



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR BROOK MEAD ACADEMY

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

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	The school chose not to have estimates
Date of this Review:	25/02/2026
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	The school chose not to have estimates
Date of last QA Review:	10/02/2025
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	19/03/2024

Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all levels Not applicable

Quality of provision and outcomes Not applicable

AND

Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged scholars and/or pupils with additional needs Not applicable

Area of excellence None identified at this review

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence None identified

Overall peer evaluation estimate Leaders chose not to have estimates at this review

Important information

- The QA Review provides a peer evaluation of a school's practice in curriculum, teaching and learning, and leadership. It is a voluntary and developmental process, and the peer review team can evaluate and offer 'peer evaluation estimates' based only on what the school chooses to share with them.
- The QA Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.
- The QA Review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. If you choose to share this report, or extracts thereof, externally (e.g. on your website or with parents), please ensure that it is accompanied with the following text:

Challenge Partners is a charity working to advance education for the public benefit. We are not a statutory accountability body. The QA Review does not audit schools' safeguarding or behaviour policies and practices. However, Lead Reviewers and visiting reviewers are expected to follow Challenge Partners' safeguarding policy and report any concerns as set out in the procedures.

1. Context and character of the school

Brook Mead Academy is an 11–16 secondary free school in Leicester and part of The Mead Educational Trust (TMET). The academy opened in 2021 and has grown rapidly; it now serves more than 1113 scholars across Key Stages 3 and 4. This year, the academy has relocated to a new, purpose-built, multimillion-pound facility. Brook Mead Academy now benefits from high-quality, contemporary learning environments, including modern classrooms, a centrally positioned library visible from all floors, dedicated music rooms, a drama studio and specialist design and technology spaces. Scholars also have access to extensive sports provision, including a full-size all-weather pitch, a multi-use sports hall and a specialist studio suitable for a range of physical activities. The building operates as a carbon net zero facility and is the first secondary school of its kind in the East Midlands, representing a significant commitment to sustainable and forward-looking educational infrastructure.

The school serves a culturally and linguistically diverse community. Approximately four tenths of scholars are identified as speaking English as an additional language (EAL), which is significantly above the national average. The percentage of scholars who are disadvantaged is just above the national average. A below average proportion of scholars have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The proportion of scholars with an education, health and Ccare plan (EHCP) is also well below the national average. Levels of mobility have been historically high because of a significant percentage of families living in temporary housing.

The academy promotes their belief in powerful knowledge for all, developing active citizens, engineering and engendering success and feedback is a gift.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The principal is an exceptional leader who galvanises her team to desire to be committed and aligned, a team which owns and executes its briefs extremely well. “An amazing team,” the principal said, “Not just any senior leadership team, but an ‘M&S’ senior leadership team!”
- As part of The Mead Educational Trust (TMET), the academy operates within a wider framework of shared trust values, governance and school improvement capacity. TMET provides strategic oversight, professional development networks and centralised support functions, enabling the academy to draw on collective expertise while continuing to establish its own identity as a growing 11–16 provision. As a relatively new and expanding school, leaders have developed systems, curriculum structures and staffing capacity at pace, alongside increasing numbers. The school is academically

ambitious, while maintaining a strong focus on personal development and a respectful culture.

- Leaders articulate a clear moral purpose focused on transforming the life chances of scholars within a diverse local community. This vision is consistently communicated to families and is evident in recruitment patterns. Parents actively seek the academy because of its ambitious curriculum and firm expectations. The academy has established strong relationships across the local community.
- Curriculum planning is led by subject experts with protected time to consider sequencing, prerequisite knowledge and end points. The curriculum continues to evolve in response to scholars' needs. Subject teams demonstrate reflective responsiveness. Where internal assessment has highlighted any areas for improvement, leaders revisited sequencing and addressed misconceptions amongst staff before refining the unit.
- Leaders actively develop their understanding of subjects beyond their specialism. This includes reading widely, engaging with subject communities and drawing on trust expertise. Weekly meetings and structured line management discussions deepen leaders' knowledge and strengthen challenge.
- The monitoring of classroom practice is routine and developmental. The open-door culture allows leaders to visit lessons frequently, observe strategies in action and follow up with coaching conversations. Staff welcome drop-ins from colleagues and leaders, and scholars are accustomed to adults entering lessons without disruption. This openness supports ongoing professional dialogue.
- Instructional coaching is firmly embedded within professional learning. Leaders can cite individual examples of teachers refining exposition and classroom routines through coaching cycles. Deliberate practice is incorporated into staff development sessions, reinforcing agreed approaches.
- Assessment systems are layered and rigorous. Staff receive structured guidance on grading benchmarks, moderation time is built into meetings and predictions are scrutinised. Data is interrogated alongside professional dialogue to understand patterns at scholar, group and subject level.
- Workload has been carefully structured through a centralised curriculum model, shared planning resources and proportionate marking expectations. Teachers are not required to recreate materials unnecessarily, allowing time to focus on refining delivery and responding to scholars' needs.
- Leaders demonstrated resilience and coherence while operating across two sites prior to this current academic year. Despite logistical complexity, routines, assemblies and professional learning remained consistent. The deliberate messaging of 'two sites, one school' sustained unity and identity.
- Senior leaders are highly visible during social times and duties. Accessibility and informal conversations during break and lunch provide ongoing

intelligence about scholars' wellbeing and barriers, strengthening relational trust.

