



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR MALVERN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Name of School:	Malvern Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Tony James
Hub:	Aspire Hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	N/A

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	09/11/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Effective
Date of last QA Review	09/02/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	26/02/2020

1. Context and character of the school

Malvern Primary School is a highly popular, above average size primary school in the borough of Knowsley. Very few pupils have English as an additional language and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is broadly in line with the national average. An above average percentage of pupils are classified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) although the percentage with an education, health and care plan is below. Stability in the school is high; the vast majority of pupils remain at Malvern for the entirety of their primary education.

The school continues to develop and is a focal point for the local community. Many events organised by the school are well attended and supported by parents. Other local residents are welcomed too. For example, the annual 'Malfest' event in the summer term attracted close to five thousand attendees! Everything staff at the school undertake is aimed at the pupils – pupils are the beating heart of the school. They enjoy an array of activities and events that many schools would be unable to provide. This is directly attributable to the love and care all staff have for the pupils.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The school benefits from a dynamic senior leadership team, led by a passionate headteacher who has a clear vision and the foresight to steer the school in a purposeful direction. Collectively, leaders all share the same philosophy which is rooted in a uncompromising pursuit of providing the best possible learning experiences for every pupil who is fortunate enough to attend Malvern Primary School.
- Leaders ensure that the school's philosophy of kindness is widespread across the school, supported by the strapline of 'Together, Stronger'. This reflects the wishes of the community and is a core value. The canvassing of parents helped to formulate the school vision. As one senior leader commented, 'we want to ensure that everyone feels valued.' Thus, every stakeholder shares the collective vision of the school.
- The middle leader group is equally strong. They have expert knowledge and understanding of the areas they lead on and fully deserve their title of Subject Champions. They meet frequently and liaise closely so that any best practice can be swiftly disseminated to colleagues across the school.
- Staff focus firmly on ensuring that pupils know more and remember more. By reducing cognitive load, pupils are able to retrieve knowledge from previous learning. This supports their current learning which they swiftly build on. Teachers encourage pupils to 'struggle to remember' as this is a proven method of enhancing long-term memory.

- The school's curriculum offer to pupils and parents is tailored so carefully that it is unique to them and their needs. As the headteacher stated, 'we are relentless in making sure that pupils leave us as the best possible version of themselves.' Pupils are fortunate to have an incredible range of activities and opportunities that they would not receive otherwise. Enrichment activities supplement the curriculum and also provide exciting, memorable experiences. This is especially evident in the provision of performing arts, for example, encompassing theatre trips, workshops and a rap artist coming to the school to work with pupils. Many other local schools are included.
- Changes to the behaviour policy have been made after consultation with the parents' council and pupils were also included in its design. It was felt that positive affirmation and praise would be more effective than critique and sanctions. The 'cube' initiative celebrates, for example, acts of kindness and good manners.
- Reading is an exceptionally strong area in the school. The seeds for this are sown in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Phonics teaching begins in the Nursery, so children gain early exposure to letters and sounds. Parents are encouraged to come into school to experience this learning with their children so they can better support their children. The focus on this area throughout a pupil's journey at the school leads to excellent outcomes in Year 6. From Year 3 to 6, all pupils read every day in the afternoon through Reading Plus. This is one of many initiatives in the school that is linked to reading, hence the success.
- SMSC is a strong feature of the school. Pupils learn about a wide range of different cultures and religions and the kindness theme reverberates clearly. Learning about fundamental British values also has a high priority, and throughout the school, displays reflect how pupils also learn about the protected characteristics. The school's Gallery of Greatness display celebrates pupils who have shown positive attitudes and behaviour.
- Malvern Primary has shared the expertise of the specialist music teacher with other schools in the local area and beyond Knowsley. In addition, the school behaviour policy has been adopted by another local school and there are indications of improvements.
- Governors are exceptionally knowledgeable, supportive and challenging in equal measure. They hold senior leaders to account and are fully behind them in driving the school forwards. Because they are frequent visitors to the school in a variety of guises, they are appreciative of the hard work of all staff. As the vice-chair noted, 'we totally align with the school vision.'

