

Written Report

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	St Catherine's RC School
School Address:	Vale Drive, Barnet, EN5 2ED
Hub School:	Compton

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Unique Reference Number:	101333
Local Authority:	Barnet
Type of School:	Primary
School Category:	Voluntary-Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Number on roll:	503
Headteacher/Principal:	Mary Ainger

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	2009
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	3 rd to 5 th February 2016
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies:	Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils is:	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:	Outstanding
Area of Excellent Practice: Growing Leaders	Confirmed

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that St Catherine's appears to be within the Outstanding grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report of 2009.

¹Please 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

- This primary school is larger than average. It draws pupils from a wide area of Barnet and serves two Roman Catholic parishes.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery for 52 part-time children and two Reception classes.
- 42% of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above National.
- The percentage of children who speak English as an additional language is above National.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- From the moment one enters St Catherine's, you are in a unique environment. There is an excellent drive for continual improvement with a shared passion for 'getting it right for the children.'
- The management structure has been modified to adapt to the changing circumstances of the previous headteacher leaving in July 15. Key responsibilities have devolved to a strong team of senior leaders. This is very effective distributed leadership and the clearly defined roles and excellent relationships underpin this.
- The interim head and senior leaders have embraced the challenge and found it: 'Exciting, challenging and rewarding.'
- Staff have undertaken training through the Compton Hub to develop their leadership skills and they meet regularly with other senior leaders from other schools. This enables best practice to be shared.
- Strong curriculum leadership, particularly for the area of excellence, means that subject leaders are aware of the needs of children and teachers across the school. They monitor long and medium term planning and use data effectively to identify areas that need to be developed as part of the whole school development plan.
- The development of middle leaders has been a key priority and all class teachers have now become curriculum leads. They all have to develop and lead the staff in assessment procedures in their individual subjects.
- The mentoring of NQTs has a specific focus to ensure that they feel supported in all aspects of school life and they really appreciate being able to plan with experienced members of staff.
- The infrastructure for the training of TAs is robust. It is evident that they know the children that they work with really well. All staff share planning.
- The school has an effective phonics' programme which includes training. This has resulted in 95% attainment in the Year 1 checks in 2015. This current year, the predictions stand at 88%.

- The school has been relentless in pursuing educational health care plans to enhance learning in all areas for children with SEN and all of these children have one-to-one support which is leading to stronger outcomes.
- The school has created a programme called Lead Learners which is designed to close the gap by providing enrichment experiences for children. They are given 'Learning Packs' which they can take home and share with their families.
- Budget allocations are well linked to the strategic priorities and bid for by teachers so that recent improvements have included: a purpose-built, multi-use games area, and additional IT equipment which enables children to use I Pads for observations, for taking photos and to create their own power point presentations.
- Computing is monitored and team teaching is available to strengthen outcomes. These include striving for a cross-curricular emphasis and the consideration of the three elements of the curriculum. There is also specific software for SEN children.

Even Better If...

...the SEF clearly indicated the main strengths of the school's work to showcase the best practice.

...leaders at all levels refine the presentation of data to enable the strong outcomes to be clearly celebrated

...the school continues to maintain rigorous book scrutiny to ensure consistency and high standards across the school.

Outcomes for Pupils

- In 2015, 70% of Reception children achieved a good level of development.
- 95% of Year 1 children passed the phonics screening. Attainment of all groups of children was in line.
- Attainment at the end of KS1 was significantly above for all subjects in 2013 and 2014. Attainment in 2015 was slightly above national but was down compared with previous years. Girls performed better than boys in reading and writing. There was a significant gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in all subjects. The performance of disadvantaged pupils was below national disadvantaged pupils. The gaps had widened from previous years. However, currently the children in Year 3 are making accelerated progress.
- KS2 attainment in 2013 and 2014 was significantly above national in all subjects. In 2015, attainment in mathematics was significantly above national, but broadly in line with national for reading, writing and EGPS. Disadvantaged pupils performed well

compared to other children in school and attainment was above national for this group.

- The value added for Key Stage 2 in 2015 was sig+ in mathematics and reading. In writing valued added was 100.4 which was not significantly above national.
- The school uses pupil tracker to monitor pupil progress. Children are each given a summative outcome: working towards; mostly; or achieving the age band. Staff assess against statements, which are then moderated in age-phase, whole school and across school.
- Staff have been conservative with summative judgment and predictions. They will continue to refine the writing assessment process over the next few months.
- Children are encouraged to be leaders from the moment they join the school and personal development lies at the heart of the community. They are taught to have ownership of their learning, to be responsible and to respect 'rights for all'. For example, house captains run the KS2 assemblies. Year 3 are training their class members to be 'meeters and greeters' so that should a visitor come into their classroom, they can explain the work of the school.
- Year 6 makes good use of their computing skills when they are making books for their younger peers to know how to work out decimals. In guided reading, children used websites to create a news report on their choice of topic which was then presented back to their class.
- Year 6 run the school council meetings and type up the minutes which are uploaded to the school's website. At their suggestion, the school changed their lunch time procedures to create 'a dining room experience', to develop a calm, social environment.
- From the earliest of ages, children are able to demonstrate independence and resilience and this was seen in the nursery when children played independently in the sand tray and in the mudkitchen.

