



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR HORNCHURCH HIGH SCHOOL

Name of School:	Hornchurch High School
Headteacher:	Serena Madhvani
Hub:	East London Hub
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	Partnership Learning Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	13/11/2024
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Effective
Date of last QA Review	27/11/2023
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	22/01/2019

Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all levels	Leading
Quality of provision and outcomes	Effective

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

Area of excellence	Accredited
Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	Professional development - forms, mechanisms and sequencing, 29/11/2023
Overall peer evaluation estimate	Effective

Important information

- The QA Review provides a peer evaluation of a school's practice in curriculum, teaching and learning, and leadership. It is a voluntary and developmental process, and the peer review team can evaluate and offer 'peer evaluation estimates' based only on what the school chooses to share with them.
- The QA Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.
- The QA Review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. If you choose to share this report, or extracts thereof, externally (e.g. on your website or with parents), please ensure that it is accompanied with the following text:

Challenge Partners is a charity working to advance education for the public benefit. We are not a statutory accountability body. The QA Review does not audit schools' safeguarding or behaviour policies and practices. However, Lead Reviewers and visiting reviewers are expected to follow Challenge Partners' safeguarding policy and report any concerns as set out in the procedures.

1. Context and character of the school

Hornchurch High School is an 11-16 academy located in Havering, Essex. The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and is a member of the Partnership Learning Academy Trust. The headteacher, along with some members of the senior leadership team, has been in post since February 2023.

Leaders are passionate about supporting the young people in their school to effectively manage their lives and their wellbeing, to help and support others and to become responsible citizens of a healthy, sustainable world. The school's ethos and values are based on 'We aspire to be the best we can be; we believe in ourselves and others; we achieve our goals and strive for the next.' The school's motto is 'Excellence for all' and its three values are 'aspire, believe, achieve'.

The school's student population is predominantly White British, although the numbers of students from different ethnic minorities are increasing. The proportion of students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL) is above the national average as is the proportion of disadvantaged students. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is broadly in line with the national average.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The headteacher and her senior leadership team (SLT) lead the school with ambition and a drive for excellence in every area. Governors have a diverse range of skills and an excellent understanding of the school; they provide challenge and support.
- The professional coaching approach, in which all staff are trained, permeates all continuing professional development and learning (CPDL) and has been transformational. Teachers have been given reduced teaching time in order to increase the amount of time given to CPDL, to improve quality first teaching for all. Staff accredit this, along with the opportunities for deliberate practice, with having improved their professional practice. Early career teachers (ECTs) and trainee teachers are highly complimentary about the support they receive.
- The passion and drive for success, modelled by the SLT, are matched by the middle leaders. They lead their departments very well and have worked closely with their teams to co-construct the frameworks for curriculum and teaching and learning. They interrogate data, evaluate and identify their strengths and areas for development, implement systems consistently and use the information gained from their quality assurance to inform the weekly CPDL that they deliver.

- Leaders have implemented six very clear 'non-negotiables' which codify what teachers should do and how the teachers' actions impact students' learning. Staff CPDL, for example, on developing students' thinking skills and metacognition, is research-informed, subject-specific and has a clear impact in the classroom.
- As a result of leaders' drive to improve standards, there is an exceptionally calm atmosphere around the school site with silent transitions between lessons and rapid, smooth starts to lessons. The classroom routines ensure that there is no lost learning time and students are ready, alert and equipped to learn.
- Leaders have implemented a banding system, having gained support from this from teachers, students and parents, and as a result, the level of challenge in lessons is usually pitched appropriately. Students welcome the banding system and are enthusiastic about the possibility to move to higher bands following assessments.
- Leaders have worked hard to raise students' aspirations at all levels, from strong improvements in academic progress and attainment, to broadening students' career aspirations and by providing a range of cultural, sporting and leadership opportunities. Students' progress has improved by, on average, half a grade in every subject in the past year.
- Students have opportunities for leadership in a range of areas, including as representatives on the school council and as anti-bullying ambassadors. They are encouraged and supported to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award.

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

... leaders built a portfolio of outreach impact on other schools.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Clear routines and the same structures, such as wait time, thinking time before questioning and random questioning are used throughout the school. This engenders students' willingness to engage with all subjects, and was notably observed in a Year 7 mathematics lesson.
- In all lessons the environment is calm and conducive to learning. For example, in a Year 10 civics lesson this allowed students to concentrate on their learning and grapple with the concept of loans and interest rates without distractions.
- In the best lessons, teachers provide an appropriate level of challenge and ensure that students are grappling with new content. This was notable in a Year 11 science and Year 11 English lesson where students were willing to struggle with new concepts and showed resilience.

- Students' oracy is developed through an expectation across the school that every oral answer is in a full sentence. Students' vocabulary is also developed and this was notable in a Year 9 science lesson where ambitious vocabulary and concepts were defined and explained, which enabled students to work collaboratively and produce thoughtful explanations of a high standard.
- The 'turn and talk' structure provides students with a safe environment to share their thinking before sharing it with the whole class. In a Year 10 English lesson, students used this opportunity to share views that could have been seen as controversial, and this allowed for deeper learning.
- Checking for understanding works well because teachers usually ensure that the lesson progresses with no misconceptions. The teacher in a Year 10 science lesson successfully used mini whiteboards at the point of learning to assess students' comprehension of the subject matter and identify, then address, misconceptions that arose.
- In the best lessons questioning is very effective. In a Year 7 English lesson the teacher used questioning to draw out students' ideas, which generated further probing questions to deepen their thinking. Students were also actively encouraged to listen to each other's responses.
- In the best lessons teachers model very effectively. This was evident in a Year 11 English lesson where the teacher used a visualiser and thought out loud, to provide students with the metacognitive understanding of her writing choices. As a result, students were able to successfully complete a piece of independent writing.
- Students are encouraged to see links between their learning and the wider world. In a Year 10 food lesson, the teacher ensured that students reflected on the price that the pastries they had made could be sold in a restaurant and the link between this and the profit that would be achieved.
- Teachers usually use rewards very well and the rewards system motivates students. In a Year 10 PE lesson, rewards were used to create a safe and positive environment, which enabled students with SEND to have the confidence to answer questions.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which include a variety of different sports such as boxing, rugby, cricket, and basketball. There are also clubs such as debating, Spanish and drama, as well opportunities for students to compete in inter-school competitions such as 'Debate-mate'.

