

Written Report

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Brindishe Lee School
School Address:	Wantage Road, Lee Green, London, SE12 8NA
Hub School:	Brindishe

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Unique Reference Number:	100717
Local Authority:	Lewisham
Type of School:	Primary
School Category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4–11
Number on roll:	272
Executive Headteacher:	Dame Vicki Patterson
Headteacher:	Diane Spalding

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	October 2011
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	17–18 March 2016
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies:	Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils:	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:	Outstanding
Area of Excellent Practice:	Confirmed
Leadership, including staff at all levels and pupils	(Included within School Improvement Strategies section)

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Brindishe Lee appears to be firmly within the Outstanding grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report of October 2011.

¹ Please 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

- The school is a broadly average-sized primary school. It is mostly one-form entry, but currently has two bulge classes – one in Year 2 and one in Year 5.
- Boys outnumber girls considerably.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average, although the deprivation indicator is higher than in the majority of schools.
- A high proportion of pupils is from a range of ethnic minority groups and speak English as an additional language. The largest single group is those of White British heritage, although this is declining. It currently stands at around 40% of the population.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities supported by the school is above average, although the proportion with statements or EHC plans is below average.
- The school is part of a federation with Brindishe Manor and Brindishe Green.

School Improvement Strategies and Area of Excellence

What Went Well

- The Brindishe Lee experience is truly inspirational at all levels.
- The philosophy is deeply embedded and entirely consistent throughout the school. This has created a remarkably organic and unique learning experience for adults and children alike, where it is quickly evident that everyone is learning all of the time.
- Everybody strives for high outcomes and to cement the universally shared values. On touring the school, the passion and ethos are palpable. Brindishe Lee takes high engagement to a whole new level, ensuring that pupils intrinsically want to do well.
- School improvement is approached from a non-hierarchical system of leadership where ‘leadership is given to those who are **an** authority as well as those who are **in** authority.’ In this way, the talent of staff at all levels is recognised and utilised. All leaders work in teams, which are organic and task focused.
- All staff see themselves as accountable. They genuinely feel that they can make a difference and have senior leaders’ trust to do so. This freedom and autonomy is highly empowering and staff do not countenance failure. This comes from strength in unity and teamwork without any sense of complacency. That said, leaders at different levels are acutely aware that expectations of everyone in the organisation are relentlessly high, exemplified in one of the executive head’s leadership mantras: ‘notice but mention.’
- The calibre of Brindishe staff is exceptionally high at all levels, the result of extremely rigorous and effective staff recruitment and development.

- The extended team of staff across all of the Brindishe schools comprises a wealth of knowledge and expertise. This rich capital is shared highly effectively within and between schools. CPD ‘pop-ups’ that utilise the expertise at all levels – teachers, teaching assistants and other adults – are voluntary and popular. These are balanced with compulsory training and are just part of a wealth of CPD opportunities.
- Pupils are leaders of their own and others’ learning. The school’s approach has encouraged children to ask their own questions about their learning and staff encourage and embrace these questions and the opportunities that they provide. The problem-solving approach, developed through the ‘Spirals of Inquiry’ planning, supports children in taking the next step, in thinking for themselves about finding answers to their questions and securing further understanding in their learning.
- ‘Spirals’ are used by adults and children alike. They have become a signifier to pupils that they are both expected and encouraged to take a leadership role in their own and others’ learning. The approach makes the process of learning explicit. ‘Spirals’ are used by adults to guide school improvement, by pupils to guide their own learning, and by pupils to support the learning of their peers or a younger pupil.
- The ‘steps’ system that is the Brindishe answer to assessment without levels is rigorous and being used intelligently and reflectively by staff. Each pupil’s progress is carefully assessed and tracked. Crucially, this information drives teachers’ planning and is used to personalise learning and maximise progress. There is a sharp focus on the individual and what they need and staff seize every opportunity to extend or promote learning. Teaching assistants, highly dedicated and committed, are integral to this team and attend progress meetings.
- Taking ‘teachers’ in the broadest sense as those who work with children, staff at Brindishe truly are ‘ambassadors for the nobility of teaching’.

Even Better If...

...leaders ensured the school’s documentation explains clearly and succinctly the factors behind the dips in some aspects of the 2015 published end of Key Stage data.

Outcomes for Pupils

- An extensive range of first hand evidence indicates that outcomes for pupils across the school in a wide range of subjects are exceptionally high and that pupils’ progress is strong and sustained.
- After a long run of impressive results over time, published data for the school dipped slightly in 2015, in comparison to exceptionally high performance in 2014. Much of this can be attributed to issues affecting individual pupils in relatively small cohorts. School leaders remain confident that, when taken alongside a broader range

of indicators, this does not represent a drop in standards or expectations. There is no sense of complacency and no stone is left unturned in the drive to achieve the very best for Brindishe pupils.

