



VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP QUALITY
ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR
MOWBRAY SCHOOL

Name of School:	Mowbray
Headteacher/Principal:	Jonathan Tearle (Executive Headteacher) Karen Pickles (Head of School)
Hub:	North East Special
School phase:	Special
MAT:	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this virtual Leadership Quality Assurance Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	24/03/2021
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Effective
Date of last QA Review	25/02/2020
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	28/12/2017



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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	Leading
School Improvement Strategies	Leading
Approach to recovery and remote learning	Not applicable
Area of Excellence	Accredited
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	Not applicable
Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate	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

Mowbray is a North Yorkshire County Council co-educational special school. It caters for 265 pupils, from three to 16 years of age. All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). Pupils at Mowbray have a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) including moderate, severe and complex learning difficulties, speech language and communication difficulties, visual and hearing impairment and autistic spectrum conditions.

The school has two sites – one in Bedale and an additional primary satellite site in Ripon. The Ripon site opened in January 2020. Mowbray has expanded over the past few years and continues to do so. Currently, there are 16 pupils in the Early Years.

The proportion of pupils entitled to pupil premium funding is slightly below half of the whole school population.

Mowbray's vision is SURE – achieving 'Success through Understanding, Respect and Endeavour'. The school has a range of accreditations including the National Autistic Society (NAS) re-accreditation at advanced level and the Optimus Well-being Award for Schools.

2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- The senior leadership team is passionate, determined and collaborative. An example of its effectiveness is the development of leadership capacity at Mowbray. Fourteen knowledgeable and confident leaders serve on the wider leadership team. This team is reflective and adaptable. These attributes are seen in the continual development of the curriculum. In secondary provision, leaders have seen the need to further develop expressive arts in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, occupational studies have been developed. The relentless focus is on what pupils and families need to lead happy fulfilled lives.
- A key ingredient of the provision at Mowbray is emotion coaching. The emotional well-being of pupils, staff and parents is a priority. Staff use a five step process to structure dialogue with pupils – tuning in, connecting and normalising, validating feelings, setting limits on behaviour and problem solving. This helps pupils identify why they are feeling and behaving the way they are. Subsequently, they can become more independent in managing their behaviour. As a result, there has

been a noticeable decline in behavioural incidents. As one leader said, 'this is about stopping the fires from starting – not just about putting them out'.

- Leaders ensure that all staff are supported in maintaining their positive mental health and well-being. There are numerous examples to illustrate this in action. Learning from research, one example demonstrates how collaboration can influence this. The English and mathematics teams each collaborated to moderate their respective leadership work.
- Being a research-accredited school, leaders have used this knowledge to create an ethos at Mowbray that encourages staff to learn and improve. Consequently, staff performing a variety of roles seek out and commit to development opportunities. Ten teaching assistants, for example, are engaged in an 18 month training programme, with staff on university courses and others following middle leadership university accreditations. This ensures that the staff team is continually updated with current thinking, both locally and globally.
- Leaders robustly monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum and, subsequently, how it is delivered. Leaders in the primary phase are allocated to curriculum pathway development. This allows specialist staff to have greater impact on teaching and learning. An important aspect of monitoring is pupil voice, which is a rich resource. Pupils talk articulately about the extent to which their behavioural choices are well supported. They also consider their learning through the curriculum, including algebra in mathematics.

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

...leaders at all levels continued to monitor robustly, to ensure that EHCP outcomes influence the curriculum offer for each pupil.

...with the recent development of the Ripon site, leaders ensured that there is consistently strong practice across both sites through sharing knowledge and practice.

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

- Pupils in the primary and secondary phases follow one of three curriculum pathways - formal, formal/ pastoral and semi-formal. All three pathways are designed to prepare pupils for adulthood. This means that generic aspects of study, informed by EHCP wording, are coupled with teaching that reflects pupils'

interests. Such a personalised approach is strengthened with AQA unit award schemes. These accreditations are selected based on pupils' interests and long term planning; 200 unit awards have been awarded since September 2020.

- The continuing professional development (CPD) of all staff is integral to the provision at Mowbray. Leaders recognise the importance of nurturing staff. Teachers' standards, for example, are used to underpin the work of teaching staff, which helps frame the nature of development needed. Staff and leaders work harmoniously and honestly, which results in personal development points being written. These are addressed via a range of means, including coaching. Progress towards targets is reviewed formally at appraisal meetings.
- Time and consideration are features of the investment in staff recruitment. Leaders recognise the importance of appointing the right people to Mowbray – specific knowledge and skills can always be taught later. Hence the person specification has greater weighting than the job description. This has paid dividends. Passionate staff are eager to engage in school improvement work.
- Induction of newly appointed staff is well planned. Owing to the capacity of the wider leadership team, there is a healthy range of options for coaching and mentoring support. The open and honest ethos is evident in these early stages, with colleagues encouraged to embrace challenges in the role and learn from these experiences. This makes staff resilient and willing to innovate in the longer term. Information gleaned from exit interviews is used to help leaders reflect on CPD.
- Staff make excellent use of Mowbray's location and premises. They understand the importance of the outdoors, as this can inspire pupils not least in their preparation for adulthood. The school farm, for example, enables pupils to learn about local agriculture and national farming activities. At the Ripon site an outdoor classroom, along with the grounds, is being developed. During the lockdown period, the whole school 'walked to Croatia'!
- A large proportion of pupil premium finances fund parent liaison officers. These staff make a difference, not only to pupils but also their families. For example, forensic CAMHS provision has led to improved behaviour for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders engage with a wide range of external agencies, including the police who advise on online safety.
- Governors are kept well informed. They recognise the challenges of covid whilst appreciating the benefits of technology. They have noted that it is easier for many to attend meetings using virtual platforms. Governors and parents understand the rationale for the three pathways, seeing how these routes prepare pupils well for adulthood.

