



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR BLATCHINGTON MILL SCHOOL

Name of School:	Blatchington Mill School
Headteacher/Principal:	Kate Claydon
Hub:	Brighton and Hove Hub
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	N/A

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	The school requested verbal estimates only
Date of this Review:	28/11/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	N/A
Date of last QA Review	N/A
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	22/2/2022



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR BLATCHINGTON MILL SCHOOL

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	The school requested verbal estimates only
---------------------------------	--

Quality of provision and outcomes	The school requested verbal estimates only
--	--

AND

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

Area of excellence	N/A
---------------------------	-----

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	N/A
--	-----

Overall peer evaluation estimate	The school requested verbal estimates only
---	--

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

Blatchington Mill School is a large mixed comprehensive school for boys and girls from Years 7 to 11. There are fewer disadvantaged students and fewer students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) than the national average. Students achieve in line with national averages in end of Key Stage 4 examinations. There have been significant changes in senior leadership in the school in recent years. A new headteacher was appointed in November 2021 and two new deputy headteachers were appointed in February 2022.

Leaders are ambitious for the students and aim to provide an exceptional education which delivers excellence in all areas. Leaders believe that every child has the potential to achieve well and they provide opportunities to allow every child to do so. There is a focus on inclusivity and the whole community is seen as being part of the "Blatch Family". The school motto is "Involvement, Achievement, Care" and this is demonstrated through the ethos of being an inclusive school which celebrates diversity. Leaders encourage students to be the best versions of themselves.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The new senior leadership team is determined that students at Blatchington Mill have an excellent education - academically, socially and culturally. Leaders are proud of the inclusive and diverse nature of the community and take every opportunity to celebrate it. This ambitious vision is shared across the school community. As one member of staff said, "We have ownership of the vision."
- Leaders know their school well. They are clear on school priorities and what needs to be done to achieve their aim of excellence. Governors are knowledgeable and provide strong support for the senior team. Leaders are explicit about what their vision for the school looks like in practice. The importance of positive communication at all levels is central to the realisation of the vision. Leaders arranged professional development for staff on emotional literacy and the initial session was led by mental health professionals. The aim was to increase staff awareness of how to address students appropriately and how to model expected behaviour. This has contributed to the creation of the harmonious and positive relationships that are seen across the school community.
- Leaders are creating a collaborative culture in the school which teachers value. Teachers are provided with a range of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities including whole school CPD, focussed

department time and coaching. Staff say that they enjoy having open learning conversations about their practice and that this is creating a positive climate for problem solving, shared thinking and training within departments. Consequently, the subject knowledge and practice of staff are continuing to build over time.

- Middle leaders say that they feel valued and listened to. They say that they are acknowledged to be specialists in their area and, therefore, have a degree of autonomy in how their subject is delivered. Senior leaders are building a model of high trust and high accountability.
- There is a wide range of additional activities for students to enjoy. There are over 40 different extra-curricular clubs including debating, skateboarding, bouldering and Italian. One student commented, "I always feel welcome when I join extra-curricular things and have fun at the same time." Students are encouraged to take up leadership opportunities and do so, for example as mental health ambassadors or leading events in Black History month. The PSHE programme is delivered by specialist teachers and students say that they recognise how important this element of their education is. "The PSHE lessons make me realise other people are experiencing things like this as well."

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

- ... governors were able to visit more frequently to see the school in operation.
- ... all form tutors took an active role in ensuring the positive engagement of members of their form.
- ... middle leaders were held more closely to account for the progress of their department.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- The school offers an ambitious, broad and inclusive curriculum. Students are guided on choices which will prepare them well for their next steps when they leave school. There is no narrowing of the curriculum for any group of students. Subject teams have thought carefully about the content of the curriculum and ensured that it is well planned and sequenced. This helps students to build their knowledge incrementally and to apply and practise skills. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and select resources which are interesting and engage students in their learning. For example, in a

biology lesson, the dissection of a chicken leg helped students to understand how joints work. Teachers encourage students to make connections in their learning. For example, in an English lesson, students compared characters in "Romeo and Juliet" and "Noughts and Crosses", leading them to conclude that in both texts there are "outside forces pulling them apart".

