Written Report

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	**The Bridge AP Academy**
School Address:	Finlay Street, Fulham, London, SW6 6HB
Hub School:	The Bridge AP Academy

Telephone Number:	020 7610 8340
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Unique Reference Number:	139509
Local Authority:	Hammersmith and Fulham
Type of School:	Alternative provision
School Category:	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Number on roll:	98
Head teacher/Principal:	Seamus Oates – Executive Headteacher Andre Bailey – Head of School

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	15-16 May 2013
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	30 November – 2 December 2015

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:

School to school support – data-led behaviour improvement	Confirmed
School to school support – strategic leadership for alternative provision	Confirmed

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that The Bridge AP Academy appears to be firmly within the Outstanding grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report 15-16 May 2013.

Information about the school

- The Bridge AP Academy converted to an academy on 1 April 2013. At the same time as the academy came into existence, the three London boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea created a new collaborative arrangement for alternative provision within their area.
- The academy acts as the pupil referral unit for the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, 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.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- The academy has continued to embed the changes made prior to the previous review in how students are assessed on entry and how this information is used to make provision for their education. Learning support professionals are now assimilated into their roles and have responsibility for leading the range of different interventions under the academy's 'wave' approach.
- These staff are now beginning to be given further autonomy and greater accountability in the way they monitor and report on the impact of interventions. There is appropriate support, quality assurance and monitoring to ensure that the processes remain rigorous. Plans are in place for these staff to provide further support for students with their coursework assignments.
- The trust's self-evaluation, improvement planning and management information systems are now fully electronic. This has allowed wider contribution and comprehensive monitoring within the school and across the trust. Leaders are able, for example, to access and add to a wealth of information about students' learning, behaviour and attitudes. This has allowed leaders to identify patterns requiring action to be taken.

Even Better If…

…the data-rich school reviewed how data is summarised, compared and presented to give a full and balanced overview of the impact of the academy's work on students' achievement, behaviour, attendance and reintegration.

...progress measures allowed evaluation of the impact of the work of the academy over the length of stay of each student, perhaps establishing an average rate of progress which could be compared with expected and exceeding expected rates of progress

…students' progress and their development as a result of some the specific interventions such as for anger management was tracked so that the academy can readily show the impact of it work in improving students' behaviour.

…the consistency of teaching approaches seen in departments such as English were embedded more widely across the academy.

Student Outcomes

- Students' attainment on entry is typically below age related expectations, often due to a history of disrupted education. Over half of students join the school with reading ages that are three or more years below their chronological age.

- Standard measures of student performance do not necessarily provide a complete picture of the impact of the academy's work. This is because students join and leave the provision at different points through the year, with no fixed length of placement.

- The academy's systems allow individual students' progress to be tracked comprehensively. Leaders knowledge of individuals gives them confidence that students' learning and progress is strong. However, the academy's systems do not currently enable leaders to easily establish the 'big picture' of the proportion of students who are making expected progress, or how many are making rapid progress over the duration of their placement. The academy would benefit from always being in a position to present accurate summary data to support its judgements.

- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is better in mathematics than in English. There is a sustained trend of improvement over time in proportions of students achieving Level 5 in each subject. Trends in attainment in science are less consistent. In 2015, over one-third of students achieved Level 5.

- Recent Key Stage 4 attainment generally compares favourably to the national averages for alternative provision. For example, the proportion of students gaining at least one GCSE pass is consistently above 90% where nationally similar establishments reach around 58%. In 2015, this indicator reached 96%, bringing it broadly in line with the mainstream school average.

- The proportions of students passing five or more GCSE examinations, or achieving an A*-C grade in at least one, each show a trend of improvement over time. These proportions compare favourably to AP averages but remain below mainstream averages by a considerable margin. Few students at the academy achieve five or more GCSEs at A*-C. Nevertheless, the proportion is in line with the AP average.

- Students eligible for support from the pupil premium tend to do better than other groups. This is because the additional support helps to improve students' literacy and build their self-esteem, improving their access to learning.

- Over the past three years, around 15 students, typically from Years 9 and 10, have been reintegrated to mainstream schools. Some of these have required more than one placement to be successful.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teachers of core and vocational subjects, with a range of experience, were chosen according to their availability during the review.