- Pupils typically make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and historically, the proportions making more than expected progress have been high in relation to national figures but were closer to national figures in 2015 except in writing, which was higher than the national average.
- Over time boys and girls have made broadly similar rates of progress overall.
- Progress tracking and documentation of outcomes from pupil progress meetings, including for disadvantaged pupils and SEN, is exemplary. This is because it is acutely diagnostic, taking account of closing both progress and attainment gaps.
- Because of very small cohorts, external data for the progress of SEN pupils must be treated with extreme caution. In reading, they have generally made quicker progress than others. In writing, progress rates improved in 2015. However, in mathematics, progress for SEN dropped in 2015.
- In 2015, proportions of disadvantaged pupils making expected or more than expected progress compared very favourably to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. In recent years, disadvantaged pupils have attained better than others have nationally. Lower down the school, gaps close less quickly although numbers of disadvantaged pupils are very low and other factors, such as SEN, have a significant impact. Evaluating their achievement using external data alone is therefore meaningless.
- Key Stage 2 attainment has been embedded at significantly above average for a number of years. Although there was a relative fall in 2015, results remained significantly above average except in mathematics. Attainment in writing has shown a continued rising trend over the last three years. Level 4+ results have been consistently above average as have level 5+.
- At Key Stage 1, attainment was broadly average in 2015 following years of embedded significantly above average attainment. The higher attaining level 3 proportions were sustained compared with the previous year while the level 2B+ dropped due to a small group with significant SEN, as a result there was more of a gender gap than the school typically sees in this cohort.
- Results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have been consistently above the national average.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of reception has been well above average for the last three years. All areas of learning are consistently above national figures

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

What Went Well

- The Brindishe teaching and learning style is striking and distinctive. Pupils are highly engaged and inspired in their learning. Staff exploit the maximum benefit from the open-plan design of the school and pupils are routinely seen in common areas working independently or collaboratively, without the direct supervision of an adult. Despite this, no child was ever seen off-task. This is because the school has inspired in pupils an intrinsic desire to learn.
- There is a strong sense of maturity and sophistication to the learning atmosphere across classes of all ages. Pupils contribute ideas readily in class and their thoughts and questions are valued. The courteous conduct of pupils, both to adults and each other, is exceptional.
- The very highest expectations pervade the school. The stunning quality and range of work that fills the environment is testament to the impressive outcomes secured across year groups. The range of learning opportunities is incredibly rich. Pupils and staff are justifiably extremely proud of this very special school.
- Pupils are undoubtedly developing strongly as leaders of learning. Leaders of learning are able to explain the learning process very well and produce mini lesson plans to guide their support for other pupils. The benefits of cross-age learning are judiciously exploited to meet the personalised needs of all pupils involved, both receiving and offering support.
- Pupils are challenged to think deeply through precisely designed tasks and incisive questioning. They engage without fear or hesitation in open-ended activities that would put many peers in other schools outside of their typical comfort zone. Pupils are encouraged and supported to develop problem-solving skills and teachers are not afraid to leave some questions unanswered.
- Teachers and other adults demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the pupils in their care. Learning activities are very well adapted to meet their needs within the flexible environment and curriculum. The teamwork evident between teachers and teaching assistants is exemplary and the support provided by other adults is of a very high standard.
- There is considerable attention to detail in adults' planning. Teachers expertly judge the right pace of learning and teaching in lessons.
- Resources to support learning are very high quality and all readily accessible for pupils across the school to access independently. Pupils are extremely adept at working collaboratively and their positive learning dialogue is impressive at all levels.
- Pupils can explain their learning clearly and articulately. Written feedback engages pupils in the process of reflecting on and improving their own learning. In this way, it is purposeful and impactful.

Even Better If...

There were no ‘typical’ EBIs and in many individual evaluations, EBIs were hard to think of. New members of staff, both experienced and newly qualified, are flourishing.

Partnerships

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

Leaders are always alert to and interested in what other schools are doing and reflective about this. Leaders attended the Narrowing the Gap Conference.

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

Brindishe Lee is an outward-facing school that gives generously of its time and expertise for the benefit of other schools. Staff share their inspirational practice selflessly for the benefit of children in other schools.

Numerous examples include: CPD on the ‘Brindishe Learning Year’; sharing the ‘Spirals of Enquiry’ approach; the ‘Steps’ assessment system; the ‘Stepping up to Senior Leadership’ training package in partnership with the Institute of Education; a bespoke programme for trainee teachers within the hub; ‘pop-up’ training using the expertise of staff at all levels; hosting visits from other schools, focused for example on mathematics or early years provision; and supporting schools further afield, for example, in Eastbourne.

Middle leaders have also come together to meet within the hub to explore how to go beyond homework to make learning between home and school seamless.

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?

The school embraces what Challenge Partners has to offer. While at this stage there is no obvious area for additional support, leaders are constantly alert to what might be just over the horizon and what it can gain and share in partnership with other schools.