
CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Woodside High School
School Address:	White Hart Lane, Wood Green, N22 5QJ
Hub:	Compton

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Unique Reference Number:	137745
Local Authority:	Haringey
Type of School:	Secondary
School Category:	Academy converter
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Number on roll:	919
Head teacher/Principal:	Elma McElligott and Gerry Robinson

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	January 15-16 2014
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	18-20 January 2017
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies: Outstanding

Outcomes for Pupils is: Outstanding

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Good

Area of Excellence: Confirmed and valid for 3 years

Mental Health and Well-being

Previously accredited Areas of Excellence:

Science, Literacy and Student Leadership

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Woodside High School appears to be just within the Outstanding grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report and action is required to ensure that it continues to meet Ofsted's criteria for that 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

- Woodside High School is an average sized, over-subscribed secondary school in an area of high social deprivation in the borough of Haringey. The school gained academy status in 2011.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language, or who are from minority ethnic backgrounds, is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students in the school is above the national average and accounts for a large majority of the school population.
- The proportion of students in receipt of support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is almost triple the national average, as is the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs or an Educational Health Care plan.
- The percentage of students who remain in Woodside for the whole of their Key Stage 3 and 4 education is above the national average.
- The school is a strategic partner in the New River Teaching Alliance.
- The school has successfully adopted a co-headteacher model that has been operational for just over a year.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- The co-headteachers have been in post for just over a year. In this short time, they have established a clear culture of accountability which was initiated at Senior Leadership Team (SLT) level in the first instance. Their relentless pursuit of ensuring high expectations in order to raise achievement for every student is evident through the exemplary conduct of students and the outstanding outcomes.
- The Strategic Development Plan identifies issues with detail and clarity. It is rooted in a thorough self-evaluation process, building on progress made since the previous Ofsted report and Challenge Partners review. The plan is an effective tool for self-improvement, providing in-depth guidance on the implementation of key systems. Main priorities and milestones are outlined in the document and it is clear that these are in place in the school. Leaders are acutely aware of areas for development due to high-level scrutiny and review. Therefore, appropriate and carefully planned strategies address these areas through a strategic and considered approach. Previously identified EBIs have been thoroughly met.
- The school's Self Evaluation Summary demonstrates clear awareness of the progress that has been made, and still needs to be made, to ensure better outcomes across the key issues. The SLT has a deep and accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness.
- School leaders have worked hard to establish and embed a culture of professionalism and accountability within the school. This is underpinned by Woodside's Leadership Standards and supported by whole school conference on accountability. This includes training on 'holding others to account' and 'having difficult conversations', as well as an ethos driven by coaching for excellence. This has been accentuated through improved and robust Performance Management.

- The focus on strengthening leadership capacity across the school is demonstrated by core Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for heads of department, lead practitioners and assistant headteachers, resulting in improved middle leadership. There is still work to be done with the newly-appointed post-holders in the school who are tasked with ensuring reliability in the predictive data within their departments.
- The quality of teacher feedback is improving. Staff and students are aware of the 'non-negotiables' in place through clear work scrutiny documentation and they use them more consistently. Where this is fully adopted, it shows direct impact on students' progress.
- Assessment processes are rigorous and strategies to track and address underachieving students are robust and impactful. 'Period 7' interventions are targeted specifically to ensure those students make excellent progress compared with their Key Stage 2 prior attainment. Thorough and effective gap analysis and intervention leads to outstanding outcomes for students.
- Leaders have worked hard to respond to national Key Stage 2-4 curriculum changes, carefully implementing revised standards and success criteria, as well as devising a model to suit Woodside students. A rich, broad and balanced curriculum provides clear direction. Leaders are effectively developing a three-year GCSE programme which aims to increase the number of students entered for the EBacc award.

Even Better If...

... middle leaders and lead practitioners, many of whom are inexperienced or new to the school, had further training to drive forward improved teaching and learning. This would allow them to evaluate more closely the impact of all strategies in their department and ensure consistency across the whole school.

