



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR DULWICH HAMLET JUNIOR SCHOOL

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| Name of School: | Dulwich Hamlet Junior School |
| Headteacher/Principal: | Claire Purcell |
| Hub: | South of the River Hub |
| School phase: | Primary |
| MAT (if applicable): | The Charter Schools Educational Trust |

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| Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review: | Leading |
| Date of this Review: | 25/05/2022 |
| Overall Estimate at last QA Review | This was the school's first review |
| Date of last QA Review | NA |
| Grade at last Ofsted inspection: | Outstanding |
| Date of last Ofsted inspection: | 16/09/2008 |



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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

Area of excellence NA

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence NA

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.

1. Context and character of the school

Dulwich Hamlet is a three-form entry junior school in the centre of Dulwich Village in London. It serves a mainly affluent area and is over-subscribed. Over half the pupils are White British. Almost all pupils from the wide range of minority ethnic groups are fluent in English. The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are below average, although the number of pupils with an EHCP is comparatively high.

The school buildings provide a variety of learning spaces. There are two halls, one equipped with stage lighting and a separate dining hall. There is a suite of dedicated music rooms, a library, design technology and cookery rooms and a well-equipped computer room. Recent upgrades include the installation of sleek IT 'teacher walls' in all classrooms. A separate building houses a multi-purpose room used for staff training, lunch time clubs and group interventions. Pupils use the veranda for reading and play. The two playgrounds have a range of challenging play structures, table tennis, an artificially turfed court and a new 'air gym'. A 'secret garden' is maintained by pupils. A large sports field adjacent to the school is used for physical activities.

The school converted to an academy in 2011 and subsequently joined The Charter School's Educational Trust in April 2021. The senior leadership team includes the headteacher and three assistant headteachers.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The relentless commitment of senior leaders to promoting the school's values is shared by all staff. Resilience, integrity, respect, and enjoyment, permeate all aspects of school life, and underpin the positive atmosphere and exceptional climate for learning across the school.
- The school's success in sustaining 'a glittering curriculum where everyone matters' was particularly evident during enthralling discussions with pupils. Among their comments were, 'The staff help us to do our best by inspiring us.', 'They give you a bit of a challenge, and clues to do the rest', and 'There is so much you can do.' Pupils spoke movingly about how they felt loved, commenting, 'Staff give us constructive comments...they are kind, caring and helpful when you need it.'

- Pupils' positive views were borne out at every turn during the review. A palpable sense of purpose pervades the school, both during lessons and more informal activities. During a rehearsal of the forthcoming Year 3 class assembly, 'The Odyssey', for example, pupils were confident, articulate, and keen to improve their performance. The high specification lighting rig was used to good effect to create a sense of atmosphere within a theatrical setting. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils contributed to the purposeful atmosphere and children's enjoyment.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop leadership skills as sports leaders, music mentors, school councillors, house captains and eco-councillors. School leaders routinely canvas their opinions, and those of parents and staff, when evaluating the provision and outcomes. Recently this process identified a common view that pupils could be further challenged. Notwithstanding the well above average proportion of pupils reaching a greater depth in the core subjects, leaders are exploring ways to ensure challenge is consistent across subjects.
- Pupils greatly value the wealth of enrichment activities. There is an orchestra, a choir and 16 different music ensembles. Over 250 pupils are learning an instrument. Pupils maturely explained how educational trips were 'for a range of reasons' and were particularly enthusiastic about the recent Year 6 residential visit. Asked about the 'glittering curriculum' they said learning is fun, and included the 'amazing' art, music, DT, and cooking.
- Staff morale is a high priority. Annual staff surveys are analysed, and action points are derived from them. The core leadership team sustain a culture where staff feel valued. Retention is high and staff view the school as somewhere they can continue to grow as professionals.
- Governors have a diverse range of skills. They are reflective and have well-founded strategies for future development. They have a clear picture of the school's provision and share leaders' ambition to sustain successes and further improve. Governors played a significant role in supporting leaders during a period of transition and in maintaining staff morale during recent lockdowns.
- Leaders facilitate additional training based on school priorities and emerging individual needs and ambitions. Among many examples of the impact of such opportunities, retrieval practice features in all mathematics lessons to enhance understanding of key mathematical ideas. Following introduction of 'boxed success criteria' by the literacy lead, teachers routinely use this format to show how pupils' oral and written accounts are relevant to the purpose and audience.
- An impressive programme of formal and informal engagement with parents underpins the excellent home/school relationships. The thriving PTA raises substantial funds, often amounting to over £20,000 annually.

- Leaders at all levels, including the senior leadership team, SLEs, and ELEs, disseminate best practice widely. They host professional development workgroups and training which have a positive impact on learning, teaching, and outcomes within the trust and beyond. They lead the Enabling Teaching and Learning and NQT plus one programmes for the London South Teaching School Hub and run Teaching for Mastery workgroups for the London SE Mathematics hub.

