

Name of School:	Willowbrook Primary Academy
Head teacher/Principal:	Marie Collins
Hub:	East Midlands South Hub
School type:	Academy Converter
MAT (if applicable):	The Mead Educational Trust (TMET)

Estimate at this QA Review:	OUTSTANDING
Date of this Review:	28/01/2019
Estimate at last QA Review	OUTSTANDING
Date of last QA Review	15/01/2018
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Not applicable
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	Not yet inspected

Quality Assurance Review

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

School Improvement Strategies	OUTSTANDING
Outcomes for Pupils	OUTSTANDING
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	OUTSTANDING
Area of Excellence	NONE SUBMITTED
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO RAISING ASPIRATIONS FOR ALL PUPILS – 2018 CURRICULUM - 2017
Overall Estimate	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. Context and character of the school

- Willowbrook Primary Academy is larger than the average primary school with its own nursery. Most pupils live on the diverse and socially deprived housing estate surrounding the school, located on the eastern periphery of Leicester city.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is significantly higher than that found in schools nationally. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is similar to the national average.
- Pupils originate from a wide variety of different ethnicities, with the majority being of White British origin. 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. Character education sits at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils are consistently encouraged to exercise their 'character muscles' throughout all aspects of school life. When they learn or play, pupils will be challenged to use and stretch a wide variety of learning, social or personal attributes, such as the concentration, confidence, honesty or perseverance muscles. This positive ethos exemplifies the school's commitment to supporting and nurturing the mental health and well-being of all pupils.
- The school's supportive philosophy extends further by valuing the staff team with initiatives such as golden weeks, when no meetings take place. Staff are encouraged to realign their work-life balance.
- Willowbrook Primary Academy 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 principal and her staff team are committed to using their skills and experience to support other schools facing challenging circumstances.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Progress from previous EBIs

- At the previous review it was recommended that the school developed their bespoke coaching model to focus on supporting staff to move from being skilful classroom teachers to becoming effective leaders. Much progress in this area is evident. The school's tenacious approach to effective coaching is apparent around the learning environment, with examples of the goal setting, reality, options and will (GROW) model, displayed in staff and communal areas. The school invites an external coach in regularly to train school staff to be coaches themselves and to work with individuals. There is now a system of coaching triads used where teachers and other adults work together to solve live issues and to inform teaching and learning practice. This approach is particularly empowering middle leaders to further develop their subject specialisms.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- The principal is an inspirational leader and a highly skilled practitioner. She shows a passionate commitment to making the school a welcoming, safe and positive learning environment for all pupils and staff.
- The senior leadership team ably support the principal in all aspects of school improvement and management. They take a proactive approach to their respective leadership roles and speak confidently about academic and pastoral initiatives.
- School leaders have an impressive history of supporting other schools. This approach is mutually beneficial for the Willowbrook team, with opportunities for secondments and well-embedded succession planning helping the school sustain its excellent provision.
- The school is committed to distributed leadership and has a commendable focus on teamwork. A notable feature of all levels of leadership is the outward looking focus. Leaders are never complacent and constantly strive to keep improving the provision for the benefit of their pupils.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out by senior and middle leaders. They focus on very regular drop-in classroom visits whenever possible, in preference to formal observations. Information gained is triangulated with analysis of findings from pupil interviews, book scrutinies and subject leaders' evaluations, which feed into pupil progress meetings.
- The school improvement planning and self-evaluation are detailed and appropriate. Key priorities are identified collaboratively, being mindful of local needs, national developments and achievement trends. Leaders at all levels contribute to the documents and the incisive monitoring.
- Leaders have embedded a culture of continual professional development (CPD) for all staff. It is given high priority with opportunities sought in response to school priorities or individual needs and aspirations. As a result, staff members feel empowered to fulfil their roles effectively.
- The inclusion leaders are proactive in reviewing SEND pupils' passports termly, with input from parents and pupils. The passports include progress steps for social and emotional needs, alongside academic targets.
- The curriculum is broad, comprehensive and inclusive. There is appropriate coverage of all subjects with many enrichment opportunities. These include a rich offer of extra-curricular provision, including sporting, dance, technology, music, cookery and mindfulness groups.
- The school serves its local community well. The family support worker provides a key link with families and the school has a genuine open-door policy. All teaching staff are very visible before and after school to help address any concerns promptly.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school. They are encouraged to take responsibilities from both class and whole school perspectives. For instance, this ranges from the school parliament celebrating their recent visit to the Houses of Parliament to a small group of pupils taking very good care of the resident guinea pigs.

- Achievement data is analysed thoroughly with the reports produced being accurate and informative. Different groups are a specific focus and each subject leader gives additional scrutiny to outcomes in their respective subject areas.

2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...

