



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR WILLOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Name of School:	Willow Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Davina Sumner
Hub:	Doncaster Hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Exceed Learning Partnership Multi Academy Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leaders chose not to have estimates for this review.
Date of this Review:	30/01/2023
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Effective
Date of last QA Review	31/01/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	18/10/2022



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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 Not submitted for this review.

**Previously accredited valid areas
of excellence** N/A

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.***

For this review, the Principal requested a specific focus on the foundation subjects, writing and personal development/cultural capital. This will be reflected in the Quality of Provision section.

1. Context and character of the school

Willow Primary School is a large two-form entry primary school in Doncaster. The demographic has changed recently with increasing numbers of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) joining the school. Many of these pupils have limited or no spoken English if they are new to the country. Currently, there are 17 different first languages in the school. The proportion of pupils in this group is above the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) needs is below average, as is the proportion with an education, health and care plan. The disadvantaged group is also well below the national average.

After a number of changes in Trust support in the last few years, the school is now a settled member of the Exceed Learning Partnership Multi Academy Trust which it joined in April 2022. Support from the Trust has been invaluable to the school's improvement journey and staff at Willow also work collaboratively with other schools in the Trust. There have also been a number of staffing changes, most notably the appointment of a new vice-principal following the promotion of the previous post holder.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The impact and influence of the principal since the time of her appointment to the present day cannot be underestimated. She has motivated and inspired all staff connected with the school, enabling it to reach the highly successful position in which it now finds itself. Together with the newly formed senior leadership team, they lead by example in driving the school forwards and are constantly looking for further enhancement of the education of the pupils.
- Liaison and collaboration across the Trust have helped Willow to succeed and all staff buy-in to the Trust's motto of 'Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day.' This focus makes the school a warm, friendly, inviting place in which to learn, where pupils are the main focus of everything and where they thrive.
- Many strategies that have become embedded at Willow have been disseminated to many other schools in the Trust locally. The principal, for example, is the Trust leader on personal development so her expertise has benefitted those schools. Similarly, different areas of the curriculum, for example, music and computing, have been shared with other academies in the Trust. Developing these areas has improved the quality of subject leadership in these schools and decreased the workload of these members of staff.
- The distributed leadership model in the school works effectively and adds to middle leaders' ownership of their subjects. Termly, every Subject Champion undertakes an in-depth investigation where they focus on the application of Rosenshine's principles, cultural capital, etc. Over the course of the year, all phases and different lessons are visited to ensure that there is full coverage.

Middle leaders are passionate about the subjects they lead. They are extremely knowledgeable in developing their curricula and providing additional activities to supplement learning.

- Writing has been a major focus in the school to return it to the consistency that was present pre-Covid. Areas were identified, particularly the pre-writing stage, so that teachers could enhance vocabulary in class to further develop writing. Recent training from an external provider has encouraged teachers to think more deeply about what they expect from all pupils, and there has been increased emphasis on achieving greater depth standard in writing.
- The curriculum is accessible to all and to enhance it, there is the Willow Fantastic Fifty – a wide range of experiences that every pupil will experience over their time at the school. This is subsidised for disadvantaged pupils, guaranteeing that there is total inclusivity. Many aspects of the curriculum revolve around the locale, ensuring that pupils' local cultural capital is increased.
- Termly pupil progress meetings identify any pupils who need support to reduce gaps in their learning in foundation subjects as well as the core elements. Pre- and post-teaching have been successfully used and low-stakes quizzes help to monitor their progress.
- Leaders have introduced THRIVE to support pupils' wellbeing, with all staff recently trained in this programme. Pupils are currently being screened to see which strands of the scheme are best applied to certain groups. A leader in the Trust supplies valuable support to Willow to ensure that the scheme will be successful. It is too early for significant impact to be seen but because the strategy is very close to the school's own policies, 'it will enhance what we already do' the principal stated.

