



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR DULWICH HAMLET JUNIOR SCHOOL

<b>Name of School:</b>	Dulwich Hamlet Junior School
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Clarie Purcell
<b>Hub:</b>	The Charter Schools Educational Trust Hub
<b>School phase:</b>	Primary
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	The Charter Schools Educational Trust

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	N/A
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	11/03/2024
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	N/A
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	13/03/2023
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	28/03/2023



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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:

**Leadership at all levels** N/A

**Quality of provision and outcomes** N/A

**AND**

**Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs**

**Area of excellence** Building Collaborative Learning Networks Accredited

**Previously accredited valid areas of excellence** N/A

**Overall peer evaluation estimate** N/A

***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**

Dulwich Hamlet is a three-form entry junior school in the centre of Dulwich Village in London. The school converted to an academy in 2011 and subsequently joined The Charter Schools Educational Trust in April 2021. The core leadership team includes the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.

The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are below average, although the number of pupils with an educational health care plan (EHCP) is comparatively high. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, around a tenth speak English as an additional language, with 15 languages spoken. Almost all pupils from the wide range of ethnic minority groups are fluent in English.

The school's vision is to enable outstanding learning, within a glittering curriculum, where everyone matters. Their values of independence, respect, integrity, resilience and enjoyment underpin their desire for all pupils to develop into young people who have a clear moral purpose, excellent communication skills, an understanding of their place in the world and an inclusive attitude.

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

- Leaders create a collaborative and supportive culture where staff feel valued and trusted. The headteacher and senior leadership team (SLT) provide enthusiastic and clear direction, fostering a strong team spirit.
- Leaders prioritise improving teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogy through continuing professional development (CPD), peer observation, and participation in research groups. Teachers actively reflect on their practice, continually deepening their understanding across the curriculum. This approach builds confidence in both early-career and experienced educators.
- Subject leaders hold a clear vision, outlining the steps required for ongoing development. They collaborate with their teams, using data from pupil book studies and pupil voice to create cohesive plans. The result is a progressive, forward-thinking curriculum that places learning firmly at its heart.
- Senior leaders are empowered to drive significant improvements within their areas. Pupil progress meetings enable the assessment lead to collaborate with class teachers, to design targeted interventions. These interventions improve outcomes with notable progress for disadvantaged pupils. Teachers value the process, describing it as empowering and effective.
- All staff benefit from a wide range of CPD opportunities. Teaching Assistants (TAs) feel part of the team, reflecting a culture where everyone's work is valued. Training is prioritised for TAs, who can pursue formal qualifications or subject-specific development. Support staff have clear progression routes, with two TAs completing the school's direct programme becoming teachers.

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- Strong home-school relationships are evident in the high level of parent and carer involvement. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) excels in fundraising and organising community-building events, such their recent quiz night. The headteacher noted that parents and carers are always eager to support the school, which creates a cohesive environment.
- The curriculum is enriched by a variety of activities that build pupils' confidence, skills, and cultural capital. From science and art-focused trips to musical performances, visits to art galleries and places of worship, teachers create memorable experiences that broaden pupils' learning. One pupil summed it up by saying, 'Enjoyment is a big part of what we do here.'
- Pupils are articulate, confident, and proud to be 'Hamleteers'. They live and breathe the school's values. One pupil explained, 'We get rewards for showing the values, but we don't do it for a certificate, we keep them because it is the right thing to do.'
- Staff wellbeing surveys are used to set school-wide targets. The school's workload planner strategically mitigates pressure points throughout the year. Additionally, wellbeing days and open conversations about mental health create a supportive environment for both staff and pupils. As a result of these endeavours, staff report positive improvements in their workload management.
- Pupil leadership opportunities help to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Year 6 captains are elected through an inclusive democratic process where they write a speech, and peers vote in a secret ballot. Pupils take their role seriously and are very proud to be role models. One commented, 'People look up to us and I feel a real sense of leadership.'

