



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR
KESTREL MEAD PRIMARY
ACADEMY

Name of School:	Kestrel Mead Primary Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Zoe Simpson
Hub:	East Midland Hub South
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	The Mead Educational Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	N/A
Date of this Review:	05/02/24
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	N/A
Date of last QA Review	08/02/23
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	15/03/2017 (For the predecessor school, prior to academy conversion)

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 N/A

Quality of provision and outcomes N/A

AND

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

Area of excellence

Accredited— A model for a bespoke curriculum design that addresses context driven issues, promotes pupil voice and creates global citizens.

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence

A model for a bespoke book-led curriculum that develops compassionate global citizens,
08/02/2023

Overall peer evaluation estimate N/A

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

Kestrel Mead Primary Academy is spread across two sites that are one and a half miles apart. It is based in Hamilton, which is on the north eastern outskirts of the city of Leicester. It is part of The Mead Educational Trust (TMET) which is made up of eight primary schools across Leicestershire.

Kestrel Mead is a significantly larger than average primary school with four forms of entry and 822 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium grant is in line with the national average. However the pupil base deprivation is above the national average. Six tenths of pupils speak English as an additional language— this is above the national average. Pupils at the school speak 57 different first languages. The school's stability is well below the national average with high levels of in-year mobility.

The school has a special needs unit based on the infants' site. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is above the national average.

The school's motto is 'Be the best you can be' and Kestrel Mead's core values are resilience, respect, compassion and curiosity.

The school decided that the focus of this quality assurance review should be on pupils' views of the curriculum. Many of the learning explorations were spent in discussions with pupils about their learning.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The inspirational, insightful principal is highly attuned to the school's community. She has overseen a strategic, innovative process which has led to the development of Kestrel Mead's bespoke curriculum. The curriculum celebrates, supports and challenges the local context. The passionate senior leadership team share an energy and drive that underpin continuous improvements. This culture is fostered across the school. Leaders focus on the impact of their actions in order to constantly evolve provision. Kestrel Mead is not a school that stands still.
- There is a comprehensive middle leadership development programme. Each 'curriculum champion' works with a link senior leader. This provides them with strategic support. It helps connect subject action plan reviews with overall school improvement priorities. The 'curriculum champions' are supported by the senior leadership team to undertake 'deep dives'. Following these, the 'curriculum champions' receive an external individual coaching session which helps to refine and prioritise their thinking.
- The 'curriculum champions' are paired up in order to learn from each other. More experienced middle leaders work with less experienced and developing leaders. The 'curriculum champions' have made notable progress in their ability to articulate their leadership knowledge and skills. They make reference to their leadership of monitoring and are increasingly driving improvement. For example, the science champion has led a focus on working scientifically using the five enquiry types. This supported improvements in provision and led to the school being awarded the Primary Quality Science Mark.
- Leaders use 'Walk Thrus' to support monitoring and evaluation cycles. These have contributed to an enhanced rigour around these areas which in turn has helped to embed the use of a range of pedagogies.
- Leaders, mindful of staff feedback, have adapted the rate of change as the school has developed. They are focused on firmly embedding change, which is underpinned by continuing professional development (CPD). 'Curriculum champions', supported by the vice principal, deliver phase seminars. One such seminar, which focused on creative writing and different planning techniques, led to pupils' increased independence. Leaders offer 'drop in days' where colleagues can work with them on curriculum areas. They respond to information from monitoring and evaluation to ensure the CPD offer meets the needs of teachers. Leaders support colleagues with planning

and have ongoing conversations about how best to implement the curriculum. They also model practice in areas such as phonics. Teachers value the high level of support that is offered.

- Pupil voice and leadership contribute significantly to the continuous development of the curriculum. Their feedback has led to adaptations of the book-led English curriculum to celebrate a more diverse range of characters in texts. Pupils value the ambassador scheme. These are earned positions which celebrate positive role models. The pupil leadership team work with their peers from across the trust. Pupils have a sense of belonging and pride in Kestrel Mead. They are proactive in their leadership. For example they recently led fundraising for Gaza.

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

... the developments in subject leadership were embedded and independence continued to grow in responding to monitoring and evaluation.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Pupils are immersed in the school's curriculum. They are articulate and talk readily about their knowledge. In history, geography, religious education (RE) and computing they are able to refer back to previously taught content and then connect this to new learning. They value the opportunities that teachers create to do this. One pupil, whilst talking about computing, said, 'It is useful to recap because you learn more. It is better to learn the basics and move onto the harder things'. Pupils reflecting upon history lessons described how they had referred to previous learning on the Anglo-Saxons when studying the Vikings. Across the school, teachers use the physical learning environment to help pupils make links in the curriculum. They display key aspects of prior learning in the classroom. One pupil shared, 'We can use our working walls to help us with words and dates'.
- The curriculum has the school's values woven through it. Striking, large scale artwork created by local artists celebrate these themes. Pupils are able to explicitly describe how their learning applies to the school's values. Pupils, when describing learning in history, were able to confidently refer to how key historical figures demonstrate the school's values, as well as their relevance

to the modern world. One pupil spoke in detail about the 'resilience of people in war time'.

