



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR MARDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Name of School:	Marden Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Niall Dosad
Hub:	Leigh hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Leigh Academies Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	20/10/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Not applicable
Date of last QA Review	Not applicable
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Not previously inspected
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	Not applicable



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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	Effective
Quality of provision and outcomes	Effective

AND

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

Area of excellence	Not applicable
Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	Not applicable
Overall peer evaluation estimate	Effective

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

Marden Primary Academy sits in the heart of a rural Kentish village in the borough of Maidstone. Marden Primary Academy joined the Leigh Academies Trust in 2020. The population of Marden is growing, from a population of approximately 3000 in 2016 to nearly 5000 now with plans to expand housing developments locally. As a result, the demographic of the school population is changing. The school prides itself on delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, enriched through after school clubs and co-curricular activities made accessible to all. This is a school which believes that every pupil deserves the right to a nurturing and caring community, whose shared vision is ambitious and uncompromising.

Marden is a relatively small school with one and a half forms of entry from Reception to Year 6. There are mixed-aged classes in Key Stages 1 and 2. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just above the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with a small proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language. The school includes pupils from a local Gypsy, Roma Traveller community. Boys outnumber girls in most classes, sometimes significantly. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who have education, health and care plans (EHCPs) is below average.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The senior leadership team has worked together over the last year to strengthen the quality of leadership throughout the school and the quality of teaching. The leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 is new. Teachers have been reassigned to different year groups as some have left. Stronger teachers have been recruited and three early career teachers (ECT) have joined the school. As a result, the overall quality of teaching has improved and the curriculum is being implemented more successfully. The trust has been instrumental in supporting the development of the leadership of EYFS and Key Stage 1.
- The school has introduced the Primary Years Programme (PYP). The PYP offers an enquiry-based, transdisciplinary curriculum framework that builds conceptual understanding. It is a pupil-centred approach to education. The lines of enquiry within the transdisciplinary themes ensure that pupils build upon their knowledge year on year. These are flexible and are derived from a collaborative process with their teacher. This has enabled pupils to use their initiative and to take responsibility and ownership of their learning.
- The 'Foundation Subject Assessment Tracker' makes it very clear to teachers exactly what they are expected to deliver in different subjects and in what order. It tracks the knowledge that pupils are expected to know. Data is gathered from the

system which enables an accurate focus for the pupil progress meetings. School leaders are well aware that the most able pupils are a priority and they have forensically examined the reasons behind some systematic underachievement at greater depth.

- Leaders' clear approach to self-evaluation and subsequent school improvement planning have ensured that actions are identified which bring about improvement in outcomes. External reviews and monitoring by the Trust Leadership Group checks that self-evaluation has a firm foundation and careful data analysis plays a key role in action planning and improvement.
- Those leaders with responsibility for improving the quality of writing have a clear strategy for improvement across the school, for example, from mark making in the EYFS to coherent writing in Year 6. Much work has been done to formulate the curriculum infrastructure to ensure that challenge becomes a common feature of all teaching.
- Work on developing the curriculum has contributed to improving the quality of teaching through the development of an ethos of 'quality first teaching'. As a result, teachers are clearer about providing solid support in the classroom for pupils with SEND. A session on the working memory opened teachers' eyes to how too much information or long sets of instructions lead to an overloaded working memory. Succinct instructions and supportive resources now allow SEND pupils to access the curriculum more easily.
- Monitoring is followed by personalised feedback for staff. Weekly casual learning walks gather information about the quality of teaching and more strategic monitoring shows any evident trends or patterns in teachers' practice. Leaders are then able to communicate their findings which supports staff in developing areas of their work.

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

- ... senior leaders provided coaching for foundation subject leaders so that they all articulate information about their curriculum area clearly.
- ... leaders reviewed targets to make them more specific, and clearly stated how goals were to be achieved.
- ... subject leaders were provided with more regular opportunities to engage in monitoring activities.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Planning in mathematics builds upon prior knowledge sequentially through the White Rose curriculum which enables pupils to master knowledge progressively. All pupils are able to access reasoning and problem-solving activities, including the least able which supports development of their mathematical thinking skills.

