
CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Churchfields Academy
School Address:	Salcombe Grove, Swindon SN3 1 ER
Hub:	Wootton Bassett

Telephone Number:	01793 487286
Email address:	www.churchfields.swindon.sch.uk

Unique Reference Number:	137408
Local Authority:	Swindon
Type of School:	Secondary
School Category:	Academy
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Number on roll:	779
Head teacher/Principal:	Sandra Muir

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	March 2016
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Requires Improvement

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	23 – 25 February 2017
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies:	Good
Outcomes for Pupils is:	Requires Improvement
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:	Requires Improvement
Area of Excellence:	Not submitted for this review

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Churchfields appears to be at the top of the Requires Improvement grade as judged in the school's Ofsted report and is working towards Good.

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

- Churchfields is smaller than an average-size secondary school.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged is well above average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language are much higher than average.
- The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average.
- The headteacher and the senior leadership team were permanently appointed from September 2016, after acting in post since January of that year.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- Soon after taking over, the headteacher had the front wall of her office removed! This represented her determination to confer with staff and know what is going on in school.
- Churchfields has embarked upon a partnership with its Outstanding hub school. Well ahead of the completion of the MAT agreement, leaders and teachers are already collaborating. This makes the transition seamless, rather than an upheaval, contributing to improvement that is underway.
- While many in-school initiatives are focussed on raising achievement for older students now, there is a simultaneous commitment to long-term solutions. Hence a very inspiring nurture group arrangement, C7, is securing the commitment of the type of student who in the past has had poor attendance, or been excluded. Curriculum change, developing pathways other than Ebacc, is under consideration.
- After a year of working together, the senior leadership team carries out its various roles very confidently.
- Middle leaders are clearly enthused and energised by developments. They appreciate the thoughtful approach to innovation and applaud the way their experiences are taken into account when modifying and improving initiatives, such as 'I Learn' and 'How's my class doing?' There is a strong sense that they work collaboratively, supporting and learning from each other, as well as having high expectations of their own team's performance.
- The school is already demonstrating capacity to be a leader of good practice. Its expertise in provision for students who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is valued by partner institutions, including higher education, as is its approach to ITT.
- Self-evaluation, firmly based on thoroughly analysed data, is linked well to development and performance management targets are harnessed to strategic priorities.

Even Better If...

... in its narrative of evaluation, Churchfields highlighted small gains in any area, demonstrating capacity to improve and heralding greater victories to come in a clear, concise way.

... evaluation documentation used the language of the OfSTED report in order clearly to link current actions to specific recommendations.

Pupil Outcomes

- Outcomes for students last year were above the floor standards and saw an improvement of eight percent in 5 A*-C. Mathematics and English results improved on previous years as a result of key interventions. However, the Progress 8 score of -0.3 was significantly below the national average. Progress of all learners was below the national figures in all elements. In particular, middle ability students, boys, students with special educational needs (SEND) and disadvantaged students, made the least progress. It should be noted that there is a large proportion students at the school who do not have a Progress 8 score due to no KS2 data; if these students had been included (as having average starting points) the progress score would most likely have been closer to -0.2. The score is affected negatively by a number of students who are currently educated off-site or have poor attendance. There are case studies explaining the barriers for these students.
- Work has been carried out to improve the accuracy of predictions of results. Leaders are now confident that the in-house data shows an accurate picture of the current position and this indicates an upward trend.
- The introduction of the 'War Board' in the staff room presents the current Progress 8 ranking of Year 11 students and tracks interventions that they have attended. It is not quite clear which subjects are contributing most, or least, for each student. It would help to state each subject's contribution to this measure. That said, the school leaders are aware of which subjects overall are currently cause for concern.
- Although overall attendance figures improved last year, disadvantaged students had a high level of persistent absence and fell into the category of highest 10 percent nationally. To counter this issue Pupil Premium funding is being used to deploy the attendance officer to support disadvantaged students. So far this is having a positive impact.
- The progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) was of concern. They did a little better in English than in mathematics. New initiatives with this group show signs of improving their progress. Again, progress is affected by some poor attendance.
- A more comprehensive data tracking system is now in place and regular triangulation meetings take place between senior leaders and Directors of Faculty to monitor the progress on key lines of enquiry, including White British boys, disadvantaged and SEND. Data for the current Year 9, 10 and 11 indicates that the

gap between disadvantaged and all learners is narrowing. Leaders focus on parental engagement for these students.

- The progress of EAL learners continues to be a success and last year the progress of the EAL students was well above that of non-EAL students. There is a strong programme of support for EAL learners and this, along with work-ethic and support from home, has impacted positively upon the results.
- A new assessment system has been introduced in Years 7 and 8, which should help to address the concerns identified in the Ofsted report and ensure continued monitoring of progress in Key Stage 3.
- The curriculum on offer is under review and the school now has an improved awareness of the impact of their curriculum upon outcomes and P8. Further changes to the subjects on offer and the CIAG given to students should continue to help improve outcomes.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- It is clear that in recent times there has been something of a sea-change in teaching at Churchfields. The attention to planning and an ethos of high expectations in many lessons is very different from what was described in the OfSTED report.
- Positive relationships are a key strength of the school; there is a recent emphasis on learning and challenge.
- 'I Learn' is contributing significantly to students taking more responsibility for their learning. They understand better how to succeed and for some this is raising their aspirations and self-esteem. Homework is now set frequently using 'showmyhomework' (over 55,000 pieces since September!) and students and parents have access. Parental engagement has improved rapidly and this is supported by the rise in the percentage of parents at parents' evenings. A new system has supported this increase and parents are now challenged if they are not attending.
- All class teachers for Years 9 - 11 complete a 'How's my class doing?' proforma after each data drop, which ensures that class teachers are engaging deeply with the data. Teachers had up to date folders in all lessons visited: evidence that data is available for informing classroom activity.
- Students expect lessons to start on time and with an engaging activity. Some teachers are beginning to introduce more adventurous ways of learning into lessons, confident that they can trust students to work in unconventional ways.
- The C7 nurture class is making great progress within a well-taught, specialised curriculum.
- There are higher expectations of teaching assistants' roles in supporting learning and this is beginning to make their contribution more significant.
- Learning-related displays are increasingly evident. Inspiring student art around the school demonstrates that the highest levels are within reach.

- Students' morale is boosted by the welcoming environment of the Library. "Year 11 Heaven", film nights and quizzes may be enjoyable, but the opportunity to read is promoted. Accelerated Reader is zealously pursued by some students.

Even Better If...

... a greater proportion of outstanding teaching ensured students – those who can - start the main challenge quickly.

... what is expected in terms of literacy and presentation of work was modelled more clearly and nothing less than the best was accepted.

... it became expected and habitual for questioning to challenge and probe students' thinking.

... marking always led to a clear response by the student.

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 to reflect further about what support they might like.

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.