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

... leaders formalised their offer to other schools to disseminate the many areas of strong practice at Malvern Primary School.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- The pupils are immensely proud of their school and recognise the hard work all staff apply to making their time at Malvern exciting and rewarding. They work equally hard and are hungry to learn more. This was reflected in their books which were beautifully presented and indicated strong progress. The journey to the curriculum end points was clear. When asked what could improve their school, one pupil stated, 'add on a secondary school because I don't want to leave!'
- Teachers ensure that pupils know more and remember more because they constantly and consistently re-visit prior learning. Retrieval practice is a common feature in lessons, none more so than a Year 6 geography lesson where the teacher was helping the class to investigate settlements in Mexico, recapping knowledge of bodies of water and rivers to consolidate previous learning.
- Teachers adhere to the fidelity of schemes and systems, hence the success the school enjoys. Everyone maintains consistency so that standards never drop. All staff have strong pedagogical and subject knowledge, resulting in high levels of attainment in all groups of pupils. The teacher in a Year 5 science lesson effectively modelled higher level, subject-specific terminology. As a result, pupils could clearly use it in their work. They could talk in depth about 'orbits' and explain exactly how planets rotate around the sun.
- Teachers determinedly focus on vocabulary development which is closely matched to the curriculum intention. For example, in the EYFS, the 'tyre game' enabled children to associate it with understanding concepts such as 'one more than' and 'one less than.'
- Teachers skilfully employ different methods of scaffolding to ensure that pupils commence their work free from misconceptions. A variety of multi-sensory approaches are utilised to encompass different learning styles and all pupils access learning using a range of resources. The use of an inspiring video clip in a Year 2 English lesson enabled the class to produce writing of the highest quality.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary across the whole school. This is because the lessons teachers plan are stimulating and exciting. As a result, pupils are motivated to learn, and engagement is exceptionally high. In a Year 6 computing lesson, pupils were totally focused on the learning intention because the teacher made the session fun and relevant.
- Pupils develop their knowledge extensively which enables them to talk in an informed and mature way about their learning. They are keen to participate and love sharing their learning with their peers. The liberal use of pair talk in all phases provides plentiful opportunities for pupils to collaborate.
- High quality questioning features in all lessons. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher probed the depth of pupils' understanding. Other pupils had the opportunity to add to the first response. The range of expertly posed questions by all staff maintains high levels of challenge for all abilities.

- The curriculum design ensures that learning is progressive and well-sequenced. However, subject champions are active in evaluating and reviewing their subject curriculum and as soon as something is not felt to be working efficiently, it is changed for the better.

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

... pupils had an increased understanding of the personal qualities their leadership roles are helping them to develop.

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

- The provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs is of the highest order. The education and wellbeing of these pupils are overseen by the deputy headteacher and SENDCo, supported not only by the teaching staff, but a group of undeniably valued teaching assistants (TAs). The latter are highly trained, extremely knowledgeable and care deeply about the development of the groups and individuals they support.
- Pupils access the full curriculum and, because every member of staff who works with them has high expectations, they achieve excellent levels of attainment and progress. All staff know these pupils very well, understand their individual needs so that the support they receive removes any barriers to learning. Leaders set the bar high in terms of achievement and the forensic focus on 'the right solution' for these pupils, whether that refers to academic needs, better attendance, etc. As the deputy headteacher stated, 'we are relentless in pursuing the best possible outcomes for all pupils.'
- More able pupils in this group are challenged appropriately because their ability is recognised on entry and teaching and learning is geared to exploiting and extending existing knowledge. Differentiation is not part of the lexicon at Malvern because teachers stretch more able pupils through deeper questioning and scaffolds that push their knowledge and understanding.
- Adaptive teaching techniques enable all pupils with SEND to fully engage with the learning intention, which sees them making progress in line with their peers. They make strong progress from their starting points.
- All non-teaching staff use their skills wisely to support pupils with SEND whilst encouraging them to become fully independent. TAs work closely with teachers to ensure that there is consistency in their joint provision. PPE plans are bespoke to each pupil, enabling them to make headway with their closely tailored targets.

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>)