

Name of School:	Bulphan C of E Academy
Head teacher/Principal:	Emma Wigmore
Hub:	Tendring
School type:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	The Vine – South East Essex Hub

Estimate at this QA Review:	Good
Date of this Review:	12 March 2018
Estimate at last QA Review	This is the first QA review for the school
Date of last QA Review	Not applicable
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	26 September 2012

Quality Assurance Review

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

School Improvement Strategies	Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils	Good
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Good
Area of Excellence	Professional Partners Accredited
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	Not applicable
Overall Estimate	Good

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.

1. Information about the school

- Bulphan Church of England Academy is a smaller-than-average sized primary school. There are currently 74 pupils on roll.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any time in the last six years is below the national average.
- There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEN statements or education, health and care plans is above the national average.
- The school has eight of the 17 ethnic groups, but the largest group is White British.
- In May 2016 the headteacher left and was replaced by an executive headteacher from St Margaret's Church of England Primary School.
- In September 2017 Bulphan joined The Vine Trust with St Margaret's. A local hub of three schools (the Collaboration) was formed to include Orsett Church of England Primary School. The executive headteacher became the lead headteacher of the hub to support a new headteacher at Orsett.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Follow up from previous review

- This is the first Challenge Partners QA review for the school.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- The executive headteacher's relentless, well-planned approach through strong, determined leadership has reaped rapid gains in outcomes. The school's systems and ethos have improved. The executive headteacher has a clear understanding of effective school improvement, focused on a relentless drive to improve teaching and learning through coaching and reflective practice.
- The commitment and determination of senior leaders are tangible. They 'ooze' passion, reflection and drive.
- Leaders are realistic about where the school is now and next steps along the journey.
- Leaders inspire teachers to improve through the highly effective 'professional partner' system. This is a vital part of continuing professional development (CPD). Teaching and learning have improved significantly because the approach supports open reflective practice. This secures mutual respect and constructive challenge among staff. Pupils spoke about how teaching has changed to make learning better.
- Detailed 'learning logs' record support and challenge and drive the rigorous performance-management process.
- Links across the Collaboration are instrumental in Bulphan's rapid improvement

because of exceptional leadership. Leaders make the most of everyone's strengths to drive the journey. Year 6 teachers moderate across the schools; an inclusion manager works across the schools and many staff meetings are jointly conducted.

- Senior leaders and teachers reached a common understanding of greater depth through open discussion. This was a focus of professional partners to ensure consistency.
- The curriculum is driven by a key question, which generates interest and focus among pupils. Pupils' interest is sustained through teaching units of work in blocks of time.
- Teachers use 'learning ladders' for assessment, which are critical to raising attainment and closing learning gaps. They are built around well-determined key performance indicators for each year group. Teachers refer to the learning ladders to plan the next piece of learning. Pupils explained clearly how these influenced their work and enabled them to make rapid progress. Gaps are closing because teachers know pupils' precise needs.
- Leaders welcome parental collaboration. The whole community agreed the school's core Christian values, which permeate its work. Staff model and constantly refer to these in all aspects of school life, an approach which pupils proudly embrace. Pupils' spirituality is developed through reflection displays and sacred spaces in classrooms. The termly 'big question', for example 'What inspires you to learn?' provokes discussion and is instrumental in developing parental partnerships. Launch events involve parents and later changes and outcomes are shared, which go to show that leaders listen and parents have an impact on the school's work.
- The focus on developing key Christian values has significantly improved behaviour throughout the school.
- The Collaboration helps recruitment to a small school as staff have opportunities to work across the schools strategically and to promote CPD.

2.3 School Improvement Strategies – Even better if...

- ...the quality of teaching in foundation subjects was as consistently high as in the core subjects.
- ...leadership of foundation subjects was developed with the support of the Collaboration.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment – Follow up from previous review

- This is the first Challenge Partners QA review for the school.

3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment – What went well

- Phonics is strong and modelled well. It begins in Reception and progresses at a

pace. Skills for reading and writing are clearly taught and applied. Readers are enthusiastic. In Key Stage 1, marking identifies spelling next steps. Writing builds from reading words to writing sentences to extended writing.

- Mutual respect between adults and pupils lead to a calm working atmosphere. Pupils appreciate the trust afforded them and work hard to please.
- Staff in the early years have high expectations of behaviour and a clear focus on personal and social skills to ensure children are ready to learn.
- A consistent behaviour policy promotes good behaviour. Pupils understand the 'rainbows and thunderclouds' because classroom expectations are clear.
- Christian values are high profile around the school. Pupils write responses to thought-provoking questions such as, 'What would God think of how we treat the world?'
- Pupils' interest in learning is strong because the curriculum captures their imagination and includes rich discussions. Staff have an engaging manner. In Reception, children were excited writing about what was in the moving parcel, from the zoo, linked to their 'Dear Zoo' text. The range of activities in lessons adds to the pace of learning and the rapid progress pupils make.
- Differentiation is key to planning and tasks in lessons. Learning intentions and success criteria are colour coded to indicate differentiated challenge. Teachers make clear their minimum expectations and then pupils are free to challenge themselves. The most able pupils are challenged through higher expectations. Pupils use success criteria and next steps for peer and self-assessment.
- Systems are consistent, such as editing, marking and the use of assessment 'learning ladders' in pupils' books.
- Questioning is strong. Questions are annotated on planning, are open-ended, clarify understanding and move learning on. Teachers probe further and ask, 'What else?' to ensure pupils expand their responses and support with evidence in reading.
- Behaviour for learning is strong across all year groups. Pupils remain on task and show resilience.
- Learning-support assistants use pre-teaching effectively for groups. They support pupils who are ready to begin activities before others.
- Lessons are accurately pitched. Learning is targeted at the age expectation, with tasks matched to close previous gaps in learning and move learning on. Pupils can explain 'learning ladders' and their benefits in helping them identify how well they are doing.
- Marking systems are consistent and applied well. Comments are useful and secure further progress. Pupils respond to these well. The 'seesaw' app for writing, which gives recorded verbal feedback, is popular with pupils, and has a clear impact on improving writing.

