



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR LAWN MANOR ACADEMY

Name of School:	Lawn Manor Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Sandra Muir
Hub:	Wootton Bassett
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	Ascend Learning Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Not applicable
Date of this Review:	22/05/2023
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Leading
Date of last QA Review	01/12/2021
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Requires improvement
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	21/01/2020



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Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers, agree 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

The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.

1. Context and character of the school

Lawn Manor Academy is a secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The academy opened on 1st Sept 2017 and was the first new secondary school in Swindon in the Ascend Learning Trust (formerly known as Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Trust). There are seven schools in the Ascend Learning Trust— four secondaries, two primaries and a junior school.

The school is located in an area of high social deprivation in Swindon and the proportion of disadvantaged students is 39%, which is above the national average of 27%. The pupils are from a range of ethnic backgrounds, with Indian, Asian and Asian British the largest ethnic groups. Over 36 languages are spoken and the proportion of students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is well above average at 36%. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 18.5%, which is above average. Mobility is high and more than average numbers of students join or leave the school at other than the usual times. Students enter the school with prior attainment that is below national expectations.

The school's vision is 'Inspiring and creating futures for all' and its values are embodied in 'ILEARN'— independence, attitude and resilience, which are 'at the heart of our strategies for success.'

The school has developed a three-pronged approach to its curriculum: the 'Independence' curriculum, which incorporates a broad range of subjects; the 'Attitude' curriculum aims to provide pupils with an 'excellent community understanding in and out of school'; and the 'Resilience' curriculum that focuses on the development of character.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The vision of the school is clear and ambitious and supports the context it serves. This was evident across all levels of leadership.
- The school benefits from being part of the Ascend Learning Trust. The trust leaders work closely and effectively with the headteacher and other school leaders. Staff from Lawn Manor also play key roles in the trust, for example, leading trust networks in mathematics and expressive arts.

- Governance is a strength and provides an excellent oversight of the school's performance. The governing body benefits from members with a wide range of appropriate skills and experience. Governors have an ambitious drive for further school improvement and hold leaders firmly to account.
- The culture of the school is embodied in 'The Lawn Manor Way'. Pupils are proud to be part of the Lawn Manor community with its diversity and aspirations. They say that the school is welcoming and that they can put forward their ideas and feel listened to. One pupil said, 'We come together and talk about our cultures. It's interesting to find out what is similar and different.' There is a strong focus on opportunities for pupils to celebrate their own and other cultures through the taught curriculum as well as visits, for example, to places of worship, visitors and 'culture days'.
- School improvement strategies are research-based and have been clearly planned and trialled before implementation. Research findings are adapted appropriately for the benefit of pupils at the school.
- The school's quality assurance (QA) model underpins the improvement approach and is well planned and thorough. Leaders instigate improvements as a result of the regular lesson visits and work scrutiny.
- The enthusiastic heads of department have prepared well-sequenced curricula that provide clear guidance for teachers. They have been given authority and support, including one hour per week, to undertake QA in their areas. The consistency seen in lessons demonstrates the positive impact of the school's approach.
- Continuing professional development (CPD) is well organised and has driven improvements in curriculum developments effectively. There has been strong support from the trust and this continues to be a rich source of collaboration. Leaders plan a variety of training according to needs and career stage. Much is delivered through the expertise within departments as well as a whole school approach that includes instructional coaching. New staff are given a robust staff induction programme. Staff understand the school's teaching and learning approach and deliver it consistently in lessons.
- The school has significant numbers of early career teachers (ECTs), including many on the Teach First programme. The ECTs were very positive about the high quality support and guidance they receive from colleagues at all levels in the school. They said that this enables them to meet different professional challenges on a daily basis and grow in confidence and competence and to be the 'best teachers we can be'. They also spoke enthusiastically about the CPD activities in which they are involved and, on occasion, encouraged to lead.

- Leaders are very considerate about staff well-being. For example, they are sensitive to the workload pressures on ECTs and provide practical support to ease conflicting demands. Access to mental health first aiders provides staff with a valuable resource for promoting well-being.
- Leaders have worked relentlessly to improve pupils' attendance, which deteriorated after the pandemic. There have been over 200 home visits, for example, by the family support worker. Attendance is tracked rigorously and pupils are rewarded for good attendance.
- Leaders have completed a thorough evaluation of careers guidance and identified clear priorities to ensure delivery of the Gatsby benchmarks. It is well led with a thorough plan for developing the provision further. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive careers fair to help inform choices for post-16.

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

- ... leaders continued their sharp focus on improving attendance at school, including working with the local authority and trust on their initiatives to complement work already going on at Lawn Manor.
- ... leaders considered how to increase capacity in careers guidance to expand the reach and frequency of support in school, particularly for vulnerable groups.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and they behave well in lessons and around the school, as a result of the school's clear expectations and vision. They are attentive and respond well in lessons. They are proud to be in Lawn Manor Academy and present themselves and their work neatly.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about aspects of lessons that they enjoy and find helpful. For example, they referred to the 'silent teacher' strategy in mathematics and the quizzes that 'refresh our memories'. They like using the mini white boards where they write their ideas and 'teachers check our understanding'.
- Relationships are a strength. Pupils are respectful towards staff and each other. This was very evident in a Year 10 music lesson where pupils were attentive during each other's performances.