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

What Went Well

- According to the children: 'Learning at St Catherine's is fun and challenging.'
- Staff feel empowered to take risks and be innovative in their teaching. Highlights include: the use of Lesson Box camera to encourage good learning behaviour for the children; free-flow classrooms; team teaching; an exciting, unusual learning environment that includes different seating areas; shoeless classrooms; bum bags for the children to keep all their equipment in; and working windows used as learning walls.

- Displays are stunning, of the highest quality, and reflect the high standards and outcomes. Every class follows the same themes using: the Rights Respecting Charter; children writing their own labels even in the Early Years; maps indicating where the families come from; and Cantonese being the language of this month.
- Behaviour for learning is excellent, which results in a positive, engagement in learning in all lessons.
- Every class has clear strategies in place for children to be able to take responsibility for their own learning, particularly if they are struggling. As one of the displays stated in a year 5 classroom: 'We strive for thorough understanding of our learning, not superficial results.'
- Teachers use excellent hooks to engage and immerse the children in the concept of what is to be learnt in that lesson. For example, the use of a sound clip, when introducing Theseus and the Minotaur.
- Talk partners is a very effective way to enable the children to share their ideas and address their misconceptions. In Literacy, children discussed the key features of performance poetry.
- Questioning is of a high order. Teachers ask: 'What did we prove was true? Can you convince me? How did you? Why would that not help me?' They prompt, 'If you are confident with that; move on now!'
- Resources are well used to help scaffold and extend the learning. For example in science, the children were given responsibility for the equipment, which enabled them to become professional scientists. To support the indoor learning, every class has an outdoor learning environment including landscape gardens, a vegetable patch, a mini-beast hotel and a memorial garden.
- There is effective deployment of additional staff and a high adult/child ratio. All staff are empowered to make judgements on assessment for learning and adjust their teaching accordingly to meet individual needs.
- Staggered starts to the lessons means that the children extend their learning from different starting points.

Even Better If...

...when assessing writing, staff continued to focus on moderating the statements rather than the agebands.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

Growing Leaders

The school's commitment to the development of staff as leaders ensures that the school is well equipped to continue on a pathway of innovation and improvement. Frequent monitoring and evaluation of action plans has led to accurate and successful triangulating of

the SLT agenda through the middle leaders and the rest of the staff at the school.

Groups and SEN children are tracked very effectively as a result of rigorous pupil progress meetings and by using baseline data to support progress of intervention groups. Middle leaders are now able to track progress and coverage across other areas of the curriculum and feel empowered to ensure that standards are met in the area that they lead. The attainment and progress of vulnerable children is extremely well monitored leading to accurately measured progress being made by these groups. The school has been rigorous in ensuring that those children in need of an EHC plan are supported.

The school training schemes for NQTs (in collaboration with the Barnet Partnership), of middle and senior leaders (through national accredited programmes) and teaching assistants are first rate and have resulted in a galvanised, focused school ethos.

Middle leaders are encouraged to be innovative and risk take. As a result, pupils have more ownership of the learning and value their school environment: 'It's awesome coming into the classroom!' All staff feel able to make recommendations to class teachers during lessons and to senior leaders about school improvement. As a result, aspects of student welfare have improved.

There is a philosophy of recognising strength and building on skills for all staff at the school. The school recognises a need and training is planned accordingly. They are proactive in identifying needs and facilitating support.

Partnerships

The school has been involved in a number of partnerships which have benefitted both the school and its partners. They have supported two schools, who were both RI in their previous OFSTED inspection, which has led to them becoming good at their last OFSTED inspection. For St. Catherine's, it has benefitted them by using their leaders to develop themselves by supporting other schools.

They have also set up partnerships with other schools where their curriculum leaders meet at least once a term to discuss developments in the curriculum and to share ideas. This helps all schools to be more consistent with specific focuses. Also within their Hub – Barnet Partnerships Schools Improvement – the head, deputy heads, the SENCO and subject leaders get to meet to discuss developments in the curriculum.

The school has set up moderating sessions with two other schools. All year groups are able to moderate their work, thus enabling them to ensure consistency and make solid judgments and to focus on key areas of writing that need further development.

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

The school has continued to provide opportunities for CPD both in house and externally. Leaders use staff's expertise and knowledge to share good practice and build upon it further. Staff meetings place an importance on sharing and reflecting upon good practice identified through CPD/outreach opportunities and experiences in other schools. Staff discuss opportunities to implement these in order to develop all areas of the school. They are open to new initiatives and willing to support the school in moving forward.

Leaders have revisited schools with other members of staff, for example, Greenleas School, in order to develop P.E.

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

Leaders have maintained links with schools where they have been Challenge Partner reviewers, enabling the sharing of good practice across the country. The school has strong links with other Challenge Partner Schools in the area and have shared insets, moderation of writing sessions, assessment practice and forged strong links between subject leaders.

The school has very strong links with hub school (The Compton). A number of staff have had the opportunities to undertake courses offered in order to further their professional development e.g. OTP, NPQSL, NPQML, NASENCo.

As reviewers, leaders are always willing to share the school's good practice, particularly with innovative teaching and learning strategies, including the learning environment.

Several members of staff have supported local Challenge Partner schools in literacy, RE, leadership and assessment. This has created a strong, supportive network between schools.

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 continue to be part of the Compton Hub and send more teachers on CP training.