

Written Report

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Melland High
School Address:	Gorton Education Village, 50 Wembley Road, Manchester, M18 7DT.
Hub:	Greater Manchester

Telephone Number:	0161 223 9915
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Unique Reference Number:	138532
Local Authority:	Manchester
Type of School:	Academy
School Category:	Special
Age range of pupils:	11-19
Number on roll:	145
Principal/Executive Principal:	Sue Warner: Judith O’Kane OBE

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	27-28 February 2013
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	26 & 27 March 2015
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES

School Improvement Strategies:	Outstanding
Achievement:	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching:	Outstanding
Area of Excellent Practice: “Media/technology”	Confirmed

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Melland High School appears to be firmly within the Outstanding grade as judged by Ofsted in the report published following the previous inspection of the school in February 2013.

Information about the school

Melland High School converted to become an academy school on 1 August 2012. It is part of the Bright Futures Educational Trust, the Executive Principal is a National Leader in Education and the academy is designated as a National Support School. It is also a National Specialist College for cognition and learning, a placement school for the National Professional Qualification for Headship and a provider of Initial Teacher Training. The academy leads on special educational needs within the Trust and is commissioned by Manchester local authority to provide support for other Manchester schools.

The academy provides for students with severe and profound learning difficulties. Some have additional difficulties such as autism, emotional and behavioural problems, and sensory impairment. Around a fifth also has high dependency health care needs. All students have a statement of special educational needs. About half the students are of White British heritage with the largest other group being of Pakistani heritage. There are about twice as many boys as girls and nine of the students are currently in the care of the local authority. The students come from the central and east areas of the city of Manchester and the proportion eligible to be supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average.

School Improvement Strategies

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- Senior leaders have inspired the entire school community with their drive and ambition. A commitment to constant analysis of student progress has resulted in a wealth of systems and procedures that promote student learning and ensure that success is constantly built upon.
- Senior leaders and middle managers actively seek out challenge in order to maintain the strong culture of improvement. During the course of this review, new ideas, suggestions and EBIs were seized with enthusiasm and in some cases acted upon immediately. Senior leaders did a remarkable amount of work overnight between Day 1 and Day 2 in order to address one issue.
- An extensive CPD programme includes a long-term approach to succession planning. As a result staff acquire the confidence that goes with new knowledge and skills and are promoted to positions of greater responsibility.
- The school is seamlessly co-located with a secondary school so that students have many opportunities to extend their social skills and levels of achievement in a wide range of inclusive settings. The new building has been carefully designed so that it suits the particular needs of different groups of students and can be adapted as the nature of cohorts change.
- The school employs a Quality Assurance Consultant who has got to know the school well over a number of years. She has consistently reported that the school achieves outstanding results and in a meeting held during this review she more than fully justified her views.

- All monitoring is linked to a well-structured annual school improvement cycle that is clearly linked to the staff appraisal cycle. All stakeholders are involved in monitoring via an “IMPACT” group that is an exceptional example of an inclusive approach.
- The school improvement plan is presented in different forms for different audiences and the school works hard to involve stakeholders in celebrations of the effectiveness of these plans.
- The development of progress monitoring meetings has resulted in staff taking greater ownership of the quality of learning and the effectiveness of interventions. This in turn has led to greater levels of accountability.
- The school has formed exceptionally positive and supportive relationships with parents. This has resulted in a strong sense of a united community working together for the benefit of the students and their future prospects.
- School improvement objectives are reflected within staff appraisal targets.
- The school has been proactive to changes within the National Curriculum and accompanying guidance.
- The SEF includes sections on key characteristics of the school and the areas that are inspected by Ofsted. At the last inspection the school was judged Outstanding by Ofsted and the SEF clearly states that the school remains Outstanding in each area.
- The achievement section within the SEF refers to the school definitions of good and outstanding progress that are linked to the Durham University P Scales project. The figures provided refer to all ability groups at the end of KS4 with some reference to the pupil premium group.
- The teaching section within the SEF refers to the gathering of a range of different forms of evidence linked to aspects of teaching but, more importantly, aspects of learning. An overall figure of 89% is given for the proportion of lessons observed that had an outstanding impact upon student learning. No lessons observed had less than good impact upon student learning.
- Some further information about achievement by other groups is contained within an additional document.
- There are many other documents within the school that when scrutinised provide a fuller picture of achievement by all groups and cohorts.
- The leadership and management section within the SEF refers to a wide range of evaluation activities and partnerships with other bodies that promote common understanding, moderation of outcomes and improvement actions.
- As a result of evaluation within each section the SEF lists the priorities to be taken forward to the SIP.
- The 2015 SIP is a lengthy and detailed list of actions introduced with a Rag-rated outline of actions taken prior to January 2015. More focussed action plans are within the range of other documents maintained by the school.
- The SIP has a summary page that provides a simpler, digestible outline for all stakeholders.

