



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH KESTEVEN ACADEMY

<b>Name of School:</b>	North Kesteven Academy
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Joanne Tunnicliffe
<b>Hub:</b>	Lincolnshire Hub
<b>School phase:</b>	Secondary with sixth form
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	N/A

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	N/A
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	04/03/2024
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Effective
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	22/02/2023
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Requires Improvement
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	15/03/2022



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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** N/A

**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

North Kesteven Academy (NK) is situated in North Hykeham in Lincoln. It is a single-academy trust which converted in 2011. It is a mixed comprehensive. The school is smaller than the average size with 662 pupils on roll across Years 7 to 13. The school was originally built in the 1960s.

NK has a larger than average proportion of pupils who are services children. The percentage of pupils for whom the school is in receipt of pupil premium is in line with the national average, though this proportion has increased significantly in recent years. The school has a high level of pupil mobility and a high percentage of pupils who join the school as in-year admissions.

Eight tenths of the pupil population is White British. Almost one in eight pupils speaks English as an additional language with 23 different languages spoken. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above the national average and is increasing.

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

- The determined, reflective headteacher, supported by the collegiate senior leadership team, continues to develop the school whilst placing pupils at the centre of all decision making. Senior leaders support and develop staff in an honest and authentic manner. This approach has helped to secure 'buy-in' from colleagues and provides the foundation for school improvement initiatives and strategies to be introduced and implemented.
- The school employs a wide range of quality assurance activities that provide valuable insight and assist with planning for onward development. Senior leaders are highly visible around the school. This helps to inform their understanding of practice. Leaders use processes such as subject reviews and working with external partners to reflect on areas of strength and where further refinements are necessary. Quality assurance processes are supportive. Good practice is shared through 'bright spots' cards which celebrate colleagues' teaching or provision they have created. This includes promotion of the innovative use of pedagogies. Subject reviews are collaborative and transparent. These inform strategic actions. For example, a subject review in computing science led to remapping of the curriculum and increasing the levels of challenge in Key Stage 3.

- Self evaluation processes inform the NK's continuing professional development (CPD) offer. Leaders analysed a range of sources to identify the need to focus on the development of formative assessment across the school. Staff have shared a collective approach over an 18 month period. This has led to a greater depth of understanding of related pedagogies, which is assisting adaptive teaching across the school. 'Teaching and learning communities' alongside 'teach meets' allow colleagues to work together and to share approaches which have been successful. The CPD activities linked to the overarching formative assessment project have helped to foster a non-hierarchical culture. Teachers at all levels of seniority and experience collaborate and jointly develop their practice.
- Leaders have introduced a behaviour curriculum as part of their revision of the behaviour policy. Pupils are now explicitly taught expected behaviours. Teachers spend time explaining and modelling positive behaviours to classes to help embed good practice and support pupils' success. Staff receive ongoing CPD related to high expectations of pupils, with staff briefings having become increasingly focused on strategic, proactive approaches. As a result of these refinements there has been an increased clarity around the systems in place. There is a more consistent approach across the school. This has resulted in a reduction in low level disruption in lessons.
- The careers provision at NK has developed with an increased number of opportunities for pupils linked to employment. This is developing their knowledge of the wider working world beyond the school. Careers are taught as part of 'personal development time' (PDT). Teaching related to careers begins in Year 7 and continues throughout all year groups including the sixth form. The school is meeting or exceeding national expectations for most of the Gatsby benchmarks.

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

...all pupils regularly attended enrichment and leadership activities.

....'formal' assessment processes were further developed, to include the spiral effect of previous content, to support secure, deep knowledge and understanding

....all middle leaders consistently articulated the impact of their curriculum and explicitly shared leading practice.