- When reflecting on RE, pupils could cite how the subject helped them to develop respect. They recognised the importance of this within their diverse school population and spoke with confidence and clarity about how understanding different religions helps them to appreciate the beliefs of their friends. One said, 'By being compassionate towards the other religions, we use mutual respect.'
- Texts for the book-led English curriculum are chosen carefully, informed by stakeholders' views. A diverse range of characters and authors reflects pupils' heritages. This approach helps to give pupils a wider knowledge of the world. It promotes empathy for others. Pupils recognise how current affairs have links to books they have learnt about. The books that are read often act as a starting point to explore complicated themes that are pertinent to the community. For example '*No Ballet Shoes in Syria*' supported pupils with their understanding of displaced people. This was at a time when earthquakes had struck Turkey and Syria.
- Teachers ensure that the curriculum is enriched by experiences. Pupils were excited when they spoke confidently about the range of opportunities they had enjoyed when visiting places of historical significance. This includes trips to Roman Leicester and the site of King Richard III's burial. Pupils also talked about valuing the handling of artefacts both outside and in school. Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 were able to recall memorable learning activities they had throughout their time at the school. They spoke about how 'We loved making the Greek salad' and 'We made marble paper like the Roman buildings.' These memories supported them to develop a good sense of chronology as history appeared more relevant and tangible to them.
- The continuous provision approach to the curriculums in Year 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage supports pupils to revisit their prior learning and apply taught vocabulary through play. Children in the settings are curious and keen to extend their own knowledge. They are encouraged to use full sentences and to use technical language when sharing their understanding. For example one child said, 'The whale travels 800 kilometres from cold to hot water. It has a dorsal fin'.

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

...there was further development of disciplinary understanding and skills vocabulary leading to improved pupils' articulation.

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

- Teachers are mindful of the low levels of literacy acquisition and high levels of English spoken as an additional language in their community. The school's curriculum design is inclusive with consideration given to adaptations and scaffolds which are built in. It prioritises the teaching of vocabulary and the promotion of oracy. Aspects of the 'colourful semantics' intervention are part of the universal offer. Pupils across the school, including those who are vulnerable, are able to use ambitious, subject specific terminology related to knowledge, correctly and in context for the majority of subjects. This was evident when pupils were speaking about geography. One described that, 'We learnt about all the parts of the earth: crust, mantle, core... we learnt about tectonic plates'.
- Pupils who benefit from social, emotional and mental health support talked appreciatively of how staff helped them. They value the strategies they are taught and the access to support workers as this helps them to access the curriculum. They spoke with pride of their achievements. One pupil said, 'I am trying to build my resilience so that I can always do my learning.'
- For all pupils, and in particular those who are vulnerable, there is a strong focus on the learning transition between Key Stages 1 and 2. There is a consistent approach to curriculum and pedagogies; for example, the use of 'sticky words' is a constant across both sites. This, alongside personalised, larger packages of support for individuals, allows pupils to continue to progress in Year 3 and settle quickly into their learning.
- The school's extra-curricular provision is designed to be relevant to the community and provide high quality opportunities in areas such as STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), cooking, sports and dance. Programmes include access to expert high quality coaching. Disadvantaged pupils' take up of extra-curricular opportunities is beginning to be tracked. The school provides additional support to ensure vulnerable pupils can access the extra curriculum and ensure their experiences are not hampered in any way.
- The school's curriculum is designed to help girls reflect upon situations and not always to accept them. They are supported to understand that it helps to be inquisitive and more confident. For example, *Ava Twist, Scientist* serves as an inspirational role model to younger girls. The school can share case

studies of where this approach has made a difference. For example, last year one girl in Year 6 had experienced low self-esteem and school anxiety. She had low levels of attendance. She was supported through the curriculum, and with a wider pastoral package, to become more confident in sharing her voice. This supported her to take a significant role in the end of Year 6 production, and to transition successfully to secondary school.

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

... systems for disadvantaged pupils were refined to allow them to make progress in line with their peers.

... the cultural capital experiences beyond the classroom were refined to maximise impact for all groups of pupils.

5. Area of Excellence

A model for a bespoke curriculum design that addresses context driven issues, promotes pupil voice and creates global citizens

Accredited

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

Kestrel Mead has successfully been on a sustained drive over a period of years to develop their curriculum. The school's curriculum is now strongly linked to its community context. The design is based on the premise that pupils are entitled to a voice, an identity and the confidence to speak out, whilst holding the highest of aspirations for themselves. The interleaved curriculum has two clear interwoven strands. The academic strand maps progression and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. There are systems in place to evaluate these against age-related expectations. The personal development strand allows children to link their knowledge and skills to a values-led and text-rich curriculum. They have opportunities to apply this with a confident voice through moral questions. Pupils

apply this to current global situations, allowing them to become compassionate citizens.

Pupils are encouraged to develop their character and independence; they readily articulate that their voice is heard and has impact in school decision making. Pupils are not passive recipients of their education at Kestrel Mead.

The curriculum was developed in 2018-19 through contextual knowledge, stakeholder voice and research. This was predominantly through the Primary Cambridge Curriculum review. Leaders sought out good practice and refined their approach through internal and external monitoring and evaluation. The school's commitment to a bespoke, needs-led curriculum model was realised with construction of three personalised curriculums during and after the pandemic (2020-2022). The school's enrichment entitlement is carefully mapped to ensure wide ranging cultural capital opportunities for all. Where appropriate this is targeted to ensure equality of opportunity. There is an embedded programme of enrichment that provides all vulnerable pupils with exceptional experiences.

The school has created an innovative and structured curriculum model. Other settings could use the processes that have supported this design to inform their own curriculum development.

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

Pupils at Kestrel Mead confidently and enthusiastically speak about their sense of belonging and their enjoyment of being in school. There is a calm, safe and productive climate and atmosphere across both school sites. The school values are embedded and promoted in teaching practice. They are an integral part of the curriculum and enrichment offer. Pupils exhibit excellent attitudes to learning, which is a key factor in ensuring that they learn without disruption and consequently make good progress. Votes for schools and 'big questions' that run across the curriculum have developed pupils' ability to discuss and debate issues and explore philosophical ideas in a climate of mutual respect and trust.

The school's attendance data shows a steep upward trend as a result of a strategic focus. Attendance of pupils is now above the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Sophie Hart, assistant principal, shart@kestrel-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>)



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