

## Written Report

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### CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

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

<b>Telephone Number:</b>	0208 509 9446
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<b>Unique Reference Number:</b>	103103
<b>Local Authority:</b>	Waltham Forest
<b>Type of School:</b>	Secondary
<b>School Category:</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	11 - 16
<b>Number on roll:</b>	897
<b>Head teacher/Principal:</b>	Meryl Davies

<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2014
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Good

<b>Date of Quality Assurance Review:</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> to 10 <sup>th</sup> February 2016
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## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES<sup>1</sup>

<b>School Improvement Strategies:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Outcomes for Pupils is:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Area of Excellent Practice:</b> Using data to ensure strong outcomes and excellent progress of all students	Confirmed

### Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Walthamstow School for Girls appears to now be within the Outstanding grade as judged by Ofsted and has moved up following the school's previous Ofsted report 28–29 January 2014 .Action is required to ensure that it continues to meet Ofsted's criteria for that grade.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

- WSFG is a popular 11-16 community comprehensive (catchment 0.78 mile) with a lengthy tradition of successful girls' education. Specialisms are mathematics and computing and applied learning. Before the last inspection, WSFG was listed in the Ofsted 'hall of fame' following three consecutive "outstanding" judgements and awarded High Performing Specialist Status. The school is newly listed in the Good Schools Guide 2016. The school has won annual awards for high achievement and progress in 2014 and 2015, and a national award for high aspirations for pupil premium students in 2014.
- Most students are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The largest ethnic group is Pakistani.
- Nearly twice as many students as seen nationally speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. In 2015, 38% of Year 11 students were disadvantaged.
- An above-average proportion of students require SEN support.
- There are an above average number of education, health and care plans and this is due to the positive reputation of the school in supporting the needs of students, for example, with students such as those with visual and hearing impairments.

## School Improvement Strategies

### What Went Well

- The school's motto: 'Neglect Not The Gift That Is In Thee' is central to the school's ethos and vision. Girls are encouraged to express themselves, to be creative, to have high aspirations and to challenge stereotypes. There is a strong anti-sexist, anti-homophobic and anti-racist ethos at the school. The vision is that the young women who leave the school will have well balanced perspectives, good interpersonal skills, a strong sense of morals and justice, a desire to play an active part as citizens of the 21st century and the resilience to deal with pressure.
- Reflective and innovative practice underpins the 'Intelligent School' ethos and manifests itself in faculty and team research-based evaluation projects and in nationally published cross-school research.
- The environment marries heritage, through the open-air amphitheatre and original Victorian buildings, and innovation, reflected in the modern architecture, to create a community of self-respect, high aspirations and pride.
- The school participated in the London Leadership Strategy where it was commended for its work in closing the transition gap in mathematics and closing the achievement gap between FSM students and others.

- Self-evaluation activities are identified by each faculty and are whole school led, with a strong emphasis on 'student voice'. For example, in English, a pilot project focused on decoding strategies was introduced and analysed and evaluated as a research project to support low attaining students in Year 9. All stakeholders were fully engaged in the process.
- Senior leaders, as leaders of whole school self-evaluation, have produced a revised and detailed self-evaluation policy. Middle leaders were engaged throughout in the process; its purpose is to ensure homogeneity between the faculties, ensuring that the monitoring work leads into clear developmental actions.
- There is a strategic and centralised approach to intervention planning, which is then analysed for impact and adjusted to ensure future impact is rigorous.
- The assessment working party had representation from every faculty to ensure that the new assessment procedures were agreed by all subjects, could be successfully adapted for all subjects, were standardised and embedded across the school.
- Retention of staff is high. All advertised positions generally receive large numbers of applications allowing for the appointment of high quality subject specialists. Several applicants will be in similar level positions to the one they apply for, reflecting the desire of teachers to belong to the WSFG community.
- Faculties bid in order to provide targeted interventions for students in receipt of pupil premium funding. This is data driven and evaluated at the end of each intervention. This has seen accelerated rates of progress in mathematics and English.
- Enterprise and teamwork prepare students for the world beyond school. The school is a Fronter Champion School and there are on-line tutor rooms for each year group. Curriculum areas also use Fronter. Within each faculty, IT reps support the development of pioneering initiatives within their specific subject areas.
- The GREEN vision work has encouraged work based independent learning and is underpinned by the use of the Learning Line for AFL and growth mind set theories. In Year 7 the GREEN project is celebrated through a public exhibition that includes art, poetry and mathematics.

#### **Even Better If...**

...the school continues to embed the work that has been undertaken following the last Ofsted inspection which is outlined in the current school improvement plan.

...the school continues to ensure continuity and consistency between all staff in giving feedback and in the use of the learning line as a tool for AFL and resilience-building.

...the school develops a whole school systematic approach to monitoring and tracking of home learning.

