



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR HALEWOOD ACADEMY

Name of School:	Halewood Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Tracey Rollings
Hub:	Aspire
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	Wade Deacon Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	04/05/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Working towards effective
Date of last QA Review	13/01/2020
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	16/03/2022



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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	Effective
Quality of provision and outcomes	Effective

AND

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

Area of excellence	None submitted for this review.
Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	N/A
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

Halewood Academy is a larger-than-average sized 11 – 16 secondary school in the Knowsley area of Liverpool. This is an area of high social deprivation; the third highest authority in the country. Almost all students are of White British heritage. Half of the student population falls into the disadvantaged group, which is significantly above the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also exceeds the national average, while of those with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is below. Stability is above average, with the vast majority of students remaining at Halewood for their secondary education.

The school joined the Wade Deacon Trust, which has the motto 'A commitment to excellence', in February 2017. This supportive relationship has been highly beneficial and has helped the school on its continuing journey of improvement. The Halewood motto 'We seek the best' inspires students to work hard for their futures.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The senior leadership team (SLT) has undergone a significant re-structuring, with new additions joining and enhancing its capacity. What is clear is that leaders are all passionate in driving the school forward and they know the school extremely well. As one senior leader commented, 'You really sense the school is going places.'
- The principal stated, 'We have covered a good deal of ground in a short period of time' since her appointment. Of a range of recently introduced strategies, the most successful in raising standards has been the RAMAR (review, advance, model, apply, reflect) approach to planning. This terminology has been passed on to students; they use these terms routinely in class. It has also led to greater consistency in teachers' planning because it provides a universal pattern for staff to follow.
- Senior leaders have recently adopted coaching roles to support and develop the middle leader group. This has enabled this group to better express the intent, implementation and impact of their subjects. Leaders of core subjects have added their expertise to this model, which has been extremely useful. Middle leaders are well-established in their roles. They demonstrate the autonomy and authority to develop their subjects or other areas of responsibility. They enjoy the trust that is invested in them.
- Support from the Trust has enabled the development of a clear curriculum model and the integral flexibility adds to the independence Halewood leaders enjoy. Assessment models are Trust-wide, so this provides unity and accuracy in the moderation of standards across all the secondary schools.

- Continuing professional development (CPD) forms a central theme at the school. The most recent has resulted in an improvement in the progress of disadvantaged students, particularly in mathematics and especially for boys. Similarly, targeting students with SEND has led to similar levels of improvement. The emphasis on quality-first teaching has had the greatest impact and utilising the expertise within the staff body has become a strength at Halewood.
- Leaders and other staff have high expectations of the students. In interpreting the school's values, students can readily articulate them because there is great consistency in teaching linked to them. During the review, visits to classrooms across the school at form time indicated that teachers were all covering the concept of respect, and this was also the theme of the Year 8 assembly.
- Staff raise students' aspirations by providing a broad range of experiences for them, for example the Future Female Leaders conference to boost the expectations and ambition of girls at the school. Inspirational speakers, particularly those who are from the local community or alumni, have had a dramatic impact on motivating students. Additionally, the HATS model (Halewood Academy Talented Students) that has recently been introduced enables students to build on their leadership skills as well as acting as positive role models for others.
- Governors provide challenge and support in equal measure. They are passionate about the school and hold leaders to account effectively. They exhibit detailed knowledge about the school and its context within the community, and now, post-Covid, welcome the opportunity to re-establish their visits into school.

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

...lead practitioners and other middle leaders consistently exemplified and presented the impact of their actions.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Teachers exhibit high levels of subject and pedagogical knowledge that contribute directly to exciting classroom experiences for the students. This was highlighted in a Year 9 history lesson based on the Holocaust. Here, the teacher's encyclopaedic knowledge brought this sensitive subject to life. Students were enthralled by the depth of his expertise.
- Pedagogy is consistently strong. During the review section of RAMAR in Year 8 and Year 10 mathematics lessons, there was clear evidence of the impact of prior learning. This enabled students to develop their answers in greater depth, which was clearly common practice as it was also evident in their books.
- Teachers use modelling effectively to support learning. This raised the quality of learning in Year 9 mathematics and Year 9 drama lessons. This was securely embedded to assist students to tackle the lesson objectives without any misconceptions. In both lessons, specific subject terminology was highlighted

which students subsequently used accurately and in the correct context.