3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment – Even better if...

- ... teachers ensured that lessons included clear modelling to support learning.
- ... teachers' skills of assessment during lessons were further developed to ensure learning was adapted to keep all pupils involved and moved all groups of learners forward.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- Children enter the school with skills broadly in line with those typical for their age. Outcomes have fluctuated over the last three years. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development (GLD) fell from above the national average to below. Following new leadership, this rose back up to above the national average in 2017. Current children are making strong progress, so outcomes are set to remain above the national figure.
- In 2015 the proportion of pupils who met the standard for the phonics screening was significantly below the national average. This improved significantly to above the national figure in 2017. This represented strong progress from the pupils' low reading outcomes coming into Year 1.
- In 2017, through current leaders impact on teaching, Key Stage 1 outcomes at the expected standard rose significantly to be in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieved greater depth increased to just below the national figure in writing and mathematics and above average in reading. Pupils' progress across Key Stage 1 from their different starting points was strong in all subjects.
- Current data shows strong progress and a similarly high proportion of pupils on track to meet the expected standards. The proportion on track for greater depth has improved in all areas. The quality of work in pupils' books matches the school tracking data. Pupils are making strong progress in writing and mathematics especially.
- In 2017, the proportion of Year 6 pupils that met the expected standard for writing rose significantly to above the national average. The proportion of pupils moderated at the expected standard and at greater depth was above the national average for reading and mathematics, which represented significant improvement.
- The work in pupils' books shows strong progress. This supports the data, where very high proportions of pupils are recorded as making expected progress. In almost all year groups, high percentages of pupils are making more than expected progress because of strong teaching. The current Year 6 are on track to be in line with the national average, which would represent strong progress in all areas from low Key Stage 1 prior attainment. Pupils with SEND make strong progress because they receive report that is well-tailored to their needs.

5. Area of Excellence

- Professional partners as school-to-school support.

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?

- The system of 'professional partners' was an established system at St Margaret's, the designated support school for Bulphan. The executive headteacher has clear evidence of impact at St Margaret's. Teaching and learning and performance management have improved. This success was recognised by Ofsted and other external visitors. This proven system was introduced into Bulphan to improve

teaching and learning. Teachers' individual professional-development needs were analysed at Bulphan so that their partners from St Margaret's were appropriately matched. Time was provided for regular coaching conversations, activities and for self-reflection. Initially, a stronger teacher or senior leader was linked to a weaker teacher. As this developed over time and the impact on improving teaching was evident and partners became more equal.

- The 'professional partner' provides mutual reflective support to meet the requirements of the school's and personal performance-management targets. The approach includes formal meetings, learning conversations, mutual observations, data analysis, sharing of planning and sharing of books. Everything is conducted in an open, reflective style where mutual trust develops. Partners change each year. Teachers can identify key people they want to work alongside to develop skills. They have to justify this in terms of the potential impact on pupil outcomes, which involves reflective analysis of previous performance.
- The process is now a culture and ethos in both schools. The rapid impact at Bulphan is evident, but the benefit is apparent across both schools. 'Learning logs', which capture evidence of all activities, are key to the process. They provide excellent evidence of everyone's commitment to reflective analytical practise. The evidence added to learning logs skilfully cross-references targets and provides robust and valuable evidence for performance management meetings.

5.2 What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

- Senior leaders are highly skilled as leaders and professional partners. This was initially the case in St Margaret's as the partner school. The executive headteacher is a local leader of education who supports other headteachers locally and within the diocese. She is a trained coach. The head of school and senior leaders are local authority moderators who regularly moderate work and provide support. One is a specialist leader of education.
- The executive headteacher has supported another school in introducing the approach. The success of the system was reported upon positively in both schools' inspections. The executive headteacher has presented at a local authority headteacher meeting. The executive headteacher is working with the chief executive officer of the trust to plan the use of professional partners across schools within The Vine Trust. The work is developing across the Collaboration so that professional partners are mutual and linked as either year groups or middle leaders. This has also been used as part of the evidence for the current teaching school bid.

5.3 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?

- The impact of professional partners on the quality of teaching and learning is significant at Bulphan, where all teaching is now good. Prior to this, teaching was

inadequate. Improved teaching had a positive impact on pupils' outcomes, with all key stage outcomes and phonics improving significantly from below to in line with or above the national average. Attainment and progress have improved in all year groups. High percentages of pupils make accelerated progress. Supporting the process at Bulphan has developed the experience and skills of the partner school, St Margaret's, and its outcomes. For example, outcomes in writing improved at the expected standard and at greater depth.

5.4 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?

Mrs Emma Wigmore

Executive Headteacher

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

The school wished to discuss and consider this further.

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.