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..... the SEF became more specific and included the comprehensive details of precise outcomes that are available in other documents. The clarity resulting may allow the document to be much shorter.

..... the amendments to the SIP made during the review were further refined to ensure that there was a clear overview of the (SMART) success criteria that will be used to judge the effectiveness of the necessary tasks.

..... the school continued to work in partnership with other schools to form common understandings about approaches to the new National Curriculum, “assessment without levels” and alternative national benchmarks given the demise of the one currently used by the school.

.... the school decided what will be included in a “Melland Basket of Indicators”. This would provide a full picture of progress measured against any conventional scales and national benchmarks that are appropriate as well as progress against highly personalised targets that address the exceptional needs or unusual patterns of learning of individuals.

Pupil Achievement

- The school has a robust system of monitoring student progress that ensures that personalised targets are adjusted in a timely manner in order to maintain progress that is at least good.
- The tracking grids indicate that the great majority of pupils in all groups and cohorts make at least good progress and much of this is outstanding. There are no significant gaps between groups.
- There are growing levels of accreditation at the end of KS4 and 5.
- Entry level Science was introduced in KS4 in September 2014 and Entry Level English and Maths will be introduced in September 2015.
- The end of KS5 data in 2014 shows that each student achieved at least one accreditation.
- The KS5 accreditation programme introduced in September 2014 was based mainly upon ASDAN but will be changed in September 2015 to OCR.
- An extensive and engaging programme of work related learning (WRL) is in place across KS4 and 5. This is pivotal for students who do not have totally clear pathways to their future and provides strong support to students and their families when making difficult decisions.
- The school has its own definition of good and outstanding progress with reference to three ability groups and linked to the Durham University P Scales project. Moderation is also undertaken with other similar schools in Manchester.
- Given the demise of the Durham P Scales Project the school is exploring other possible national benchmarks such as CASPA to use in future. Discussions are also being held with partner schools with a view to developing a common approach.
- The assessment and progress monitoring cycle is well embedded and results in a great deal of data.
- Attendance is very high compared to other similar schools.

- Case studies show that individual pupils achieve personalised targets in PSHE, behaviour and communication. These important outcomes for pupils with exceptional needs or unusual patterns of learning are in future to be included in a “basket of indicators”.
- Interventions include “Rapid Readers” and “Mindfulness”. Students’ contributions to a meeting with a reviewer and assessment records indicated that these have a significant impact.

Quality of Teaching

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- During the course of the review, 8 lessons were observed jointly by a visiting reviewer and a member of the school staff. In each case the co-observers reached a full agreement about the extent of learning seen during the lesson. This corresponded with the school policy to evaluate teaching entirely in terms of learning and progress. The great majority of teaching seen resulted in outstanding learning.
- The school’s own record of the evaluation of teaching is based on comprehensive review of all the evidence of student learning. The school has concluded that 100% of teaching over time results in learning that is good or better and 89% results in learning that is outstanding. The detailed evaluation records substantiate these figures.
- The characteristics of the most effective teaching were:-
 - Clearly differentiated learning objectives for groups and individuals.
 - A clear sharing of learning objectives so that everyone understood them.
 - Consistent re-enforcement of the learning objectives throughout the lesson.
 - A range of possible activities to suit the learning styles of individual pupils.
 - Teachers who had good subject knowledge and used subject-specific language.
 - Good use of open questions that had increasing levels of complexity.
 - Excellent relationships between adults and students.
 - Pairing of students for peer support.
 - Good modelling of outcomes by teachers.
 - Appropriate use of technology – e.g. interactive whiteboards and iPads.
 - Pace of teaching that promoted engagement and generated a sense of fun and a love of learning.
 - Adult feedback, including celebration, that promoted further student learning.
 - Teaching Assistants who were well informed, who often had good subject knowledge and who knew how to provide appropriate levels of support.
- Because of an increase in the number of ASD students being admitted the school has developed a particular curriculum approach for certain groups. This has been supported by discussions with other providers and a CPD programme and there is good evidence that the approach is being effective.

- Creative use of assistive technology, very effectively supported by the speech and language therapist employed directly by the school, has given students many more opportunities for their voices to be heard.
- There is qualitative and quantitative evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of a “Mindfulness” intervention programme.
- AfL is well embedded in lessons.
- Teaching Assistants are well deployed according to their roles, responsibilities and the needs of students.
- Regular progress monitoring meetings ensure that challenge is constantly adjusted to match the progress being made by individual students.