## Outcomes for Pupils

- The school has a very strong programme of personal development for its students; inclusive care for individuals lies at the heart of the schools ethos and culture.
- The use of the GREEN Learning Power programme teaches students to 'Learn How to Learn' with strategies to become focused, resilient, inquisitive, adventurous and open-minded learners and supports overall progress rising.
- The school environment impacts very positively on the belonging of the students to their school community.
- In 2015, overall KS4 value added was significantly above average in all subject areas. From each starting point, the proportion of KS4 students making and exceeding expected progress in English and maths was above national figures.
- Overall attainment is rising with positive results in capped 8 and attainment 8.
- Progress and achievement for students receiving pupil premium funding is well above national average compared to non-pupil premium students nationally. Within school, there remains an attainment gap and this continues to be a school priority.
- Overall progress is rising, currently putting the school in the second percentile nationally for Progress 8 according to FFT data.(2015: VA 1041 overall)
- All five Ebacc areas now have a value added within the top 20 percent nationally.
- SEN and low prior attainment value added has risen sharply in 2015, evidence of the impact of the 2014-15 interventions.(2015: VA 1095 low prior attainment)
- All students cover nine GCSE courses or equivalent, which is indicative of high expectations for all.
- There are early interventions for numeracy and literacy at the transition between KS2 and KS3 to ensure students work at national expectations and catch up with their peers.
- Regular curriculum reviews enable the school to reflect on appropriate provision that leads to increased output in both progress and attainment. Where inconsistencies in subjects or in performance and outcomes are identified, clear systems are in place to drill down and then organise tangible actions to overcome barriers.

## Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

### What Went Well

- Excellent relationships between staff and students are evident in lessons. Behaviour is very positive; students are polite and courteous. Attitudes to learning are very good.
- Students demand to be taught well and respond with high levels of engagement and enthusiasm. This enables the students to develop a love of subjects which is

embodied through the passion of their teachers. The students' perception of their positive learning experiences reflects the outstanding classroom practice.

- Lessons are planned effectively and most teachers prepare activities that engage students. For example, in humanities, students worked on their own projects about Hinduism. Their topic work was substantial and of high quality. Students showed independence and resilience.
- Teachers ask students challenging questions and ensure that students are thinking hard about their answers. For example, in physics, students discuss and understand about the different types of radiation and their everyday uses.
- Teachers ensure that students have opportunities to solve problems and investigate. There are strong curricular links between subjects and links to real-life skills and experiences. Students work out percentages to receive benefits from sale goods. Good conversations in mathematics helped students to overcome misconceptions and support each other in their learning.
- English lessons engage students well and Year 11 are very well prepared for their oncoming examinations. For example, when studying 'An Inspector Calls', they were clear on the use of the language devices and character analysis. Teachers ensure that students build well on their prior attainment and that they develop confidence. Regular reading has promoted more interest in reading, and there are frequent library sessions and an accelerated reader programme for Years 7 and 8. Students enjoy English and say that teachers are passionate about their subject.
- Practical subjects are taught well. Teachers provide clear feedback on work so that improvements can be made. Students are engaged in constructing models of molecules. The learning is built up in stages and short activities build up on prior learning with targeted questioning checking for understanding.
- Teachers are reflective practitioners because of the culture which the school has generated. This ensures that practice improves. They give freely of their time and students appreciate this and say that teachers are always there for them.
- In the best lessons, there was good use of challenge and it was clear from the progress made that the students could respond. For example, language lessons were conducted entirely in Spanish and French.
- Starters check for prior knowledge and the progress is evident in the header questions that they were getting right.
- When marking is at its best, learning dialogue takes place and the purple/green pen is consistently applied.
- There is a systematic approach to work sampling to ensure clear expectations throughout the school. This has recently been launched and there are regular book scrutinies. Strengths and developing areas are collated across faculties and then used to inform school planning. This ethos has created increasingly transparent discussions about teaching and learning and a sharing of good practice.

## **Even Better If...**

...the school builds on the progress made so far in ensuring consistency of feedback and students responding when set targets on how to improve their work.

...the school develops questioning to ensure all students are challenged to take risks and work more independently across the curriculum.

## **Quality of Area of Excellent Practice**

### **Using data to ensure strong outcomes and excellent progress of all students.**

The school's KS3 data tracking supports strong tracking at KS4 where outcomes are very good. Staff training and CPD has ensured there is a solid understanding across the curriculum of how the use of data supports progress and attainment. The school has a reflective and considered approach that constantly re-examines the use of data to build on or adjust systems and staff understanding for greater impact on student outcomes. This also enables the school to ensure that interventions are targeted for both individual students and groups, and that these interventions are specifically targeted to meet particular skills gaps or learning needs. Middle Leaders are highly reflective; they adjust the curriculum offer, assessments and interventions to feed data outcomes back into the school provision. School policies (for example, marking and feedback) inform data analysis. Rigorous analysis of data and knowing groups well filters down into the classrooms and works as a whole school subtext to enhance the progress of students.

## **Partnerships**

### **How have you used Challenge Partners schools to address your previous 'Even Better Ifs'?**

This was the school's first Challenge Partners review.

### **How have you worked with, or supported, other schools in Challenge Partners?**

As part of the Waltham Forest group.

The school shows passion and commitment to working collaboratively with other schools and community groups and the sharing of best practice. It is a longstanding active member of **CENLIG** (Central Schools LIG) and has made a significant impact on several local partnership school improvement priorities, which add value to the high level of enrichment and curricular provision for students (and staff via CPD opportunities). The collaborative and customised CPD programme has a strong track record of successful impact. The thriving NPQSL group this year has 17 participants from WSFG and other local schools, plus colleagues from other boroughs and this even includes a hospital school. There is a

commitment to developing leadership capacity in other schools via the NPQSL, for example, as well as an enormous investment in school and SIP-focussed CPD.

The school is an active participant of FAP (Fair Access Protocol) whereby schools support one another to manage and support students with behavioural needs. This is seen nationally as a model of unique good practice.

Waltham Forest Womens' network is an important element in the education of the girls and has continued the message of no limits or barriers to the achievement of women, empowering and enabling girls to lead.

**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.**



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

Following discussion with the Headteacher, the school would like some additional support with visits to outstanding schools and schools with areas of outstanding practice to learn from them.