...leaders were to disseminate further the best practice that is evident across the school to enable all staff to continue to develop their expertise.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Progress from previous EBIs

- At the previous review it was suggested that the most able pupils would benefit from increased challenge and pace in lessons. During lesson observations, and when talking to pupils, the school's commitment to constantly challenging all pupils, including the most able, was evident. The school has appointed one member of staff as the 'Stretch and Challenge Leader' to monitor this aspect. Consequently, teachers routinely plan clearly differentiated activities with an expectation of 'Mr Stretch' tasks being built into all lessons. As a result, lessons include consistent evidence of challenge and high expectations. Furthermore, the culture of risk-taking has developed so pupils are confident to extend their own learning.

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

- A consistent feature of all lessons is the warm and positive relationships between adults and children. All staff know the pupils well and strive to help them achieve their potential in the nurturing and supportive environment. Pupils show commendable learning behaviours and have a thirst for knowledge. They show high levels of engagement and collaborate very well with each other.
- Class teachers and leaders have high expectations of learning and behaviour, to which the pupils respond very well. Links are consistently made to pupils' prior learning which helps secure positive progress during lessons and over time.
- Teachers in parallel classes plan together. Other adults are valued members of the team and play an active part in the dialogue between year groups and across the school. This collegiality helps establish a consistent provision for all pupils.
- An energetic pace is maintained throughout lessons. Time is used productively alongside clear procedures and timely transitions which help to maximise learning.

- Questioning is used effectively to help engage pupils and promote their interests. Notably, pupils also ask questions to clarify their own understanding and when creating investigations.
- The teaching of reading and writing throughout the school is focused on quality books and texts. In Key Stage 2, all classes take a novel-based approach with a bank of 16 texts used as the basis for pupils' learning. The novels are chosen carefully to help pupils become immersed in a variety of different experiences, to engage all pupils and appeal to both genders. Notably, all pupils have copies of these set books, supplied free by the school, which is especially beneficial for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, an expectation of a rich vocabulary is intrinsic to lessons and outcomes in reading and writing are showing consistently upward trends.
- Other reading initiatives further enrich pupils' learning and love of books. These include links with Leicester City FC premier stars reading scheme which particularly appeals to boys and sporty pupils. In addition, peer reading between older and younger pupils is enjoyed by all involved and fosters positive relationships and boosts self-esteem.
- Interventions for pupils who have SEND are planned to meet both emotional needs and as a response to data analysis. Expertise is cascaded effectively across the school and resources shared discretely to best meet individual needs.
- The school delights in providing many outdoor learning opportunities which make the best possible use of the extensive grounds. Pupils greatly benefit from activities related to their key skills, looking after the planet, gardening or simply enjoying the outdoors.

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

...learning was further enhanced by increased opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- Children enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at levels well below those found nationally. The proportion of children who reached a good level of development in 2018 was close to the national average. This represents at least good progress from the children's starting points.
- The proportion of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018 was just above the national average, as was the percentage of Year 2 pupils who passed the re-test.
- In Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils who met the reading, writing and mathematics standard was similar to that of schools nationally, at both the expected level and at greater depth. This outcome has been fairly consistent

in recent years.

- Key Stage 2 outcomes in 2018 were above those of schools nationally in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar at both the expected and higher levels. This represented an upward trend on 2017 and over time. Notably, the progress made through Key Stage 2 was above average in reading and writing. Progress in mathematics was particularly noteworthy, being classified as well above average and in the top 10% of schools nationally.
- Pupils who have SEND are well supported with a range of proactive interventions. Consequently, almost all of them make very positive progress from their individual starting points.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school is quite pronounced in the EYFS and moving into Key Stage 1. However, the gap in achievement narrows considerably as pupils move up through the year groups. As a result, by the time disadvantaged pupils leave the school they are achieving well above similar pupils nationally and the gap with their peers has closed significantly.
- Tracking data highlights that girls are outperforming boys throughout the school, particularly in reading and writing. The school is working hard to reduce this disparity. Recent monitoring and assessments indicate that the literacy initiatives introduced are proving beneficial and gender differences are already lessening.
- Most pupils are on track to reach their aspirational end-of-year targets. These are generally at, and often above, age related expectations in all subjects. Importantly, they indicate that pupils are being well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Predictions for end of key stage outcomes in 2019 show further improvements on the previous year. Importantly, the work in pupils' books corroborates the targets set. Books show quality work across the curriculum and subject areas, with clear progression over time. There are consistently high expectations of presentation and pupils are encouraged to edit their work regularly. Pupils' responses to marking and feedback help to extend their learning further.

5. Area of Excellence

None submitted.

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

The school team values the support already offered by the Challenge Partners QA review system. They are happy with the current situation and the continued support received from the local hub.



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR WILLOWBROOK PRIMARY ACADEMY

As a next step, they would now like to explore different schools' approaches to embedding a knowledge-led curriculum across the Challenge Partners network, in view of nationally changing priorities.

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.