



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR RUSHEY MEAD ACADEMY

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

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	01/02/2023
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Leading
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	25/02/2002
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	08/03/2022



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR RUSHEY MEAD ACADEMY

#### 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** Accredited

**Previously accredited valid areas  
of excellence** Curriculum beyond the classroom,  
25/02/2022

**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**

Rushey Mead is a converter academy in Leicester and is part of The Mead Educational Trust (TMET). The Academy is home to the Leicester and Leicestershire Teaching School Hub which provides high quality professional development for over two hundred schools. Several staff at Rushey Mead are involved in the facilitation and evaluation of Teaching School Hub programmes and have impact within and beyond TMET schools.

The academy is a larger than average, oversubscribed, secondary school and has recently expanded to meet growing demand in the city. The Principal was appointed in 2022 having previously been Vice Principal for many years and is supported by a committed leadership team.

The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average, with a large majority of students being of Indian heritage. For most students English is an additional language (EAL). The academy includes a smaller than average proportion of students who are White British and a slightly larger proportion of boys 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) is in line with national averages but the proportion with an Education, Health and Care Plan is below average. On entry, students have prior attainment which is below the national average.

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

- Leaders have fully achieved the EBIs from their last review. They have refined their school improvement priorities in order to focus more precisely on meeting the needs of key vulnerable and underperforming groups. They have also used opportunities presented by the embedding of quality assurance strategies, such as subject grids, to identify and share best practice.
- The school has a strong and dynamic senior leadership team, that continuously goes beyond the expected to ensure that all students have access to a wide and rich set of learning experiences. To support the delivery of learning, middle leaders are provided with both the autonomy and support to ensure that they make a proven, discernible contribution to implementing, monitoring, and refining the curriculum. The impact of their work is shown in their development of 'year group trackers,' and the provision of tools, such as 'student spotlight sessions', which give regular opportunities to capture information on all groups of students to identify personalised next steps to further improve learning.

- Communication is a strength and results in staff, parents and students being clear about what is expected of them, leading to consistency, trust, and respect at all levels. Students are rightly proud to attend Rushey Mead and the positive difference that the school has made to their lives. This was shown by a Year 11 student who proudly reported, 'Rushey Mead has enabled me to come out of my shell. When I was in Year 7, I was quiet and unsure. Now after 5 years in this school I have confidence, which has allowed me to gain scholarships to high performing sixth form colleges.'
- Rushey Mead's leadership regularly shares evidence-based learning with peers from across their Trust and in other settings beyond their school. There is clear evidence that the sharing of Rushey Mead's pupil premium strategy has supported vulnerable young people across the wider Leicester community, allowing them to explore and express their character, building the skills they need for their later life.
- Leaders ensure that all staff benefit from focused, timely and highly effective professional development and can demonstrate the sustained impact of this. Regular 'low stakes' learning walks inform 'Professional Growth Conversations' between staff and leaders. These are used to ensure that continuing professional development (CPD), is targeted to meet identified needs throughout the school. The success of the school's recent CPD is shown by the development of staff as 'mental health first aiders', which has supported high quality pastoral support across all departments. A strength of the school's CPD model is its ability to meet individual staff's interests and ambitions. This has seen staff engaging in sessions with other schools within the Trust and provided opportunities for them to be seconded to groups such as the reading and language development team.
- Shared accountability is a feature of the school's continuing success. The senior team regularly conducts joint learning walks with curriculum leaders to monitor teaching and learning. This process has seen both middle and senior leaders support aspects of self-evaluation and produce detailed plans to support teachers' next steps. These plans are individualised and provide achievable targets, which has both improved provision and further developed confidence amongst the school team.
- The leadership team has worked closely with heads of department to develop a cohesive approach to the teaching of diversity across the school. The impact of this is evident within the school's geography curriculum, which provides students with opportunities to explore the contextual history of local streets. Leaders' robust strategies to develop vocabulary has supported this work by providing students with the means to clearly articulate their opinions.
- Staff and student well-being is taken very seriously, and the impact of new initiatives and policies are routinely discussed by the school leadership. This has resulted in several practical measures, such as collaborative planning

sessions, which have reduced staff workload. The effective use of the Rushey 123 behaviour scheme has also supported staff by providing them with clear signposting to a range of graduated support, including intervention from external agencies. The resulting focus on student wellbeing, provided by this work, has further supported the positive relationships between all members of the school community.

