
CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Beachcroft School
School Address:	35 Finchley Road, London, NW8 0NW
Hub School:	Woodfields School

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Unique Reference Number:	133923
Local Authority:	City of Westminster
Type of School:	Pupil Referral Unit
School Category:	Pupil Referral Unit
Age range of pupils:	11–16
Number on roll:	38
Head teacher/Principal:	Executive Head: Seamus Oates Head of School: Graham Sacks

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	20–21 March 2013
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	2 – Good

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	25–26 February 2014
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES

School Improvement Strategies: Outstanding

Achievement is: Good

Quality of Teaching: Good

Area of Excellent Practice:

English Confirmed

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Beachcroft School appears to be at the top of the Good grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report 20–21 March 2013 and is working towards Outstanding.

Information about the school

Beachcroft School provides education for students at risk of exclusion, those permanently excluded and those on fixed term exclusions from schools in the tri-borough partnership of Westminster City Council, Hammersmith and Fulham Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Most students are supported at school action plus, and one quarter of students have a statement of special educational needs, for their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Most students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The large majority are boys. A few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The school moved into a new building in January 2013. The unit uses a range of alternative provision.

School Improvement Strategies

What went well

- The leadership of the school continuously reviews the provision made by the school to ensure that students have the best possible chance to make outstanding progress and be well prepared for the next stage of their education. The tri-borough partnership's chosen system for streamlining school improvement processes, Bluewave Swift, has been successfully introduced.
- In response to a comprehensive analysis of tracking data, Beachcroft is in the process of reviewing and adapting its Year 11 curriculum in order to better meet the needs of all students. The school is considering, after appropriate consultation with staff, students and parents, the introduction of a greater range of vocational courses and work related opportunities.
- Robust processes are in place to ensure high quality teaching and learning are taking place. The school provides support in the form of coaching, lesson observation opportunities and target setting for teachers who are not yet consistently good or outstanding.
- Continuing professional development, training and coaching are a strength of the school. An increasing number of staff is involved in the delivery of training, coaching and mentoring. Strong practice, for example in the English department, is being shared across the school.
- Development of the leadership team has been recent and extensive. Middle leadership roles have been introduced for the 2013-14 school year. This has already been effective in increasing the capacity to turn strategic planning into operational procedures.

Even better if

- The school's development plan and self-evaluation documents were streamlined and succinct with clear priorities for development.
- Links with other challenge partners schools were exploited to help secure an outstanding mathematics department.

Pupil Achievement

In Key Stage 3, students are making strong progress in both English and mathematics. They often exceed the challenging targets set for them using the CATS baseline assessment data. Students are, on average, making two sub-levels of progress during an academic year. They make particularly rapid progress in reading. Progress in science has not yet reached the levels achieved

in the other two core subjects. By the end of Key Stage 3, a good proportion of students achieve at level 5 or above.

Attainment for students at Key Stage 4 is improving. The number of students gaining at least one accreditation and the number achieving multiple passes in GCSEs or equivalents is increasing. Progress in both English and science is strong. Issues around recruitment are a significant barrier to improving progress in mathematics. The school has put a number of measures in place to address this situation.

Academic tracking of student progress is robust. The school is confident in the validity and accuracy of the data in the majority of subject areas. The data is collected 6 times a year and leads to specific targeted interventions to support all students. In response to the most recent data collection student timetables were altered to provide one to one support to improve student progress.

Baseline assessments and on-going monitoring of students' attitudes enables staff to be more specific in supporting their emotional and behavioural progress. In addition, improvements in behaviour for learning is monitored through the use of the motivational Vivo miles online reward system.

Students typically move on successfully to other education, employment or training opportunities at the end of their placements. While the number of students reintegrating to mainstream is not high, there has been a improvement in this proportion over the previous two years.

Quality of teaching

The school timetabled lesson observations and learning walks so that all teachers were seen during the review.

What went well

- Detailed and thorough lesson planning shows that teaching staff have a clear understanding of each students' prior attainment and what they need to do to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding further. They use this effectively to ensure that lessons are highly personalised, allowing students to make exceptional progress from their individual starting points. Planning for literacy development promotes students' confidence well.
- Engagement in lessons is often strong, particularly in morning sessions. Activities are carefully selected to motivate students based on their own interests and aspirations. The pace of lessons allows student engagement to remain high throughout and reduces opportunities for off task behaviour. Students are challenged in lessons because teachers have high expectations of achievement for everyone. This is a strength of teaching in the school.
- Teachers use modelling effectively to support students in understanding concepts which allows them become clearer in their own understanding. In some lessons teachers employ targeted questioning which is well matched to students' current levels and provides opportunities to move learning forward rapidly. In the most effective lessons subject knowledge is strong allowing students understanding of key ideas to become fully developed.
- In one to one lessons, progress is often rapid for the student involved as teachers are able to respond and reshape the learning to closely match changing circumstances.

- Marking of students' work adheres to the school's policy and provides meaningful comments to help students improve the quality of their work. Some students' work shows that they use this feedback to make changes to the techniques they use in subsequent work.
- Teachers are aware of key triggers for problem behaviour. They manage these situations dynamically to avoid learning being adversely affected. Behaviour is well managed during lessons and appropriate action is taken in line with school policies when more complex situations arise. Praise and rewards are used effectively to both reward progress and positive behaviour for learning.
- Learning support assistants are integral to lessons. They provide high quality and timely support which impacts positively on learning and allows the targets students to make progress. For example, in a lesson where students were completing their individual BTEC assignments, they were helped and motivated to conduct research about rules of different sports which allowed them to make exceptional progress.

Even better if

- Questions were more open ended so that teachers had better opportunities to check students' understanding and allow them to express themselves more clearly.
- Students were given longer thinking time to process open-ended questions posed by the teacher.
- Opportunities to deepen students' understanding were enhanced through more secure subject knowledge of those teaching outside of their specialism.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

The English department has been established as a strong team over the past three years. All members of the department now have additional whole school leadership responsibilities; one is a member of the senior leadership team and two others are middle leaders. The department is at the forefront of driving improvements in teaching, learning and behaviour management across the school in all curriculum subjects. They are the iGCSE lead for English across the tri-borough alternative provision. While the other schools within the trust will undoubtedly benefit from this, senior leaders should be mindful of the impact this outreach work could have on the progress and achievement of their students.

English lessons observed were typically outstanding and reinforced the department's belief that students want to learn and achieve. The department has embedded an aspirational approach to the teaching of literacy both as a discrete subject and across the curriculum. This mainstream approach has resulted in 80% of 2013 school leavers securing a qualification at GCSE or functional skills level as appropriate. 100% of 2014 leavers have already secured such a qualification. Staff have liaised with colleagues in mainstream schools to ensure that the curriculum supports reintegration well. The delivery of functional skills across the curriculum is a priority area for staff training for the 2013-14 school year. English literature will be introduced in September 2014 providing the opportunity for students to secure two English GCSE qualifications.

Partnerships

The school continues to work closely with mainstream schools to improve the effectiveness and success of the transition process for students being reintegrated. The school works with a large

number of organisations that offer support for learners and their families, for example with drugs, criminality or sexuality issues. Dialogue between the school and external support services is co-ordinated by a member of SLT who then disseminates the information appropriately. Parental engagement has improved with the introduction of text messages, weekly phone calls and attainment postcards although the school recognises the need to develop this further.

The effectiveness of this provision may improve further if the academy trust was able to develop and establish, in conjunction with key stakeholders, a system that more effectively limits the expected length of referral to a fixed period. This could be associated with an agreed destination for each student from the beginning of placement.

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.