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

- ... year group leaders were empowered to take a holistic view of whole school strategic development.
- ... pupil leaders networked with other pupil leaders from across the Trust.

#### **3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well**

- The school offers a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum designed to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education and equip them for future life. Staff refer to it as the "glittering" curriculum, emphasising that every pupil's potential is valued. This curriculum is rooted in the school's core values of independence, integrity, resilience, respect, and enjoyment. The impact of these values is evident in the pupils' enthusiastic engagement with learning and their pride in being part of this vibrant, thriving community.

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- All pupils are encouraged to think deeply, empowering them to connect concepts and complete tasks independently. Challenge is integrated throughout lessons, moving learning forward. This was exemplified in Year 5 lessons where children were actively encouraged to express their understanding of multiplying fractions in various ways, showcasing the depth of their grasp on the topic.
- The teaching of reading is extremely effective. High-quality texts that represent the school community are carefully selected, and a well-stocked library provides a welcoming space for promoting a love of reading. Teachers regularly read to pupils and focused intervention programmes ensure that gaps are closing rapidly. In a Year 6 lesson, expert modelling by the teacher supported pupils' development in fluency and expression through individual and choral reading. This structured approach results in pupils achieving significantly above the national average in reading by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Retrieval practice is consistently embedded across the school and used effectively to engage prior knowledge ready for learning new material. Teachers understand the importance of retrieval and plan activities such as low-stakes quizzing and '3 a day' fluency questions for pupils to recall past learning. A pupil in a Year 5 computing lesson explained how revisiting prior learning helps them get in the rhythm of the lesson.
- All staff have high expectations of their pupils. Teachers use strategies such as cold calling, stem sentences, vocabulary banks, and consistently model tier 2 and 3 vocabulary choices. In a Year 3 English lesson, pupils understood and were able to use fronted adverbials because of precise modelling by the teacher. This resulted in pupils using ambitious vocabulary and demonstrating exemplary behaviour for learning.
- A positive, purposeful climate is evident throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and take responsibility for their learning. In many lessons, the impact of embedded behavioural and pedagogical routines is significant, resulting in all pupils making strong progress. This success is reflected in Dulwich Hamlet's exceptional academic results, with performance at every level significantly above the national average.
- The 'Hamleteer values' are deeply embedded and both pupils and staff demonstrate them, which contributes to the positive culture of the school. Pupils take pride in the work they produce, with examples of well-presented, extended pieces of writing in books. One of the house captains said, 'We learn so well here and I am really proud when I complete a task independently.'
- Governors demonstrate deep commitment to the school's success. Their professional expertise creates a balance of support and challenge for school leadership. Through their actions across various areas and ongoing training, they directly contribute to the school's positive environment, offering their support and constructive feedback.

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

- ... subject leaders identified key knowledge in order to structure retrieval practice.
- ... all teachers considered the precision and clarity of explanations to direct and maximise attention on the learning objective.
- ... TAs deployed the same classroom strategies and techniques when working with subject-specific staff e.g. music and physical education.

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

- The experienced special educational needs/disability coordinator (SENDCo) adopts a strategic approach and works effectively across the school. She attends all pupil progress meetings to monitor progress and suggest interventions and adaptations for classroom practice. She is actively involved during transition points, visiting settings and meeting with parents to ensure vital information is gathered and passed on. The impact of this work is positive. Provision for pupils with SEND is effective and they make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers skilfully employ a variety of strategies to ensure accessibility for all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with additional needs. These strategies include targeted questions, flexible groupings, choral recall, and explicit teaching of vocabulary. A Year 3 lesson exemplified this, with scaffolds successfully removed for certain pupils, allowing them to achieve the learning objective independently.
- Tuition groups support all disadvantaged pupils, enhancing their understanding and enabling them to catch up on key concepts. In Years 4, 5, and 6, targeted interventions help disadvantaged pupils with high prior attainment reach higher standards, demonstrating the school's ambition for this pupil group.
- Pupil progress meetings, book studies and curriculum spotlights place a strong focus on the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs. This ensures their needs are met, and insights into their retention are incorporated into planning, maximising outcomes for these pupils.
- The school's culture and vision emphasises destigmatising mental health for pupils. This includes celebrating mental health days, explicit teaching on wellbeing and social/emotional literacy through PSHE, and additional support for children with additional needs. As a result, pupils demonstrate increased emotional literacy and know who to approach for support. This is evidenced by positive changes in pupil surveys and the school receiving the Southwark Healthy Schools Gold Award.