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

- ... leaders informed parents about the intended impact of challenging pupils, including their development as autonomous thinkers and life-long learners, alongside reaching even higher standards.
- ... leaders further developed pupils' involvement in development priorities.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Pupils achieve exceptionally well. As they enter Year 3, pupils' attainment is typically above average. Despite the impact this has on progress measures, progress scores were significantly above average in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Attainment over these three years was in the top 20% of all schools in reading, writing, mathematics, EGSP, and science, including at higher standards and combined subjects.
- The school's internal tracking indicates that, in spite of pandemic lockdowns, pupils in all year groups are making particularly good headway. The current Year 6 results are predicted to include a third of pupils achieving a greater depth in writing and over half reaching the high standard in mathematics.
- Underpinned by the aim to offer a holistic experience, the curriculum provides an effective balance between academic, practical, and creative activities. This approach is much valued by pupils and parents.
- Pupils are confident readers and enthusiastically discussed the 'fantastic range' of books in the library and how their reading of different genres gave them insights and ideas for their own writing. Linguistic phonics has been adopted, to good effect, to support the few pupils who are less confident in reading and spelling. Skilled teaching enables pupils' writing to move on apace. Lessons typically provide opportunities for collaboration and discussion, and excellent open-ended questioning enables pupils to extend their ideas.
- Pupils have appropriate opportunities to practise and develop their writing across the curriculum. Subject specific vocabulary is promoted successfully. During a Year 6 RE lesson, for example, pupils categorised religions, independently using terms such as polytheistic and Abrahamic.

- The teaching of mathematics is equally strong. Questioning is a real strength, pre-empting misconceptions and promoting high expectations in the use of mathematical terminology. During a Year 3 lesson, questions such as, 'Can you convince me?', 'True or false?', and 'What do you notice?' led to pupils articulating their reasoning. Similarly, during a Year 4 lesson on fractions, challenging questions extended all pupils. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge was evident as she insisted pupils used correct mathematical vocabulary.
- High quality teaching across the board means pupils are engaged, eager to learn and acquire a remarkable degree of independence. Strong relationships among staff and pupils enable both to take risks. Lessons are well-planned and, following a brief retrieval session, teachers skilfully adapt the pace of learning and adjust the level of challenge to meet the differing needs of pupils. Pupils, for their part, demonstrate well-established behaviours for learning, and respond maturely to 'no hands up' and 'cold calling' approaches. They frequently assess their own and their classmates' work using clear success criteria.
- Discussions with pupils about their learning, and observing their responses during lessons, and displays of their work, indicated that success in the core subjects is not at the expense of the wider curriculum. High quality work was evident in art, music, computing, history, PE, and RE.
- Pupils in Year 4 worked collaboratively and were mutually supportive as they created mandala patterns. Other pupils had used the perspective and contrast techniques of Rousseau and the 'op art' approaches of Bridget Riley with considerable flair in their own work. Music is a real strength, evident, not least by the number of pupils currently learning an instrument, and the school choir rehearsing for their leading performance at The Queen's platinum jubilee celebrations. Pupils in Year 4 used their understanding of angles well and showed a very secure grasp of logo commands during a computing lesson. In PE, they made substantial progress in hurdling and enthusiastically described how they had overcome initially difficulties due to the teacher's expert help. Year 6 pupils used computer tablets confidently as they explored ancient Maya City states. They showed a significant understanding as they recalled the religions they had studied since Year 3.

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

- ... further opportunities were provided for pupils to develop independence though open-ended tasks using scaffolding only when appropriate.

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

- Pupils benefit from the well-managed provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. The SENDCo has a clear development plan and has recently adopted the trust-wide 'Edukey' provision mapping program. There is a clear process to identify pupils who need support. Teachers and skilled teaching assistants are well-trained and work in close partnership with parents. Time is set aside for teachers and support staff to plan bespoke interventions.
- Resources are provided when appropriate during day-to-day lessons. During a Year 6 humanities lesson, for example, these included a footstool, headphones, and a laptop. Links to previous learning at the beginning of lessons, help all pupils, particularly those with SEND. This was evident during a Year 5 French lesson, where pupils with SEND made similar progress to their classmates, due to careful scaffolding and multi-sensory support. In this class, as in others, the teacher skilfully addressed misconceptions within a safe environment where pupils were not afraid to make mistakes.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported seamlessly and sensitively. Each pupil is offered two free sports clubs and participation in the extensive range of enrichment activities is frequently subsidised. An assistant headteacher keeps a close eye on all vulnerable pupils.
- As a result of first-class provision, pupils with SEND typically progress very well towards their individual targets. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is a real success story. In the 2019 SATs, their attainment was in line with the high standards achieved by their peers and above that of other pupils nationally. The judicious use of catch-up funding and reduced absence among this group are ensuring current pupils have the same opportunities to achieve as well as their predecessors.

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

... the use of Edukey becomes fully embedded to refine the evaluation of the provision and planning for vulnerable groups.

5. Area of Excellence

NA



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

Having recently joined the partnership, leaders would like to explore ways of extending and sharing their expertise.

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.