



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR THE GRANGE ACADEMY

Name of School:	The Grange Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Ian Critchley
Hub:	North West
School phase:	Academy (all through)
MAT (if applicable):	Wade Deacon Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	11/02/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Effective
Date of last QA Review	Virtual Leadership Quality Assurance Review 5/07/2021
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Requires Improvement
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	08/07/2016

1. Context and character of the school

The Grange Academy is an all-through school for pupils aged 3 -16 located in the town of Runcorn in the wider Merseyside area. The school converted to academy status in 2018 joining the Wade Deacon Trust. There is a strong culture of collaboration with other schools in the Trust.

The school is in an area of significant deprivation with above average proportions of pupils eligible for the pupil premium in both primary and secondary sections. Over recent years the school has received higher numbers of applications into both sections suggesting rising levels of interest and confidence amongst the community. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is also well above the national average. The school houses three resource bases for pupils with autistic spectrum conditions and hosts two satellite provisions for a local special school.

Leaders promote the school values of respect, excellence, perseverance and safety, the 'REPS.' They are committed to creating a 'community that works together to create an exceptional learning journey for all.' Pupils benefit from a state of the art, well equipped and maintained, spacious building. The school holds national awards in Information and Guidance, Healthy Schools, School Games and Virtual Schools.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The curriculum is broad and balanced; roadmaps which illustrate the learning journey in each curriculum area are visible in curriculum areas. Plans have been co-constructed and there is good evidence of the careful mapping of skills across key stages.
- Curriculum leaders have developed carefully articulated subject development plans framed by a clear statement of intent and aligned with school priorities. Actions are clearly identified, and progress is sharply tracked at regular intervals.
- Staff benefit from access to an extensive programme of continuing professional development (CPD) including dedicated time to design and develop the curriculum. The CPD programme includes training for leaders on the use of coaching strategies designed to be used in line management meetings. A range of senior and middle leaders also access national professional qualifications.
- The CPD programme is highly inclusive and open to all members of the support team. Early Career Teachers offer significant praise for the work of mentors and for the opportunities to access a range of thematic training linked to the school's priorities. Several staff have also benefited from Team Teach and Emotional Literacy Support training.

- Leaders have successfully implemented an innovative programme designed to promote the well-being of the whole community. There is clear evidence of impact of The Happy at School Project (THASP) in the calm environment and positive relationships between pupils and staff.
- The school successfully managed to reduce the numbers of pupils who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Effective information and guidance are provided at key transition points, including between Years 6 and 7.
- Positive next step progression is facilitated by highly positive working relationships with local Post16 providers. Leadership of careers education is informed by a depth of understanding of local labour market information. The majority of the Gatsby benchmarks are met, including evidence of purposeful integration of careers within the curriculum.
- Highly trained pastoral leaders provide front line representation for the school, working closely with parents to provide support and guidance. The role of progress leader is clearly defined and this is enabling leaders to focus on the key priorities of improving attendance and promoting engagement in learning.
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is well led. Parents are provided with useful opportunities to develop their understanding of both the phonics scheme and EYFS framework. Phonics is a key priority; pupils are offered decodable books that match the sounds that they know, which is helping to drive fluency.
- Leaders conduct forensic analysis of patterns of attendance over half termly cycles. Pupils who are persistently absent are closely tracked and as a result, attendance is rapidly improving. During Covid lockdowns leaders demonstrated sensitive understanding of the challenges facing vulnerable families.
- The school benefits from experienced, highly skilled, and well-trained governors. They understand the key priorities and are ambitious for the success of the school. The Standards Monitoring Board receives useful presentations from subject leaders and governors conduct link visits designed to provide an additional level of quality assurance.
- Leaders are keen to ensure that staff workload is carefully considered; the adjustments to the marking policy including enhanced use of live marking and the new books of excellence, have had a positive impact on driving pride in presentation.
- There are a range of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate leadership. In the primary phase, minister badges enable pupils to carry out specific roles. The school council helps to promote the British value of democratic representation.

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

... the identification of planned opportunities for subject leaders to identify the key knowledge in each area of the curriculum and further develop leadership capacity continued to be of high priority for the school.