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...

- ...as Mowbray continues to grow in size, leaders ensured that this growth is managed well so that improvement is sustained.
- ...leaders considered carefully and strategically how best to develop post-16 provision in the locality.
- ...leaders clarified a common vocabulary which would help them articulate the Mowbray provision.

4.1 Approach to recovery and remote learning - What went well

- As the past year has progressed, more pupils have been taught face-to-face in school. This proportion extended to greater than a half. Whether pupils were learning at school or at home, staff wanted to ensure that all pupils continued to engage effectively. This meant that they needed to have familiar resources and routines. In order to do this, staff created videos and resource packs for parents and pupils to use. As a result, not only did pupils continue to learn well, but parents gained helpful insights into teaching and learning at Mowbray.
- Staff recognised the importance of maintaining a focus on EHCP outcomes. Where additional guidance was required, specific expertise was sourced. Such expertise included occupational and speech and language therapy. Activities were modified accordingly. For example, if an outcome was for a pupil to be independent when dressing and undressing, parents were helped to use bath time to continue this development.
- Work on emotion coaching related to other aspects of provision. For example, staff were empathetic when engaging with parents. They understood the danger of placing too many demands on parents, hence the supportive approach by providing a range of resources to help in the home. Parental feedback, reflecting on the lockdown periods, acknowledges this.
- Leaders have learned a great deal from remote provision. They are keen to implement this learning as the 'new normal' develops. Leaders recognise that loosening break and lunch timings of the school day and varying the pace of teaching will benefit learning. Whilst there will be logistical aspects to consider, everyone understands that pupils' learning comes first.

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

...leaders ensured that the identified successes over the past year were implemented into provision moving forward.

5. Area of Excellence

Mowbray 'preparation for adulthood' curriculum – meeting the needs of all learners, no matter what curriculum pathway they follow.

Accredited

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

- Just over two years ago a new curriculum with a focus on preparation for adulthood was implemented. Core aspects of life are central to all teaching and learning, regardless of which learning pathway a pupil follows. These will always be applicable throughout their school career and when they move into adulthood.
- All staff were involved in the creation of the curriculum, through a variety of workshops. They continue to evolve the curriculum offer, effectively managing the continued growth of the school well.
- Pupils have been placed in three distinct pathways of learning– formal, formal pastoral and semi-formal. Learning is split into six skill categories:
 - Out and about
 - Physical wellness
 - Thinking skills
 - Communication skills (including, verbal and physical communication, literacy and computing)
 - Mathematics for Life
 - People skills

These are broken down into 24 skill sets, areas of *skills for life*. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and reflects the Mowbray ethos of SURE 'Achieving..... Success through Understanding, Respect and Endeavour'.

- The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of each pupil, no matter which pathway they follow. Each pupil is placed in classes with other pupils on the same pathway. The curriculum is designed to prepare each child for adulthood. Vocational links in Key Stages 3 and 4 are carefully considered and selected. Accreditations and qualifications are sourced to marry well with the curriculum followed.

- The curriculum is holistic, strongly promoting pupils' well-being and personal development. EHCP outcomes inform the design and sequence of the curriculum pathway. Assessment systems are personalised, with whole school collaboration in producing 'I can' statements for each pathway.
- NAS awards recognise how the Mowbray facilities, including outdoors, strengthen the provision.

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

- Leaders at Mowbray articulate the impact of the curriculum in a range of ways. This includes reflecting on pupils' destinations, current progress towards unit awards, and qualifications and accreditations attained.
- Staff use a range of processes to capture holistic achievement. These processes are selected according to the evidence which is being sought. This will involve information about pupils' behavioural choices, academic progress through the curriculum and the extent to which a pupil is becoming more independent.
- All awards attained, together with NAS reports, detail the impact of the curriculum. Awards include:
 - School farm network award
 - Investors in pupils
 - Eco schools awards
 - NAS awards
 - NYCC Well-being Award
 - Alex Timpson ARC Attachment Award-winners 2019
- Mowbray is very well connected with a range of other organisations. This is not least owing to the extensive range of research engaged with. Such connections help ensure that such curriculum work is grounded in secure national and global thinking.

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

Name: Angie Staple and Katie Oliver

Title: Heads of secondary and primary

Email: angie.staple@mowbrayschool.co.uk and katie.oliver@mowbrayschool.co.uk

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

Senior leaders would like to continue to engage with Challenge Partners' networks nationally to develop provision.

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.