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

... leaders ensured that academic progress for disadvantaged pupils accelerated from their starting points on entry to Dulwich Hamlet.

## **5. Area of Excellence**

Building Collaborative Learning Networks

### **Accredited**

#### **5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?**

Dulwich Hamlet embraces collaboration as a cornerstone of its educational philosophy. This belief extends beyond the classroom, recognising the school as part of a larger local and global community. Collaboration drives a shared commitment to learning and its impact is powerful.

Leaders ensure that all staff wholeheartedly embrace collaboration, understanding it both supports others and enhances the school's own learning, improving outcomes for pupils. This commitment is evidenced in their dedication to CPD. Staff at all levels engage with external networks, leading where appropriate and stepping in to fill the void where insufficient network opportunities exist.

The school's position at the forefront of the London South Research School at Charles Dickens, along with the deputy headteacher's role as an Evidence Leader in Education, fosters impactful collaborations. The 'Explore the Evidence' sessions influence schools across England, leading to longer-term collaborations and targeted school development projects. For example, a partnership with another Trust enables joint projects such as a bespoke Year 6 wellbeing curriculum trial. Additionally, the Year 5 team's trial of an Education Endowment Fund (EEF) reading programme positively influences reading fluency.

Investment in staff means they have the knowledge and skills to confidently share best practice, with many engaging in national professional qualifications (NPQs). Where networks are lacking, they establish hubs, exemplified by the religious education hub led by the school's Lead Practitioner. This impactful work benefits pupils in other schools through collaboration with subject leads.

A key approach to improving teaching and learning is the school's leadership within the area mathematics hub. The Leader of Maths Education runs workshops, and teachers host leaders and teachers for mathematics lesson observations. This collaboration has significantly increased attainment in mathematics, with Year 4 pupils particularly benefiting from a new approach to developing mastery of multiplicative reasoning.

The school actively engages with neighbouring schools and communities, sharing resources, expertise, and best practice. This collaborative approach fosters a wider sense of connection, shared learning, and a commitment to making a positive impact both within the school and beyond its walls. As the deputy headteacher aptly stated, 'We have found that you get tenfold back by giving of what you have.'

## **5.2 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?**

Case studies of the school's work demonstrate a successful model for building local and global networks that positively impact pupil outcomes. Lead practitioners expertly provide insights to other schools, build confidence through peer learning and offer practical guidance and inspiration on how to embark on a collaborative learning network journey.

By cultivating connections with schools worldwide, pupils gain valuable insights into different cultures and perspectives. Year 5 pupils engage with a Ugandan school, with annual video conferences allowing them to compare educational contexts and broaden their understanding. Similarly, Year 6 pupils have the unique opportunity to connect with members of the Amazonian Huni Kuin indigenous community. These connections cultivate greater cultural awareness, empathy, and a broader perspective on learning – positively impacting outcomes for all children involved. As one pupil commented, 'This helps us to develop a sense of the global community.'

The school demonstrates strong attainment in mathematics across the school. Following engagement with the Maths Hub in 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics increased from 83% in 2016 to 91%. This has continued to be a strength of the school with pupils consistently achieving significantly above the national average in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. This approach offers a model for other schools seeking to improve their outcomes for mathematics.

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

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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/>).

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>).