



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR GREAT HOLLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Name of School:	Great Hollands Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Richard Ferris
Hub:	Thames Valley Hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	The Maiden Erlegh Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	15/11/2021
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	This was the school's first review.
Date of last QA Review	NA



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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 Leading

Quality of provision and outcomes Leading

AND

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

Overall peer evaluation estimate Leading

***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.***

Grade Set:

1. Leading
2. Effective
3. Working towards effective
4. Ineffective

1. Context and character of the school

The school was redeveloped recently with major additions and refurbishments. The headteacher was consulted in the design of the new building, which now provides a superb environment for learning. Rooms and corridors are bright and airy, and extremely well-equipped with a host of modern systems including moveable walls and interactive touchscreen displays. The early years areas, both indoors and outside, provide exceptional spaces for children's learning and all-round development. There are dedicated rooms for music, cooking and IT for older pupils, together with two halls and a separate gymnasium. Outdoors, there is lots of space for sport and recreation, including climbing apparatus, a trim trail, and cosy shelters.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Under the excellent direction of the headteacher, leaders have transformed the school in every respect. In the last four years, exclusions have fallen from eighty-three to zero, and bullying incidents reduced from twenty-one to three last year. Pupils' conduct and behaviour for learning are now exemplary. The impact of these changes is evident, not least, in the dramatic escalation in pupils' achievements.
- In the relentless drive to improve behaviour and culture, senior leaders consistently and rigorously model expectations for adults and children. They make a clear distinction between conduct and behaviour for learning. This is well communicated and promoted to pupils and parents. For example, leaders used a live coaching approach at first to rapidly change the culture. The approach includes specific and relevant feedback. Staff, for example, were successfully encouraged when praising pupils to extend 'Well done', to the more specific, 'Well done for ...'
- Leaders have created a culture of learning that continually promotes self esteem in pupils. One pupil, explaining growth mindset, said, 'Your brain tells you never to give up even when it's hard.' Another remarked, 'We have a mind that grows so we can learn and become better.' Older pupils were keen to explain how the school had improved. One said, 'Children are now more mature. This is because of our role models. The teachers are always teaching us how to be a better person.'
- Each member of the Local Advisory Board is a 'champion' for an aspect of the improvement plan, such as inclusion, and have secure understanding of key priorities. As a result, they ask pertinent and insightful questions, requesting evidence of impact as critical partners.

- Middle leaders share the unremitting ambition to ensure all pupils do well, despite the odds. They keep well-informed, taking full advantage of the professional training offered in school and by the trust. Phase leaders evaluate the provision regularly and devise action plans which identify priorities. Subject leaders gain a clear picture of their curriculum areas through feedback from pupils, learning walks, and monitoring planning and pupils' work. This results in pertinent action plans that have a continuing focus on improving outcomes.
- Leaders, acknowledging the demands placed on staff in making rapid improvements, make every effort to support their wellbeing. Staff have access to a mental health platform and leaders keep an eye on workloads. The exchange of emails at weekend is restricted to urgent issues, staff are encouraged to leave the school by 3.30pm on Fridays, marking has become more manageable, and there is advance warning of events. The school is working with the trust's new mental health support team to design questionnaires for staff and pupils.
- Leaders successfully promote the trust's aim to develop 'mutual respect, equality, an understanding of other cultures, empathy with the wider world, and a strong and collaborative work ethic'. Pupils clearly articulated these goals, frequently mentioning teamwork, kindness, and responsibility. They described how adults build their confidence, and proudly discussed their awards for demonstrating a school value. Pupils have a clear understanding of British Values and can articulate examples of respect, democracy, and discrimination, inside and outside of school. They said that lessons in PHSE had given them an understanding of these values and opportunities to discuss and debate.

