



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR RUSHEY MEAD ACADEMY

<b>Name of School:</b>	Rushey Mead Academy
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Victoria Barwell
<b>Hub:</b>	East Midlands South
<b>School phase:</b>	Secondary 11-16
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	The Mead Educational Trust (TMET)

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	25/02/2022
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Leading
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	31/01/2020
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	07/11/2007 (Predecessor School)



## 1. Context and character of the school

Rushey Mead is a larger than average academy convertor on the outskirts of Leicester. It is the founding school of The Mead Educational Trust (TMET), a growing partnership of primary and secondary academies located in the East Midlands. The Academy is also a National Teaching School, providing high quality professional development for both its own staff and those in other Leicester schools. It hosts a school-centred initial teacher training provider serving both city and council.

The academy has established a strong track record of growing its own leaders. The Head of School was appointed in 2022 having previously been Vice Principal and is supported by an extended leadership team, including an Associate Leader from TMET, and the Executive Principal who is also the Director of Secondary Academies for the Trust.

The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than average and a large majority of students are of Indian heritage. This is also the case for students for whom English is an additional language (EAL). The school includes a smaller than average proportion of students who are White British. 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 proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) support is in line with the national average although the proportion of students who have an education, health and care plan is above average. On entry, students have prior attainment which is below the national average.

### 2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Leaders express a clear and ambitious vision for pupils' success. The Rushey SMART (Smile, Manners, Articulate, Respect, Titles) approach provides a framework for pupils to live out the school values. Daily narration of the SMART mantra has enabled staff to build a culture of high expectations, which is recognised and valued by all members of the school community.
- The school development plan is co-constructed, which ensures that departmental action plans are aligned with the key school priorities and promotes rich dialogue between leaders at all levels
- In the governing body there is both significant depth of experience and an advanced skillset. Governors understand the school's key priorities and recognise the important balance between accountability and support in their roles. They are highly committed to the school, conducting regular visits, and contributing to the implementation of the framework for quality assurance.

- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum, including provision of a range of arts subjects. The scholarship programme for disadvantaged pupils is designed to address barriers to participation in instrumental lessons and promote inclusion.
- There is clear understanding of the Rushey Principles of Instruction: 'I do, we do, you do.' An extensive and multi-layered professional learning strategy, Monthly Mondays, provides four strands for staff to focus upon. They are encouraged to explore specific questions of interest through the Edu-research group, while subject-specific pedagogical content knowledge is explored in teams. The Weekly Wednesday sessions provide further opportunities for deliberate practice. This research-informed approach is helping leaders to drive consistency.
- Leaders have implemented comprehensive systems for quality assurance. Senior leaders have committed to developing their knowledge and understanding of the areas to which they are linked and work alongside curriculum leaders to conduct extensive quality assurance activities. Leaders use instructional coaching to provide opportunities for professional reflection. Newly developed subject grids are being used to ensure that scrutiny is informed by a clear understanding of pedagogical content knowledge.
- Staff work hard to provide a rich co-curricular offer for pupils beyond the classroom. The Rushey passport provides a framework for enabling pupils to develop their whole self. It is closely aligned with the school's framework for developing pupil leadership, both within school and beyond the gates.
- Careers provision is highly developed, and quality assured against the Gatsby benchmarks. Pupils benefit from access to digital information and guidance tools. Disadvantaged pupils are taken to open days in further and higher education settings and benefit from personalised careers interviews.
- Leaders continue to engage in a series of best practice and research-informed visits to other schools. The SCITT offers a well-established and highly regarded series of programmes for staff working at different levels. School staff are engaged in curriculum and cross-phase networks and share their expertise across the Trust. Transition work is highly strategic with close emphasis on Rushey SMART and the Rushey 123 to ensure that new pupils rapidly develop their understanding of the school's values and ethos.
- Levels of attendance are above the national average. The attendance team are highly responsive and work closely with pastoral leaders to closely track pupils with barriers to attendance. Pupils know that teachers want the very best for them and respond by demonstrating their commitment to learning and strong levels of participation.

## **2.2 Leadership at all levels – Even better if**

... there were further refinement of the school improvement priorities in order to focus more precisely on meeting the needs of key vulnerable and underperforming groups.

... leaders used the opportunities presented by the embedding of quality assurance strategies, such as the subject grids, to identify and share best practice.

