QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR RUSHEY MEAD ACADEMY

Name of School:	Rushey Mead Academy
Head teacher/Principal:	Gulbanu Kader
Hub:	East Midland South
School type:	Academy converter
MAT (if applicable):	Rushey Mead Education Trust

Estimate at this QA Review:	Outstanding
Date of this Review:	06/02/2019
Estimate at last QA Review	Outstanding
Date of last QA Review	22/01/2018
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	November 2007

Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising of host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

School Improvement Strategies	Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Outstanding
Area of Excellence	Accredited
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	Support for disadvantaged pupils, 24/06/2018
Overall Estimate	Outstanding

Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

1. Context and character of the school

Rushey Mead Academy is a converter academy on the outskirts of Leicester. It is part of The Mead Educational Trust, a growing partnership of primary and secondary academies situated in the East Midlands.

It hosts a school-centred initial teacher training provider serving both city and county. The academy is larger-than-average secondary school and has recently expanded to meet growing demand in the city. The new principal was appointed in 2018 and is supported by an extended leadership team.

The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than average, with a large majority from an Indian heritage. The proportion of students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is also higher than average. The school includes a smaller than average proportion of students who are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of boys is slightly larger than girls. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The school is characterised as having an average deprivation indicator.

The proportion of students receiving support for their special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is in line with national averages and the proportion of students with an education, health and care plan is below average. On entry, students have prior attainment which is below the national average. Partnerships are varied and highly effective.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Progress from previous EBIs

- Leaders have identified the progress of disadvantaged students and boys as a key priority in their self-evaluation form and school improvement plan.
- Leaders are relentless in identifying opportunities to raise standards where it is most needed.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- The school continues to pursue its journey of continuous improvement since the last inspection and review. The principal is inspirational and, with her team, relentlessly explores new initiatives to secure the best outcomes for the students, particularly the disadvantaged.
- This is an information rich school where leaders work cohesively. It allows students to thrive in a positive and productive learning environment. This is evidenced by very strong outcomes for students in both progress and attainment

over a number of years.

- A distributed leadership model ensures all staff are held to account. An effective monitoring of SMART objectives is apparent in the school development plan. There is strong alignment between the priorities of senior and middle leaders.
- Communication with key stakeholders is strong and leads to bespoke intervention for the most vulnerable students, curriculum pathways to meet the complex needs of some students (such as those who are disadvantaged, those who speak English as an additional language, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and boys) and a highly effective careers programme.
- Self-evaluation is based on a thorough analysis of progress data around key milestones, frequent monitoring of teaching and learning, book scrutiny and curriculum reviews. School leaders have implemented effective systems to track the progress of groups of students to ensure that no one falls behind and underachieves.
- School leaders have a clear understanding of the school's key strengths and areas for development. This is evident at all levels of the leadership team. Diminishing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students and between boys and girls (although their progress is above national averages) remain the two main areas of development.
- Teachers adhere to school wide approaches to learning underpinned by the Rushey way of teaching and the principles and features of the Rushey Mead curriculum. Leaders want students to be "knowledgeable, critical, enriched and well poised to lead fulfilling lives".
- There is a strong sense of trust and cohesion in this school where middle leaders and teachers are frequently asked to reflect on their own practice. It informs effective curriculum modifications. The impact of new initiatives is assessed through learning walks, student surveys and data analysis. Professional developmental activities are meaningful and focused on capacity building.
- Indeed, at Rushey Mead, all students, teachers and parents share a common vision to "make a positive difference".

2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if…

…leaders continue to implement effective strategies to diminish in-school outcome differences between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students, and boys and girls.

…leaders continue to improve the outcomes of high attainers in English and humanities and of all students in art and photography.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Progress from previous EBIs

- Effective questioning was at the heart of most lessons visited. It allowed students to deepen their learning and use higher order thinking skills.
- Interactions between teachers and students are productive. Feedback systematically leads to next steps in learning.
- The curriculum review and the Rushey way of learning are securing more opportunities for stretch and challenge.

3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well

- Outstanding behaviour is apparent throughout the school. Students are polite, open and articulate, making it a pleasure to engage with them in lessons.
- The use of effective praise, as a form of feedback to students on their contribution to discussions, answers to questions and on the work produced, is a feature of the vast majority of lessons. This contributes to the calm and productive learning environment in all lessons.
- Feedback is consistently effective as it includes clear targets for improvement. In most lessons, there is a drive to ensure students respond and act upon feedback. When it is insisted upon, the students respond well and it contributes to their good progress. In a Year 11 history lesson, feedback was used to emphasise key learning points. The teacher skilfully used modelling to illustrate the conventions for constructing a hypothesis. The impact was immediate and highly effective.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. They have high expectations of students' learning no matter to which group students belong. This was particularly the case in a Year 7 history lesson where the teacher made learning memorable through the use of historical storytelling, including gory details. Differentiation was effective and all students were fully engaged. Some deepened their knowledge further by asking questions.
- Teacher/student relationships are a strength of the school and, as a result of the high levels of trust created by this caring environment, students of all ages and abilities readily demonstrate an eagerness to learn and make progress across the curriculum. In a Year 10 computer science lesson, the teacher used their expertise to create a supportive learning environment where students were inspired to produce their best work.
- In the best lessons, teachers use effective questioning, including questions for recall, clarification and to stretch students' understanding. Many of these lessons include examples of targeted questions specifically to address the learning needs of groups of students. Disadvantaged students play a central role in discussions. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, the teacher very skilfully pre-empted misconceptions through modelling, allowing students to work independently. In a Year 8 textiles lesson the teacher was adept at picking up students' misconceptions and using them as key learning points.

