



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR BROOK MEAD ACADEMY

Name of School:	Brook Mead Academy
Principal:	Rita Hindocha
Hub:	East Midlands South
School phase:	Secondary Free School
MAT (if applicable):	The Mead Educational Trust (TMET)

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	04/03/2024
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Leading
Date of last QA Review	18/01/2023
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	The school has not yet been inspected by Ofsted
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	N/A

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
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Quality of provision and outcomes	Leading
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AND

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

Area of excellence	Not submitted for this review
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Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	N/A
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Overall peer evaluation estimate	Leading
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***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

Brook Mead Academy is a growing secondary free school located in Leicester City. The school opened in September 2021. It has a citywide catchment so all families within the city are able to apply for a place; the school currently has over 50 feeder schools. The school will grow each year to include scholars in Years 7 to 11. There are scholars in Years 7 to 9 currently. Scholars are based in temporary accommodation, with Years 7 and 8 currently at the main site and Year 9 scholars at the upper school site. It is a 15-minute walk between the two sites.

There is an emphasis on cultivating a positive sense of self and working with resilience and dedication. The school draws from cultures and ideas from across the globe and in the local community to teach these values. The collective beliefs are powerful knowledge for all, developing active citizens, engineering and engendering success and feedback is a gift.

The Mead family of schools has developed a set of guiding principles, the 7Cs, that define and help to guide staff in all that they do. These are: Challenge, Creativity, Culture, Collaboration, Community, Character and Courage.

Scholars come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and over 40 mother languages are spoken. Most scholars speak English as their first language although a number are new to English. The proportion of disadvantaged scholars is above the national average. The proportion of scholars with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is broadly average.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The principal's clear vision for the school is known and shared by the entire school community. Scholars speak with enthusiasm about the school's four key beliefs and how these shape their lives. The highly skilled and committed senior leadership team has worked relentlessly and collaboratively over time to make Brook Mead Academy a leading education establishment. The education that the school provides extends scholars' intellectual horizons, enables them to fulfil their potential and endows them with a raft of life skills. Leaders know all scholars as individuals and are constantly seeking ways to remove any barriers to scholars' learning.
- An ethos of high ambition permeates all aspects of the academy's work. Staff wholeheartedly promote the collective beliefs on which the academy is founded. The academy rightly prides itself on its unique provision but it is also outward-looking and collaborates very well with other schools both within the trust and beyond.
- Leaders at all levels are involved in school development planning and the

identification of strategic priorities. Priorities are shared with all staff, securing a clear understanding of the direction of travel of the academy and why key decisions are made.

- Middle leaders speak passionately about the school. They have a deep understanding of the school's systems and processes. They understand how the curriculum is constructed which enables leaders to 'plan to the detail' and to deliver high-quality learning experiences for scholars.
- Senior leaders make use of the trust-wide tracking and assessment systems. These systems allow senior leaders to analyse scholars' progress information at a granular level. As a result of this level of analysis, leaders are able to focus support and resources to meet the needs of different scholar groups, including those scholars who are disadvantaged and those with SEND.
- Teachers are proud to work at the school and morale is high. They appreciate the opportunities provided for professional learning (PL). The model of direct instruction and the time given to high-quality coaching drives much of the school's PL offer which enables staff at different stages of their career to access personalised PL pathways. Numerous trust PL networks and subject forums provide opportunities for teachers to enhance their subject knowledge and pedagogy.
- Through assemblies and the tutor programme, scholars' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is greatly enhanced. For example, scholars receive tutor sessions based on the basic principles of Stoicism.
- The school's ethos promotes openness about wellbeing and encourages staff to feel comfortable sharing concerns. Whole trust surveys illicit staff views on wellbeing.

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

... middle leaders fine-tuned the narrative regarding the impact of key subject strategies on scholar outcomes.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Brook Mead Academy continues to provide a first-class education for its scholars. The curriculum is broad and ambitious and goes way beyond the minimum requirements of the National Curriculum. Scholars have access to a wide variety of subjects and enrichment opportunities. For example, all scholars in Year 7 study Latin. The curriculum model allows a focus on the Ebacc suite of subjects.
- Workbooks are very well presented and illustrate high rates of progress for all groups of scholars. For example, in a Year 8 art class, scholars demonstrated fine brush skills and their work showcased a high level of knowledge of various artists. In a Year 7 English class, scholars analysed the relationship

between Prospero and Caliban and whether Caliban would be able to regain control of his island by force.

