

Written Report

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Fullhurst Community College
School Address:	Imperial Avenue, Leicester LE3 1 AH
Hub School:	Rushey Mead

Telephone Number:	01162824326
Email address:	office@fullhurst.leicester.ssch.uk

Unique Reference Number:	120298
Local Authority:	Leicester
Type of School:	Secondary
School Category:	Trust
Age range of pupils:	11–16
Number on roll:	893
Head teacher/Principal:	Tom Campbell

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	October 2012
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	2 Good

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	19–21 November 2014
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES

School Improvement Strategies:	Outstanding
Achievement is:	Good
Quality of Teaching:	Good
Area of Excellent Practice:	
Continuing professional development	Confirmed
Curriculum Pathways	Confirmed

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Fullhurst appears to be at the top of the Good grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report in October 2012 and is working towards Outstanding.

Information about the school

- This is an average-size secondary school.
- About-two thirds of students are of White British origin.
- An above average proportion of students speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion entitled to support from pupil premium funding is very high at double the average nationally.
- The proportion of students entering with low prior attainment is much higher than nationally.
- There is inward mobility in most year groups and this particularly affected Year 11 in 2013 when a nearby school closed.
- In 2014 the school met the floor standard.

School Improvement Strategies

- Over the past five years a steady process of transformation has taken place. A school that was once in special measures is now clearly good and poised to move to the next level of quality because of unremitting determination to offer its students the best education.
- Strategic development that places students at the heart of every decision has developed a remarkable ethos in which students recognise the quality of what is being offered and believe in their ability to succeed.
- The organisation and development of leadership is very strong with senior roles conducted in partnerships of two. The emphasis on assessment and teaching is jointly represented at faculty level. This ensures depth of penetration of improvement strategies.
- The Monitoring and Accountability Committee structure meets regularly at all levels to thoroughly check the progress of improvement priorities with strong links to assigned governors.
- No opportunities to positively influence learning are missed. Initiatives to develop reading, to support needy students through the “graduate” programme, to deploy tutor groups with a focus that will help them develop a key skill, or reach a high level of performance are examples of how strategic thinking exploits every possible opportunity to enhance learning.
- The behaviour system has in the view of the oldest students been the most visible and significant change. Lessons are characterised by very focused learning. Any students who do step out of line are dealt with in a fair and structured way that gives them the opportunity to think for themselves and willingly do what it takes to regain mainstream. Younger students who have never known anything else accept high standards as the norm for Fullhurst.

Pupil Achievement

It is clear that achievement is on an upward trajectory. Students enter with well-below average prior attainment, but this is improving as the school works with feeder primary schools to raise achievement at end of Key Stage 2. Very good strategies to improve reading are contributing strongly to progress in Key Stage 3. Progress in English and mathematics at GCSE is improving, but is variable. For expected progress, English is stronger than maths, but vice versa for more than expected progress in projected results. 2013 results were negatively affected by in-year transfer from a closing school. Nevertheless progress for almost all groups in that year was better than national figures. 2014 saw a strong recovery to over fifty percent gaining 5+A*-CEM as a best entry; this is likely to strengthen the progress indicators for all groups. Although a substantial gap remains from other students, pupil premium students progress better than the same group nationally. The gap between pupil premium students and other students has narrowed over the last three years (5 ACEM 27% 2013, 24% 2014 and projected gap 9% 2015) and is narrowing more rapidly in English than maths (based on 3 levels of progress in projected 2015 figures).

The school manages data very well and has a track record of highly accurate predictions of GCSE outcomes. The predicted final figures for 2015 are projected to match the much improved results of 2014 and some results are already “banked”.

For some time the school has used multiple entry GCSE as a means of raising achievement. Best entry figures are much higher than first entry (29% versus 50% in 2014). At present the intention is to retain this strategy in the best interest of students, but the school is aware that the impact of first entry only results counting will present initially a negative picture of attainment and progress. That will need to be counteracted by convincing evidence of how multiple entries have raised achievement.

All areas of self-evaluation reference achievement as a crucial measure of success. What is most impressive about how the school is transforming expectations and outcomes for students is the intensely detailed scrutiny of progress at school, faculty and classroom level. This leads to very accurate detection of barriers to success in subjects and teachers have access to constant, bespoke professional development to tackle and remove these barriers. Teachers’ tireless efforts are supported by innovative use of tutor groups based on identified needs and access to the “Graduate” programme to support improvement. All students have benefitted from Fullhurst’s untiring efforts to raise achievement. As those cohorts who have experienced the transforming strategies for longer time reach GCSE, further improvements in outcomes are expected.

