
CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Octavia AP Academy
School Address:	Coalwharf Road, Wisbech, PE13 2FP
Hub School:	The Ashley School

Telephone Number:	0203 108 0367 ext 105
Email address:	nmorley@tbap.org.uk

Unique Reference Number:	142793
Local Authority:	Cambridgeshire
Type of School:	Academy
School Category:	Alternative Provision
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Number on roll:	31
Head of School/Executive Head:	Nick Morley/Angela Tempany

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	A widespread re-arrangement of a number of previous Cambridgeshire AP provisions means that reference to any predecessor school is meaningless.
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	N/A

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	13-15 March 2017
--	------------------

QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies: Outstanding

Outcomes for Pupils are: Good

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Good

Overall Review Evaluation

A widespread re-arrangement of a number of previous Cambridgeshire AP provisions means that reference to any predecessor school is meaningless. The academy is yet to have its first Ofsted inspection but the entire review team concluded that in view of the above estimates the academy appears to be working within Good grade. The academy recognises that to be securely Good the rapid rate of overall improvement needs to continue and in particular the evidence of pupil progress needs to be much clearer.

1. Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

Information about the school

- Cambridgeshire AP provision was re-arranged in 2013 and the school formerly on this site then became part of the TBAP Multi-Academy Trust in May 2016. The Academy inherited no useful information about previous performance.
- The local authority appointed a caretaker Head in early 2016 and he was subsequently made the substantive Head by TBAP. Some former members of staff have been replaced and the academy is now much less reliant on supply teachers.
- Since September 2016 the academy has been working on an extensive programme of fundamental improvements so that policies, structures and systems enable the quality of provision to be monitored and analysed.
- The academy currently has 31 secondary-aged students on roll, almost entirely in Y10 and Y11, although mobility is high. The students have previously been in mainstream schools where they were not succeeding because of learning or behavioural difficulties associated with SEMH. Y11 students are regarded as permanently on roll but there is a strong emphasis on re-integrating younger students.
- 81% of students are White British and the remainder have other ethnic backgrounds. 1 student is LAC, 6 students are EAL and 68% of the students are disadvantaged. 78% of the students are boys and 6% of them have child in need status.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- This is a school where senior leaders clearly have drive and ambition and have set out an extensive programme to bring stability and structure to what was only recently a school with a number of shortcomings. A wide range of documents is focussed upon policies, systems and action plans intended to bring about rapid improvement.
- Senior leaders know the staff and students exceptionally well and focus appropriately on areas for improvement. There are raising achievement plans for each subject and a strong overall emphasis on 5 key learning strategies. Staff and students respond exceptionally well and there is a great impression of an academy with a strong ethos working collectively and positively towards improved outcomes. Given the short time since the academy was established, this is an exceptional achievement.
- There is a coherent link between the self-evaluation report and the school improvement plan. Issues arising from self-evaluation are pursued within the improvement plan.
- The school improvement plan is predominantly a detailed organisational plan. It refers to a range of important tasks that need to be undertaken in order to bring

order to the academy and includes details of the in-year progress towards their completion. It also contains sharp success criteria for improvements in literacy and attendance.

- The school is working towards defining and introducing Attainment 5 and Progress 5 as the key measures of achievement and is embedding Pupil Asset so that the academy has a reliable system for tracking and evaluating individual and group progress.
- The TBAP structure provides a strong, supportive framework on which the academy can build. In particular, the shared expectations and shared information within a network of similar academies provides sources on which Octavia can call for advice, support, validation, moderation and CPD.
- Pupil progress reviews have been introduced and take place at two-week intervals. Progress information is uploaded to the central system at no more than 6-week intervals but sometimes more often.
- A very impressive student welfare and inclusion service co-ordinates a wide range of highly personalised pastoral support activities. These include therapeutic activities, access to counselling, parental support events, preparation for adulthood and post-16 support. The students and the wider community hold this aspect of the school in very high regard.
- A daily staff briefing and weekly staff newsletter are of exceptional value because whilst addressing organisational arrangements they also refer to aspects of teaching, the current priorities and the recently emerging evidence of improvements.
- Discussions with a parent and a multi-systemic therapist provided only positive views of the academy. The parent particularly valued the daily information received about progress, the personalised learning approach, the preparation for adulthood and the early interventions arranged when issues arise. The multi-systemic therapist had very similar views and also identified the pro-active work done with other agencies and the very strong staff/student relationships.
- A local authority representative is clearly delighted with the improvements that have been brought about at the academy in a very short space of time. The Head Teacher works very closely with the authority and continues to adapt the TBAP model to the particular needs of this community and the students. A focus on life skills, a wide range of opportunities and constant engagement with the community are now very evident features of the provision.
- The academy inherited a well-designed, recently constructed building that has an excellent range of facilities. The academy maintains this building to a very high standard and lays great emphasis on the quality of the learning environments. The classrooms are immaculately organised and surround the students with a variety of explicit and subliminal messages that promote caring behaviour and independent learning.