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

- Adults across the school have positive relationships with pupils. They know them as individuals. One Key Stage 4 pupil said, 'Teachers are always able to help.' The level of care helps pupils to feel secure which, in turn, supports higher levels of engagement with learning. The safe learning environments promote confidence and risk taking. Pupils readily volunteer answers. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson where pupils were calculating interest, the warm interactions between the teacher and pupils supported high levels of response to verbal questioning. Pupils' sense of belonging is shown by the pride the majority take in their books. These are well presented and carefully maintained by many of the pupils.
- Key vocabulary is explicitly taught to pupils across all subjects. In a Year 7 PDT session where pupils were reading *His Dark Materials*, the teacher provided explanations for key language. This allowed all pupils to access the text. In a Year 10 chemistry lesson on covalent bonds, challenging vocabulary was explored which supported pupils to use this themselves in their explanations. In a Year 10 history lesson linked to the Anglo-Saxons, pre-taught vocabulary was used by pupils whilst answering thought-provoking questions.
- The use of 'cold calling' is an embedded questioning strategy used by teachers across the school. In the majority of lessons, this presents pupils with probing questions that demand active engagement. In Year 10 English lessons on *Macbeth* and a *Christmas Carol*, the teacher's use of 'cold calling' meant all pupils participated fully. In a Year 7 mathematics lesson, exploring the concept of 'the range', this questioning approach ensured a deeper understanding on the part of pupils. In a Year 9 English lesson focusing on the text *All That is Left in The World*, 'cold calling' stretched pupils to think beyond the initial questions posed.
- Lesson structures have been developed across the school to support pupils' engagement in their learning. In a Year 10 PDT session, the well established routines around reading supported all to engage in *The Women in Black*. In a Year 13 politics lesson on anarchism and a Year 13 health and social care lesson on child development and 'the little red book', the use of purposeful starts to the lessons meant students focused from the very beginning.
- Teachers routinely check for understanding and tackle pupils' misconceptions. This includes the use of mini whiteboards. In a Year 8 geography lesson on the production of sapphires in Madagascar, the teacher purposefully used these to check the class' understanding and then respond with explanations

where gaps were apparent. In a Year 12 and 13 sports lesson on organising a sporting event, pupils used mini white boards to share their initial thoughts to allow the teacher to gain an insight into their understanding.

- Leaders have developed the use of PDT to support pupils' development in a wide range of areas. These include reading, careers, revision interventions, celebration assemblies and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) learning. NK's PSHE curriculum is bespoke to the setting. In part it has been created to respond to local needs such as road safety. The purposeful use of PDT and the range of aspects that are covered, support pupils to be responsible, active and respectful citizens.

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

...there were more opportunities for stretch and challenge to further deepen pupils' thinking.

...all teachers were explicit in their response to checking for understanding.

...all teachers effectively guided pupils' responses to whole class feedback.

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

- The majority of teachers have a secure understanding of the needs of pupils. Annotated seating plans demonstrate that teachers use this information to put in place personalised, inclusive strategies. For example, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson on algebra, the teacher ensured that precise, targeted support allowed the most vulnerable pupils to be successful in their learning whilst managing their cognitive load. In a Year 10 dance lesson based on *Mamma Mia*, the verbal scaffolding provided by the teacher supported vulnerable pupils in accessing an extensive piece of reading.
- The SEND coordinator leads a weekly briefing for staff on pupils. This includes sharing information and strategies on how to meet the needs of individuals. The school has delivered inclusion training to staff on areas such as well-being and ADHD. Leaders ensure that all such sessions include staff who have specific pupils in mind. This helps them to connect the CPD to members of their school community and to develop practical strategies for support.

- Leaders have developed a comprehensive, considered reading strategy. This strategic plan has been informed by working with external partners such as the LEAD Academy to help hone and refine initiatives. NK's approach to the further development of reading is based upon four strands: learning to read; progress in reading; reading to learn; and reading for pleasure. Leaders use a wide range of information, including assessment data, to analyse pupils' attainment and progression in their reading. This includes understanding their fluency and vocabulary development. 'Bedrock', a digital literacy resource, has been embedded in Key Stage 3. The introduction of reading in PDT, with pupils exposed to a range of quality texts, is promoting a love of reading for all pupils, with a particular benefit to vulnerable pupils. This allows them to explore complex themes and to develop their cultural capital. Pupil voice and feedback from staff shows there is great enjoyment and engagement in reading together.
- Where appropriate, pupils received targeted intervention for phonics. This includes supporting the increasing numbers of pupils that are arriving at the school with limited understanding of English. This provision may be supplemented with the use of 'Flash Academy' which is a software programme which supports pupils with literacy acquisition. A member of the inclusion team in 'The Bridge', leads a programme related to this. Additionally pupils access and engage at home with the technology. One Key Stage 3 pupil shared that 'Online platforms help me to broaden my vocabulary in English lessons. I now use words that I wouldn't have used before.' School internal assessment shows that these vulnerable pupils receiving this package of support make accelerated progress in their vocabulary development and reading comprehension.

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

... leaders further developed their strategic plans to support pupils with SEMH needs to be successful.

... adaptive teaching continued to develop to provide an appropriate level of support for all pupils.

... a distributed attendance strategy was established within the school.

## 5. Area of Excellence

N/A

### **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>)