



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR FOSSE MEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

Name of School:	Fosse Mead Primary Academy
Principal:	Jay Virk
Hub:	East Midlands South Hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	The Mead Educational Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	27/01/2023
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	This was the school's first review
Date of last QA Review	Not applicable
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Not applicable
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	Not applicable



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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 Effective

Quality of provision and outcomes Effective

AND

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

Area of excellence Not applicable

**Previously accredited valid areas
of excellence** Not applicable

Overall peer evaluation estimate Effective

***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

Fosse Mead is a large primary school which serves a diverse community near the centre of Leicester. Around two-thirds of pupils have English as an additional language, with forty-nine different home languages. Most pupils are of White British heritage, although there is a wide range of minority ethnic groups.

Mobility is high, with 40% of pupils joining or leaving the school last year. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above the national average. The percentage of disadvantaged pupils (40%) is well above average. In addition to these groups, there are many other pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. A breakfast of toast and milk is available to all pupils in every classroom.

At the time of the review, the school was undergoing extensive refurbishment. All the classrooms were being updated and re-equipped with modern furniture. The areas that have been finished, such as the attractive and well-resourced library, suggest that the accommodation will offer a bright and stimulating environment for learning. On entering the building, visitors see the impressive mural on the outside and have a tantalising view of the bright welcoming décor as they enter.

The school has had a chequered history in recent years, reflected in the Ofsted reports before the school became an academy in September 2021. Before this, the principal, when head of a neighbouring school, had supported the leadership on behalf of the local authority. Coinciding with the school joining The Mead Academy Educational Trust, she took up the permanent post. The vice principal and assistant principal were appointed at the same time. Twelve of the 15 teachers have joined the school since then, including several in their first or second year of teaching.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The principal, vice principal and assistant principal provide excellent leadership. They work as a powerful triumvirate and have driven the extraordinary transformation of the school during the last eighteen months. Their impact can be seen at every turn, in particular, the remarkable sense of belonging and team spirit among all staff. One remarked, 'We're all on the same page', while another commented, 'We are regarded as a person, not just a member of staff.' Staff feel valued and described how senior leaders have created an atmosphere where 'everyone is listened to'. This indicates a significant turnaround in the ethos and culture across the school, as one new teacher remarked, 'When I arrived, it was like a breath of fresh air.'

- A planned programme of leadership development is bearing fruit. Senior leaders consistently model subject leadership. Subject leaders and those aspiring to the role feel extremely well supported. Opportunities for external training by the trust and through the NPQ programme are widely undertaken. Subject leaders have worked alongside the early years leader to ensure they understand and know the starting points and curriculum opportunities in their subjects.
- Teachers new to the profession spoke highly of the support they receive. Those in their first year have weekly targets with ample opportunities for discussion with their mentors. One teacher in her second year described how she had been motivated to conduct research into 'meaningful explanations' and described the immediate impact this had on her classroom practice.
- The notion of 'leadership at all levels' is extended to pupil leadership at Fosse Mead. Pupil leaders articulated their roles within school confidently and with passionate enthusiasm. They knew how their contributions helped to improve school experience for themselves and others. 'If you don't take a job seriously, how can you succeed?' was typical of their comments. Pupil leaders help to review policy and procedures and have an active part in disseminating this within and across other schools, for example, a video they made about bullying is available on the school website.
- Leaders are successfully developing partnerships with parents. Parents meetings are held from 8.00am to 5.30pm which results in 100% attendance. Leaders report changing attitudes, particularly regarding the school's promotion of inclusion. Parents are very appreciative of the wide range of enrichment activities that are funded by the school for all children. 'Are they really going to the chocolate factory?', exclaimed one parent as he was greeted in the morning.
- Pupils benefit from an extensive range of enrichment activities that promote their academic and personal development, their enjoyment and attendance. Following bespoke training, teaching assistants run catch-up courses after school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- All clubs are free to pupils, including those provided by professional coaches in dancing, skipping and multisport. Every teacher runs at least one club during the year, including samba drumming, cooking, sewing, and art. School teams compete in football, basketball, and netball.

- The PSHE curriculum is both proactive and responsive to the context and needs of the pupils and community. Leaders actively plan, source materials, and invite visitors to help address contextual issues relevant to the pupils and the wider community. Collective worship themes are decided in response to the analysis of CPOMS¹ data or incidents in school. Racist comments, for example, led to a week of learning around the power of words.
- Pupil leaders spoke confidently about how the school equips them to be part of a modern British society and recognised the importance of being tolerant and respecting differences. They fully understand the five 'character muscles' (resilient rhino, responsible rabbit, kind koloa, courageous kangaroo and enthusiastic elephant) and described how they practise them within their roles.

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

- ... all subject leaders become increasingly confident in articulation, implementation, and impact in their subjects.
- ... the school continued to establish pupil leaders for all areas of the curriculum.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well.