Even Better If ...

... a distinction was made between an organisational plan that focuses upon tasks and a short outline of strategic intentions that focuses upon sharp success criteria and the precise measures that will be used to gauge the impact of improvement actions.

... greater clarity was brought to the current works in progress by defining when the academy will be in a better position to provide a fuller picture of progress across the curriculum in all year groups and subjects. It is particularly important to complete the work being done on Pupil Asset and before proceeding further it would be helpful to determine what key information needs to be drawn from Pupil Asset at intervals in order to provide a current picture of Attainment 5 and Progress 5. A summary of these two elements of achievement needs to be coherently presented in a short, sharp, succinct format at intervals during the year and at the end of each year. The primary purpose of this summary will be to share with internal stakeholders a clear view of strengths and areas for improvement but it will also provide an easily digestible report for any external evaluators.

Pupil Outcomes

- Attainment in 2015-2016 was 40% 5A*-G GCSE. Of these, EAL was 43%, PP was 43% and LAC was 50%.
- 90% of Y11 in 2015-2016 moved on to education, employment or training.
- Attainment targets were set for 2016-2017 – 85% 5A*-G GCSE.
- Current attainment predictions for 2016-2017 are 71% 5A*-G GCSE and 35% to obtain at least one C grade, 17% to obtain at least 2 C grades and 11% to obtain at least 3 C grades. 100% of LAC and PP and 35% of EAL are on track for 5A*-G.
- The academy is not yet able to provide a sophisticated analysis of current progress. The academy inherited no useful information about progress so Pupil Asset was introduced in Autumn 2016. By December 2016 baseline assessments using CATS had been carried out and entered into the system. In February 2017 progress information was added but this was against the TBAP key performance (attainment) indicators within the Pupil Asset system rather than against the academy curriculum and individual student targets. The system will shortly be improved so that it will be possible to track individual student progress over time against personal targets set using the academy curriculum.
- Because of the unclear records of progress over time co-observers paid particular attention to evidence of progress within workbooks and in the lessons observed. This provided a very positive picture.
- Attendance this year so far is 78.15% to be set against a national AP figure of 68%. Given that some pupils were originally non-attenders this is a strong indicator of the academy's success.

- Surveys of learners during this school year indicate that 81% of students have a very positive view of the academy and that more specifically 74% of them have a high regard for the quality of teaching.
- A discussion with students provided clear evidence of positive attitudes towards the support provided by the academy. Significantly, one student openly referred to the academy as a “joyous” place to be.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- The academy has observed 6 lessons this year and has formed a mixed view of the effectiveness of teaching. 15 other Learner Progress Classroom Check Points have taken place this school year. As a result of all these evaluations the academy has concluded that there are mainly strengths but some areas for improvement across subjects.
- 9 lessons were co-observed during the review and co-observers were entirely in agreement about their conclusions. The most effective teaching was characterised by detailed, differentiated planning based upon prior learning and a calm and considered approach particularly when learners arrived in an unsettled mood or were reluctant to engage in a task. Supportive systems of marking, clear feedback to students, positive re-enforcement, strong staff/student relationships, and careful but challenging questioning were also contributory factors in these lessons.
- A focus on independent learning, a well paced and scaffolded lesson structure and short time-limited activities that promoted high levels of engagement were features of some lessons.
- Some teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and use this to provide clear step-by-step learning opportunities.
- A PE lesson had a clear link with numeracy and demonstrated good use of student choice of activity, a reward system and a competitive element.
- A construction lesson focussed clearly on safe working practices.
- Support staff often demonstrate their understanding of the learning intentions by extending the activities and asking challenging questions.
- Engaging lesson starter activities are often very effective and promote good student behaviour for learning. One result of this is that students are confident to ask questions and are not afraid to make mistakes.
- A number of examples of very well presented student work were seen in the classrooms.
- The academy refers to the Teacher Standards and the Octavia 5 Key Teaching and Learning Strategies when evaluating teaching. As a result of evaluation, the academy is focussing on the use of feedback to students, the use of peer assessment and differentiation.

Even Better If ...

... students always knew what they are expected to learn next, how this relates to their prior learning and the extent to which they have progressed during the lesson.

... the pace of teaching was adjusted according to the immediate needs of the pupils.

... more opportunities were created for peer assessment.

... extension tasks were available for students making faster progress.

... the work being done on Pupil Asset was completed so that it becomes the fully embedded system for tracking and evaluating pupil progress from their starting points. The information provided by Pupil Asset should then be evaluated to determine the extent to which it impacts upon pupil outcomes.

... the emphasis within achievement targets shifts from attainment to progress from starting points.

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 some additional support with the use of Pupil Asset. A link with Milestone Academy in Dartford was established for this purpose during the review and an arrangement has already been made for an Octavia senior leader to visit Milestone in the near future.

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.