teachers secure pupils' engagement very effectively through well-chosen curriculum topics and resources, particularly for boys. Younger children in particular are hooked in quickly to learning, for example, by video messages from the 'pirate' whose ship has sunk. This leads to impeccable pace and enthusiastic learning behaviour.
- Cross-curricular links are strong throughout the school. For example, pupils are guided to explore vocabulary in context in history and use their mathematics skills in geography.
- Teachers' questioning is well developed as a result of focused improvements throughout the school. Expectations of high quality, extended answers and deep thinking are consistent. Pupils are expected to respond using full sentences and be able to rationalise their answers. Higher order questions are selectively used to provide suitable challenge. The standard of modelling by teachers is such that older pupils are able to generate their own high-quality questions.
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants in a considered and effective way. Interventions are timely, and the strategies used are well prepared and resourced. Teaching assistants work confidently and proactively to adapt work to meet pupils' needs and make relevant links with other areas of learning. As a result, pupils' learning moves on successfully.
- Success criteria are used from the beginning of lessons to scaffold learning and promote independence. They are revisited part way through the lesson to sustain progress. Pupils use them, through self- and peer-assessments, as a self-help tool. In some lessons, such as Year 3 writing, they generate their own criteria against which they evaluate their work.
- Teachers use a variety of visual stimulus to involve and engage pupils throughout the school. Resources such as working walls and reference mats are available to, and used by, pupils in most lessons. Teachers use visuals of the 'character muscles' to help remind pupils to show positive learning behaviours, such as working as a team and being a good listener.
- Teachers use the 'Mr Stretch' character to engage pupils with the concept of more challenging learning. They create and use opportunities to model higher level vocabulary and use of language as a strategy for raising expectations. Learning tasks are planned to incorporate appropriate levels of challenge

### 3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if...

...teachers consistently ensured that the pace of learning for those working at greater depth keeps them challenged at all stages of the lesson.

#### 4. Outcomes for Pupils

- Attainment on entry to Nursery is well below what is typically expected for children of this age.
- The school does not have information about children's current progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) because they have not yet had a formal data collection for this phase.
- School information and learning observations support the school's view that pupils' current progress is above average. Leaders have established a nominal threshold which they use to evaluate whether the proportion of pupils working at or above age-related expectations (ARE) is acceptable. The school's analysis of its most recent data collection shows that, overall, the proportion of pupils in Key Stages 1 & 2 who are at or above ARE is better than expected.
- Girls currently perform better than boys in reading and writing in Key Stage 1. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils working at or above ARE is lower than that of their peers, particularly in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) who are at or above ARE is higher than first language pupils in Years 1 to 4. White British pupils, while mainly reaching the threshold, do not consistently perform as well as their peers.
- The proportion of mobile pupils currently at or above ARE is much lower than their peers in Years 3 to 6. This reflects their starting points on entry rather than the progress they are making at school. This group is monitored closely by teachers and leaders to ensure that they have every opportunity to make accelerated progress.
- While current Year 6 pupils rarely reach the nominal threshold used in other year groups, teachers and leaders are confident that their performance is also at least acceptable. The school might like to consider establishing a separate threshold to reflect their clearly different expectations for this year group.
- Historically, progress in the Nursery is very strong. This ensures that a broadly average proportion of children reach a good level of development (GLD) by the end of the Foundation Stage. Compared to their peers, a higher proportion of disadvantaged children and a lower proportion of EAL children reach GLD. Few children reach a point where they are working at greater depth within the expected standard. Girls perform better than boys in all areas, particularly in communication and language, and physical development.
- Attainment in Key Stage 1 remains broadly in line with ARE over time. Pupils' writing in particular shows improvement from end of EYFS with more pupils reaching greater depth.
- Pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 shows a three-year trend of improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching ARE in the combined measure. The school's performance has risen from below national to above national and the proportion reaching greater depth is now above national.

## **5. Area of Excellence**

A whole school approach to raising aspirations for all pupils.

### **5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?**

The school has successfully implemented a range of health and well-being strategies with the common aim of developing pupils' character, resilience and aspiration. Leaders identified this need because the school is situated in a community of high social deprivation with a significant number of vulnerable families with complex needs and high levels of disadvantage. Many pupils come from families where education is not highly valued and children are not encouraged to be aspirational.

The school continually looks for ways to:

- improve aspiration for all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged
- improve attendance and punctuality
- improve links with the community
- improve parents/carers perception of school
- reduce bullying and playground conflicts
- reduce exclusions
- reduce disruption from low level misbehaviour

### **5.2 What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?**

- Leaders have successfully implemented strategies to make the journey from 'growth mindset' to 'developing character'. Teachers and pupils make regular reference to 'character muscles' and use the language of well-being throughout the school day. This has been achieved through assemblies, parent workshops, displays and consistent inclusion in lesson planning.
- The school has an extensive health and well-being offer, integrated with the PSHCE curriculum, with a particular emphasis on the provision of sports coaching and activities for all pupils. Additional level 5 training has been provided for staff to continue improving the quality of PE and sport offered in the school. Staff actively seek to transfer skills learned through sport back into the classroom.
- Leaders have implemented the 'route to resilience' project.
- The school has established an effective 'removing barriers to learning' team to target and support vulnerable pupils.
- The school has developed a range of approaches to develop children's leadership skills, such as school ambassadors, young sport coaches, school parliament, playground leaders, character champions, technicians and eco leaders.

### **5.3 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?**

- There is a sustained five-year trend of improving attendance, which is now in line with national figures, for all groups.
- There have been no reported incidents of bullying for two years, a reduction on the previous two years.
- The number of pupils on 'red report', the school's in-house behaviour system, has steadily reduced over three years.
- The number of exclusions has reduced.
- Boxall profile information for targeted vulnerable pupils indicates, without exception, an improvement in social interaction.
- Attainment at Key Stage 2 has been above the national average in the vast majority of subjects for three years.
- Progress and attainment for disadvantaged pupils has been above national disadvantaged in the vast majority of subjects for three years, and sometimes above national non-disadvantaged.
- Lesson observations and learning walks show a significant improvement in behaviour and low-level disruption.

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

Rose Rees

Health and well-being lead

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

Access to the National Professional Qualification for Middle Leaders for other leaders. The school will continue to take part in leadership development days where these provide useful content.

**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.**