

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

<b>Date of this visit:</b>	20/04/2021
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	04/07/2011

## **1. Information about the visit**

In place of a Quality Assurance Review (QAR), Pickhurst Academy undertook a virtual consultancy with a Lead Reviewer who spent one day reviewing the following areas with school leaders:

- The quality of education, including the remote curriculum and its delivery
- Leadership and school improvement

## **2. Information about the school**

Pickhurst Academy is a four-form entry junior school and is part of the Chancery Education Trust that is made up of three schools. There are strong links with the other two schools in the Trust, including sharing best practice, in particular during the Covid-19 pandemic and joint continuing professional development (CPD) programmes. The school opened an additional resource provision (ARP) in 2018 to meet the needs of pupils with severe and complex educational needs. Presently 23 pupils attend this provision and all of them have an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is below average as is the proportion of disadvantaged pupils.

### **3.1 The quality of education, including the remote learning curriculum and its delivery – What went well**

- The motto at Pickhurst Academy of 'every child counts' underpins all actions taken by leaders. They continue to be driven by the aspiration of high achievement, challenge and the opportunity for every pupil, irrespective of background, to succeed.
- Following the last Quality Assurance Review (QAR) in November 2019, leaders have made significant revisions to the curriculum, including that of the foundation subjects. The school has moved from using the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) to a curriculum based around discrete subjects. This is allowing subject leaders to take greater ownership of what themes and topics to include which better meet the needs of the pupils at Pickhurst Academy.
- Subject leaders have identified and mapped where specific opportunities within the curriculum develops pupil's cultural capital. This includes the pupils' ability to recognise the importance of how different languages impact on the culture of a country; that great and inspiring works of art have and continue to be produced by peoples of all backgrounds and how each pupil has the potential to be a published author. Initial feedback from the pupils is that they are now more able to articulate their subject specific learning and they have increased opportunities to deepen

and develop their knowledge.

- Prior to March 2020, the school had already been using Google Classroom very effectively including its use for on-line feedback and home/school communication. Pupils and teachers were confident in its use and as such were able to seamlessly move into remote learning at the start of each lockdown. On a daily basis, teachers uploaded a pre-recorded English, mathematics and a foundation subject lesson along with supporting materials. This allowed pupils to access these at a convenient time as well as being able to refer back to the videos if they needed additional support. Digital devices were made available at the request of families. Tracking data on attendance and completion of work by pupils indicates that pupils' engagement has been extremely high during the whole of the past twelve months. This reinforces the importance that pupils at Pickhurst have for their own learning and their desire to succeed. The school continues to use its website and Facebook page to share and celebrate pupils work on a weekly basis with both pupils and their parents and carers.
- Teachers made routine phone calls home to check on both the academic progress of pupils and addressed any of their welfare needs. Parents were extremely grateful for the personal care shown by the staff in supporting not only the pupils but the whole family. In order to support those pupils who found working from home a challenge during the most recent lockdown, they were invited to come into school where their attendance was very positive.
- Routine contact was made with disadvantaged pupils and those who have a special educational need and/or disability (SEND), and they were provided with one-to-one support by additional staff to talk through any difficulties they may be having with the tasks they were set. The most vulnerable pupils received a daily phone call as part of a welfare check. Staff delivered resources, including packs of paper and pens and pencils and free school meal vouchers.

### **3.2 The quality of education, including the remote learning curriculum and its delivery – Even better if...**

...more opportunities were built into learning walks and book scrutiny activities to reflect upon the impact of actions taken to support pupils learning

### **4.1 Leadership and school improvement - What went well**

- Despite the pressures caused as a result of the pandemic, leaders have continued to drive forward improvements to the quality of the curriculum. In particular, the subject leaders of art & design, English, modern foreign languages and mathematics, who took part in this review, all have an accurate and up to date assessment of the strengths and areas for improvement in both teaching and pupils learning for their respective subjects. In addition, the director of the ARP is constantly refining both the curriculum and CPD programmes for its staff to meet the needs of the changing cohort of pupils.

- Leaders across the Trust's schools have routine virtual meetings that provide valuable support when introducing different methods for teaching and learning. Staff from across the schools contribute fully to Trust-wide CPD programmes, such as training for newly qualified teachers.
- In addition to the whole school CPD provision, leaders are proactive in identifying subject specific support from a range of external agencies including professional subject associations. Leaders at all levels are outward-facing. They want to learn from best practice as well as reflect upon their own learning when offering support and training to other colleagues, both within the school and across the Trust.
- During the recent lockdown, all subject and middle leaders took part in a leadership development programme along with colleagues within the other schools within the Trust. Feedback from this programme indicated that it has been highly successful. Sessions focused on managing difficult situations as well as preparing subject leaders for subject focused (deep dive) reviews. Leaders have been able to use information from this programme as part of their development plans for the next academic year.
- A comprehensive programme of transition arrangements supports the transfer of pupils into Year 3. This includes meetings between teachers across Key Stages 1 and 2, visits to spend time in the various Year 3 classes, parental workshops and Year 2 pupils attending the Year 6 production and the annual summer musical concert. Additional meetings are held between members of the inclusion team with parents of pupils with SEND to ensure that teachers are able to address each individual pupil's particular needs. Leaders report that this provides additional reassurance to parents and carers.
- The director of the ARP has developed an equally extensive programme for the induction of pupils into Year 3 in addition to meetings with key personal within high schools when pupils are transferring into Year 7. In order to address some of the challenges faced by these pupils during the past twelve months, plans are in place to increase the amount of physical exercise that these pupils receive as well as increasing opportunities for them to learning in an outdoor environment. The 'Walk to John O'Groats' initiative is but one example of this programme.

## **4.2 Leadership and school improvement - Even better if...**

There were no areas identified during this review.

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

- Leaders would like to reflect upon this.

**This visit 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.**