What Went Well

- Teachers help students to clearly understand what they are expected to do. They focus appropriately on students' targets and how they are going to achieve them. This ensures that students are typically well engaged in learning in most lessons. Engagement is especially strong in practical subjects such as art, where students demonstrate particular pride in their work.
- The consistent application of the academy's behaviour management systems ensures that students are clear about the benefits of making a positive contribution to lessons and the consequences of any poor behaviour. Calm, measured and predictable responses from staff contribute well to the fostering of positive relationships between students and their teachers and ensure any issues are dealt with swiftly. Students clearly trust the staff to have their best interests at heart.
- Teachers' planning usually meets the diverse needs of the students in each class. In some lessons planning is personalised to individual students' academic and behavioural needs. Teachers deploy learning support professionals effectively as part of their planned use of different resources. Planning in English is particularly strong because it takes account of erratic attendance, provides an appropriate sequence of learning and anticipates difficulties and potential responses.
- In the best lessons, teaching supports high academic expectations. The strongest practice includes modelling of A-grade work as well as detailed written documents that explained students' attainment and provided targets for improvement. In many lessons, teachers' questions help students to improve their ability to explain their thinking and verify their learning.
- Teaching routinely seeks to reduce students' anxiety and provide 'quick wins'. Teachers' recognition of work that has been completed to the correct standard has a positive impact on students' motivation. Teachers' verbal feedback, encouragement and direction creates a purposeful and developmental climate in most classrooms.

Even Better If…

…the school's marking policy was implemented effectively and consistently in all lessons and across all departments.

…teachers' feedback had greater impact on learning through a more consistent, academy-wide approach to encourage students to respond to teachers' marking. This could possibly be incorporated into the 'TBAP Way' and monitored through work scrutiny.

…there was greater consistency in the effectiveness of questioning across lessons so that students were able to demonstrate their understanding. This could also possibly be incorporated into the 'TBAP Way'.

…scaffolding was in place in all lessons to support students in achieving more challenging outcomes. Better links could be made with outstanding work when identifying what will improve less strong work.

…questions were rigorously planned to check learning and understanding, particularly where the teacher is less experienced.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice
School to school support - data-led behaviour improvement and strategic leadership for alternative provision

These Areas of Excellent Practice have developed out of a vision to bring schools together within the trust to achieve consistency of delivery across providers. The academy has developed expertise over time in alternative provision academy conversion, alternative provision trust formulation and SEN support. As such this academy is well placed to support other alternative provision in leading school improvement and improving the monitoring of behaviour, as well as achieving consistency of approach at both school and trust level.

The proposed offer is to support schools in the implementation of the 'TBAP way' suite of systems to develop leaders and to monitor and improve behaviour. This is done through three key areas: CPD programmes, models for working, and data systems. The 'TBAP way' gives students a clear sense of the boundaries they are required to work within and the expectations that are placed upon them.

The academy has a track record of supporting other schools to improve behaviour systems. There are currently five Specialist Leaders of Education (SLE) based at the academy and a further four across the trust. These SLEs specialise in areas such as behaviour management, child development, attachment theory and anger management. They have worked across and beyond the trust to deliver support. The 'TBAP way' stems from the systems developed at the academy, and which have had a positive impact on students' outcomes.

The academy uses commercial digital assessment packages such as PASS and SNAP to gather baseline data on students' attitudes to themselves and education, as well as their special educational needs, upon entry. Staff have much experience in interpreting this data so that progress can be measured across a range of areas beyond academic attainment. At leadership level, this data system is used as part of teachers' performance management and appraisal.

The academy's leadership team has been instrumental in developing data systems to support the tracking and improvement of student achievement. The academy has developed its own very detailed and comprehensive system within the well-known SIMS package for monitoring students' learning and progress. The system provides tiered descriptors for behaviour, attitudes and learning as well as the regular attainment, progress and targets. This make is particularly suitable for the alternative provision environment where it is important to measure progress in students' personal development.

Bluewave Swift, a cloud based management system, is used to track staff performance across the academy and trust. It allows for easy mapping of staff achievements against the development plan. The impact of these systems on staff is that they are able to operate within a very clear framework that supports them in monitoring and holding others to account. The use of Bluewave Swift ensures a joined up, robust and consistent approach across performance management and SIMS enables leaders to have a rapid overview of student data.

Partnerships

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

We have been active participants in Challenge Partners hub meetings and have worked with colleagues to review assessment practices in a number of Challenge Partners schools to inform improvements in our own school.

The Head of School attended an assessment and data 'Peer Sharing' session hosted by Challenge Partners to locate excellent practice and pool ideas.

Staff have made use of the ITP & OTP as part of their continuing professional development.

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

The Head of School is a member of the Challenge Partners SEN Board and has been involved in the development of an SEN review structure with colleagues from other Challenge Partners schools and the Challenge Partners SEN lead David Bartrum. The Head of School has worked with partner schools on reviews of their SEN protocols.

The Head of School co-authored the CP assessment in Special Schools and AP Settings: http://challengepartners.org/publications/view/17#.VlxeC4RByAQ

There are currently three senior leaders trained to carry out QA reviews. We commit at least two members of staff to the review process every year.

The academy hosts visits from Challenge Partners colleagues and has provided support on data systems and the use of SIMS.

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 academy would like some additional support with assessment without levels as part of their on-going development.