- All aspects of the National Curriculum are delivered in a meaningful and purposeful way. For example, in Year 1, pupils learn about the weather and how it affects how people live. Higher up in the school the same thread is picked up when pupils learn about types of climates.
- The English leader has introduced reading comprehension sessions across the school which have a distinct and focussed structure. This is clearly embedded and it is evident that teachers and pupils have 'bought into the system'. Pupils are confident in discussions and give valid opinions on what they have read. This is because of teachers' careful choice of text, and excellent questioning.
- The literacy lead has instigated and planned for Shakespeare and other classics to be read to the pupils during a specialist week so that they have opportunities to broaden their experience of text. It is clear that the most able pupils are being more successfully challenged through questioning and more exacting tasks.
- After lots of hard work, 'phonics international' is embedded and being taught consistently across EYFS and Key Stage 1. Staff are on board and confident in teaching the material which was evident through teachers' sound subject knowledge and well-organised resources. Pupils' reading books are perfectly matched to their ability to decode using phonics.
- Enquiry-based learning is a positive feature of most lessons. Year 4 were engaged in an enquiry lesson based around healthy lifestyles. They spoke confidently about what they were learning, applying the vocabulary that they had acquired throughout the enquiry. Year 3 were working on the theme of lifestyle, choices and goals. They were encouraged to explore complex ideas which focused on personal development and allowed them to be aspirational about their future lives. Technology was used well to scaffold learning.
- Outdoor learning enriches pupils' learning. Year 6 pupils worked well with a partner to navigate a pathway; one pupil was blindfolded, and another was giving directions. This encouraged clear communication and confidence. Adults supporting outdoor learning know the pupils well and target their individual needs, helping them to make positive progress. For example, pupils with additional needs worked competently with tools and cooked pancakes on a bonfire.

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

- ... increased challenge was provided across the curriculum, but particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, so that a higher proportion of pupils achieved a greater depth outcome in national tests.
- ... more individualised support was provided for a few teachers to improve their practice.
- ... children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were able to access outdoor learning all year round so that practice outside matched the quality delivered inside.

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

- The inclusion lead has established excellent systems within the school. As a result, the identification and tracking of pupils with SEND are more efficient and staff have a better understanding of how to seek the right support for these pupils.
- Leaders are clear that inclusion within the classroom is a key component of learning. The curriculum scaffold in place ensures that all can access the same learning as their peers. Much work has been done to upskill staff so that they are able to implement personalised learning plans successfully to break down barriers to learning. For example, targets on personalised learning plans are now more specific, measurable and achievable which enables individual provision to be more targeted.
- Interventions take place within the classroom, with a focus on quality first teaching and scaffolding pupils' learning. This has encouraged teachers to take more ownership of pupils' additional needs.
- All staff complete professional development (PD) which includes emotional coaching and regulation and specific nurture training. This has enabled staff to talk more constructively with pupils. Online training is available which staff access. One teaching assistant spoke about the dyslexia training she has undertaken which has enabled her to understand 'how pupils learn best'. The PD programme offered across the trust is praised by staff and is comprehensive; teachers are able to direct teaching assistants towards appropriate courses. Teaching assistants have weekly meetings with teachers to discuss provision.
- Colourful Semantics is used effectively in classrooms to support pupils with SEND. It is a method of teaching pupils how to understand and build sentences, supporting the development of accurate grammar but remaining rooted in the meaning of words. This successful approach was particularly evident in the Year 4 'reading vipers' session. Pre-teaching is used to introduce SEND pupils to new vocabulary that is contained in the focus text, supporting their participation in the learning in the classroom.
- Disadvantaged pupils are provided with opportunities to access wraparound care, through the breakfast and after school clubs, as well as extra-curricular activities. Where families cannot afford these, the cost is subsidised by the school.

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

... none identified in this review.

5. Area of Excellence

Not submitted at 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>)