- Leaders have taken steps to develop high-quality enrichment activities, with disadvantaged scholars taking part in at least proportionate numbers to others. The school day is slightly longer on Mondays and Thursdays in order to accommodate scholars' participation in Brook Bonus Time. The music scholarship programme enables disadvantaged scholars to take up instrument tuition.
- Scholars' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are exemplary and contribute in no small measure to the high rates of progress they achieve. They are very polite and respectful of each other, staff and visitors alike. Scholars are proud of their school, feel safe, happy and well looked after. They feel that they have a voice and are listened to by staff.
- A three-pronged reading strategy is helping to accelerate the development of scholars' reading skills. The strategy is based around reading for empowerment, reading to learn and learning to read. A coherent school wide canon of powerful reading builds cultural literacy and background knowledge. Texts link to each other and with curriculum content in all subjects, with judicious balance between 'classics' and new voices, and information texts. The recruitment of a trained Early Years reading recovery teacher and the purchase of the Switch On software are supporting the teaching of early reading skills to those scholars with low reading ages on entry.
- Teaching and learning is rooted in educational research. The use of Barak Rosenshine's Direct Instruction and John Sweller's work on cognitive load theory to inform teaching are central to the school's culture of teaching and learning. Principles of instruction are very clear throughout.
- Teachers' high expectations, strong subject knowledge, skilful questioning and positive relationships with scholars contribute to scholars' very positive learning in lessons. Teaching is inclusive of all learners. Embedded routines are visible in every lesson and scholars respond well to them with no learning time being lost.
- In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to check scholars' understanding and expect scholars to think deeply. Scholars are encouraged to reflect on their own learning and often ask questions in lessons, which indicates their curiosity of the topic. This drives the pace of lessons, and challenges scholars at all ability levels.
- Teachers skilfully build on scholars' knowledge and skills. They are precise in their starting points for activities and in discussions of where the learning is going. This may take the form of a high-quality piece of writing, a solution to a mathematical problem or a creative solution to an art-based challenge. This approach rarely fails to engage scholars.

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

- ... teachers used 'in the moment' assessment techniques more effectively to check all scholars' understanding, make informed decisions as to whether scholars are ready to move onto the next step, adapting their teaching as necessary.
- ... leaders and staff continued to embed the 'loud and proud' component of instruction so that all scholars are able to project their voices when answering questions and discussing topics.

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

- Leaders and teachers promote SEND scholars' independence, rather than allowing them to develop dependency on teaching assistants for their learning in lessons. A graduated approach is used to assess, plan, do and review throughout the academic year with the school at the centre of this approach. The primary intention, where possible, is for scholars with SEND to access the full curriculum in mainstream lessons. Leaders aim for all scholars to enjoy the knowledge-rich curriculum.
- Staff development and training are carefully planned based on the needs of each cohort. Visiting professionals are invited to develop and train staff as part of the professional learning programme. Leaders actively invest in the SEND/inclusion team and promote their expertise as 'Everyone a Leader'.
- Whole school assessments and data drops allow leaders and teachers to identify if scholars are positively progressing towards individual outcomes. The progress of scholars is tracked carefully and regular discussions are held regarding their individual progress. When a concern about a scholar's progress is raised, it is discussed with all staff who work with them.
- Disadvantaged scholars have a multiplicity of needs and starting points. The provision for these scholars is built upon the pillars of a rich well-crafted curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and a calm, orderly environment. Leaders and teachers have consistently high expectations which benefit all learners but particularly those who need school to be well structured and safe places in which to thrive.
- High-quality teaching is at the heart of the school's approach, with a focus on areas in which disadvantaged scholars require the most support. To this end, leaders and teachers have developed and consistently apply the Brook Mead teaching and learning framework. The intention is that disadvantaged scholars' attainment will be sustained and improved alongside progress for their non-disadvantaged peers.

- The purchase of standardised testing packages, MIDYIS and the GL assessment suite, helps leaders to identify needs and target resources to scholar cohorts.

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

... leaders checked that all teachers are making effective use of the information contained within the scholar passports when planning their lessons in order to support SEND scholars even further.

5. Area of Excellence

The school did not propose an area of excellence for this review.

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>)