



**VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP QUALITY  
ASSURANCE REVIEW**

**REVIEW REPORT FOR  
WEST THORNTON  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

<b>Name of School:</b>	West Thornton Primary School
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Rupinder Bansil
<b>Hub:</b>	Inspire Partnership Hub
<b>School phase:</b>	Primary
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	Inspire Partnership

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this virtual Leadership Quality Assurance Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	26/05/2021
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	N/A
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	N/A
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Inadequate
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	04/02/2020



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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:

<b>Leadership at all Levels</b>	Leading
<b>School Improvement Strategies</b>	Leading
<b>Approach to recovery and remote learning</b>	Not applicable
<b>Area of Excellence</b>	Not applicable
<b>Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence</b>	Not applicable
<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate</b>	Leading

*Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed peer evaluation estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.*

## **1. Context and character of the school**

West Thornton Primary School is a large five form entry school based over two sites, serving a diverse community in Croydon. The 'Canterbury Road' site consists of purpose-built premises for pupils from Reception to Year 5. The school officially became part of the Inspire Partnership in April 2020 when it closed and re-opened with a new DFE number.

West Thornton Primary School educates children from Reception to Year 6, working closely with partner schools in the Inspire Partnership as well as schools in the wider local community. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups (Other Asian, Black African, Black Caribbean, Indian) and for whom English is an additional language (EAL) are more than double the national average. A high proportion of pupils on roll, well above the national average, are in the disadvantaged group. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those with an education, health and care plan, are broadly below the national figures. A major recruitment of new senior leaders took place at the end of 2018.

### **2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well**

- The headteacher is passionate, determined and dedicated. She leads by example and is very clear that everything the school does has the best interests of pupils in mind.
- The leadership team has grown with the appointment of four teaching and learning leaders. New teaching appointments were also made. Consequently, the capacity to improve is now strong.
- All leaders are aspirational and have high expectations. They understand the context of their school well. This allows them to design a curriculum that is ambitious and that “equips pupils with the knowledge, skills and values they need to embrace the opportunities and challenges they encounter, creating a future that they want to live in.”
- The work around character skills has paid dividends. Pupils’ personal, social and emotional development is a key focus of the school. Pupils are polite and friendly. They listen to each other respectfully - both in discussion and when reading to the visiting reviewer. They are not afraid to challenge one another, enjoy self-evaluating using their “honesty sheet” and share their feelings with their teachers or peers during lessons (thumbs up or down). They clearly benefit from a supportive and positive learning environment.

- There is a collegiate approach to school improvement and a clear drive to ensure that teaching and learning is of the best quality. Despite the challenges faced during the pandemic, leaders have relentlessly eradicated any under-performance in teaching. Non-negotiables in terms of pedagogical methods have secured more consistency. As a result, pupils speak highly of their lessons where they frequently “interact with teachers and children” and where teachers “make their brains work more”. This means that they benefit from talking about their learning with their classmates, giving each other feedback and respectfully challenging each other’s ideas.
- Retrieval practices are fully embedded. Starter activities to recapitulate previous learning are now a common feature of most lessons. Pupils believe their environment helps them to remember and consolidate their vocabulary: "We can look at the washing lines for yesterday’s learning."
- Vulnerable pupils and pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers, when appropriate. The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator, teachers and teaching assistants work very well together. They are ambitious for their pupils because they know and support them well. Staff build strong partnerships with external agencies.
- Pupils enjoy a range of extracurricular activities to enhance the curriculum. The junior leadership team (JLT) scheme allows pupils to have a stronger voice. Leaders are innovative and ambitious. They engage the JLT with some aspects of the monitoring process, such as book scrutiny, learning walks and meeting with governors. In a recent newsletter to parents, the headteacher shared: “the headteacher of a local school was very complimentary about the changes that had been made since her last visit over a year ago. She took away lots of ideas to share with staff in her school.” The school is now seen as a beacon of best practice.

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

... leaders further developed and embedded the knowledge and understanding of middle leaders, especially those new to subject leadership, to give them the confidence and capacity to drive their areas forward.