... the scope and range of wider curriculum opportunities were further enhanced in order to provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to develop character and cultural capital.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Pupils are clearly able to articulate their understanding of the school values. They are unanimous in their praise of school leaders and the positive impact of recent changes. Conduct both in lessons and around the school site is increasingly positive and recognised by pupils.
- The school environment is vibrant and well maintained. Classrooms are appropriately resourced and include subject specific visual resources and 3D working walls.
- During periods of lockdown pupils report that they were well supported with high quality remote learning. Pupils were able to identify precisely the use of baseline assessments. They talk with pride about their work and their achievements to date.
- Primary curriculum champions are positive about the support received from secondary colleagues in planning and developing the curriculum. They describe a culture of teamwork and collaboration, which has helped to secure appropriate long-term plans.
- Staff model positive behaviours and maintain close communication with pupils around the school site. Attitudes to learning scores are gathered in every lesson; this enables staff to track closely the high levels of engagement. The graduated approach to behaviour management includes incentives as well as sanctions. Generation of 'heat maps' also enables careful analysis of pupils who are at risk of exclusion.
- Curriculum leaders have developed well-sequenced schemes of learning. In the most effective teaching, task design is carefully matched to the needs of pupils. In these lessons pupils benefit from effective modelling, which is used to secure understanding.
- Leaders have made significant progress in developing high quality knowledge organisers. These resources are used to support the connect phase of the lesson and provide useful retrieval opportunities.
- The strategic approach to reading is multi-layered. Peer mentors support weaker readers in morning interventions. There are also many examples of confident use of vocabulary by pupils facilitated by staff. In the primary sector, the word of the week is secured through use of probing questions and choral repeat.
- The personal development curriculum has been well developed. The carefully considered relationships and sex education curriculum includes robust coverage of consent and harmful sexual behaviours.
- Pupils benefit from some innovative enrichment opportunities including karate, orienteering and quidditch. Clubs run every day with plans for expansion of the programme.

- Leaders have given careful consideration to the importance of ensuring that pupils understand the various cultures that make up modern British society. Both the assembly programme and the tutor programme include opportunities for pupils to consider respect and tolerance. Corridor displays signpost key concepts of equality and diversity, including the promotion of aspirational role models from diverse communities such as Marcus Rashford.

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

- ...there were greater consistency in the use of effective modelling to provide pupils with a useful scaffold to support their learning.
- ...there were more focus on the importance of providing an appropriate level of challenge which moves pupils more rapidly onto their next steps.
- ...there were further planned opportunities for pupils to engage in collaborative discussion prompted by skilful questioning.
- ...there were greater security in the implementation of the various strands of the reading strategy, including explicit teaching of reading skills.

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

- The specific needs of disadvantaged pupils are clearly identified and well understood. Staff use information about starting points to identify barriers to learning and plan accordingly. Curriculum design is appropriately ambitious and includes a range of carefully identified vocational subjects. Appropriate work experience placements provide useful opportunities for pupils to experience work related learning.
- The pupil premium strategy is research informed and includes coverage of a range of strands, including wider curriculum and attendance. Analysis of the impact of the previous year's activities is detailed and evidence based.
- Early identification of pupils with SEND ensures that barriers to learning are promptly addressed. Use of the Central Referral Form system acts as a gateway to completion of more detailed and fluent 'pupil on a page' documentation.
- Strong leadership of SEND ensures that pupils remain at the forefront of provision. Pupils are nurtured in carefully designed specialist accommodation which acts as a safe space and enables them to access social and emotional as well as academic support.
- Leaders place high value on the work of the Family Support Worker in promoting positive relationships with parents and carers. Tools such as Tapestry help to enhance communication, whilst pastoral staff work closely with senior leaders to provide up to date information on the impact of community issues on the health and welfare of pupils.

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

...leaders continued to forensically track the progress of vulnerable pupils to ensure that curriculum provision was appropriately tailored and sufficiently ambitious.

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

The school continues to work closely with partner schools in the local hub.

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.