



**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:	Not applicable
Date of this Review:	28/04/2025
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Not applicable
Date of last QA Review	17/04/2024
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	13/09/2022

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

Stopsley High School is a mixed comprehensive school located in the east of Luton on the border of Hertfordshire with students in Years 7-11. The proportion of disadvantaged students is above the national average. The proportions of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 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 Stopsley High School community.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The Trust executive team and governors have a strong and secure understanding of the school and ensure leaders at all levels are held to account. The chief executive officer (CEO) is present for exam analysis meetings and clear plans are put in place to ensure appropriate support and challenge is available.
- Continuing professional development (CPD) for all staff is well planned and aligns with priorities on the school's improvement plan. The peer coaching model was structured in consultation with staff, and they feel it supports them 'to collaborate with colleagues'. The model allows staff to focus on areas identified through learning walks and identified on school priorities. Staff engagement is high and monitoring shows positive impact on the quality of teaching.
- The progress of early career teachers (ECTs) is enhanced by a programme of twilight sessions, half termly learning walks and subject specific mentoring. This enables them to build on the pedagogy and strategies learnt in their training year. One trainee teacher said there was a culture at the school of 'what can we do to support you?'
- Staff well-being is very important to leaders. Senior leaders seek feedback from teachers benchmarked against schools nationally to better understand and take account of the main pressures on them. As a result, the 'you said, we listened' culture supports changes made to key policies and practices that have allowed staff to be more productive. For example, leaders have developed non-negotiables that reduce the workload for planning.

- Relationships between staff are positive and they feel valued by leaders. Staff enjoy working at the school and they say colleagues 'share an interest for everyone to succeed'.
- Senior leaders engage effectively with students through groups that deal with wellbeing, safeguarding and general student voice. Students recognise that their feedback is valued, important and incorporated into changes made at the school. A wellbeing corner has been launched in the library and students take responsibility for whole school themed days such as Victory in Europe (VE) day.
- The curriculum ensures there is high quality provision for students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. In tutor time, Year 9 students were engaged in discussions demonstrating their understanding of the rule of law and how it relates to their school community.
- The language used for messaging is consistent across the school. The focus on success is built around 'top class' and focuses on four attributes: conduct, attitude, community and attendance. These are consistently built into the weekly messaging through form time and assemblies. These four attributes also feed into the school's reward system and badges. Students can articulate what it means to be 'top class' and one student said it supports them to 'behave and learn better'.

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

... leaders continued to monitor pedagogical approaches in the classroom to support the consistency in the implementation of the curriculum.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Staff have fully achieved the EBIs from their last review. They have provided further opportunities for students to engage in discussion of the key learning gained during direct instruction, to develop greater confidence in the articulation of their knowledge and understanding. In Year 10 Geography, students used talk stems, tier two and three vocabulary to 'speak like a geographer'.
- Staff at Stopsley High School pursue a shared vision to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all students, with an appropriate balance between vocational and academic qualifications. The increased ambition in the curriculum has resulted in all students studying a humanities subject at Key Stage 4 and an increase in the proportion of students selecting a language.

- The impact of this vision is evident in well-presented books and displays, demonstrating coherently planned and well sequenced learning across a range of curriculum areas. In Year 7 English, the learning journey was clear in the books and the presentation demonstrated student pride in their work.
- Leaders at all levels have focused on all teachers following the guiding principles in the MLT teaching and learning handbook. This was devised in collaboration with staff at all levels across the three schools. Using research informed practice and clear 'non-negotiables', a range of strategies have been implemented. All lessons consistently begin with a 'flying start' activity to engage students and check on prior understanding. In Year 11 chemistry, the teacher used their expert subject knowledge to pose carefully constructed questions to support general revision for upcoming exams.
- A range of strategies are used to check for understanding through effective questioning. In a Year 7 English lesson on medieval times, no hands up questioning was used to check for understanding of students. In Year 10 sociology, the questioning linked to key terms. Questions such as 'can you give me one key term that links to that?' and 'what is the definition?' encouraged the use and understanding of key vocabulary. This was then applied to exam questions.
- Across a range of subjects and lessons, there are clear expectations and learning routines to support student learning. In Year 10 bricklaying, active circulation from the teacher and teaching assistant supported students in building a wall in only their second practical lesson. In Year 8 physical education, the teacher adapted and provided personalised learning to group students appropriately when teaching rounders. This allowed the teacher to model and demonstrate more to a particular group of students. In Year 7 geography, the use of mini whiteboards supported scaffolding to write a definition of organic farming.
- There are a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities as well as leadership roles to develop wider skills and qualities. These include clubs linked to gardening, sport, drama and debate clubs. Students appreciate responsibilities such as prefecting, reading buddies, sports leaders and talked about being 'role models for younger year groups'.
- A strong careers education programme is mapped out to meet the Gatsby Bennchmarks and this is evidenced in the recent achievement of the Careers Mark. Subjects such as mathematics are regularly inviting in speakers to discuss future opportunities.

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

- ... teachers further developed routines for explicit instruction through modelling and scaffolding to enhance student understanding and support their transition to independent practice.
- ... teachers further embedded targeted strategies that engaged all students in their learning, with the aim of eradicating passivity and increasing active participation.

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

- Leaders have continued to focus on the EBI from the last review and launched IDEAS, a dedicated lesson for identified students. In a Year 10 lesson, clear and established learning routines ensured that the learning environment is a safe space. Students developed their thinking and confidence in regard to speaking and listening.
- There is a relentless drive across the school and Trust to improve outcomes for all students, especially for students with SEND. Sharing of good practice in weekly briefings, inclusion boards, SEND register reviews and student profiles has supported closing the progress gap.
- Students with SEND are encouraged to thrive and develop independence as they progress through the school. This starts when students transition into the school and continues throughout to support students with making appropriate choices at post 16. All students with an EHCP in Year 11 have secured a post 16 placement.
- Importance is given to providing opportunities to develop cultural capital for disadvantaged students. This is done through extracurricular opportunities, student leadership and rewards contributing to a sense of belonging to the school community. Participation in programmes such as the Brilliant Club and visits to local colleges provides aspirational opportunities.
- The recent development of a register for EAL students provides staff with concise information which is easy to access. The EAL lead meets with all students as they join the school in Year 7, as well as those who join as in-year admissions. This meeting identifies a student's proficiency level in English which then informs the type of intervention that is implemented.

- Leaders have taken the time to carefully construct a four-year plan for literacy, working with the National Literacy Trust frameworks and other research informed practices. In phonics sessions, the expert knowledge of the teacher meant that students were able to demonstrate sounds and phonetic matching. They were then able to take this from word to sentence level.

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

... no significant area of improvement was identified

5. Area of Excellence

Not applicable

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/>).



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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>).