- Challenge is appropriate in most lessons and was evident during the review tasks students were set. In Year 8 art, students were heard to say, 'Aaagh, this is hard!' as they initially grappled with the theme of the lesson. However, they used their resilience to overcome that challenge.
- Questioning is a strength and fully probes students' understanding. For example, in a Year 8 geography lesson, a thorough examination of students' knowledge by the teacher enabled them to fully understand the terms 'biodiversity', and 'flora and fauna'.
- High levels of engagement are a 'given' at Halewood, largely because teachers create a positive learning environment in which students can learn safely and are not worried about making mistakes. One Year 9 student stated, 'If I get something wrong, I learn from it.'
- High quality relationships abound, built on mutual respect and trust. Teachers know their students exceptionally well and because routines and expectations are well embedded, students enter the classroom ready to learn.
- Positive attitudes to learning are commonplace. Students in a Year 8 English lesson were thriving and showing great enthusiasm for the subject. They were hanging on the teacher's every word, which encouraged them to produce high quality work.
- At Key Stage 3, the change to a three-year programme has worked effectively in providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Close liaison with the feeder primary schools also adds to the consistency of learning, which ultimately leads to a smooth introduction to new subjects at Key Stage 4. Increased numbers of students are following an EBacc pathway, highlighting the further development of an academic approach to learning.
- Clear and consistent routines have been re-established post-lockdowns, leading to increased cooperation within the student body. Standards of behaviour and engagement in learning have correspondingly improved. The work leaders have developed to address an increase in behavioural incidents and mental health issues post-Covid has brought about considerable positive changes.
- The use of technology is a strength of the school and staff utilise technological resources wherever possible, preparing students better for life in the 21st century. For example, the Numeracy Ninjas programme, linked to Hegarty Maths, has been highly successful and data highlights student progress. This has particularly been the case for disadvantaged students, where attainment gaps in mathematics are closing rapidly.
- Cultural capital is developed through a comprehensive PHSE programme, and a range of expert teachers are utilised effectively to broaden students' knowledge and horizons. Assemblies and celebrations highlight possibilities in the local community that are available to students, for example, Earth Day and International Women's Day. Students learn about other cultures in a number of subjects across the curriculum, enabling them to understand and celebrate diversity.

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

...in some lessons, teachers utilised assessment for learning strategies more effectively to ensure that there is stretch and challenge for all students.

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

- Students who are disadvantaged and those with SEND learn in a safe environment where everyone's views and opinions are heard and respected. In a Year 7 Spanish lesson, the questioning and inclusion of these students ensured that everyone was appropriately challenged and fully involved in the learning.
- Raising standards of attainment for the disadvantaged group was evident in all lessons visited. Specific strategies, for example, targeted questioning, carefully devised seating plans and marking their work first are combining to gain success. Gaps in learning for this group are diminishing.
- The expansion of the leadership team has been beneficial. Additional leaders in the SLT have enhanced the provision, particularly in relation to students with SEND. In many cases, these students are outperforming their non-SEND peers. Also, the appointment of a librarian has contributed to improving literacy across the school, with increased numbers of students visiting the library and borrowing books.
- The input of professionals in the community, for example the educational psychology service, has been beneficial in diagnosing and recommending the appropriate support for vulnerable students. When combined with the focus on high quality, wave 1 teaching and a range of positive interventions, students with SEND make strong progress from their starting points. Close liaison with feeder primary schools has resulted in a smooth transition for these students into Halewood.
- For students with an EHCP, the SEND coordinator has developed support to ensure that all staff are fully aware of their learning needs and how to best enrich their learning. These students' individual education plans, and the provision maps that accompany them, enable staff to tailor their teaching precisely to further their development.

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

...leaders who are linked to SEND provision continued to streamline and develop the SEND register to ensure the right students were identified to receive the appropriate support.

...leaders explored further opportunities to develop the ELSA (emotional literacy support assistants) strategy to further support students with emotional needs.

5. Area of Excellence

None submitted for this review.

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

Contact with similar schools to link effective practice to further develop provision for disadvantaged students.

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.

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 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.