



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR DOVELANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Name of School:	Doveland's Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Jenny Slinger
Hub:	East Midlands South Hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	The school has chosen not to have estimates for this review.
Date of this Review:	20/01/2025
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	This is the school's first Challenge Partners review.
Date of last QA Review	Not applicable.
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	11/01/2022

Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers, agrees that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all levels Not applicable

Quality of provision and outcomes Not applicable

AND

Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs

Area of excellence Not applicable

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence Not applicable

Overall peer evaluation estimate Not applicable

Important information

- The QA Review provides a peer evaluation of a school's practice in curriculum, teaching and learning, and leadership. It is a voluntary and developmental process, and the peer review team can evaluate and offer 'peer evaluation estimates' based only on what the school chooses to share with them.
- The QA Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.
- The QA Review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. If you choose to share this report, or extracts thereof, externally (e.g. on your website or with parents), please ensure that it is accompanied with the following text:

Challenge Partners is a charity working to advance education for the public benefit. We are not a statutory accountability body. The QA Review does not audit schools' safeguarding or behaviour policies and practices. However, Lead Reviewers and visiting reviewers are expected to follow Challenge Partners' safeguarding policy and report any concerns as set out in the procedures.

1. Context and character of the school

Dovelands Primary School is a large school, close to Leicester city centre. It has a 75-pupil admission number in each cohort which necessitates some mixed age classes. There is also a 24 place, school-managed nursery on site. The school is a popular choice in the locality and most classes are full.

Pupils originate from many different ethnic backgrounds. Most pupils speak English, although there are approximately 50 different home languages spoken, and over one third of pupils classified as speaking English as an additional language (EAL). The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is growing, although is currently still below the national average. Similarly, the number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is slightly lower than the national picture.

Dovelands Primary is a UNICEF rights respecting school, attaining gold status in 2023. The headteacher was appointed later in 2023, having previously been headteacher of another city school. She is supported by a large senior leadership and staff teams, many of whom have worked at the school for a considerable period.

The school is a study site for the Leicester and Leicestershire School Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) centre, which allows the staff team to deliver training to teaching students and demonstrate their best practice.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The experienced headteacher leads the school with passion and pragmatism. She speaks with conviction about the school's strategic, child-centred approach, together with recent developments which have enhanced teaching and learning.
- The school's ethos has been developed collaboratively with all stakeholders and is centred around everyone being kind, respectful, brave, aspirational, and belonging. Rewards and celebrations are related to the ethos, with certificates and postcards valued greatly by pupils and families.
- Leaders at all levels are actively involved in school development planning, with their robust and cohesive systems for monitoring and evaluation enabling the entire staff team and governing body to have a clear understanding and ownership of the priorities. The plan is linked closely to action plan foci which are led by identified leaders, with individual subject plans underpinning these. Priorities are shared with families and governors, with regular support and challenge provided by School Improvement Leicester specialists.

- The learning environment is inviting and well organised, both indoors and outside. Communal areas celebrate the school's ethos, whilst also focusing on reading for pleasure. Classroom expectations are consistent, with working walls and displays of pupils' work evident. The use of low stimulus display boards, woodland greenery and fairy lights throughout create a calm and nurturing ambience. This leads to an engaging climate for learning which pupils respond to with enthusiasm.
- Friendly and productive relationships are key to life at Dovelands, with pupils showing respect for each other and for adults. Clear expectations, in and out of classes, have become embedded through development of the behaviour and relationship strategy, together with the excellent role modelling by the highly motivated staff team.
- The curriculum is enriched with many extra-curricular activities that help prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. These include a wide range of visits and visitors linked to the curriculum, including trips to local parks, places of worship, to the nearby King Richard III centre. There are many fundraising events related to the UNICEF accreditation, including supporting local food and clothes banks currently. In addition, pupils benefit from a variety of leadership opportunities, such as being school councillors, UNICEF ambassadors, eco warriors, reading ambassadors, lunchtime monitors, and sports leaders.
- Leaders consider the wellbeing of the staff team very thoughtfully, whilst being conscious of balancing this with empowering all adults to also take responsibility for their own 'living well' decisions. Many initiatives support wellbeing, such as regular surveys to gain the views of all, shared PPA time, and ready access to the mental health lead and external counselling. In addition, termly Golden Weeks, when no meetings are scheduled and fun events planned, further strengthen the team ethos.
- The school offers an extensive range of popular workshops for parents, designed to inform both academic and pastoral aspects of their children's school lives. Notably, the Parent Teacher Family Association is very supportive, with the substantial funds raised being targeted to supplement development plan priorities.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

