Written Report

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	**Beachcroft AP Academy**
School Address:	35, Finchley Road, London, NW8 0NW
Hub School:	The Bridge AP Academy

Telephone Number:	020 7483 4434
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Unique Reference Number:	140806
Local Authority:	Westminster
Type of School:	Alternative Provision
School Category:	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Number on roll:	36
Head teacher/Principal:	Seamus Oates – Executive Headteacher Andrew Burton – Head of School

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

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	11-13 January 2016

QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES

School Improvement Strategies: Outstanding

Outcomes for Pupils are: Outstanding*

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Outstanding

Area of Excellent Practice: Confirmed
Deployment of Learning Support Professionals

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Beachcroft AP Academy appears to have moved beyond the Good grade as judged by Ofsted in the academy's previous Ofsted report 20-21 March 2013 and is beginning to work within the Outstanding grade.

*The academy's leaders recognise that work is still in progress to make this secure, particularly in how they select and present information about students' outcomes.

Information about the school

- Beachcroft AP Academy converted to academy status on 1 April 2014 and is part of the TBAP trust. It caters for students with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- The academy acts as the pupil referral unit for the borough of Westminster, and also supports groups who are at risk of exclusion, or who, for various reasons, are unable to attend mainstream schools.
- The proportion of students who qualify for the pupil premium, the proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs and the proportion of students who are from minority ethnic communities are all well above average. The majority of students are boys.
- There has been a change of leadership since the previous Challenge Partners QAR.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- Improvements in some of the key outcomes measures are often the product of creative interventions. For example, the academy is able to provide examples of how communication with parents, partnerships with the authorities and modifications to the curriculum improves students' engagement and attendance.
- The academy draws on, and contributes to, the provision made by the trust as a whole to improve outcomes for students. A wider range of GCSE courses are now available because the trust's academies share specialist teachers who deliver lessons and support colleagues. This has given students more choice about the courses they follow, as well as ensuring access to qualifications above entry level. This is helping students to reach a greater proportion of the achievement targets identified during baseline assessment.
- There are now fewer supply teachers which has helped improve consistency. Staff are more committed to the improvement processes underpinned by performance management. Teachers new to the profession receive support from trust SLEs. The 'leverage leadership' coaching model has had a positive impact on the structure of lessons, the use of resources and the quality of questioning. External support, such as that provided by PIXL has supported improvements in the monitoring of assessment.
- The role of learning support professionals has become more established. They are now clear about their role and what the impact of their work should be on students' behaviour, attitudes, learning and aspirations. The sharing of information about students has improved, helping provision for students to meet their diverse needs.

Even Better If…

…the SEF and SDP were better coordinated, so that it is clearer that those areas identified in the SEF are linked strongly with development priorities.

…target setting was developed and refined to be more personalised to the particular circumstances of the academy.

…outreach support for schools was developed, especially when primary provision opens.

Pupil Outcomes

- Around two-thirds of students completing Key Stage 4 at the academy in the last academic year made at least expected progress in English. A larger proportion, around 78%, achieved this in mathematics. Leaders could usefully prepare information about the current rates of progress made by students in other year groups to support their evaluations. They also need to make sure that all students who have been or are currently are on roll are included in the information provided.
- The academy needs to be clearer about the proportion of students who make more than expected progress.
- Students' reading ages typically show very strong improvement over time. Students make around three times more progress than expected. This demonstrates that the value added by the academy, including the wave approach to interventions led by learning support professionals, is very effective in closing the gap between students' reading and chronological ages by around 18 months on average.
- Older students who are more likely to achieve the 5A*-C GCSE measure are typically referred on to a small unit within a neighbouring mainstream school. This has implications for the academy's results profile and is not a particularly useful measure of the academy's success. Nevertheless, on average, 12% of students over the past three years achieved this measure. The proportion of students awarded five GCSEs at grades A*-G has risen by 47% over three years and is now 71%. Predictions indicate that the academy hopes to improve this figure to 92% this year.
- Students in the Key Stage 3 classes initially make more rapid progress in improving key aspects of their behaviour and social, emotional and mental health than in their academic skills, knowledge and understanding. PASS data demonstrates significant improvements in attitudes to self and school but could usefully be measured more frequently.
- The academy's improved sustained reintegration model has led to a greater number of students successfully returning to mainstream school, including some in Key Stage 4. This is because the academy has forged better relationships with receiving schools and is getting better at preparing students for the transition, particularly through the support provided by learning support professionals. The academy is on track to meet this year's generic trust target for Key Stage 3 reintegration. It may now be appropriate to review whether it would be more appropriate to set challenging

targets for this measure based on baseline assessments and the professional judgement of staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

All except one of the academy's permanent teachers were seen during the review.

