



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):	Not Applicable (N/A)

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	The school requested verbal estimates only
Date of this Review:	02/02/2026
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	(N/A)
Date of last QA Review:	10/03/2025
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	06/05/2022

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 N/A

Quality of provision and outcomes N/A

AND

Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and/or pupils with additional needs N/A

Area of excellence Not submitted

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence Leadership of Initial Teaching Training and Early Career Teaching
10/03/2025

Overall peer evaluation estimate N/A

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



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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

Blatchington Mill is a large, mixed comprehensive school in Brighton and Hove for students aged 11-16. There are fewer disadvantaged students than the national average, though numbers are increasing. The number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is close to average, though there are fewer students with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) than the national average.

The number of students with English as an additional language is close to average. Approximately one-third of the school's students are Black and racially minoritised. Blatchington Mill has an Adaptive Learning Provision (ALP) which takes referrals from across Brighton and Hove. The 12 week programme aims to develop confidence and self-esteem as well as literacy and numeracy.

The school motto of "Involvement, Achievement, Care" is central to the culture of the school. The aim is for all staff and students to be involved in opportunities which promote their sense of community and personal growth; for all to understand the purpose of their learning and use this to achieve; and for all to feel cared for with well-being and equity at the heart of the school.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The headteacher and her senior team have a compelling vision of what they want to achieve at Blatchington Mill. The school puts inclusion at the heart of all its work and this focus is shared by governors, staff and students. As one Year 9 student said, "Team Blatch is about not leaving anyone out".
- Governors take an active part in the formulation of the vision and school development planning. They provide appropriate levels of support and challenge for the school. They know the school well through a strong programme of visits, regular briefings and presentations from staff.
- Senior leaders work to the principles of deliberate restlessness, trust, verification and excellent communication. These principles inform all aspects of their work across the school.
- Leaders are mindful of staff well-being and workload. They ask for feedback from staff and listen to their views. Staff say that there is very collegiate approach, which they appreciate. One member of staff said about the school leadership, "the current one really listens and acts".
- Leaders know the strengths and areas for development in the school and work collaboratively with staff to improve provision. There is a range of professional development from in school training sessions, to departments working together on peer reviews, and leaders actively searching out other schools to share expertise and build on learning through the phases.
- Middle leaders know the school priorities and their role in working towards them. They understand and share the senior leaders' vision of inclusivity and

high expectations for all. There are agreed processes across the school, but subject leaders are given autonomy to work in ways which best suit their departments.

- Relationships across the school are very positive. Students are respectful of their teachers and their peers. Students feel very well supported and know that staff have their best interests at heart. As one Year 7 student said, “I like all my lessons because the teachers really help me”.
- There is a wide and varied enrichment programme which is informed by student voice. There are over 50 after school clubs including creative writing, the green club, the global club, the anti-racist student group. There are many sports clubs.
- Students are encouraged to reflect on local, national and global issues. They take part in an annual week of action where they choose an issue which is important to them and take action on it, this might be writing letters to people in care homes or supporting a chosen charity.
- Students are well prepared for their next steps learning about careers throughout their time at school. The school works to the Gatsby benchmarks.

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

... attendance improved more rapidly.

... the role of the tutors was reviewed and training provided to increase the impact of their work.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Students achieve well at Blatchington Mill, with the attainment of all groups being above national averages. Where students achieve less well than expected there is a collaborative approach to investigating the reasons and finding solutions.
- There is a well thought through curriculum designed to interest students and prepare them well for the next stages in their education. Leaders regularly review the curriculum offer and are responsive to changing needs and the local and national context. For example, the school is introducing a digital literacy course for Year 9 students. There is a varied choice of options including, for example, photography and art and design alongside the more traditional offer.
- The school focuses on high quality teaching for all and staff experience a range of professional development activities. They are given guidance on the elements of strong provision and departments are then encouraged to apply these in a subject specific approach. For example, last year middle leaders considered how to organise student learning and what feedback would look like in their department. Following any whole school training staff are given

time to discuss the topic in departments so that it is implemented in a way that works best for their subject.

- Lessons are very well sequenced and enable students to build on prior learning. Essential learning is highlighted, for example key notes might be given so students are clear about the key learning for that topic. Students are enthused by well-chosen resources and real world applications of their learning. For example, in science the teacher introduced the topic of magnetism by talking about the northern lights. Technical vocabulary is introduced and explained so that students can use it confidently.
- Assessments are used to identify misconceptions and gaps in learning which are then addressed in the next sequence of lessons. Following summative assessments, students are given time and guidance to help them to reflect on what went well and how to improve.
- Clear instructions from the teacher ensure that students understand the task and its purpose. Well structured modelling by the teacher means that students know what is expected of them and how to progress quickly.
- There is a strongly articulated long term plan for developing literacy which started with reading, is moving onto oracy and then to writing. Leaders are ensuring that aspects already in place are embedded before introducing new elements.
- The climate for learning across the school is strong. There are well established routines, so students know what is expected of them and transitions between activities go smoothly. Relationships are very positive. Students are greeted at the classroom door in a warm and welcoming manner. Students respond well to instructions. As a result, classrooms are calm and purposeful and students are able to concentrate on their learning.

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

- ... there was wider whole class checking for understanding before teachers moved on.
- ... there was a consistent level of challenge for higher prior attainers.

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

- Blatchington Mill is a highly inclusive school. Leaders are absolutely clear that their mission is to ensure that every student achieves the very best that they can. They are committed to providing support and removing barriers to allow them to do this.

- High quality teaching in the classroom is the focus of leaders and departments. Teachers are given guidance on strong practice, such as providing opportunities for structured talk and direct questioning to ensure engagement. They are also expected to know their students well, to understand their needs and to build relationships that motivate students to do well.
- The progress of disadvantaged students is woven through all aspects of the school, such as performance management, department reviews and pastoral work. Leaders talk to disadvantaged students about their learning and review their progress in work scrutinies.
- Disadvantaged students are provided with resources to support them, for example revision guides, and financial support is offered to ensure that they are able to take part in trips and visits.
- Students with SEND are supported by a large team which is well organised to provide appropriate support. There are team leaders with areas of focus, such as cognition and learning or social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). The school has a strong history of supporting students with complex needs.
- The philosophy which guides decisions around provision is that students with SEND, as far as possible, should be in lessons with their peers. They should have access to all that their peers do and their peers should benefit from working with others who have different needs. All students can then be aware that the world is a diverse place and inclusion is a positive thing.
- Teachers are given guidance on inclusive practice such as chunking information, using visuals to support text and instructions, and the use of appropriately sized text.
- The SEND team maintains regular contact with families so that, together, school and home can provide the strongest support.
- As a result of the care and support students receive, both disadvantaged students and students with SEND attain better than those groups of students nationally.

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

- ... the participation of disadvantaged students in extra-curricular activities was tracked.

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 partnership of schools and trusts 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 partnership 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>)