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

- ... leaders promoted Fantastic Fifty to ensure that it is an experience unique to pupils at Willow Primary School and everyone has a shared understanding of it.
- ... leaders' strategic planning resulted in consistently strong practice in all areas.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

Foundation Subjects

- A whole afternoon was devoted to visiting classes in all year groups undertaking lessons in art, PE, computing, science, geography and to the early years. All visiting reviewers were accompanied by the principal and vice-principal.
- The school's 'learning superpowers' were clearly observed in the visits to foundation subjects. Resilience was evident in a Year 5 art lesson where the

pupils persevered with a complex drawing task. Investigation was the theme in a Year 4 art lesson where pupils were researching the life and work of Valerie Ganz. While Collaboration was apparent in all classrooms visited, a Year 4 geography session was notable because pupils were working successfully in labelling mountains and ranges on a map of the British Isles. Finally, in a Year 2 computing lesson Evaluation played a major role in pupils programming and debugging Be-Bots.

- Oracy has been a major focus for the whole school. The opportunities for discussion have been a major contribution to improving pupils' spoken and written work. Work in a Year 3 science lesson, based on the human skeleton, prompted one pupil to say, 'we're not scientists– we are osteologists!'
- Questioning is used purposefully in most lessons observed. Teachers skilfully utilise a range of strategies to probe pupils' understanding. This ranges from 'hands-up', 'no hands-up' and carefully targeted 'cold-calling.'
- Cross-curricular links are commonplace, connecting learning in a range of subjects. This aspect of the curriculum is not lost on pupils, one stating, 'what we are learning now relates to what we have done in history' Furthermore, science was expertly linked to design technology for a Year 3 class studying the anatomy and physiology of the hand and how it works. They were then going to make a robotic hand.
- To help pupils know and remember more, the Last Time, This Time, Next Time, Steps to Success strategy has been successfully embedded. This is consistently applied and its repeated practice, added to the use of knowledge organisers, is invaluable in supporting learning.
- The application in computing of Microsoft Excel in a Year 6 lesson was pleasing for leaders to see as pupils tackled an exercise using a spreadsheet. In addition, working on desktops contrasted with the familiar use of laptops and iPads and developed skills that pupils will need in their secondary education.
- Teachers have strong subject and pedagogical knowledge so that they plan and deliver lessons that are stimulating and capture pupils' interest. Pupils respond by being inquisitive learners who want to know more.
- Positive attitudes to learning are the order of the day, culminating in high levels of engagement in all classrooms. The environment in all rooms is highly conducive to learning because teachers have utilised neutral colours positively, which has the de-stimulating effect of preventing sensory and cognitive overload. As the principal remarked, 'We let the work provide the 'colour.'"

Writing

- Writing is a concerted focus area for the whole school. This review will highlight successful practice so far and indicate areas for further improvement.
- Pupils have a good understanding of purpose and audience in their writing. According to the context, content and who will read their work, they are swiftly

developing the knowledge to satisfy the reader accordingly.

- The leader for this area has chosen high quality texts to inform pupils writing and provide the impetus that will stimulate them. For example, teachers are using “Fox” in Year 4 and “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” in Year 3 to fulfil this aim.
- The Connect activities that teachers apply help pupils to understand the context and meaning of sources and they then apply this knowledge to their writing. This is also invaluable in supporting them in retrieval sessions.
- Grammar Punctuation 3 is a major focus to ensure that the quality of pupils’ writing is boosted. The repeated practice and development of ‘sticky knowledge’ is also essential to raise standards.
- Planning strategies for writing are embedded. The frequent use of graphic organisers by pupils assists them in planning their writing. Teachers also ensure that the vital sequencing of lessons is accurate in the build-up to a piece of written work.
- Engagement in lessons is exemplary. Pupils are fully focused on their work and enjoy every opportunity for collaboration with their peers.
- Children in Reception are given many chances to develop their writing in free-flow sessions and in more formal teaching situations. They are commonly using elements of Read, Write, Inc that they have acquired in phonics sessions to help develop their writing.
- Teachers expand pupils’ knowledge of specific vocabulary and understanding of the correct terminology. They encourage the use of higher-tier words whenever that is appropriate. This is impacting positively on the standard of pupils’ writing.
- Sentence starters support some pupils in beginning their writing. Modelled texts of high quality, mainly written by teachers, add an additional stimulus to those pupils who require additional support.
- Pupils’ consistency in editing their work adds depth to their understanding and aids them in producing writing that is not only well presented, but colourful and in many cases, extensive.
- Visits and trips act as a motivating factor for writing. For example, the Key Stage 1 trip to Conisborough Castle resulted in some exciting writing.