- All staff understand the rationale that underpins the notion of PHSE being the golden thread that runs through the curriculum. As a result, they frequently include reference to concepts, such as fairness and equality, during day-to-day lessons. Core texts for each theme are central to this approach. Year 5 pupils, for example, study 'Hidden Figures' by Margot Lee Shetterly. Planning notes indicate how this text used to highlight issues around equality and diversity, at the same time promoting pupils' English skills, including predicting, inferring, and using synonyms and antonyms. A teacher described subtle adjustments to the wording of problems in mathematics, including changing names to reflect the culturally diverse backgrounds of pupils.
- Senior leaders support staff in providing an ambitious curriculum through shared planning and coaching. They ensure that subject folders include expectations regarding progression in skills and vocabulary and models of outcomes.

¹ CPOMS is online software for monitoring wellbeing and pastoral issues.

- Adaptions are made to the curriculum as pupils' needs emerge. The early years leader, for example, explained how assessment had revealed gender differences in physical development, and how the planned improvements to the outdoor learning area would be designed with this in mind.
- Pupils confidently explained how teachers help them learn. They explained how 'making mistakes in learning are good' and provided a range of examples. They talked about how British and wider values are promoted, such as 'making sure children are OK inside and outside, taking care of the environment and becoming aware of the wider community'.
- Leadership of the phonics programme is robust. All staff who teach phonics have received training and have weekly coaching. This means that all teaching is consistent across groups and key stages.
- Reading is regarded as the highest priority across the school. Clear mantras and expectations are shared amongst all staff. Phonics teaching every morning happens regardless of timetable changes. Rigorous tracking systems and robust assessments of reading ensure that no pupils slip through the net and have the appropriate teaching or intervention to meet their needs. As a result, pupils are making swift progress in reading, and this is beginning to have an impact on their writing.
- There were many examples of the sea-change in the quality of learning. Pupils' enthusiasm was evident in all the lessons observed, reflecting a huge transformation in their attitudes and behaviour. Pupils understand the importance of learning 'to unlock your potential' and could confidently recall information. They were eager to explain how the new leaders and current teachers had made learning exciting. Pupils make every effort when recording what they have learned. Their curriculum books and 'floor books' are impressive, with high quality work evident across the curriculum.
- Behaviour management is typically seamless. In the Reception classes, for example, adults successfully engaged all sixty children in active learning. As a result of skilful interventions, children collaborated well and communicated confidently with one another.
- In the most successful lessons, teachers elicit and extend pupils' understanding through a range of questioning strategies, such as talking partners, wipe boards and 'bouncing' questions around the room. Think-aloud techniques modelled by teachers are increasingly used by talking partners; pupils in Year 6 did this when discussing their writing. In many lessons, visual prompting and making sure pupils know 'what a good one looks like' (WAGOLL), motivate pupils and sustain their attention.

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

... teachers were more confident in using 'in the moment' assessment to move learning forward.

... the 'no hands' up' approach to feedback was embedded across the school.

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

- Every effort is made to ensure disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs benefit from all the opportunities the school offers. The pupil leadership teams (PLTs) are inclusive of pupils from different backgrounds. During a discussion with representatives of the PLTs, pupils from these explained that their ideas were shared with the senior leadership team. A pupil with autism, discussed his role at length, describing how important it made him feel and how seriously he took it. 'Nothing gets by me', he said with pride.
- The assistant principal drives the provision for disadvantaged pupils with the mantra, 'All for all', recognising that the efforts made to break down barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils is inextricably linked to the provision for all pupils, many of whom have other vulnerabilities. Disadvantaged pupils can be seen among the higher attaining pupils. Efforts made to narrow the gap are paying off. This is particularly evident in English, where improvements in phonics are having a positive impact.
- Pupils with additional needs mostly learn alongside their classmates, reflecting the expectation that all children benefit from quality first teaching. The headteacher is currently supporting a new SENDCo. Their unbridled commitment rubs off on the staff who frequently go the extra mile to help pupils feel included.

- Teaching assistants are well trained and use their initiative as they support individuals and small groups. The work produced by pupils with additional needs is often collected in floor books to which they all contribute, with the support of teaching assistants. Those produced during the study of the Bayeux tapestry, for example, show pupils' very secure knowledge, and considerable pride is evident in the quality of presentation.
- Teaching assistants play a significant role in helping pupils with complex needs to sustain their attention. During a mathematics lesson, for example, a teaching assistant sensitively resolved an emerging conflict and enabled a pupil to calm down and re-focus. Pupils in Year 2 had benefitted from the support of a teaching assistant as they worked as a group to design and make a Victorian puppet. They showed a great sense of pride in their accomplishment.
- As a result of the skilled support they receive, underpinned by a shared determination across the staff, pupils with additional needs typically make secure, and often rapid progress from their starting points.

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

No significant areas for improvement were identified during the review.

5. Area of Excellence

None submitted.

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 report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.



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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.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice (SLP) 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.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events 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>)