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

... there was greater consistency in the level of challenge to develop students' higher order thinking skills.

... there was consistency of 'scaffolding up' the learning to ensure that all learners make the best possible progress.

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

- The highly experienced SEND coordinator (SENDCO) works across two schools and supports two deputy SENDCOs. Students with SEND now have support in lessons and receive interventions at different times. The routines and structures have had a positive impact on students with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
- Curriculum adaptations ensure that barriers to learning for students with SEND are diminished. These students have full access to the curriculum offer, and all study a modern language to GCSE.
- A wide range of reading interventions are used, such as paired reading and phonics teaching. All these interventions are successful in developing students' vocabulary and showing accelerated improvement in their reading ages. Students use Sparks Reader, which is accessible at school and at home, to enable them to read an electronic book.
- Teachers direct questions to disadvantaged students and students with SEND, using 'no opt out' protocols, as well targeted support where necessary. In a Year 10 Spanish lesson with low prior attainers, students were given challenging work with the right amount of chunking and scaffolding, which enabled them to use a challenging grammatical concept.
- Support for students with EAL is evident. Staff use the student's home language where appropriate in order to communicate more effectively with them. In a Year 10 geography lesson a student with EAL was supported with specific strategies to help him complete a task.
- Leaders are aware of the challenges that disadvantaged students face, such as lower reading ages, lack of cultural capital and lower attendance, and they have strategic plans in place to address these barriers. The disadvantage gap is closing, for example for students attaining English and maths at grade 4 and above.
- Disadvantaged students are provided with financial support for the Duke of Edinburgh award. All students in Year 7 receive free musical instrument lessons.

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

... the school continued to work with disadvantaged students so that their progress and attendance are consistently in line with that of non-disadvantaged students.

5. Area of Excellence

Climate for Learning – enabling routines

Accredited

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

- Effective daily routines consistently enhance the school's strong climate for learning. They have a positive impact on provision and outcomes as outlined below in this report.
- Lining up at the start of day, and before and after each break, as affirmed by one student, "Really helps me be ready for my lessons". During the review staff greeted Year 8 and 10 students warmly and enthusiastically from the outset. While heads of year set high expectations, form tutors registered students and checked their uniform and readiness for learning.
- Silent transitions support students' success by encouraging good habits in moving purposefully after line ups and between lessons. Encouraged by staff who helped reinforce expected behaviours, this routine is much appreciated by students who said, "It is beneficial as the atmosphere is calm and people get prepared for their next lesson".
- A well-structured form time programme underpins the school's commitment to starting the day effectively. This is engineered to allow students to develop their love of learning, instil good learning behaviours and prepare them for the wider world.
- Six non-negotiables are used to ensure staff work together to keep learning central to the school's work. These involve: (1) students following 100% of the teacher's instruction 'first time, every time' (2) a purposeful 'Do Now' start to each lesson to activate prior knowledge (3) a clear greet and dismiss at the door to start and end lessons (4) a 'planners and equipment out' that ensures students are prepared from the beginning of lessons (5) a 'random selection' approach which encourages all students to be ready to respond to questioning; (6) 'wait time' to ensure students have time to think before being selected to answer questions.
- Comprehensive and highly effective CPDL has been put in place to support all staff in implementing these routines. Consultation evenings have been provided to ensure all parents understand the rationale for these routines and the benefit they bring to the quality of learning for their children.

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

- Records show that, as a result of applying these routines, punctuality to lessons and to school has improved. Disruptive behaviour in lessons has significantly decreased over the last two academic years and the percentage of lost days due to an internal isolation halved.
- Since implementing the clear escalation process now in place, students' behaviour is calm and orderly within and outside classrooms. Exclusion data is on a downward trajectory with the lowest recoded number of suspensions last academic year.
- Student voice data highlight that 93% of students are positive about the routines. One student commented "I feel safe walking in the corridors and don't feel intimidated".
- Students also enjoy the use of Do Now that allows them to activate prior knowledge. One shared, "I like that I get to start the lesson by going back over what I did last lesson as it helps me feel prepared for the lesson."
- Progress 8 increased from -0.44 to +0.27 since the routines were implemented in February 2023. Basics 5+ has increased by 15 percentage points in 12 months. Since introducing the non-negotiables, all departments except those that have changed qualification have demonstrated an improvement in their progress data.

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

Name: Alice Davies

Title: Associate Deputy Headteacher for Inclusion

Email: adavies@hornchurchhigh.com

Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse content reports from across the hub networks including using AI tools to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector (sharing these with the partnership) each year. The QA Review reports remain confidential to Challenge Partners and the host school. This ensures that schools embrace the review as a development process, acting as a catalyst for their ongoing improvement. This is the primary purpose of the QA review. However, our aim is that the thematic analysis will demonstrate the additional value of a sector wide overview, illustrated with real-life examples.

For further support following your QA Review, 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. The School Support Directory can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.

(<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report

(<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)