Quality of teaching

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- The strong recruitment and retention policy has built a powerful team of teachers. Staff have been developed internally or attracted by the strong professional development the school now offers.

- Very well thought through strategies, such as lesson study groups and Thursday briefings, positively influence the quality of teaching and the quality of support from assistants.
- The emphasis provided by a teaching and learning TLR in each faculty is securing consistency in implementing strategies. For example students are motivated by their visible progress through the, “assess, review, reassess,” approach.
- Teachers are highly accountable for progress data, but it is a two-way process that provides advice and support when barriers to learning are detected.
- Teaching is characterised by very good relationships with classes that usually lead to highly focused behaviour for learning. Sometimes teachers use this trusting relationship to push students further in answering in depth.
- The framework of support for behaviour, contributes strongly to the prevailing sense of good conduct and “turning points” give some students the opportunity to regain full participation in the learning community.
- Marking is supportive and regular with opportunities for dedicated improvement time.
- Students enjoy the variety of approaches that teachers use, including resources, choice of ways of working, clear interactive graphics and display. Lessons are well planned so that students gain a clear picture of what they are expected to achieve.
- Students who have difficulty in accessing lesson content because of low literacy or being new to speaking English are very well supported.
- Some very imaginative opportunities to enhance learning such as the accredited course that is already growing food for local food banks are providing alternative opportunities for students and help them remain engaged with the more formal skills curriculum.

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-in more lessons teachers could persuade students to be more confident in venturing to answer questions at length and in depth; taking the “risk” of being wrong or uncertain so that discussion leads to deeper learning for all.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

CPD

- Fullhurst’s recruitment and retention of staff is supported by maintaining a network of contacts with high quality colleagues. Experts are keen to be recruited knowing that their expertise will be valued and extended. These colleagues know that joining Fullhurst will bring a range of challenges and support to develop professionally.
- Succession planning is secured by partnerships at senior level and by replicating senior roles at faculty level in managing assessment and teaching and learning.
- The school embraces national structures of leadership qualification at all levels, believing that lifelong learning will refresh staff’s professionalism.
- Teach First has been used very effectively. A first class induction programme has enabled beginning teachers to make an effective contribution.
- Recognising the contribution of every member of the organisation, Fullhurst invests time and money in developing teaching assistants and administrative staff.

- On a regular basis, teachers engage in lesson study groups and Fullhurst has contributed to a national conference.
- Thursday morning sessions provide an opportunity for faculties to share their work on current school-wide priorities and approaches to learning.
- Individual teachers have regular opportunities to discuss the progress of their classes and to access tailor-made CPD and internal resources to match analysed needs.
- Overall, as well as developing professional effectiveness, the universal engagement with CPD sends a strong message about the reputation and ethos of the school to students, parents and the wider community.

Curriculum Pathways

- Very precise analysis and monitoring directs students to appropriate tutor group provision, for instance specialising in improving literacy or immersion in a modern language.
- Differing pathways at KS3 impact positively upon the progress students make in year 7 and 8.
- Early engagement with GCSE choices in Year 8, with some flexibility to re-orient in Year 9 prepares many students for early entry to GCSE.
- There is continuous accredited engagement with PE for almost all students.
- Alternative subjects, increasingly offered on-site to ensure quality control, provide a suitable curriculum for some students while retaining their engagement with core skills subjects.
- The Graduate programme provides additional help with homework and independent study especially for students who might find difficulty in studying at home.
- “Turning Point 3” provides a modified curriculum for a few students who have struggled to engage with the mainstream curriculum, retaining them within school and pursuing opportunities for continuing education or employment.

Partnerships

- Fullhurst uses an extensive range of partnerships to have a positive impact on students’ education.
- Links with primary schools and post-16 improve students’ whole learning journey. In response to high levels of learning difficulties a partnership with a special school is bringing innovative ways of meeting special needs into the mainstream.
- SLEs work to develop the primary curriculum to help improve curriculum provision so that students get off to the best possible start in Year 7.
- Partnerships with Audi and Leicester City Council widen students contact with the outside world as they get help with reading and other businesses offer formal interviews and feedback in Year 11 that orient them to adult life and raise self-esteem and ambition. A cricket foundation provides apprentices which extend lunchtime sport opportunities.
- The links with post-16 providers develop pathways to vocational and academic courses, including preparation for university.
- Extensive links in the professional educational field include Challenge Partners through reviews and the OTP, a local improvement partnership. The school works with university education departments especially regarding teaching successfully in an inner city context. It has a very high profile specialism in teaching EAL learners, reaching out widely to schools and initial teacher training.

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.

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

Fullhurst accesses the OTP and contributes to reviews. It is keen to know about opportunities there are to make contributions to Challenge Partners' national dimension, for example at conferences.