

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Walthamstow School for Girls
School Address:	Church Hill, Walthamstow, London, E17 9RZ
Hub:	Waltham Forest

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Unique Reference Number:	10313
Local Authority:	Waltham Forest
Type of School:	Secondary
School Category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Number on roll:	890
Head teacher/Principal:	Meryl Davies

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	28-29 January 2014
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	6 – 8 February 2017
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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 Excellence: Leadership through moral purpose	Confirmed and valid for 3 years
Previously accredited Areas of Excellence:	Using data to ensure strong outcomes and excellent progress of all students

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Walthamstow School for Girls appears to have moved beyond the Good grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report and is working within the Outstanding grade.

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

- Walthamstow School for Girls (WSFG) is highly popular non-selective community school located in Waltham Forest local authority.
- The buildings of the school are a mixture of a Victorian (now listed building) and modern architect-designed teaching areas. The school grounds are thoughtfully designed to provide interest and space for the pupils and staff. This combination of building and space is well used by the school to provide an enriching learning and social environment for its pupils and staff.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding in 2016 was above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The largest ethnic group in the school is Pakistani.
- In the school's last Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review (8 – 10 February, 2016), the summary of estimates placed it as Outstanding in each of the estimate categories.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- Leaders have created a culture where excellence is the norm. The head teacher is unwavering in her drive for sustained improvement and is very ably supported in this by leaders at all levels.
- The school's self evaluation document clearly lays out the priorities, strengths and areas for improvement over a 3-year period (2014-17). It is an accurate evaluation of where the school currently is and where it wants to be; it links effectively to its School Improvement Plan (SIP). The next 3-year self-evaluation and SIP (2017 – 2020) are being drafted.
- Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement within its last Ofsted inspection report. It has built on its existing Area of Excellence ('Using data to ensure strong outcomes and excellent progress of all students') effectively.
- Embedding strong 'learning to learn' principles in Key Stage 3 is a key priority for leaders currently. This sets the foundation for strong future learning as pupils begin studies of GCSE subjects.
- The school's ethos and vision 'Neglect Not The Gift That Is Within Thee' runs throughout its principles and practices; this is evident from the huge number and extensive range of educational, social, personal and cultural enrichment opportunities that are on offer to the pupils. For example, drama productions, music performances and visits to local museums and art galleries.

- The leaders and staff of the school have developed strong external links with educational organisations and charities to provide enrichment opportunities for its pupils and others. The school has funded the establishment of a school in Pakistan and is planning a visit to Zanzibar to develop cultural and educational links.
- Pupil premium is used very effectively and has led to substantial improvement in the educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Senior leaders, very well led by the highly experienced and visionary head teacher, have at the heart of everything they do the personal and educational improvement of each and every pupil. Of particular note is the high level of research-based development in practice across the school, where all staff are encouraged to innovate and integrate examples of effective practice from outside into the strategies in the school.
- Leaders have very effectively promoted self-evaluation at all levels to weave reflection of practice throughout their work. This has led to an improvement of the quality of teaching over time.

Even Better If...

... leaders maintained the drive towards regaining the Ofsted outstanding judgement through continuing with the GREEN vision and values and its Area of Excellence

... leaders sustained the current priority of Key Stage 3 'learning to learn' to firmly fix strong learning and progress outcomes for all pupils as they move into Key Stage 4 and beyond.

Pupil Outcomes

- The head teacher acknowledges that there was a dip in performance in 2012, but pupils' progress increased in 2013 and has been substantial and sustained since then. In 2016, outcomes for the school were very strong: P8 was 0.63, placing the school in the top 3% nationally. A8 was 57.3, significantly above national (48.5).
- 80% of last year's Year 11 achieved C+ grades in English and mathematics.
- WSFG ranks 3 out of 55 in comparison with similar schools (DfE 2016 performance tables).
- The Average Point Score at the end of Key Stage 2 for last year's Year 11 was 27.5; the school provides significant value added to the education of its pupils from Year 7 to Year 11, particular for those pupils within the low prior attainment group.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in 2016 was extremely strong with P8 of 0.49 compared to national other at 0.10. A8 at 51.2 was just below national other figure of 53.3.
- For pupils generally, progress is above average in nearly all subject areas.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- The relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. There is a strong sense of mutual trust throughout the school. Teachers are determined that pupils achieve well as summarised by a student, 'We are pushed to achieve our best.' PSHE lessons provide very strong opportunities to develop emotional intelligence, tolerance and mutual respect. There is a real sense of community throughout.
- GREEN vision and values runs through the significant majority of learning experiences of pupils. Learning management in lessons is strong.
- Teachers' planning takes account of the variety of pupils' needs so that each pupil is appropriately challenged to take account of their differing starting points.
- Teachers widely and effectively use open questions in lessons, which are targeted at individual pupils to systematically check for understanding and develop knowledge. Pupils are confident in responding with little fear of giving the wrong response; teachers encourage pupils to take risks in their learning.
- Pupils are articulate in stating where they are in regards to current grades and they can explain what they need to do to improve. Examples were seen where pupils described their thought processes in learning; for example, in mathematics and design technology.
- The promotion of both literacy and numeracy is strong within all subjects; it is not seen solely as the responsibilities of the English and mathematics departments. For example, numeracy was promoted within a PE lesson by calculating time differences.
- Teachers create strong classroom atmospheres, where high expectations are the norm and which facilitate the development of pupils' learning.

Even Better If...

... all teachers used the GREEN approach in their planning and lessons. A small minority do not, but the school's CPD programme will address this in the near future.

... pupils responded in a consistent manner to written feedback from teachers (as required by the school's assessment policy). There were occasions where responses were limited to one or a few words only.

Quality of Area of Excellence

Leadership through moral purpose

Why has this area been identified as a strength?

'Leadership through moral purpose' lies at the centre of the school's practice in its ongoing drive for improvement in the broadest sense. This improvement is not confined to outcomes, but includes all facets of life in the school and beyond – for example, community work, inclusion, achievement, cultural, social, sporting, and wellbeing.

The GREEN vision and values (Growth, Resilience, Energy, Empathy and Newness) pervade all aspects of school life.

Leaders and other staff have participated and presented in a range of events and activities to share this Quality Area of Excellence, including, amongst others, SSAT Leading Edge Achievement Show, Waltham Forest Challenge hub, London Mayor Gold Challenge and Stonewall.

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

Leaders developed the school community by a process of system change, enhancing leadership capacity across the school whilst working with a very large body of educational stakeholders in order to apply informed leadership theory.

The development of the Faculty Review process was middle leader led, resulting in a distributed leadership system where middle leaders complete reviews and senior leaders act in a quality assurance capacity.

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

Strong record of exam performances for all pupils in 2016: P8 of 0.63. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils show not only significant diminishing differences in comparison with national other, but in many cases exceed them. For example, P8 of 0.49 against national other of 0.10; P8 English of 0.64 compared to national other of 0.08; P8 disadvantaged high prior attainment group of 0.46.

Wider impact can be seen from pupils' work in the local and wider community: celebration functions for local residents, drama and musical events, charity events to support local and international causes.

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

The school wants to continue to work with other schools in order to share excellent practice and offer further staff development opportunities.

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.