### **3.1 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs- What went well**

- Self-evaluation is robust and based on a thorough analysis of progress data, frequent monitoring of teaching and learning, book scrutiny and curriculum reviews to secure the best outcomes for pupils. School leaders have implemented forensic systems to track the progress of groups of pupils to ensure that none falls behind and underachieves. For example, the use of standardised testing and moderation activities from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Year 6, supports the robust assessment systems that the school has in place.
- Close monitoring of key priorities is apparent in the school development plan and self-evaluation documents. This is an information rich school where communication with key stakeholders is strong. The views of staff, parents and pupils are regularly sought and considered. They feel listened to and valued.
- Middle leaders plan their curriculum around three fundamental areas (progressive, knowledge-based and expansive) to ensure that pupils' learning deepens. The vocabulary that pupils need to learn and remember has been carefully mapped out. Subject leaders are honing their planning and sequencing of each subject. Progression in skills is also effectively planned.
- Over time, pupils develop mathematics skills and improve their ability to read and write. Staff have acquired stronger subject knowledge in phonics, which means that, from the earliest stages, children begin to use their phonics skills to help them read and write. Teachers choose appropriate books for individuals to read which match well to their phonic knowledge and reading ability. It is evident that reading for pleasure has been a priority, as all pupils we met could talk confidently and enthusiastically about the books and authors they enjoy.
- Pupils enjoy lessons in the foundation subjects. They believe they are learning a variety of subjects, including some they "had not done before". Lessons are now more "practical and captivating". For example, a pupil in Year 5 described how he used clay in art for the first time. These new experiences considerably enhance the development of all pupils' cultural capital, as well as their core learning.
- The Inspire Partnership provides high quality strategic support and guidance at all levels of leadership, resulting in rapid progress. Middle leaders share senior leaders' commitment to high standards and appreciate the clarity of purpose and the guidance provided by them. Subject leaders have specialist expertise and are taking important steps to learn from the very best practice available.
- Teaching assistants shared they felt very well led and that they valued the continuing professional development (CPD) on offer. As a result, pupils with

SEND are well supported during lessons and through a range of additional programmes. Vulnerable pupils make particularly sustained progress in the bespoke programmes they attend, following the lockdowns.

- Leaders provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. This support focuses on pupils' academic and emotional needs as well as ensuring that every pupil has equal access to all aspects of school life. As a result, these pupils have confidence and high self-esteem, which has a positive impact on their progress. A 'hard-to-reach' parent shared: "My daughter wants to come to school every day now. We feel very well supported. The school has become the main support system for our family."
- Governors and leaders have worked tirelessly and effectively to improve the school. They believe that both sites "work as one". They recognise the significant impact the new strategies and policies have had, particularly on the most vulnerable.

### **3.2 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs - Even better if...**

... the CPD package of support highlighted non-negotiables for teaching assistants and new staff joining in September 2021, to maintain the rapid and sustained progress of teaching and learning.

... leaders enhanced the professional development of teaching assistants (action research projects) to allow them to evaluate and articulate the impact of their work.

### **4.1 Approach to recovery and remote learning - What went well**

- During the lockdown periods, leaders had taken rapid action to ensure that staff developed their expertise in how to deliver the planned curriculum remotely, as required. As a result, teachers moved seamlessly to delivering the curriculum online. Appropriate systems are still in place for any pupils who still need to access their education at home due to self-isolation.
- Regular opportunities for training that were still available during the lockdown periods had a positive impact on both virtual and face to face lessons. This also allowed leaders to sustain quality first teaching.

- There were clear benefits for those vulnerable pupils who attended on site provision. Staff also kept a careful eye on the well-being of vulnerable pupils working at home. Partnerships with external agencies were meaningful and led to bespoke interventions where they were most needed.
- Leaders and teachers made sensible adaptations to the order in which the curriculum was taught. This made learning more manageable for those pupils working at home. The curriculum was adapted to suit the needs of all pupils - including those with SEND; considerations and adjustments around delivery and resources were made and expectations remained high. For example, in mathematics, some elements of geometry were not taught in the timescale originally planned as not all pupils had access to the required resources (e.g. protractors). These strands were taught when back in school.
- Leaders followed guidance - both external and from the partnership - to ensure gaps in knowledge were identified and rectified. For example, a whole Trust approach around project-based learning in art and PHSE gave pupils the opportunity to reconnect with their peers and demonstrate positive learning behaviours. Pupils also enjoyed the videos that were provided during lockdown as "they explained things clearly for them".
- Now that all pupils have returned to school, teachers are checking the knowledge that pupils know and remember in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers are using this information effectively to plan additional support for pupils who have fallen behind. For example, timetables of early morning work were modified to allow teachers to implement interventions that addressed attainment gaps and reflected the individual needs of cohorts.
- Engagement and attendance had improved between lockdowns and the proportion of persistent absentees continues to diminish.
- Leaders celebrate the stars of the week and share details of all class Twitter accounts in their newsletter. A curriculum in focus section allows parents to follow pupils' learning journeys.

#### **4.2 Approach to recovery and remote learning - Even better if...**

- ... the good practice implemented via Google Classroom during lockdown became part of the "everyday" blended offer to continue to meet the needs of all pupils and remove 'glass ceilings' for those working at greater depth.



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#### **5. Area of Excellence**

Not applicable.

#### **6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?**

Leaders would benefit from the best practice within the Challenge Partners network. The school leaders' work around pupil leadership should be considered as an area of excellence for their next review.

**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.**

**Schools can also 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 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.**