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

... subject leaders developed their leadership further so that they had more ownership of their teams and demonstrated a more proactive approach to strategic decisions, for example when interrogating data.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Behaviour expectations are clear and shared. Scholars understand the three ground rules of 'silence means silence', 'first time every time' and '100% focus on learning'. Consequently, leaders report low levels of disruption in lessons. Classrooms are typically calm and focused, enabling sustained concentration on learning throughout lessons.
- Social times are structured to promote belonging and individuality. Leaders value play, enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Scholars interact across year groups and engage in activities such as chess, Ancient Greek, mindfulness, debate club and many varied sporting activities, contributing to a distinctive culture. Enrichment is inclusive by design. Bonus time is timetabled within the school week, removing financial and logistical barriers.
- The pastoral structure provides significant capacity. Each year group benefits from both a teaching and non-teaching year lead, enabling close oversight of disadvantaged scholars and rapid response when concerns arise.
- Intervention in English for Year 11 scholars is highly targeted and question specific. Small morning groups focus on specific examination components. Attendance at these sessions is strong, suggesting scholars value the support.
- Classroom routines are consistent and predictable across the school, providing scholars with clarity about expectations and creating calm environments in which learning can proceed without disruption. Scholars settle quickly, equipment provided without disruption where needed, and corrections were calm and proportionate, allowing learning to continue without interruption.
- Retrieval practice is visible across subjects. 'Do Now' activities link directly to prior learning, ensuring scholars revisit key content before moving forward. 'Tick and fix' is also embedded. Scholars routinely correct and improve their work in green pen, demonstrating a visible culture of drafting and refinement.
- Mini whiteboards are used exceptionally well across the school. In Year 10 physics, scholars studied atomic structure. Whiteboards were used consistently to check the understanding of all scholars, with misconceptions

addressed through immediate questioning and refinement. The teacher cleverly signposted the next steps in learning, including reference to more complex scientific models not yet covered in the curriculum.

- Scholars are introduced to increasingly complex vocabulary development which is prioritised across year groups. Teachers deliberately highlight and unpack subject terminology and expect scholars to use precise language in written and verbal responses. In Year 8 and Year 9 English, scholars engaged confidently with challenging Shakespeare texts, including *The Merchant of Venice* and *Julius Caesar*. In these lessons, teachers modelled analytical writing clearly, required full sentence responses and embedded ambitious vocabulary such as 'obdurate' and 'tyrant'. In computing, Year 9 scholars participated in choral response which promoted the practising of key words, ensuring clearer understanding of the words concatenation and coding.
- Scaffolding is embedded within adaptive teaching. Lower prior attaining groups receive careful scaffolding without dilution of content. Teachers support scholars through modelling, vocabulary focus and structured sentence stems while maintaining ambition. In geography and humanities lessons, scholars demonstrated strong written responses because they were well supported through scaffolding structures, such as topic sentence frameworks. Teachers ensured that misconceptions were corrected before independent tasks were completed.
- Questioning strategies promote participation from all scholars. Teachers use cold calling and structured turn and talk to ensure that responses are not limited to volunteers.

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

- ... following careful exposition and checking for understanding, teachers then removed scaffolds, especially for high prior attainers, so that practice was truly independent.
- ... a whole school focus on ensuring scholars answered questions in a 'loud and proud' voice promoted strengthened participation through improved clarity of articulation and increased accountability for learning across all classrooms.

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

- Leaders demonstrate detailed knowledge of both disadvantaged and SEND scholars through systematic data analysis. Following data drops, underperformance is flagged, discussed and translated into action through curriculum conversations, mentoring and/or classroom adaptation. Any concerns lead to swift intervention.

- Academic support for disadvantaged scholars is sharply targeted. In English and mathematics, small-group and one-to-one mentoring focuses on specific gaps, including question-level examination preparation and developing foundational knowledge. Attendance at these sessions is high.
- Pastoral mentoring complements academic intervention. Leaders described regular one-to-one conversations addressing attendance, wellbeing and barriers outside school for vulnerable scholars. This approach strengthens engagement and helps them to sustain focus within lessons.
- Reading provision operates as a universal entitlement rather than a bolt-on intervention. Structured whole-school strategies, including tracked reading and choral response, ensures that disadvantaged and SEND scholars participate actively in reading. Targeted diagnostic testing further identifies specific literacy needs.
- Teaching assistants (TAs) receive structured professional learning through the GROW principles, emphasising purposeful guidance, independence and partnership with teachers. Weekly training supports the expectations that TAs scaffold learning without creating dependency.
- Intervention choices are responsive. Where literacy programmes have limited impact in small groups, delivery is adapted to one-to-one provision. Emotional and social needs, particularly SEMH, are recognised as a growing trend, with programmes such as Zones of Regulation and CBT-based approaches deployed accordingly.
- Pupil passports are collaborative and dynamic. They incorporate scholar voice and parental input and are reviewed through scholar spotlights and teacher dialogue. This ensures that adjustments are responsive and grounded in classroom experience.
- Parental engagement is proactive. The SENDCo maintains frequent communication with families, attends review meetings beyond statutory requirements and has launched an anonymous survey to gather candid feedback.
- Diagnostic literacy assessments, conducted in-house, strengthen understanding of starting points and enable progress to be measured through specific skill gains, as well as GCSE outcomes.
- Targeted Shakespeare reading sessions for disadvantaged scholars build vocabulary and confidence ahead of mainstream lessons. Scholars attend consistently and demonstrated enthusiasm, they show growing cultural confidence as well as academic readiness.

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

- ... all teachers knew their scholars well and 'planned to the detail' so that all needs were met in all classes.

5. Area of Excellence

None identified 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 content reports from across the partnership of schools and trusts including using AI tools to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector (sharing these with the partnership) each year. The QA Review reports remain confidential to Challenge Partners and the host school. This ensures that schools embrace the review as a development process, acting as a catalyst for their ongoing improvement. This is the primary purpose of the QA review. However, our aim is that the thematic analysis will demonstrate the additional value of a sector wide overview, illustrated with real-life examples.

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 partnership of schools. The School Support Directory 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>)