- Pupils worked very well together as 'coaches' in a Year 8 physical education lesson when one pupil explained to her partner, 'You need to move your arm further back and lean more before releasing [the javelin]'.
- The climate for learning is very positive and supported by 'Teach Like a Champion' strategies that include a focus on clear routines, such as 'Threshold,' 'Do Now' and 'Cold Calling'. Routines are a strength. They are well established and used by teachers in all subjects. 'Do Now', for example, at the start of each lesson encourages pupils to recall previous learning and enables lessons to start promptly. Pupils were positive about the strategies and said, 'Do Now warms up our brains for the lesson'.
- Teachers make effective use of different questioning strategies, particularly in core subjects. 'Cold Calling' was used well in many subjects and helped all pupils to remain attentive and involved. Teachers' challenging questions, such as in Year 7 science, encouraged pupils to think hard.
- The focus on helping pupils know and remember more is effective. In many lessons, pupils demonstrated a good recall of previous learning. For example, in Year 9 dance, they recalled terms such as 'action', 'space' and 'dynamic', including demonstrating what they meant. In Spanish, Year 8 pupils remembered the term 'cognate' and could give examples such as 'difícil'. In Year 8 English, they showed strong knowledge of the text, *Animal Farm*, and could discuss character, themes and structure confidently and with insight. Work in books is generally of an appropriate standard with some good extended writing.
- Good use is made of resources to enhance learning. White boards are used well in many subjects and help teachers to identify misconceptions. Teachers utilise visualisers in English to model good practice and to check pupils' understanding. In art, music and physical education, the good range of materials and equipment ensure that all pupils can participate and learn as well as possible. Teachers also include instructions in other languages, such as Portuguese and Arabic, to support EAL learners.
- The school has developed a systematic approach to formative and summative assessments of pupils' learning. Teachers consistently use 'improvement and correction time' (I ACT), particularly in science and mathematics, to ensure that feedback is relevant and acted on. This has had a positive impact on pupils' progress and ability to remember key knowledge. The school is proud of its achievements in science and the high proportion of pupils that study three sciences at GCSE.

- There is an exceptionally well-planned programme to improve pupils' reading. Leaders have carefully researched the best approaches to use and have introduced, for example, Accelerated Reader and Lexia, along with training for staff. All pupils are assessed on arrival and reading ages are tracked. Some interventions have been very successful in improving reading ages significantly.

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

- ... leaders continued to develop their structured approach to improving pupils' extended writing, particularly at Key Stage 3.
- ... pupils were given more opportunities in lessons for thinking time and to discuss ideas more fully.
- ... leaders audited and extended the use of academic texts across departments and year groups to see how successful 'reading to learn' has been so far.

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

- Lawn Manor Academy is a truly inclusive school, as embodied and reflected in its vision of 'Inspiring and creating futures for all'. Provision for pupils with SEND is well managed and very effectively led. The SEND provision map is impressive: the school has implemented a wide range of specialist, targeted, interventions to support the wide variety of pupils' additional needs. Leaders draw on external specialist expertise to extend provision. Their work on mental health needs with Barnardo's 'Project Me' has enabled the school to provide timely support for learners in crisis, strengthened work with parents and ensured that teachers have greater confidence in providing wave 1 cognitive behavioural therapy style interventions.
- Connect, the alternative curriculum provision, for pupils with SEND, is imaginatively resourced to support the physical and cognitive development of learners. Relationships are positive and teachers' questioning is tailored to each individual student. This results in a positive learning environment and ensures that all pupils can access learning.

- The well-qualified teachers within learning support demonstrate bespoke planning and responsive teaching to cover the mainstream curriculum successfully. For example, in a Year 9 Connect mathematics lesson, the teacher very effectively ensured that all pupils made gains in knowledge through finely-tuned questioning.
- In mainstream lessons, pupils with SEND or who are disadvantaged are included well in all activities and are making progress along with their peers. Teachers are well aware of pupils' needs and, for example, place pupils with SEND at the front of the class. Teachers target questions appropriately so that all pupils are involved and encouraged to contribute. Work in books tends to be well scaffolded for pupils with SEND and it is clear that they are benefiting from the school's consistent approach to quality first teaching.
- Leaders have identified and tackled some stubborn issues, such as low levels of engagement of disadvantaged pupils in extra-curricular activities, through the creation of the 'Pledge'. Subject Leaders have been encouraged to identify additional resourcing and activities that will deepen and enrich the learning experiences of disadvantaged pupils and improve outcomes, for example, theatre visits in drama and geography field trips.
- Leaders carefully track the attendance of pupils with SEND or who are disadvantaged in extra-curricular opportunities as well as their participation in the 'Pledge' activities. The recent appointment of a well-informed member of staff with good community links as the 'pupil premium lead' provides an excellent opportunity to review the strategy and implement different initiatives.

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

... leaders developed a more forensic approach to analysing the needs of disadvantaged pupils, prioritising more data-driven support and interventions to strengthen provision and monitor impact.

5. Area of Excellence

Not applicable



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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 report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

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.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice (SLP) events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events 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>)