### **3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well**

- As a result of the significant investment in professional learning, curriculum leaders have secured clear and coherent sequences of learning. Key knowledge is presented through direct instruction; pupils are subsequently provided with clear models and scaffolding which supports them in moving towards independence. Teachers' impressive subject knowledge ensures that planning is precisely matched to pupils' starting points.
- Tier 3 subject-specific vocabulary is clearly signposted in pupils' books and in learning environments. Leaders are clear that emphasis on language acquisition and development is key to providing quality first teaching.
- In the most effective teaching, there is skilful use of cold-calling questioning strategies to promote understanding. Exploration of Willingham's contention that 'memory is the residue of thought' has generated a key focus on the use of hinge and probing questions. This is helping to build long term memory.
- Pupils' books suggest that there is significant pride in the presentation of work. In some subjects, pupils use different exercise books to present their working process and their best work.
- Provision designed to promote pupils' personal development is a considerable strength of the school. Leaders at all levels are passionate about ensuring that pupils have the knowledge and skills to prepare them for their next steps in education and life beyond. Pupils benefit from opportunities to work with local charities and understand the importance of active citizenship.
- Leaders are determined to develop both character and the skills required to compete with their peers. Inter-school public speaking events are designed to develop pupils' skills in debating and speaking in front of an audience. High levels of success in pupils' participation in The Brilliant Club initiative is also integral to the raising of aspirations.
- The personal health and social education programme includes a focus on knife crime and includes input from external professionals including the police and local community workers. Leaders have carefully mapped opportunities for pupils to explore British values, including a range of initiatives designed to model democratic processes.
- The school's reward system is carefully designed and closely aligned with the Rushey 123. In the first strand pupils are rewarded for acts of kindness such as assisting new students. In the second strand pupils are able to achieve bronze, silver and gold awards for exceptional contributions in each subject. Pupils are also able to earn house points and value the range of opportunities to receive recognition for their various achievements in different areas of school life.

- Leaders are developing an effective reading strategy based on a graduated model designed to promote fluency. Pupils who have not yet achieved functional literacy are provided with targeted interventions, including the use of phonics strategies. Initiatives designed to promote a love of reading, such as reading competitions, are also gaining traction.

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

... there were further opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion of the key learning gained during direct instruction, in order to develop greater confidence in the articulation of their knowledge and understanding.

... there were further sharing of best practice in the use of probing questions to deepen understanding and provide further challenge.

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

- The senior team are clear that consistent quality first teaching is the main driver for raising standards for disadvantaged students. Staff demonstrate deep understanding of the barriers to learning and deficits in cultural capital experienced by some pupils.
- Since the return from lockdowns leaders have developed a highly intuitive team-around-the-child approach. In each year group team there is a DSL, behaviour mentor, pupil premium champion, head of year and lead teaching assistant. This has proved to be a highly effective strategic approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils.
- Detailed pupil passports include clear targets for pupils with SEND. Progress against targets is closely tracked and communication between pastoral and academic staff is highly effective.
- Leaders have developed an effective language development team dedicated to working with pupils with varying levels of language proficiency including those who are new to English. Support is highly personalised and includes a team of peer mentors. These pupils are also able to earn leadership points which are entered into their log. This is another example of the strategic joined-up focus on the Rushey 123.

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

... leaders were able to precisely articulate the corporate profile of pupils with SEND.

## 5. Area of Excellence

Curriculum beyond the classroom

### Accredited

#### 5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

Leaders are determined that pupils will benefit from a range of opportunities to develop their whole self. The Rushey 123 is reiterated across the school, permeating lessons, tutor time, assemblies and intervention times. Consistency in the use of the Rushey SMART mantra is also key to establishing the culture of mutual respect. The house system is pupil led and designed to instil an ethos of friendly competition and collegiality. Pupils strive to win points for their houses through engagement in sporting, artistic and charitable activities.

Implementation of the team-around-the-child framework has provided additional capacity for responding to the needs of all pupils. The team acts as the first point of contact for staff to refer concerns as well as to celebrate pupils' achievements. Leaders believe that this strategic approach to inclusion is helping to further promote an ethos of collaboration. Leaders have also promoted strong anti-bullying messages establishing a team of ambassadors and a culture of vigilance amongst staff.

The Rushey 3 passport scheme incentivises pupils to engage in the rich and varied extra-curricular programme and provides opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and skills. The passport ensures that all students are rewarded for their non-academic achievements and a document for celebrating success beyond exam results. Students accumulate points on their passport through engaging in activities and committing to clubs. In order to graduate with Rushey 'Honours' students must take part in an activity from all three areas of the passport, ensuring that they 'make a positive difference to themselves, others & their community.' The tiered approach to graduation incentivises students to achieve the maximum points possible so that they can graduate at the highest level. This gives *all* pupils, irrespective of their starting point or background, the chance to graduate with First Class Rushey 'Honours' and wear a gown and mortarboard in the graduation ceremony at the end of the year. This provides strong visual representation of the culture of aspiration and achievement.

## **5.2 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?**

A pleasing number of rewards is given to pupils through the school's reward system. In the previous academic term over 3,000 certificates were awarded for demonstrations of kindness and hard work (Rushey 1 and 2). In some subject areas leaders have developed postcards to represent the award, which pupils take great pride in displaying in books. Information about pupils' successes in the house competition is also displayed around the school. As a result of the launch of Rushey SMART, leaders are also reporting fewer behaviour incidents.

Leaders have sought independent evaluation of the impact of the launch of the Rushey passport. The report indicates that levels of attainment increased in core subjects. Attitudes to learning scores were also enhanced across all year groups. Leaders were particularly pleased with the reported increase in positive progress amongst pupils with SEND.

The school has shared the evidence of the success of the various initiatives with other schools in the Trust. Deliberate practice of Rushey 123 and SMART frameworks has been undertaken at training events designed to promote a shared sense of responsibility amongst staff. Leaders believe that this systematic approach will enable the school to continue to sustain exemplary standards of performance amongst staff and pupils.

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

Head of School: Victoria Barwell  
Email address: VBarwell@rushey-tmet.uk

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

The school will continue to work closely with schools in the local hub.

**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.**



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR RUSHEY MEAD ACADEMY

**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.**