



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR STOPSLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Name of School:	Stopsley High School
Headteacher/Principal:	Karen Hand
Hub:	Compton
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	Middlesex Learning Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	The school has elected not to have estimates this year
Date of this Review:	17/04/2024
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Effective
Date of last QA Review	20/03/2023
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	13/09/2022

Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all Levels	The school has elected not to have estimates this year.
Quality of Provision and Outcomes	The school has elected not to have estimates this year.

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	The school has elected not to have estimates this year.

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

Stopsley High School has 1,092 students in Years 7 to 11. The school was newly built six years ago. It is located in the east of Luton on the border of Hertfordshire. The proportion of disadvantaged students is above the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the number of students with education, health and care plans (EHCPs) are in line with the national average. Student mobility is high, and the proportion of students speaking English as an additional language (EAL) is significantly above the national average and rising.

The school academised and joined the Middlesex Learning Trust (MLT) in September 2021. The MLT consists of three highly successful secondary schools.

The school's core values are 'ambition, endeavour and success.' The shared vision of the MLT is 'Excellence for All' which has been fully embraced by the school community as its mission too.

2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- The headteacher is experienced and committed to inclusion and supporting every student to succeed both in their time in school and in whatever they choose to do when they leave. She is reflective in her approach and has built strong working relationships with her senior leadership team, middle leaders and staff as a whole. One of her first actions when appointed was to move her office from the administration block to the heart of the school on the top floor, so that she was visible to all and could put into practice her firm belief in an open-door policy.
- The headteacher is well supported by a strong and passionate senior leadership team which collaborates and communicates highly effectively. This allows all members of the team to have a shared vision of how to move the school forward. For example, recently a decision was made to implement changes to assessment at Key Stage 3 which has led to a more detailed analysis of gaps in students' knowledge and understanding.
- Middle leaders feel that they are extremely well-supported both by the leadership of the school and the trust itself. Consequently, they feel confident in driving forward improvements in their area, for example, how best to implement the new focus on literacy and oracy.
- The pastoral care provided by the school is highly effective with a strong focus on inclusivity as shown by use of the behaviour unit so that students are not excluded from school. Whilst students are removed from the main school community they are accessing learning and appropriate interventions to prevent issues re-

occurring. Leaders use a wide range of outside agencies to ensure that students find the curriculum relevant to their lives. For example, Resolutions, Tokko and Luton Sexual Health Clinic.

- There is a strongly led teaching and learning team who work out of a shared room. There is a detailed handbook to support teachers in their daily implementation built around the key principles of challenge, high expectations and inclusion. Termly learning walks are conducted in line with this handbook so staff know exactly what is being looked at. Best practice is regularly shared at staff briefings. Consequently, teaching across the school is strong and, as a result, outcomes in all areas are improving.
- Leaders are fully committed to both the wellbeing of staff and their professional development and, consequently, staff, including early career teachers, feel valued and cared for. They feel fully involved in decision making and, as one said, “feel that there is no hierarchy in the school.” There is also a fully equipped gym and support for staff’s emotional wellbeing through the Employee Assistance Programme. Alongside the wide-ranging professional opportunities provided by both the school and the trust, staff are supported to undertake National Professional Qualifications.

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

...middle leaders continued to promote and monitor the key principles underpinning the implementation of the curriculum to further improve outcomes for all students.

3.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - What went well

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and have highly positive relationships with students. This results in classrooms being safe and stimulating learning environments where students are keen and excited to learn and demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. In an engaging Year 7 design and technology lesson, students were keen to share their ideas on the different things you could do with a paperclip and supported one another in their ideas. Also, they had no hesitation in asking the teacher for extra help or resources.
- Students can demonstrate what they have previously learned and make connections as required. For example, in a highly effective Year 7 music lesson students were confident in recalling what they knew about notes before enthusiastically moving on to a composition task. All lessons start with a “flying start activity” which ensures lessons start promptly and students quickly apply themselves. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson the flying start activity provided students with the structured challenge of revisiting learning from the last lesson, last week, last term and last year.

- Teachers adapt their lessons well to meet the needs of different groups of learners. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson graphs were populated with varying degrees of information dependent on the current attainment levels of students.
- Teachers are beginning to confidently use strategies to develop and strengthen students' oracy skills. For example, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson on constructions students were given both key words. For example, perpendicular and starter stems for supportive pair/share conversations, such as "the construction that is shown is..."
- Teachers are highly skilled at modelling what students are going to be learning, often employing the "I do, we do, you do" approach. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson the teacher effectively used this approach to ensure that students could move to working independently on how to manipulate algebraic formulae.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides good progression from Key Stage 3 to 4. For example, at Key Stage 3 all students study construction and can then move to a recognised level 2 qualification in Key Stage 4. As a result, a number of students have progressed to a full apprenticeship in the building trade.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that reading for all groups of students is a priority. To that end, the school is in the process of introducing Fresh Start for those students needing additional support in strengthening their phonics skills. Additionally, Accelerated Reader is currently used to support Years 7 and 8 students which is helping improve their reading age, particularly for those for whom English is an additional language. Reading for pleasure is also a huge drive for leaders and form tutors regularly read to their tutees. Staff model the importance of reading for pleasure and display what they are reading on doors and on their emails. In classrooms the book the teacher is reading is often open on their desk.
- The school also provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, Duke of Edinburgh and chess and board games in order to develop students' cultural capital. There are many opportunities for students to become involved in decision-making in the school. They feel they have a voice. For example they were instrumental in setting up the pre-loved uniform outlet. There is an extensive careers programme in place which is valued by students and meets the Gatsby Benchmarks, thus ensuring that students are well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment.

3.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - Even better if...

... oracy strategies, including the use of subject specific vocabulary, continued to be embedded.

4.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- Provision for students with SEND and disadvantaged students is a real strength of the school and well-managed throughout. This results in students with SEND making consistently good progress and the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students significantly reducing over the last three years.
- The school's driving principle for all vulnerable students is that of inclusivity. For example, the Archimedes Centre provides a safe and nurturing environment for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) which results in many being able to spend the majority of their learning time in mainstream education.
- Termly focus meetings take place where the progress of disadvantaged students and those with SEND is scrutinised. Where required, appropriate interventions, either at departmental or whole school level, through the inclusion board, are put in place to help students catch up. Each week in staff briefing, a profile of a student with SEND or who has EAL is shared with all staff in order to promote the strategies that will make a difference with that individual but can be applied to other learners to positively benefit too.
- Seating plans are well considered and consequently provide easy access for the teacher to support students with SEND so that their progress can be regularly checked, and additional scaffolding put in place when required.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively both to support individual students and the whole class. For example, in a Year 10 geography lesson, the teaching assistant discreetly supported a particular student so that they were able to access their learning while at the same time providing support to the wider group.
- Disadvantaged students are given a range of opportunities and prioritised to develop their cultural capital through participating in the wider life of the school by being assigned student voice roles and participating in careers talks and events.
- There are strong relationships with a range of outside agencies, for example the Autism Advisory Service and several counselling services so that additional support can be put in place when required.

4.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

...the school considered introducing an alternative qualification for the most vulnerable students which recognises their achievements in life skills.

5. Area of Excellence

N/A



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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/>)