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

The review did not identify any significant areas for improvement.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Leaders have created an ambitious 'no excuses' culture, and this underpins the rationale of the relevant, engaging, and challenging curriculum. The teaching of core skills enhances access to the wider curriculum, providing stimulating and challenging experiences for all pupils.
- As they start in Reception, few children are at the level of development expected for their age. In 2016, less than a third achieved a good level of development. In 2019 the proportion was close to the national average. Outcomes for older pupils reveal a similar success story. Phonics scores are growing rapidly. By 2019 combined scores in reading, writing and mathematics had soared from 27% in 2016 to an above average 69% at expected levels. Pupils are doing remarkably well in writing. This year, pupils in Year 6 were close to being in the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) top 5% band, with 71% reaching this target.
- The impressive increase in pupils' performance is due to high quality teaching and learning. Children in Reception respond extremely well to the stimulating environment, where every opportunity is taken to promote their personal development, and language and number skills. Excellent relationships and highly effective teaching by all adults, leads to rapid progress. Well-established routines mean no time was wasted. Transitions from adult-led sessions to free flow activities are seamless, due to the skilled use of non-verbal cues and high expectations.
- The skilled teaching of phonics in Reception continues in the older classes. In Years 1 and 2, teachers and support staff consistently adhere to the methodology integral to the phonics programme. Superb relationships and sky-high expectations coupled with a high degree of sophistication in the teaching methods frequently holds children spellbound. Staff are quick to spot mistakes and provide immediate reinforcement through verbal and visual representation.
- Consistent approaches to reading mean pupils build well on their phonics skills. The 'my turn, your turn' approach, and the use of sentence frames and talk partners, feature strongly in lessons. There is a strong focus on fluency, comprehension and understanding. Teachers frequently model reading aloud, which helps pupils read with expression.
- Teachers use the school's bespoke strategy for teaching writing very successfully. This draws on the 'Talk for Writing' approach, including an 'imitate, innovate, invent' sequence, which is part of the school's 'Writers' Toolkit.' Pupils increasingly use the literary devices they glean from their reading in their own writing. A pupil in Year 3, for example, used a rhetorical question: 'So how can we be successful when we're trying to learn?'. After studying Beowulf, and work on innovation, a Year 5 pupil wrote, 'Outside the wall of Herot, hiding in the cold fog, a warty, grotesque, beast staggered through the undergrowth.'

- Across subjects, pupils have regular opportunities to discuss their learning with partners. This is one of the strategies in the 'five bs' mantra (brain, board, book, buddy, boss) that promotes independence. Pupils of all abilities used these strategies well during a Year 6 mathematics lesson. After using the concrete, pictorial, and abstract sequence of learning, they used the correct mathematical terminology when explaining their methods of comparing and ordering fractions.
- Pupils typically articulate their subject knowledge very well. Year 5 pupils, for example, confidently explained the difference between soluble and insoluble materials. Regular practical investigations in science, mean pupils enjoy the subject. Pupils were keen to talk about how they created a volcano by mixing baking soda with vinegar, for example.
- Although, understandably, a high priority is given to basic skills, this is not at the expense of the wider curriculum. Displays in corridors abound with examples of work in art, and pupils are rightly proud of their humanities workbooks.

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

...pupils took greater personal responsibility for sustaining a healthy lifestyle
...the use of Smart boards was refined to ensure visual images, font sizes and backgrounds were clearer, so they are accessible to all pupils.

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

- The leadership and management of provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs are first rate. The inclusion manager has considerable expertise and leads the local hub for SEND across eight schools. Phase leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching and support for specific pupils and regularly review their progress with class teachers. They report back to the inclusion manager so that next steps can be addressed. The success of this system is seen in the impressive outcomes.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning, to the extent that reviewers found it difficult to differentiate between teacher and support staff. This was evident at its finest in the high-quality teaching in phonics. The contagious enthusiasm of staff working with groups of pupils with complex needs meant pupils were engaged throughout. For example, 'Fred Frog' captured their attention, and as a tool for modelling blending worked very well. Pupils celebrated their success when they spotted new sounds among the known sounds being revisited.

- All staff take collective responsibility and live up to the high expectations that school leaders have for all learners. Pupils with additional needs are provided with personalised learning to access the full curriculum. Pupils with complex needs in Year 3, for example, were supported with the use of scaffolds, such as writing frames, word banks, and resources such as 'Colourful Semantics'
- The school uses the EEF guidance to provide a tiered approach to supporting disadvantaged pupils, and staff apply Rosenshein's Principles of Instruction, with an emphasis on high quality teaching for all. Metacognition and self-regulated learning are promoted effectively. Sharply focused, diagnostic assessment enables teachers to modify learning in lessons and to facilitate booster sessions and other interventions as appropriate.
- The impact of the school's support for both groups of pupils is obvious from their highly positive attitudes, as evident for their application of the 'I can't do it...Yet' mindset. Academic results are equally notable. Low attainers performed significantly higher in writing than those nationally in the 2019 assessments, for example. Internal assessments show that gaps diminish as pupils move through the school. Similarly, the gaps continue to narrow between disadvantaged and other pupils. Last year, for example, the gaps at Year 5 in reading, writing and mathematics, were halved in Year 6.

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

The review did not identify any significant areas for improvement.

5. Area of Excellence

Not applicable

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

Leaders would like opportunities to share and extend their expertise in promoting learning behaviours within a school serving a similarly disadvantaged area.



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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.

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