- ... leaders built on the strengths across their team to further raise teachers' aspirations to increase the proportion of pupils achieving highest standards.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Leaders and teachers have worked hard to develop their bespoke curriculum which is coherently planned and sequenced. It takes a subject specific approach through the two-year rolling programme, which is necessitated to ensure no repetition for pupils in the mixed age classes. Meaningful links will be made between subjects or themes when appropriate. Target memory grids have been devised to support the delivery of foundation subjects, together with substantive and disciplinary knowledge maps and ongoing retrieval practice. These are formalised by end of unit quizzes which are used to assess learning.
- The whole staff team benefit from a well-planned programme of continuing professional development (CPD). Notably, all teachers are involved in weekly coaching sessions which help to develop their practice, with leaders regularly talent-spotting to train additional coaches. Subject and phase leaders often deliver sessions to colleagues, focusing on current priorities. Consequently, the subject and pedagogical knowledge of all adults is strong.
- Lessons typically include an 'I do, we do, you do' lesson structure, including strategies such as 'think, pair, share', and 'signal, pause, insist'. These strategies are well-embedded and intended to develop pupils' oracy, vocabulary, and reasoning skills. This was evidenced well during Year 6 writing sessions, when pupils engaged positively in 'conscience alley' discussions about the text features being explored.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is bright, spacious and well-resourced. Learning is linked purposefully through the range of continuous provision activities, with an effective balance of adult- and child-led challenges. This was very evident when children showed confidence and understanding whilst engaging in a variety of birdwatching tasks related to their current text, as well as to the BBC Birdwatch survey.
- Much focus is given to the development of early reading and phonics. Consistency was apparent across the different phonics groups, with accurate pitch and competent delivery by all adults involved. As a result, phonics outcomes achieved are similar to national averages.
- The commitment to the development of reading continues into older year groups, with a love of reading particularly engendered. High-quality novels are selected to frame much of the English curriculum. This impetus was illustrated in Year 3 and 4 shared reading sessions, when pupils enjoyed skimming and scanning extracts of their novel which supported their prior learning.
- The teaching and learning of writing is a whole-school priority, exemplified by the termly assessments undertaken across all year groups which demonstrate the progression effectively. There is continual attention given to developing core grammar and higher-level vocabulary in a variety of practical ways. For instance, in a Year 5 lesson pupils were building on their existing skills in various comprehension tasks related to a non-chronological report. This was

exemplified by a pupil who said, "I like that we do activities and are not listening all the time".

- A mastery approach is taken to the teaching and learning of mathematics, with consistency mostly seen across parallel classes. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were enthusiastically identifying division arrays and then being challenged with related word problems. They worked well in pairs and could speak confidently about their reasoning.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are close to national averages. Predictions for 2025 indicate there will be upward trends in all subjects.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

... teachers considered further ways to inject awe and wonder into lessons, to build greater inspiration and engagement to enhance the quality first teaching evident.

... challenge was injected into all aspects of lessons for all learners, particularly in mathematics.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- The inclusion lead takes responsibility for both the leadership of inclusion and for disadvantaged pupils. This coherent approach reflects the importance placed on these vulnerable groups. She is the school's SENDCo and speaks very confidently about her role in proactively supporting the most vulnerable pupils, whilst working with the pastoral team. The team also includes the mental health and attendance lead, the pastoral support lead, and the emotional literacy support assistant. All members of the team work closely together, whilst liaising effectively with external agencies, to ensure the needs of vulnerable and hard to reach pupils are met as beneficially as possible.
- EAL pupils benefit from well-managed support, carefully selected resources and close monitoring. Consequently, new arrivals make rapid progress and quickly settle into life at Dovelands.
- The curriculum is successfully adapted to respond to the needs of vulnerable pupils. A successful balance of assistance in classes, alongside specific interventions, is established. Individual targets are set termly for SEND and disadvantaged pupils and tracked carefully. As a result, evidence indicates that most pupils are making good progress from their individual starting points.

- Teaching assistants are highly valued members of the teaching team, they know the pupils well and work purposefully with small groups and individuals.
- Vulnerable pupils thrive in the school environment, with dedicated areas such as The Nest proving very valuable. This is an informal, additional provision which SEND pupils attend at specific times during the school day.
- The behaviour and attitudes of all pupils, including those most vulnerable, are generally very positive. Pupils respond appropriately to the clear expectations apparent, together with the warm, nurturing relationships and consistent messages given from all members of the staff team.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved for all groups of pupils, including those disadvantaged. This is due to many recent proactive initiatives, such as a fully funded nurture breakfast club and subsidised places on all school trips.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

- ... leaders considered compiling case studies to evidence the impact of the support given.
- ... additional links were established between the pastoral team and vulnerable families by inviting parents to attend the nurture breakfast club at key times of the year.

5. Area of Excellence

The school chose not to apply for an Area of Excellence for this review.



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Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse content reports from across the hub networks including using AI tools to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector (sharing these with the partnership) each year. The QA Review reports remain confidential to Challenge Partners and the host school. This ensures that schools embrace the review as a development process, acting as a catalyst for their ongoing improvement. This is the primary purpose of the QA review. However, our aim is that the thematic analysis will demonstrate the additional value of a sector wide overview, illustrated with real-life examples.

For further support following your QA Review, schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools. The School Support Directory can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.

(<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report

(<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)