

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

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	School leaders decided not to have estimates for this review.
Date of this Review:	22/11/2021
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Leading
Date of last QA Review	6/11/2019
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Predecessor school – outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	04/07/2011

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	Not applicable
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Quality of provision and outcomes	Not applicable
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AND

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

Area of excellence	Not applicable
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Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	Embedding technology across the curriculum (6/11/2019)
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Overall peer evaluation estimate	Not applicable
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The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.

1. Context and character of the school

Pickhurst Academy is a four-form entry junior school with 502 pupils on roll. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. It became an academy in February 2012 and is in the Chancery Academy Trust with two other schools. The headteacher has been in post for nine years. The deputy headteacher started in January 2021. The wider leadership team includes heads of year and subject leaders. The Pickhurst values are to be: Proud, Inquisitive, Confident, Kind, Healthy, Understanding, Respectful, Successful, Trustworthy.

There is an additionally resourced provision (ARP), which started in 2018, for 22 pupils with education, health and care plans (EHCP) for severe and complex special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND). The admission criteria for the ARP are broad and it meets the needs of a wide range of SEND. Many of these pupils move to special school provision for Key Stage 3.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Leaders have continued to develop the curriculum as recommended at the last review. They have moved from an integrated topic approach, following the International Primary Curriculum, to specific subjects. Subject leaders have chosen and implemented single subject schemes and they support staff in creatively implementing and resourcing these. Pupils now say they know what they are learning in each subject and build their subject-based skills effectively.
- Leaders at all levels contribute to self-evaluation and the resulting plan. Senior leaders work effectively with subject leaders monitoring the consistency of subject delivery. Subject leaders are given training and time to do this and they support colleagues effectively within and between year groups.
- Leaders have addressed the EBIs from the previous review. English leadership is clearly defined and combines reading and writing, which has strengthened the teaching of English across the school.
- Senior leaders visit all classrooms each fortnight, with a particular focus that enables them to check the impact of the development plan. They identify areas to improve and work closely with all teaching staff to continually improve teaching and identify training needs.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take an active part in the school. Pupils are appointed as subject ambassadors and make recommendations to subject leaders. For example, they requested more opportunities for relevant practical mathematics and then wrote a budget for the teacher's holiday.
- Year 6 pupils apply for posts in the pupil parliament, as prefects and head and deputy boys and girls. One said, 'We have recently been trained as Mental Health Champions and we help other children in school. An example of when I have

used my training is when there was a Year 3 child who felt really sad at lunchtime so I helped her feel calm and reassured her she would be ok and told her to speak to her teacher’.

- Staff have ensured that there has been a relatively seamless return to school after lockdowns. A pupil said. ‘When we came back from lockdown, I felt a bit anxious because I was used to working on my own on my device. But I’ve got used to going back to normal and my teachers really help when I feel like that’. The pupil parliament, working each week with the headteacher, communicated other pupils’ anxieties when the class ‘bubble’ arrangement finished.
- Parents have monthly opportunities to visit classrooms where their child shares their work. These are well attended and parents appreciate these informal sessions to find out what their children are learning. Parents and the whole school community have defined the Pickhurst values and pupils eagerly collect ‘stamps’ on their Pickhurst passports when they exhibit the values. The values are clearly evident in pupils’ demeanour in lessons and around the school.

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

- ... leaders refined their focus for learning walks to fully evaluate the impact on pupils’ learning and how teachers facilitate this.
- ... leaders enabled teachers to learn from each other so that the best metacognitive practice is shared consistently across the school.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- When designing the curriculum, staff have chosen topics and texts that are relevant and motivating to the school community. Visits and visitors are integrated into the plans and a wide range of appropriate activities are chosen by teachers for pupils to demonstrate and secure their knowledge and skills. For example, a bank visits the school to extend pupils’ financial literacy.
- The English leader has built a robust curriculum that identifies high quality texts that motivate and extend pupils’ language. Teachers integrate the teaching of reading and grammar, building pupils’ skills so that their writing is interesting and imaginative. Pupils understand the effect of this on the reader and eagerly explain how their writing tasks extend what they have read about in the text. Year 6 pupils explained ‘foreshadowing’ and used it in their writing. Year 4 pupils explained how pronouns are used, and Year 3 pupils eagerly planned narrative writing and were enthusiastic to begin.
- Pupils use their knowledge in writing, for example, writing from a different character’s point of view. They say that they enjoy writing stories and work in their books is presented well. Teachers indicate the next steps when marking pupils’ work and pupils respond to this well.

- Teachers support pupils to make links in their knowledge of subjects, for example using a book, 'The Explorer' to support geography and literacy skills. Pupils know about the Amazon, identify continents and features on maps. Pupils use their sustainability knowledge well when working as 'ECO warriors', working with catering staff to ensure they are using sustainably sourced fish, for example.
- Pupils apply themselves well to learning in lessons. They work effectively with partners, for example, defining and using relative clauses appropriately. Year 4 pupils explained how that would improve their writing by adding more information. Pupils use hand signs when preparing to contribute further information in class discussion to 'build on' or 'challenge'. This enables them to participate highly effectively.
- Pupils relish challenge and are keen to demonstrate their reasoning and problem-solving skills. For example, in mathematics lessons, pupils were able to articulate their understanding using mathematical vocabulary. Teachers question pupils effectively to deepen their understanding when pupils explain their reasoning.
- Teachers construct learning opportunities well. For example, Year 6 pupils learnt about identity and prejudice in a personal, social and health education lesson. Class discussion explored the definition and meaning. Then pupils talked together in groups to establish their understanding and to discuss how identity was reflected in the school values.
- Teachers work closely with support staff in lessons to ensure that pupils with SEND work on tasks that are well matched to their needs. There are well planned short programmes that support specific learning skills for pupils with dyslexia, for example.

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

... staff provided more planned opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge of subject and technical vocabulary consistently in all lessons.

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

- Senior leaders are fully involved in pupil progress meetings to ensure that the progress of each individual is evaluated. They track the progress of all vulnerable groups effectively and take quick action if there is any slight slowing of progress.
- Senior leaders have appointed a pupil premium leader who knows each individual family and circumstance really well. The result is that pupils receive bespoke support that is specific to their individual needs.
- ARP staff have designed the learning environments and resources well to meet the individual needs of pupils in these rooms. The particular sensory needs of

individual pupils are well met. The lesson structure and activities are also designed to support individual targets. For example, the sensory room is well equipped and used for individual work and pupils sit in their preferred place to listen to the teacher's input.

- In the ARP, staff understand the social and educational needs of each individual pupil well. They construct activities that motivate and engage pupils to learn. For example, pupils read electronic books and answered simple questions.
- ARP staff work really well with their mainstream colleagues to provide training and expertise for teaching pupils with SEND. Recent training on emotional awareness has resulted in all mainstream classes using the 'zones of regulation' material and techniques to enable pupils to understand and regulate themselves. Pupils say that this helps them when they are in the red or yellow zone and need to use a specific place and calming activities in the classroom.

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

- ... EHCP targets were reviewed and updated, with the local authority, so they are more meaningful and specific and then broken down into realistic and achievable short-term targets in the personal plans.
- ... staff continued to plan for specific integration opportunities for individual pupils, where possible.

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

To link further with special schools within the network for visits and to access any training available.

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.

Schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR PICKHURST ACADEMY

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.