Personal Development/Cultural Capital

- Trips and educational visits, for example, the recent visit to the coal mining museum gave pupils a valuable insight into the heritage of Doncaster. Many other real-life examples the school provides adds to pupils’ knowledge of their local area and the wider world. Heritage Week, where pupils learn how they develop personally as well as about Doncaster, instils pride in where they come from. As the principal noted, “this is a ‘central part of our curriculum.’”
- Visitors to the school are commonplace and the knowledge they bring with them, and the activities they involve pupils in, broaden pupils’ horizons and teach them more about life beyond Willow and Doncaster. A recent author visit was highly

popular and events from doctors, people from commerce and business and representatives of other cultures boost pupils' cultural capital.

- Exceed games and STEM projects add excitement to pupils' experiences at school. In a recent project, pupils were insistent that they weren't designing trains, they were making 'locomotives!' This work served the dual purpose of enhancing vocabulary. Pupils enjoy the different activities they are introduced to and one Year 6 girl stated, 'making learning fun helps you to remember.'
- A wide-ranging extra-curricular activities programme provides pupils with many opportunities and experiences to develop their talents and interests in a variety of areas.
- Leadership responsibilities for pupils are many. In the different roles that pupils undertake, the profile increases by calling them ambassadors and they perform a number of worthwhile roles across the school. For example, diversity ambassadors played a major part in the Summer Fayre. Pupils clearly link their responsibilities as ambassadors to developing qualities they will draw upon in their future, for example empathy and punctuality.
- The school's approach to personal development helps pupils to become helpful and cooperative members of the school community. Pupils understand that people have personal differences and thus, they are very supportive. This was accentuated when one pupil commented, 'everyone treats each other equally.'

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

Foundation Subjects

... teachers ensured that all pupils were given greater independence in developing their work and applying their knowledge.

Writing

- ... staff used high quality examples of writing to exhibit and showcase exemplary work across the whole school.
- ... adaptations were made to further challenge greater depth writers through precision teaching strategies.
- ... teachers were more aware of enabling some pupils, who fully understood the learning intention, to commence their written work sooner.
- ... teachers more consistently demonstrated high quality hand-written models in the classroom.

Personal Development/Cultural Capital

... there were more leadership opportunities for pupils that would have a greater impact on the wider community.

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

- The reading focus the school has undertaken has had a significant impact on the oracy skills of disadvantaged pupils. Book bundles are sent home. This has had a positive effect on developing reading skills and is transferring into their writing. Last year, they actually outperformed their non-disadvantaged peers in reading.
- Funding has been diverted into the First Class Writing strategy to home on improving the writing of this group. Assessments already indicate that standards are improving in writing for this group. These initiatives have also been effective in improving the reading and writing of EAL pupils.
- Attitudes to learning and conduct have improved exponentially over time because the four main rules – be ready, be respectful, be safe and be kind – are applied with total consistency across the school. When allied to the four learning superpowers, this ensures that pupils are far more ready to learn than in the past. Aspire points fuel the pupils' hunger to learn, and they enjoy receiving these rewards.
- CPD for teaching assistants has been very beneficial. All have had THRIVE training to enable them to support in that aspect, and work on developing First Class Writing has added to their skillset. The latter has helped reluctant pupils to become better writers.
- The SENDCo at Willow is very knowledgeable and passionate about her role. The Trust's SEND consultant lends her support whenever it is required in addition other network meetings with all of the SENDCos in the Trust schools. This is valuable for informal discussions with colleagues to take place and facilitates the sharing of great practice.
- The SENDCo has forged very positive relationships with parents. They exploit every opportunity to come into school for discussions linked to their children or simply to undertake the training sessions that she organises. They enjoy being able to learn more about various aspects of special needs and this helps them to support their children in and out of school.
- Class teachers adeptly make the appropriate curriculum adaptations whenever necessary, for example pictorial representations and pre-teaching sessions. Much of the support takes place in the classroom and pupils are only taken out of class for an intervention if moving to a quieter place would be beneficial.

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

None emerged on this review.

5. Area of Excellence

Not submitted 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>)