- Teachers' planned questioning encourages students to extend their knowledge. They use creative strategies to deepen understanding, for example suggesting students "phone a friend" (another classmate) when they cannot add any more to an answer. Success criteria are clearly explained to students so they know what they are expected to do.
- There is a positive climate for learning in lessons across the school. Students enjoy their learning and are keen to participate in lessons. Relationships are strong between students and their peers and their teachers. Students listen respectfully to requests from teachers and to contributions from their peers. This means that students have the confidence to join in and give their opinions in groups and in front of the class. Students are keen to do well and take pride in their work. Routines are well established so transitions between activities run smoothly and no learning time is lost. School leaders have developed a system of early intervention to address any concerns over behaviour and there is clear evidence that the behaviour of those students requiring support is improving following intervention.
- Students value the detailed feedback they receive in subjects such as art and say that this helps them to think about their learning over time. Students appreciate the consistency of lesson structure within and across subjects as this means that they know what is expected of them. They enjoy the varied activities they experience in lessons which might include whole class teaching, think/pair/share, group discussions or playing Kahoot.
- Students produce work that is of high quality in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Subject teams have considered subject specific literacy and so specialist vocabulary is regularly reinforced in lessons. As a result, students use key vocabulary in their work. They read clearly and with confidence in class. They can relate learning to real life contexts, for example in a mathematics lesson students cited temperature as an example of where they might encounter negative numbers in real life. Students achieve in line with national averages in end of Key Stage 4 examinations.

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

- ... teachers gave more frequent, specific feedback so students know what to do to improve.
- ... teachers ensured that all students were actively engaged in learning.
- ... teachers adapted lessons to ensure appropriate levels of challenge for all students.

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

- The new special educational needs coordinator (SENDCo) is passionate about improving the experience and achievement of students with SEND. She has a clear strategy for improvement which has been informed by research into best practice in SEND provision. The SEND register is being reviewed to ensure that it accurately reflects current need. Screening is used to identify barriers to learning. Teachers have access to information about students on the SEND register. They are provided with student profiles which detail student needs and the strategies to address them. Teachers say this information is very helpful and they use it to plan for SEND students in their lessons. Consequently, strong systems allow students to make good progress from their starting points.
- Team leaders in the SEND department visit lessons to assess how strong in class provision is for students with SEND. There are a number of interventions in place outside of the classroom, for example there is one to one tutoring for students with low levels of literacy and/or numeracy. One to one or small group interventions are carefully monitored by the SEND team. Pre and post intervention assessments are used to gauge impact and early indications are that interventions are improving student progress. Attainment information from the twice-yearly data collections is used to identify underachievement and this leads to action plans being created for identified students. A number of strategies are being implemented to increase the engagement of the families of students with SEND, these include coffee mornings and drop-in sessions. As a result, the SEND team is receiving more positive feedback from parents about how well their child is supported at school.

- Teachers are provided with information about disadvantaged students in their class. They are expected to use support strategies such as marking disadvantaged students' work and homework first. Mentors support disadvantaged students where appropriate so that any barriers to learning can be quickly addressed. Parents of disadvantaged students are given priority for appointments to parents' evenings and this has increased parental attendance at these events. Disadvantaged students are given resources such as revision guides and encouraged to attend extra-curricular activities, which are funded where possible. Consequently, disadvantaged students frequently take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities which are available.

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

... there was greater capacity in the SEND/PP team to allow more effective delivery of strategic aims.

5. Area of Excellence

An area of excellence was not submitted for this review

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.

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



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR BLATCHINGTON MILL SCHOOL

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>)