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... all lessons matched the standards of the best particularly by.....

- Ensuring that all in-room progress records are dated.
- Ensuring that language and questions are matched to the pupil ability level.
- Continuing to refine lesson plans so that all other adults in the classroom have a clear understanding of the context of the lesson and its relevance to the students’ needs.
- Ensuring that all lesson plans include a clear identification of an SMSC element.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

“Media/Technology”

- The creative use of ICT and media has been developed and incorporated into the school curriculum. The school has worked to adapt new technologies, consulting with creative practitioners such as professional filmmakers, interactive music specialists and a partner company (“Clit Media”) to ensure that investment has been made in appropriate technologies. This is a reciprocal arrangement and Clit Media have used their experiences in school to develop their services elsewhere.
- The approach has resulted in enhanced learning experiences for all students. Investment in a fully equipped media studio has provided access to equipment and expertise that enables imagination to be given substance and bring a great deal of enjoyment to learning.
- Other spaces including interactive sensory and science studios and an interactive hydro pool have had a powerful effect on pupil outcomes, engagement, motivation, behaviour and attendance.
- A school orchestra, ‘Rawchestra’, formed with the co-located secondary school utilises state of the art interactive technology to make it fully inclusive.
- The approach embraces a rigorous staff training programme and a team of creative and technical staff ensure that equipment is working and available for use in lessons.
- The media team keeps abreast of changes within new technologies and seeks advice from the business partner. An ICT steering group ensures that the whole school is involved in sharing ideas and knowledge and making decisions.

- Whiteboards, Apple TV, iPads and X-Box controllers are key resources within the approach and give students access to a virtual environment that promotes playful, purposeful learning.
- The media studio has a student-led “Media Crew” who use ICT to control sound and light at school performances and film and edit content for a media library.
- Teachers have used Augmented Reality to create interactive learning displays and to enhance learning opportunities across the entire curriculum.
- Interactive switches to activate sound, lights and visuals give pupils access to the visual, aural and tactile world. This is extremely motivating for pupils who lack other formal or traditional skills.
- The impact of the approach is wide ranging. Some students have achieved specific accreditation awards and there has been a general upward trend in outcomes particularly in Science and ICT. Evidence gained during lesson observations indicates that student voice, engagement and enjoyment have increased and there have been specific gains in reading, communication and the general standard of behaviour. In addition the range of exciting opportunities available has contributed to notably good attendance.

Partnerships

- **Bright Futures Educational Trust (BFET)**
 - Melland High School is one of the 8 schools that form this Trust across Manchester, Blackpool and Wigan. Significant impact has resulted from the wide range of CPD organised within the trust and the many opportunities to share good practice and pursue specific training courses. These include valuable opportunities for governors. In addition the centralisation of services and the economies of scale within the Trust have created operational and financial advantages.
- **Alliance For Learning (AGGS)**
 - All the BFET schools are also members of the Alliance For Learning Teaching School based at the Altrincham Girls Grammar School (AGGS). This group of 40+ schools has driven improvement by organising accredited CPD courses such as NPQH, NPQSL, NPQML, OTP, Leadership Coaching and Mindfulness.
- **Health Services**
 - The school has strong relationships with health service professionals such as speech and language therapists. Additional services are also commissioned directly by the school.
- **Work Related Learning Partners**
 - FC United
 - Hulme Community Garden Centre
 - Manchester Metropolitan University ‘Bridging the Gap’
 - Manor High School
 - Newbridge Special School
 - Peoples History Museum
 - Real Food Wythenshawe
 - Simply Cycling
 - Sutton Road Nursery

- The Children’s Society
- The Lowry
- Toni and Guy
- **Other valuable partnerships include:-**
 - Central and East Manchester High Schools (9)
 - Central Manchester Behaviour & Attendance Partnership
 - Challenge Partners
 - Creative/business partner - CLICT media (see area of excellence)
 - LA SEND steering group
 - Manchester City Football Club
 - Manchester High School Heads
 - Manchester Metropolitan University - ITT providers
 - Manchester Special Schools’ Strategic Group
 - Manchester University - ITT providers
 - Tesco community champion
- **Outreach**
 - The school is commissioned by the LA to provide an advisory and support service to schools in Central and East Manchester in respect of SEN pupils. This has included SENCO training, diagnostic testing and promoting collaborative working amongst the other schools.

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

The school is working in partnership with other schools to form common understandings about approaches to the new National Curriculum, “assessment without levels” and alternative national benchmarks given the demise of the one currently used by the school. Other networks are working on the same issue and the school would like to draw all this together by organising a conference that enabled schools and networks to share what they are doing. Challenge Partners support for this project would be greatly appreciated.

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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.