- Rushey Mead's academy council have actively sought validation of leaders' work, and regularly complete visits which are linked to the school's strategic planning model. Through these they seek opportunities to gather evidence to test leaders' judgements on the impact of school development.

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

... leaders continued to implement the multi-faceted literacy plan so that the existing work on reading and oracy further develops all students as competent and confident communicators.

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

- Staff have fully achieved the EBIs from their last review. They have provided further opportunities for students to engage in discussion of the key learning gained during direct instruction, to develop greater confidence in the articulation of their knowledge and understanding. They have also arranged regular opportunities to share best practice in the use of probing questions to deepen students' understanding and to provide further challenge.
- Staff at Rushey Mead pursue a shared vision to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all students, which is embedded securely and consistently across the school. The impact of this vision is evident in well-presented books and displays demonstrating coherently planned and well sequenced learning across a range of curriculum areas. The work given to students, over time and across the school, consistently matches the aims of the curriculum. It is coherently planned and sequenced towards building sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning.
- Positive attitudes in all lessons demonstrate students' engagement in their learning, as do their comments which show their deep level of learning, both inside and outdoor of school. Students are proactive in making tangible contributions to the life of the school and the wider community This was demonstrated by a Year 10 student's comment that, 'it is amazing to see so many students actively engaged in voluntary events. It shows how much we respect our learning at school.' The Rushey Passport, which provides a

resource for students to celebrate their achievements was also described by a member of the school council, 'We are encouraged to take as many opportunities as we can complete our Rushey Passport and graduate at the end of the year.'

- Leaders have refined their curriculum provision to further accelerate the progress of the diverse range of students, who join the school speaking 45 different languages. A graduated response for New To English students (NTE), using strategies such as reading aloud and targeted questioning, ensures a consistent focus on disciplinary literacy. This focus has supported the development of NTE students' curiosity across the broader curriculum and allowed them to make significant progress over time.
- Teacher's strong subject knowledge, which is developed through well targeted professional development, allows them to provide precise feedback to further accelerate progress. Students value feedback which encourages them to reflect on strategies to improve their learning to build sufficient knowledge and skills to support their future learning. For example, a Year 7 student stated, 'the trigger words of motte and bailey, which were used in my start of lesson activity, encouraged me to reflect on the importance of buildings, such as castles, during the Norman conquest.'
- The Rushey Mead curriculum provides aspirational learning opportunities to prepare students for the next stages of their lives. The teaching of key issues, such as LGBTQ+ and protected characteristics, is routinely supported by external speakers who encourage students to consider choices that they will make in their future. In addition, students proficient use of new technology provides key information to ensure that they can confidently access prior knowledge to develop their understanding of key issues.
- Improving levels of attendance and limited fixed term exclusions provides clear evidence of the positive learning culture, which is supported by Rushey Mead's pastoral team. Each student is allocated a tutor who runs a programme of social and cultural activities and provides personal mentoring. Examples of topical themes covered during tutor time include 'misogyny' and 'the impact of social media influencers.' These sessions provide regular opportunities for collective reflection, sharing of 'Rushey Smart' values and a stimulus for important cultural, social, and curricular topics. This focus on personal development ensures that all students behave with consistently high levels of respect for others. This focus was demonstrated by a year group leader who, when talking to students, shared, 'the second you meet somebody your manners highlight what sort of person you are. Think of the people around you and how you can give the best impression of yourself.'

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

... staff consistently continued to promote all opportunities for all students to engage in the exceptional extra-curricular provision offered by the school.

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

- Leaders have fully achieved the EBIs from their last review. They have created clear 'SEND in a nutshell' documents, which has allowed them to precisely articulate the corporate profile of students with SEND.
- The school leadership team articulates a clear vision that 'All students, regardless of their background and ability will develop an understanding of the Rushey Smart approach to learning. This allows them to identify the specific learning skills which will support their journey through lessons.' This shared approach encourages all staff, parents, and students to work closely together to ensure that those with additional needs are consistently provided with high quality personalised learning opportunities which meet their specific needs. It also ensures that these students are provided with a range of enrichment opportunities to reinforce their learning.
- Teachers are aware of the importance of their role in addressing learning gaps for students with additional needs. They are supported by enthusiastic leaders who ensure that they have the resources to identify students' specific learning barriers and identify key objectives to address these. Teachers receive regular monitoring from the SEN team which provides immediate feedback. CPD needs are identified by this monitoring and addressed through regular training sessions and advice cards, which are provided on the school's learning platform.
- Effective SEN provision is provided for those students with the highest level of need through the 'Team around the Child' initiative. This successful strategy brings together a wide range of professionals from within the school, and specialist expertise from across the trust, to support vulnerable learners by equipping them with the skills needed to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

