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**CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report**

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

<b>Telephone Number:</b>	01612239915
<b>Email address:</b>	admin@melland.manchester.sch.uk

<b>Unique Reference Number:</b>	138532
<b>Local Authority:</b>	Manchester
<b>Type of School:</b>	Academy Special
<b>School Category:</b>	Non-maintained special school
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	11-14
<b>Number on roll:</b>	145
<b>Executive Principal:</b>	Judith O’Kane OBE
<b>Principal:</b>	Sue Warner

<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2013
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding

<b>Date of Quality Assurance Review:</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> March 2014
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## **QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES**

**School Improvement Strategies:** Outstanding

**Achievement:** Outstanding

**Quality of Teaching:** Outstanding

**Area of Excellent Practice:**

**Whole School Improvement** 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 school's previous Ofsted report 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013.**

## **Information about the school**

Melland High School converted to become an academy school on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012 and is part of the Bright Futures Educational Trust (BFET). The Executive Principal of Melland is also the Director of Secondary Education across the Trust. She is also a National Leader of Education and the academy is a National Support School and a specialist college for Cognition and Learning. It is a placement school for the National Professional Qualification for Headship and is a provider of Initial Teacher Training. The academy leads on special educational needs within the BFET and is commissioned by Manchester local authority to provide support for other Manchester schools in the centre and east of the city.

The academy provides for students with a wide range of diverse needs including those 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.

Around a half are of White British heritage with the largest other group being of Pakistani heritage. There are twice as many boys as girls. 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.

## **School Improvement Strategies**

The school have identified Whole School Improvement as their area of excellent practice and having had the opportunity to discuss school improvement strategies with governors, staff, students and an external consultant it is absolutely clear that school improvement and outcomes for students are at the heart of everything that takes place at Melland High School. Despite the outstanding practice that occurs, the whole school community are continually reviewing and evaluating their practice to look for ways they can continue to improve.

The school is securely operating beyond the outstanding criteria in every area which has enabled the leaders to deal with a number of developments through the plan as and when is necessary.

A very clear and well developed cycle of quality assuring the work of the school is in place and the various reports are scrutinised by the IMPACT (Improving and Monitoring Performance Analysing and Challenging Targets) group which consists of governors, teachers, parents, business partners, partner school representatives, student advocates and more importantly students themselves. There is a wealth of documentation to support each stage in the monitoring cycle and evidence is collected, analysed and recorded at regular intervals. Any areas that are identified as needing refinement are addressed immediately. Evidence shows that at the end of each cycle all targets are met or exceeded.

The whole school community are aware of the priorities that are identified in the school improvement plan- these are displayed in student friendly language across the school and are truly understood and referred to by the students. Discussions with the students clearly demonstrated that they truly believe that they have a voice in school improvement and were able to give examples of where this was the case.

Staff and students know that the leadership team are prepared to take calculated risks to try out new initiatives but that equally they will not 'jump on the bandwagon' unless there is evidence to suggest how these will impact on student progress or well-being. All achievement against action points in the school improvement plan are celebrated which again reinforces the students understanding of them.

The leadership team have created a real learning culture in the school not only for the students but also for the staff. CPD has a very high profile and is tailored to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to grow and develop personally and professionally and many

opportunities have been created within the school, BFET and beyond. There is clear evidence of the impact this has had on learning levels and student outcomes.

Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and strategies are in place to ensure that staff taking on new and demanding roles are challenged but supported well.

Pupils are proud of their school, are happy and engaged in their learning and hence there is good attendance.

## **Pupil Achievement**

Melland High School is cognisant of all elements of assessment, methods of measuring attainment, the need to benchmark and verify data and use this with rigour. Use of data both informs levels of achievement and subsequently is used to set challenging targets for future learning.

This is well documented and verified in a report by a Quality Assurance Consultant, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2013. This lays out in detail the achievement of the pupils in both absolute terms and also against national benchmarks. The review cannot add more to this except to add further weight to the fact that the school has a very good command of the use of data and its integral role in informing learning steps, identifying real time progress and then target resources, planning and teaching (including short and long term additions/alterations to pedagogy).

The school has a real command of the role of formal data to inform possible directions the school could take to enhance achievement. Numerical data only tells a small part of the overall offer that is presented to the students. It is obvious in discussions with leaders that there is an insistence that staff build an intimate and comprehensive knowledge of the student as an individual so that valid decisions can be made both in terms of curriculum delivery and setting of challenging targets. Formal progress meetings are held to ensure any potential for underachievement is quickly identified and addressed.

Taking into account the ability range and knowledge of the students the staff have devised their own descriptors of what constitutes good and outstanding progress based on Progression Guidance materials and University of Durham datasets. This has enabled all staff to gain a real understanding of what they can expect the students to achieve.

Essentially there is an overall tenet in the school seen throughout ALL that underpins the teaching and learning that consideration of all elements that impacts on learning has been considered.