What Went Well

- The learning environment in classrooms is typically calm and orderly. The structure and routines established by staff, based on common TBAP approaches, enable students to anticipate change and respond appropriately. This reduces anxiety and encourages positive behaviour.
- Staff and students have productive relationships with each other. This helps to successfully promotes students' confidence and engagement during lessons. When working individually with learning support professionals, students are particularly well focused.
- Teachers' planning and preparation are thorough. Students are routinely informed about learning objectives so that they can participate in evaluating how successful they have been. Teachers' high expectations for student achievement are reflected in the provision for teaching up to GCSE A grade in Key Stage 4 lessons.
- Teaching resources, including the use of practical learning aids and ICT, help to stimulate students' interest and promote their independence.
- Marking of students' work is typically comprehensive and compliant with the academy's marking policy. It is mostly informative for students, giving them positive feedback about their work and how it could be improved. Students are offered opportunities to respond.
- Questioning by both teachers and learning support professionals is often skilled. It helps to promote students' thinking skills and avoids a reliance on spoon-feeding information by developing students' understanding.
- In some classes, teachers enable students to have the confidence to learn through taking risks and making mistakes.
- Additional staff are deployed and used effectively to support students' learning and progress. The academy has moved away from the concept of having other adults in the room to control students' behaviour. Teachers have had to adapt their practice to take account of the fact that there may not always be an extra member of staff in the room with them. Learning support professionals are increasingly and competently taking responsibility for directing students learning and providing them with meaningful mentoring.

Even Better If…

…behaviour was consistently challenged appropriately in all lessons, to ensure that there students always receive common messages about expectations from staff.

…where teachers expect responses to marking, they ensure students provide them to enhance their learning.

…opportunities for students to take risks and make mistakes, participate actively and lead learning were more consistent across the academy.

…provision for stretching and challenging students to develop and extend their learning, promote their independence and develop, use and apply higher order thinking skills was more extensive and consistent across the academy.

…differentiation was always clear in lessons where students have obviously different needs, demonstrating that staff have made the appropriate choice of resources, support, questioning and scaffolding to meet individual needs.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice
Deployment of Learning Support Professionals

Over the last year, the academy has changed the focus of the work of additional adults and significantly increased their responsibility for students' learning and progress. The role of 'teaching assistant' has been removed and learning support professionals (LSPs), with new terms and conditions have been established. They are now more involved with termly planning for both classroom curriculum delivery and individual student support.

LSPs are particularly responsible, at middle management and classroom level, for the delivery of interventions in phonics, literacy, handwriting, numeracy, speech and language skills and anger management. The academy uses baseline assessments to identify students' needs and allocate them to a needs band, or 'wave'.

While all LSPs are trained to provide all of these interventions, each wave also has a specialist in each of the areas as well as a wave leader, an LSP with management responsibilities. The academy makes significant use of digital resources such as Lexia and Manga High during 1:1 interventions with students.

The impact of LSPs' work is particularly evident in students' literacy skills. Their reading abilities have shown marked improvement, with 85% of students making at least expected progress and nearly two-thirds of students making progress at twice the expected rate.

LSPs also provide mentoring for all students. Each student is assigned an LSP who gets to know them well and can provide appropriate challenge and support throughout their time at the academy. This is helping to improve the quality of information shared between school staff during the academy's daily briefings.

Partnerships

How have you used Challenge Partners schools to address your previous 'Even Better Ifs'?

The academy has been an active participant in Challenge Partners hub meetings and has worked with other schools to review assessment practices in TBAP trust schools to inform improvements in our own school.

How have you worked with, or supported, other schools in Challenge Partners?

Staff have made use of the ITP and OTP as part of their continuing professional development. The Head of school is presenting at the Lightning Hub Challenge Partner event. He has also recently presented on Inclusive Practices at the Mayor's Annual Education Conference and at the annual AP conference at City Hall on 'Assessment within AP'. There are currently two senior leaders trained to carry out QA reviews. The academy commits at least two members of staff to the review process every year.

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.

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

Following discussion with the headteacher, the school would like to reflect further about what support they might like.