- The individual needs of disadvantaged students are known, and support is put into in place, after discussion with the school's pupil premium champions, for all staff to identify and share barriers to learning. High quality teaching and learning, which focuses on disciplinary literacy and is supported by a reading support programme, is a clear focus for the school. The prioritisation of vocabulary acquisition supports them achieving the best possible outcomes from their starting points. An example of the impact of the school's high expectation in this area was shown by a Year 8 pupil who confidently explained, 'Foxgloves contain digitates, which can be used to treat a range of heart conditions.'
- There is a clear expectation in the school that all disadvantaged students, deepen their learning through the specific learning interventions to support their mathematical understanding. The success of these students is celebrated by all, whether it is demonstrated by their academic progress or improved motivation and confidence.
- The school's effective range of partnerships with external providers ensure vulnerable have a smooth and purposeful transition into the next stage of their careers. All students attend theatre trips and regularly visit local universities. Regular exposure to opportunities both within the wider community, and a range of visitors to school, aspire these students to explore a wide range of career pathways in later life.
- Leaders have developed positive relationships with parents by helping them to overcome barriers to learning for their children. Examples of support include the provision of data bundles to facilitate online learning. This leads to a range of positive comments from parents and visiting professionals such as, 'I've worked with many schools with my own children, and I feel Rushey Mead is above all of them.'

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

... leaders continued to work with peers across the trust to identify suitable alternative provisions, to support the students with the highest needs.

### **5. Area of Excellence**

Using Pupil Premium to support disadvantaged students to achieve outstanding outcomes.



**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 at Rushey Mead are committed to using the power of education to help students to break away from poverty. As such, their intention is that every student has access to high-quality provision, achieving highly both academically and non-academically, regardless of prior attainment, need or background. They ensure that disadvantaged students increase their cultural capital through enrichment activities and have numerous Pupil Premium music scholarship groups.

Leaders implement high quality plans that recognise that many young people, not in receipt of the Pupil Premium, also face significant barriers to learning. Therefore, these plans focus on whole school strategies for the benefit of all, whilst encompassing tailored individually-targeted interventions.

The school's multifaceted approach, which is coordinated through a 'Team Around the Child' approach, addresses an array of complex needs, from emotional to organisational and social to academic. Barriers to learning are identified, through robust analysis of information, to target planned interventions and areas of focus. The impact of interventions is routinely monitored using information from a range of sources..

Leaders ensure that all staff are clear about the collective responsibility towards all disadvantaged students and that there is a shared understanding that the best strategy for reducing the gap is quality-first teaching through direct instruction. This is complimented by a rich extra-curricular provision and opportunities.

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

Disadvantaged students continue to achieve exceptionally well at Rushey Mead compared to their peers nationally. In 2022 the achievement of this group was above national levels in almost all measures.



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR RUSHEY MEAD ACADEMY

As well as quality first teaching and a full, ambitious curriculum offer, disadvantaged students benefit from one to one and small group tuition. Pupil Premium Champions' termly reports evidence that, for each year group, the targeted students' organisation and study skills improve, as evidenced by decreases in homework consequences. Termly tracking data also shows that there is a significant impact on improving the attitude to learning of these targeted students, which in turn improves their attainment and progress.

Non-academic barriers to success at Rushey Mead are tackled through the funding of the Family Support Workers, who significantly increase parent contact and build relationships with vulnerable families. Alongside this, an increase in the working days of the school counsellor, funded through the Recovery Premium, means that the wellbeing of more students than ever has been supported and nurtured.

The flexible working of the Family Support Worker role allowed families to benefit, where needed, from home visits. Last year attendance improved significantly for a number of harder to reach students as a result, one child's attendance increasing from 0% to 70%. Families have been supported to access food banks and Household Support Funds as well as being supported to complete child maintenance forms, manage their household bills, and liaise with other support services.

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

Helen Mugglestone

Vice Principal

hnugglestone@rushey-tmet.uk

### **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 report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

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 network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice (SLP) 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. (<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>)