

Name of School:	Pickhurst Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Daniel Siggs
Hub:	Pickhurst Academy Hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Chancery Education Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	06/11/2019
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Outstanding
Date of last QA Review	14/11/2018
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	04/07/2011

Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all Levels	Leading
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Quality of Provision and Outcomes	Leading
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AND

Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs

Area of Excellence Embedding technology across the curriculum	Accredited
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Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	ASPiRE (a programme to support disadvantaged pupils) The impact of sport and outdoor learning on teamwork, support and growth mindset. 29/11/2017 Differentiation in mathematics. 02/11/16
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Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate	Leading
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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

Pickhurst Academy has sustained its success over several years. It is a large, four-form entry junior school set in spacious grounds. It is the lead school in the Chancery Education Trust. Additional resource provision (ARP) was established in September last year and supports pupils with severe and complex educational needs. The school has many strengths, recognised, not least, by the numerous awards it has received. These include the Primary Quality Mark and Sports Mark Gold. The school is a hub for the Science Learning Partnership STEM initiative and pupils were recently involved in judging the Royal Society's Young People Book Prize. Leaders play a significant role in supporting schools, including those within the trust and others locally and nationally. Recently, for example, following guidance from senior leaders, another school within the trust moved from inadequate to good following its inspection in January.

There are 520 pupils on roll. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEND) is above average. In addition to the pupils learning in the ARP, all of whom have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). In the remainder of the school, 10% of pupils have SEND, five of whom have an EHCP.

2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- Leaders at all levels are highly ambitious for all pupils. The principal provides extremely strong leadership and is very ably supported by the leadership team. Leaders share a common sense of purpose, expressed in the school's motto as 'Every child counts'. This incentive permeates all the school does and is evident in the fact that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve very well. Pupils benefit from an excellent climate for learning. The school is a harmonious community where both adults and children enjoy the purposeful atmosphere.
- Leaders ensure there is a good balance between school and individual priorities when arranging opportunities for professional development. Much training is through workshops, where staff choose from a range of options running in parallel. All content is available on the shared drive if they wish to access materials from other sessions. Staff were keen to describe the impact additional training has had on their classroom practice.
- Subject leaders and year leaders feel supported and valued. They outlined their range of responsibilities and described the positive impact of quality assurance strategies. These include looking at books alongside assessment data, and regular meetings with colleagues to review and modify planning in the light of pupils' responses and outcomes.

- Leaders are in the process of reviewing the curriculum, they are progressively involving all staff in designing a new approach underpinned by a shared rationale. Given that pupil outcomes are typically high, this illustrates a strong commitment to refining the provision to sustain current successes and widen opportunities for pupils' academic achievement and personal development.
- Curriculum enrichment remains strong and plays a significant part in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A revamp of the after-school activities, in consultation with pupils and parents, has resulted in a varied programme and high levels of participation. Pupils enjoy 'cool cooking', 'dazzling dance' and 'superb science', to name a few. The impact of such extra-curricular activities is clearly evident in pupils' enthusiasm for learning, strength of character and zest for life.
- British values are promoted through assemblies and a carefully designed scheme with termly whole-school topics including, democracy, freedom, individual liberty, tolerance and mutual respect. School councillors explained the democratic process involved in their election and looked forward to a visit to the Houses of Parliament in the summer
- There are strong home/school links. The school has begun a series of workshops aimed at supporting parents in engaging with their children's learning. There are many opportunities for parents to engage with the school, including 'class dojos' which enhance their ability to support their children.
- Pupils feel secure and well supported. They understand who to approach if they feel upset or unsafe for any reason. The school promotes pupils voice in several ways including the school council, subject ambassadors and eco-warriors.
- Pupils understand some of the challenges currently facing society and can suggest strategies to address these at school level.

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

...leaders sustained the current curriculum review to bring foundation subjects in line with the core subjects regarding the progression of specific knowledge and skills through the school.

...middle leaders were further encouraged to be innovative in promoting creative approaches within their subjects and year teams.

...roles within the leadership of English leadership were clarified.

3.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - What went well

- Pupils benefit from a rich, varied and ambitious curriculum which stimulates their curiosity and contributes significantly to their academic and personal development. Pupils respond very positively to the challenges which underpin each subject.

- Careful thought, backed up by research, has led to the gradual integration of cultural capital into curriculum design. Senior leaders have successfully led the establishment of four categories within cultural capital: knowledge, skills, appreciation and aspiration. Recently introduced curriculum plans provide excellent guidance for staff about how cultural capital can be enhanced through, for example, enquiry, creative thinking, reasoning and self-awareness.
- Skilled teaching across the school is characterised by secure subject knowledge, the pitch of work which challenges all groups, and the skilful use of teaching materials. Manageable assessment strategies provide clear 'next step' guidance for pupils. Assessment for learning is well-established, with pupils often making informed decisions about success criteria. The use of technology (described below) is used extensively by pupils and staff to record and evaluate work in progress.
- Teachers provide strong role models in their use of language. They manage behaviour seamlessly, not least, by ensuring pupils are engaged and challenged. Consequently, behaviour across the school is typically exemplary as pupils rise to the high expectations. Their enthusiasm for school is evident in the high rates of attendance. Pupils and adults work in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Outcomes over recent years have been well above those achieved nationally and above local averages. Pupils build very well on their above average attainment as they enter Year 3. Typically, the school is in the top 20% of all schools regarding the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics, both individually and across these subjects. Similarly, outcomes in science are well above average.
- Achievement in the core subjects is not at the expense of foundation subjects. Pupils' books indicate that their achievement in history and geography is at least at expected standards. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning and pride in their work are evident in their very well-presented work.
- Evidence of high standards is evident in pupils' current work. Pupils read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age. Pupils' confidence in reading is reflected in their writing. Many pupils show considerable flair. Examples from longer passages include:
 - 'A single tear of crystal-clear water slowly curved its way down his withered old cheek'.
 - 'High pitched screams and blood oozes out of the deserted homes...bringing a cold chill to the mist covered pathway below.'
- Using excel in a real-life context, pupils in Year 6 rapidly applied their mathematical knowledge to explore relationships between fractions and percentages. Science books included well-informed accounts of recent activities. The recently introduced 'knowledge organisers' are used consistently well in Years 4 to 6 to support pupils developing scientific understanding.

- Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND achieve very well. Remarkably, disadvantaged pupils often outperform their peers. The outcomes of pupils with SEND are typically above average for such pupils nationally. The holistic approach of staff ensures that all pupils are treated equally. Learning explorations showed that disadvantaged pupils engage in the same work as their peers in a highly supportive environment.
- Leaders continue to work closely alongside specialist staff from the local authority to develop the ARPs support for pupils, particularly those with speech and language difficulties. Clear structures and well-established routines, together with well-considered deployment of staff, support pupils in accessing the curriculum and making progress.

3.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - Even better if...

...pupils were encouraged to use their depth of understanding to think creatively within and across subjects

4.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- The provision for disadvantaged pupils is led extremely well by the principal. An increasing characteristic of the leadership is the mutually beneficial liaison with the ARP. Intervention groups are fluid and their impact is monitored every four to six weeks. There are clear roles and responsibilities within the team. The inclusion officer provides excellent support for vulnerable groups and keeps in close contact with parents. Teachers and support assistants benefit from regular training and updates, the impact being evident in the impressive progress made by most pupils.
- A major strength in the provision is the ASPIRE programme, accredited as an area of excellence last year. Staff provide a rich and varied curriculum, enhanced by a range of additional activities, including a mathematics after-school club exclusive to disadvantaged pupils. Pupils supported by the pupil premium are given a book of their choice to keep each term.
- Disadvantaged pupils typically achieve at least as well as their peers. In 2018, 92% reached the expected standards in reading, with 85% doing so in writing and mathematics. A quarter reached greater depth in the combined subjects. Results in 2019 were a little lower due to cohort differences. Pupils with SEND outperformed this group nationally with 32% achieving expectations in the combined scores.
- Pupils respond very positively to the consistent inclusive, nurturing approach by all staff. Staff form warm relationships with pupils and build positive relationships with parents.

4.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs. Even better if...

The review did not identify any significant areas for improvement.

5. Area of Excellence

Embedding technology across the curriculum.

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 successfully promoted the use of various technologies in learning, teaching and administration. The introduction of 'Google Classroom' has facilitated digital collaboration between students and has enabled home/school communication. Teachers post assignments and set home learning projects through the system, providing on-line feedback. Parents gain insights into their children's learning and progress during parents' evenings as they scan quick response (QR) codes to review evidence of their children's learning.
- The use of modern technology is an integral feature of many lessons. Pupils increasingly use QR codes to access learning resources and to record their work. In Year 3, for example, pupils film themselves during drama/role play activities. Teachers create quizzes to identify pupils' starting points. Following one such quiz, the teacher remarked, 'Well, now I know that none of them know what fibre means!'
- The use of technology to enhance learning is embedded across the curriculum. Pupils who lack confidence in speaking, for example, develop their confidence through creating videos. The use of Google Drive enables photographs, movies and/or presentations to be securely accessed using Pickhurst email accounts only. Through allowing the use of technology to record their learning, barriers to learning are diminished. Children with social anxiety are able to rehearse and record their learning and share this with the class teacher and their peers without the need to stand in front of the class.
- In science lessons, pupils regularly use iPads to engage in research as well as measure and record their own data; children have used iPads as a stopwatch, to take accurate measurements in fitness investigations, to record video clips of their scientific thinking and even create their own animations to show the water cycle. Pupils can join in with a virtual community and 'talk science' with their peers and share content with their families. To date, there are over 50 children who have chosen to join the 'virtual science club'.

- 'Live assessment' has been introduced recently. As pupils complete quizzes, the teacher can see their individual responses instantly and identify gaps in the learning that can be quickly addressed. This somewhat reduces the need for teachers to mark and collate quantitative data.

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

- Progress in knowledge understanding and skills across the curriculum through the use of technology is evident. Wide-ranging work was seen on such diverse topics as floods, wildfires, calculating area and book reviews. Pupils' enthusiasm and confidence in using computers is evident at every turn. Routinely, pupils communicate with one another during lessons. For example, one pupil posted, 'Does anyone know how to use google docs in python? If you do, can you please tell me.' She received numerous responses including, 'We can come and help you.' Such sophisticated interaction helps to sustain the calm and business-like atmosphere in lessons.
- Outcomes across all year groups are consistently high. Embedding technology across the curriculum contributes to improvements in pupils' self-assurance and resilience. For example, pupils who lack confidence in spelling and are reluctant to write benefit from using 'speech to type'.
- Sustained impact is evident in the high-quality work in pupils' books. Pupils develop high levels of independence and become immersed in their studies, typically adopting a 'can do' approach.
- A consequence of developing pupils' digital literacy is the very positive impact on their achievement in the computing curriculum. By Year 6, pupils' ability to design, write and debug programs is well established. From independently creating algorithms on day-to-day activities such as baking bread they become confident in explaining how simple algorithms work.

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

Name: Callum Barrett

Title: Writing lead

Email: calum.barrett@pickhurst.com

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

Leaders would like opportunities to visit and share practice with other ARPs.



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR PICKHURST ACADEMY

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.