Case studies are being used more extensively to be able to demonstrate the outstanding progress that individual students achieve. These identify starting points on entry, any interventions in place and progress within a range of subjects and where appropriate parent and student views.

Although outside 'direct data' the school really does understand the value this type of opportunity provides for 'real achievement'. There exists many and varied opportunities for this to occur which adds a true core value to the students. The school recognises total achievement in a very wide sense and actively explores avenues for formal accreditation of these skills. This in turn creates an aspirational culture for the students. Students in KS4 and in the 6<sup>th</sup> form follow a range of accredited courses and the school is aware of the need to challenge the higher attaining students by, for example, offering GCSE or equivalent courses.

The school rightly identifies three distinct ability groups against which targets and achievements are tracked. Further there is tracking of groups such as gender and impact of pupil premium. There is obvious rigour and cognisance of the need to track these elements.

## Quality of teaching

It was incredibly difficult during the review to identify any “Even Better Ifs” from the lessons observed during the review as the learning that was taking place was outstanding.

A number of contributory factors that contributed to this were shared and agreed by the review team and staff of the school.

- The lesson structures that are in place, that students are familiar with, gives them the confidence to attempt tasks, experience both failure and success and to learn from the experiences.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use correct terminology within lessons which enable the pupils to develop their own skills knowledge and understanding. The language of learning is used extensively so that pupils know what they can do and what they need to do to make progress.
- Relationships between the staff and the pupils provide the platform for outstanding learning. All staff have a very deep understanding of each student's individual needs and barriers to learning and work seamlessly together to address these. There is a real feeling of mutual respect and regard for each other.
- Strong teamwork and the very effective deployment of teaching assistants ensures that support is given where needed, that students are appropriately challenged and that they feel safe to take risks.
- Lessons are interesting, fun and enjoyable. Students are motivated, enthused and show very high levels of engagement. The very rich questioning that takes place not only helps teachers to check on students' prior knowledge but enables them to develop their thinking and reasoning skills so that they all make gains in their knowledge and understanding.
- Cross - curricular links in all lessons observed were evident which enables students to make the links between different subjects and real life experiences. Lesson planning is detailed and well differentiated to meet individual needs but teachers are not afraid to divert from plans if necessary in order to develop students understanding further.
- Spiritual, moral, cultural and social development was extremely well promoted in lessons seen – particularly in Science where there was real ‘awe and wonder’ when the students were carrying out experiments and in an English lesson about the Hobbit where students showed real empathy for the characters in the story.
- All staff have very high expectations not only for behaviour but for what they expect the students to achieve and the students respond positively. Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are very skillfully managed and do not distract the learning of other group members.
- The innovative use of technology to create interactive learning environments truly is outstanding and provides real meaning for the students. It allows teachers and staff teams to be creative in the ways in which they structure learning experiences.

## Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

The school identified their school improvement strategies as an area of outstanding practice and this was confirmed by the review team. It was evident through observations, scrutiny of documentation and touring the school that all aspects of the school's work are outstanding. The use of technology was particularly striking and worthy of note. The school uses technology creatively to provide interactive creative working environments and the students are incredibly competent in using technology to make interactive displays and presentations.

Another impressive element of the schools work is the interventions that are put in place to support the students' emotional health and well being. A mindfulness session with a group of 6 students demonstrated very clearly the personal impact on their lives of learning these practical methods of self regulation. The lead member of staff had also combined this work with the use of an ICT programme called 'Heart Math' which allows students to see clearly how stressed they are and then use their breathing techniques to calm themselves down. One pupil talked confidently about how he had used Mindfulness techniques that morning whilst he was waiting for the school bus.

## Partnerships

The school obviously functions at a level of mastery and understands that this can add real value to other schools and students. It takes this role seriously. It seeks to develop capacity to deliver outreach and actively seeks to develop partnerships that will benefit the education of both its' own students and others.

The school seeks to build sustainable relationships that have legacy impact. This includes the formal role the school is entrusted with by the LA to co-ordinate SEN outreach to its locality within the City. An example has been facilitating and brokering a SENCO forum for local mainstream schools. The school is entrusted to provide a core service to these schools but will provide further specialist SEN advice as an Outreach service. It has a similar role within the Bright Futures Educational Trust and is currently running SEN and behaviour diagnostic reviews within the Trusts academies.

There exists a 7 year old partnership with a media provider, WFA/CLICT, that has ably and mutually supported the development of an exceptional media programme within the school. CLICT reports the value of involvement with the students in understanding elements of communication outside of direct language.

CLICT media, Manchester City FC, Manchester Metropolitan University, TESCO, professional musicians number among many groups who contribute in meaningful ways to the enrichment of real learning for the pupils at Melland. Many of these groups sit formally on the IMPACT group.

The school also takes a prime role in partnership with teacher training agencies. The models of teaching and learning that occurs within the school are of obvious benefit to any prospective teacher.

**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.**