- In most lessons, questioning allowed teachers to pin down methods and identify and address learning gaps. In a Year 9 science lesson on terminal velocity, the students deepened their learning as teachers used pair rehearsal, focused questioning, cold calling, redirecting to another student, and sequencing effectively.
- In most books, work is of a very high standard, and most students, including disadvantaged students, take a real pride in the appearance and the quality of their work.

3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if…

…teachers, through the Rushey Mead principles of teaching and learning (direct instruction), continued to systematically focus on the needs of key groups.
…teachers ensured students systematically reached the highest levels in subjects that are currently not in line with the performance of other strong subjects in school.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- Examination results in 2018 were strong. Progress 8 was in the top 6% for the last two years for all students. It was in the top 10% for disadvantaged students in 2018. Progress 8 scores in mathematics and EBacc elements were in the top 2% for the last two years. Science was in the top 5% and languages was in the top quintile for the past two years. Two-thirds of Year 11 were entered for the EBacc, which is close to the governments' ambition for 2020. These students achieved a particularly strong progress 8 score.
- Students' attainment was equally strong and in the top quintile for the last two years. In 2018, the Year 11 cohort included an average proportion of disadvantaged students. The school continues to successfully diminish differences between the disadvantaged and their peers and other students nationally.
- Different groups of students performed well. Students in all prior attainment groups as well as disadvantaged students were in the top 10% for progress nationally.
- In 2018, outcomes in the open element were in the top quintile, a great improvement from previous years.
- The Progress 8 scores for students receiving SEND support was above the other students' national average, but in English and humanities it was below.
- Although the progress of high prior attainers in English and humanities was above the national average, it remained a concern relative to the progress of other prior attainment groups. The attainment of all students in art and photography is a key focus for leaders. School leaders are aware of this and interventions are in place to improve these areas. The current data shows a positive trend.

- Predictions for 2019, taking into account the change in measures, is clearly on course for maintaining this success. Predictions against actuals compare very favourably thus reinforcing the accuracy of current predictions. The current progress of Year 11 compares favourably to Year 11 at the same assessment point last year.
- Current data shows strong progress overall from Key Stage 3 into Key stage 4 for all groups.
- Most subjects in Year 11 are predicted to be above national average for both 9-5 and 9-7.
- Destination data shows that almost all students went on to further education or training. There is an impressive record of zero students who are not in employment, education or training.
- Although the progress of boys is almost a grade better than their peers nationally and has improved over time, they still lag behind girls except in mathematics and science.

5. Area of Excellence

Mathematics

Accredited

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?

- The high-quality mathematics curriculum is a key strength of the department and plays a major role in the continued success of students' outcomes.
- Schemes of learning are developed during professional learning (PL) time, with all staff contributing.
- Learning is progressive and builds on prior learning, expectations are mapped out.
- Lesson structures are based on Rosenshine's principles of instruction (and other relevant theory).
- Example resources are created so that teachers can use, copy and amend.
- Pedagogical approaches are developed and explored in PL time with subject experts training and supporting others.
- Routines and processes support the mathematics teachers in their implementation of the curriculum (lesson starters, homework, assessment and marking and feedback routines).

5.2 What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

- PL time is focused on developing teaching practice. There is a strong ethos of continuing professional development in the department and a real culture of collaboration. Mathematics specific subject knowledge and pedagogical development is at the heart of all meetings and professional conversations with the team.
- All members of the mathematics team have had subject knowledge sessions, Monday PL sessions and collaborative planning sessions. To complement this, all faculty meetings start with the completion of a difficult question and a discussion about how best to approach them.
- In addition to the opportunities within the department, several external professional development opportunities have been provided, including hub meetings and conferences, twilights and subject knowledge courses.

5.3 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?

- Pupil outcomes are consistently higher than the national average with Progress 8 scores above +1.
- Over the past two years, over 40 higher prior attainers have studied for level 3 free standing mathematics qualifications after school and all have successfully passed. Nearly two-thirds of them achieved A level grade A (the highest available on this qualification).
- Lesson observations show high levels of subject knowledge from staff as well as engagement and buy in from all students.
- Books show that students take pride in their work; progress over time is evident.
- A two-day departmental review of the mathematics team was conducted by three senior leaders from across the city all of whom are mathematics specialists. The report cited many strengths including curriculum leadership, teaching, learning, assessment and intervention.
- A governors' visit less than a year ago identified strengths in mathematics in a variety of areas including outcomes and systems and processes.

5.4 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?

Vicky Barwell

Vice principal

vbarwell@rushey-tmet.uk

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

The school suggested they would benefit from support linked to their EBIs.

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.