... there was a continued focus on quality-first teaching and improved differentiation in the classroom.

Pupil Outcomes

- The progress 8 score for 2016 is 0.49. This places the school among the highest performing schools in the country. The attainment 8 score is also above the national average. The school achieved 75% A*-C including English and mathematics, significantly above the national average. This is an astonishing 31% higher than the 2015 result. Overall, this places Woodside as the top performing high school in Haringey.
- Expected progress in English is well above last year's national average figure and students making more than expected progress has also increased significantly. Expected progress in mathematics is well above last year's national average and students making more than expected progress has increased significantly. The percentage of students achieving the EBacc is stable and in line with the national average. The school has set itself a challenging target for 2017 and created a new curriculum structure to ensure that more students are eligible to achieve the EBacc qualification. Science is an area of strength in the school and the results in this department have improved significantly over time.

- Disadvantaged students make more progress at Woodside High School than non-disadvantaged students make nationally. Differences between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students have narrowed in recent years so much so that, in some areas, no gaps exist at all.
- A range of strategies was used to secure the hugely successful examination outcomes in 2016, including extensive student progress tracking and gap analysis, motivational speakers, mentoring (by peers and staff) and the engagement of parents. Analysis and monitoring of the progress of current students is extremely rigorous and there is a sharp focus on the progress of different groups, including those who are disadvantaged, those identified as academically more able and those of different ethnic groups. New systems and software introduced over the past two years ensure that all teachers are aware of the progress made by the students they teach. This is making a major contribution to the school's success.
- Middle leaders are held to account for the progress of students in their subject areas and they regularly present progress reports to the senior leadership team.
- The school is focused on raising the aspirations and expectations of academically more able students. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and is overseeing a range of strategies. These include successful Year 11 students from the previous year ('Super 8 students') returning to school to speak to current more able students. These success stories are proving to be a highly motivational tool for current senior students. In preparation for more demanding GCSE examinations, leaders have focused on introducing more rigour at Key Stage 3. Much work has been done to improve literacy through targeted interventions and personalised curricula and this was evident throughout the review.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- The positive relationships between staff and students allow for a highly effective learning environment. Students are mutually supportive of each other and are not afraid to take risks in their learning. They are exceedingly proud of their school and when one was asked if he liked his school, he promptly responded, "Yes – 100%!"
- Behaviour for learning is excellent in lessons because teachers have high expectations of students who aspire to meet these expectations. This is reinforced by excellent behaviour around the school where students are courteous, wear their uniform immaculately and respond quickly to staff requests.
- CPD within the school is wide-reaching and affords teachers the opportunity to reflect upon their practice and consider how they could develop further their skills. Initiatives such as 'Butterflies' and twilight sessions focused upon sharing good practice allow time for this to be disseminated across the teaching body. The Coaching 4 Excellence programme enables all staff to develop their knowledge and understanding, particularly around the new curriculum. The GROW programme, as well as the Teaching Framework, supports staff to develop their skills to become outstanding teachers.
- In the most effective lessons, feedback in students' books is regular and useful in communicating how they might best make 'next steps' and there are clear responses

from students. This was particularly apparent in one Year 8 Spanish lesson where there was evidence of students re-drafting work regularly following the teacher's feedback.

- Opportunities to develop students' literacy skills are evident throughout lessons. Students are eager to read in front of their peers and teachers challenge them to write complex answers. Students' work in books and in lessons demonstrates that they make good progress over time. This was demonstrated effectively in one history lesson where students each gave one-minute presentations around the causes and key events during the Cold War. In the most effective lessons, students are challenged to think deeply about their learning and are posed questions that require them to qualify their perceptions.
- A robust quality assurance procedure enables middle leaders to develop their leadership of teaching and learning within their departments. This enables the SLT and governors to make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Effective gap analysis and subsequent intervention has enabled students who need further support to be correctly identified, allowing them to quickly catch up with their peers.

