

## Written Report

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### CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

<b>Name of School:</b>	<b>Abbeyfield School</b>
<b>School Address:</b>	Stanley Lane, Chippenham, Wilts, SN15 EXB
<b>Hub School:</b>	Royal Wootton Bassett Academy

<b>Telephone Number:</b>	01249 464500
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<b>Unique Reference Number:</b>	131969
<b>Local Authority:</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Type of School:</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School Category:</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	11-18
<b>Number on roll:</b>	767 including the Sixth Form
<b>Head teacher/Principal:</b>	Ian Tucker

<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	27-28 September 2012
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Good

<b>Date of Quality Assurance Review:</b>	3-5 March 2016
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## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES<sup>1</sup>

<b>School Improvement Strategies:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Outcomes for Pupils is:</b>	Good
<b>Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment</b>	Outstanding
<b>Area of Excellent Practice: Provision for vulnerable learners</b>	Confirmed

### Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Abbeyfield School appears to be at the top of the Good grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report 27-28 September 2012 and is working towards Outstanding.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

- Abbeyfield is smaller than the average-sized secondary school serving the town of Chippenham. Numbers on roll are set to rise significantly in the coming five years as the planned growth for the town develops.
- The vast proportion of students are of White British heritage, with only 10% coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. Similarly, the proportion of students for whom English is an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of students in receipt of special educational needs support is below average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.

## School Improvement Strategies

### What Went Well

- Abbeyfield School's key issues have been identified based on robust self-evaluation processes. This is demonstrated in the school development plan, which focuses on teaching and learning and leadership and management at all levels.
- To drive forward these priorities the school has invested considerable resources in developing middle leaders. This includes CPD for middle leaders on quality-assuring teaching and learning within their departments. Retention of middle leaders is being addressed through establishing the 'wider leadership team' (WLT) and associate senior team members.
- Rigour is demonstrated through a whole series of meetings that hold the various stakeholders to account. Middle leaders present the findings from the quality assurance process to the senior team. The WLT meet regularly to discuss vulnerable students and decide on actions to resolve areas of underperformance. The headteacher then shares these findings with a specific team of governors who monitor school improvement.
- The self-evaluation form and the corresponding evidence documents are thorough, allowing all stakeholders to signpost the various pieces of evidence they are involved with. This enables them to demonstrate the impact that each strand of the SDP is having.
- The school has made considerable progress in embedding effective marking and student reflective DIRT time.

- The senior leadership team demonstrates, as the pupil premium review suggests, that they are closing the gap for the disadvantaged students group and have devised many excellent initiatives to supply individual support to these students.
- Students who spoke to the QAR team in the student voice activity were unreservedly positive about their school experience.

### **Even Better If...**

...all key improvement strategies were implemented consistently in all subjects.

### **Outcomes for Pupils**

- Achievement at Abbeyfield School is showing an upward trend. Last year, the school achieved 59% A\*–C including English and mathematics, which placed them above the national average and was an improvement on the previous two years.
- The average capped total points score rose significantly from 278.5 in 2014 to 316.9 in 2015, which placed them above the national average.
- Performance in English rose rapidly in 2015 and the average points score improved from being significantly below the national average in 2014 to significantly above in 2015. There is, however, a gap of 14% between the attainment of males and females which the school is addressing.
- The percentage of students achieving the highest grades in English was also significantly above the national average at 20.2%.
- The attainment of students entering the school with high or middle prior attainment is above the national figure in almost every measure – in Basics and science, 100% of those who entered the school with high prior attainment achieved A\*-C.
- The progress of students has risen in every value added measure over the last year and significantly so across the Best 8 subjects and in English, where the score is now broadly in line with the progress that has been made in mathematics over the last three years. The school has utilised the experience of their mathematics team to ensure successful strategies are shared across other departments.
- Although better than 2014, progress for groups of students across a range of subjects is below the national average. The school is embedding a very clearly targeted and monitored intervention programme from Year 7 through to the sixth form to ensure any learner who is underachieving will get back on track. Consequently, predictions for 2016 show that gaps are likely to narrow further for disadvantaged learners.
- The school completes a termly analysis of progress of vulnerable groups against other students in English and mathematics. Progress in other subjects is also scrutinised through a departmental analysis which is RAG-rated for each student against targets. These actions are executed after each data drop and the

intervention process, which is clearly evident across all areas, enables staff to reduce gaps whilst keeping attainment high.

- The school has increased the focus on attainment and engagement in the sixth form, which is leading to significant improvements. The rigour with which the school's leaders are monitoring the quality of learning experiences for post-16 students is enabling them to set goals in line with the high expectations held in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- The school has a well planned and considered model in place for assessment without levels. Their mastery curriculum is embedded across the school and is enabling leaders to assess knowledge and skills in every subject, which is then linked to the students' personal trajectory or 'flight path' to their GCSE target. The model is discussed by students who have a clear understanding of the progress they make through the stages and how this relates to their success in the subject.

## Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

### What Went Well

- Teachers use effective planning to help students learn well. Lessons are planned around a single learning objective. Success criteria for outcomes are clearly outlined, meaning that students focus well on their learning from the start of the lesson.
- Teachers give students feedback in line with the school's assessment policy. Students use this feedback well and they know what they need to do to improve. This is well developed across many areas of school, with widespread use of 'What Went Well/Even Better If/My Response Is..' stamps. Best practice was seen in MFL books, where teachers phrased the EBI as a question.
- Students are given time to review written feedback and respond to it in lessons through strategies such as DIRT. In mathematics books, for example, the MRI was often a response to a question, which the teacher had stuck into books to indicate consolidation or to show how misconceptions have been addressed.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and they plan activities which build on previous learning. Some questioning was used to probe students' responses, and in one mathematics lesson, it was pleasing to see the teacher reshape tasks, giving explanations to tackle misconceptions. As a result, students were able to make progress on an area they had previously been struggling with.
- Teachers make effective use of questioning strategies to create a secure learning environment. Creative use of the staff ID badge was evident, enabling them to employ the school's 'Stuck' policy purposefully, and the 'pause, pounce, bounce' strategy also showed some impact.

- Teachers know their students well across all subjects and at all key stages. This is completely in line with their mantra that the school is ‘big enough to make a difference but small enough to know each student.’ Relationships between teaching staff and students are positive and a definite strength of the school. Behaviour is consistently managed well so that very little low level disruption interferes with learning in the classroom.
- Teachers set homework that is in line with the school’s policy and appropriate for the age and stage of students. This consolidates learning and prepares students well for work to come. The use of ‘Show My Homework’ has had a positive impact at all levels, as well as being received favourably by parents. Tasks are set to include a range of styles such as consolidation, application and preparation.
- Teachers develop students’ reading and writing well across the curriculum. Silent reading was observed in tutor periods, and the Accelerated Reader scheme has seen an increased number of students reading for pleasure. 1:1 intervention programmes such as handwriting and touch-typing for Year 7 students on the BEAMS (Building English And Maths Skills) curriculum is showing impact across the wider curriculum.
- Teachers expect and encourage all students to work with positive attitudes so that they can apply themselves and make good progress. Resilience is a feature within lessons; students are not afraid to give a ‘wrong’ answer, as was observed in a geography lesson.
- Through DIRT time and homework, students commit to improving their work. This is evident through work scrutiny, and good practice was seen in English books, especially at Key Stage 3, where first drafts were rewritten following feedback and MRI comments.
- Teachers promote equality of opportunity and diversity in teaching and learning.

### **Even Better If...**

...teachers were to take further opportunities to open up discussions with students who want to find out more, for example, always taking opportunities to open up debate and spread this thirst for learning through more probing questioning.

...teachers used their good knowledge of students to plan tasks with appropriate for all throughout the lesson.

## **Quality of Area of Excellent Practice**

### **Provision for vulnerable learners**

Abbeyfield School has devoted a great deal of time and effort to improving the performance of vulnerable and disadvantaged students in the school. They have approached the

narrowing the gap agenda with vigour and determination and the fruits of their labours are bringing about real improvements for these students. Increased capacity in the senior leadership team and in the governing body has ensured that this area has gained even more effective support. There has also been a greater emphasis on staff accountability at all levels, and class teachers now give greater focus to these students in their planning, questioning, feedback and marking. Staff receive regular CPD on this matter and have undertaken action research to further develop this provision.

In overall terms, the school has developed very detailed data tracking for all students, but this has been effectively applied to monitoring and supporting vulnerable students. 5A\*-C including English and mathematics at GCSE has risen by 27% in the last year and robust predictions indicate that this figure will continue to rise again this summer. Value added is also predicted to show a dramatic increase and move very close to the figure suggested for non-disadvantaged students. Likewise, the Progress 8 figure looks set to show a much decreased gap. A further statistic giving further kudos to the school in this area is that there have been no NEETs for the last two years, indicating that vulnerable students are fully equipped to take the next stage in their lives on leaving Abbeyfield.

The school has developed a number of highly effective strategies to support these students, for example, the BEAMS initiative where vulnerable students receive dedicated support and guidance to boost their performance in core subjects. In addition, 'vulnerable learner conferences' are held termly to review and monitor the support they receive, ensuring that a bespoke programme can be assembled that will lead to the greatest effect. The positive effect that these and many other strategies are having has led to Abbeyfield becoming the lead school in Wiltshire on provision for vulnerable students.

## **Partnerships**

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

This was the school's first Challenge Partners review.

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

Despite being relative newcomers to Challenge Partners, Abbeyfield School has worked closely with their Challenge Partners hub school as part of their Teaching School Alliance. The school engages in close cooperation with three Primary schools in the hub, chiefly on effective transition and cross-phase teaching. The school has also hosted reviewer training.

**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 not like any further support at this time.