Even Better If...

... teachers embedded insightful feedback more consistently in both classwork and homework so that students have precise next steps guidance.

... questioning was used to greater effect in lessons to challenge students' pre-conceptions more effectively, particularly those of more able students.

... leaders implemented additional guidance around the presentation of work to promote further students' pride in their learning.

... there was greater challenge for more able students through targeted differentiation to allow these students to make more rapid progress.

Quality of Area of Excellence

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Why has this area been identified as a strength?

Leaders have worked extensively at promoting the wellbeing of all stakeholders so that it makes a real difference to all members of the school community in a positive way for students, staff and parents alike.

The imperative for the school needing to address mental health and emotional wellbeing came from numerous directions. Working with student bodies such as the school council, senior leaders realised that underlying issues such as homophobia, racism and attitudes towards women were not being overtly addressed, with consequent negative effects in many ways upon self-esteem and emotional wellbeing. The local context was also a contributory factor, with Haringey having a higher level of suicide compared with the London average. Added to this is the acknowledgement that, with increasingly challenging curricula and more linear examinations, pressures on students are being felt more than ever before. Last year, over 50% of Year 10 girls expressed that they were becoming overly anxious about examinations.

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

The school has responded in a wide variety of ways, often student-led and always student-centred, only some of which can be mentioned here. The Equality and Diversity Group is a thriving group of upper school students who 'champion' an open approach to raising these issues. What is impressive is that this originated two years ago from the students' desire to see change happen and it is a very active group. Students themselves have taken their message to other schools, in London and beyond. They have enjoyed total responsibility for leading staff through 'inset' on the subject (which was glowingly received) and they have fronted assemblies to all year groups.

An extensive mentoring system has been established, aimed at promoting emotional wellbeing and encompassing Year 8 students as 'buddies' for Year 7 pupils and Year 10 students as peer mentors. This involves regular meetings and does not stop once students pass into older years. One Year 11 student explained how their 'mentee' still sees them and talks to them whenever they bump into them around the school site. A measure of the peer mentors' achievements is the fact that they won the prestigious National Diana Award in 2016. Students were very clear that the atmosphere around the school has changed in the last two years and that, if a student needed to speak to someone about their emotional wellbeing, there will be someone to help and guide them. Full-time adult mentors also help in innumerable ways in this respect, as do the school's other support professionals such as representatives from CAMHS and HEWS.

The school's drive to embody a more open attitude to diversity, and therefore counter negativity, is seen in the shared values that permeate the school. Celebrating differences, raising self-esteem and embracing diversity are behind many of the initiatives that the school becomes involved in, such as Stonewall and LGBT History Month. Helping to address the school community's emotional wellbeing also includes inviting Year 7 parents in at the start of Year 7, many of whom are anxious about their children starting secondary school. Parents have expressed how valuable they find this welcoming approach. Senior girls have also presented the work they have carried out in school at the highly prestigious Woman of the Year Awards, as well as visiting other schools locally, and as far away as Suffolk.

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

There is no doubt that students feel that giant strides have been made, especially in the last two years. They are much more open about speaking out about issues surrounding emotional wellbeing and mental health. Some Year 11 students use this topic as the subject of speeches addressed to the whole staff as part of prefect applications - with notable effect on the audience. The Equality Group has recruited several new students to take over when the current Year 11 students leave, ensuring continuity of approach. Racist incidents have decreased over the last year, leading to fewer fixed term exclusions and, around the school, there have been improved attitudes to learning. While it is difficult to establish a definite link to improved academic outcomes, there is no doubt that students of both genders feel more comfortable in school and have clear channels for support when needed. This boosts their desire and capacity to learn, as well as engendering further their love of school and willingness to attend.

Senior leaders know that this work is both essential and never-ending. Plans are already underway for increasing staff awareness, the appointment of well-being ambassadors and investing time in embedding a growth mind-set for the benefit of the whole community.

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.