



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT ACADEMY

<b>Name of School:</b>	Royal Wootton Bassett Academy
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Anita Ellis
<b>Hub:</b>	Wootton Bassett Hub
<b>School phase:</b>	Secondary
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	Royal Wootton Bassett Academy Trust

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	22/2/2023
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Leading
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	19/1/2022
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	28/11/13

## 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

**Quality of provision and outcomes** Leading

**AND**

**Quality of provision and  
outcomes for disadvantaged  
pupils and pupils with additional  
needs**

**Area of excellence** Not submitted for this review.

**Previously accredited valid areas  
of excellence** N/A

**Overall peer evaluation estimate** Leading

*The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades.  
The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is  
developmental not judgmental.*

## 1. Context and character of the school

Royal Wootton Bassett Academy (RWBA) is a larger than average and growing 11-18 secondary school. It is the founder of the Ascend Learning Trust and the lead school in the regional Challenge Partners hub. The school plays a significant role in the training of teachers locally as the founder of an initial teacher training centre (SCITT) and in the development of school leaders as a designated leadership training centre.

The school's indicators of disadvantage are low relative to national averages, although the proportion of students with support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is high.

The school's inspection status and its academic profile mean that it is oversubscribed. Retention into the sixth form is also strong. It offers a wide range of academic and vocational subjects at GCSE and A level.

A core aspiration is for everybody to be a better version of themselves. The school seeks to instil positive values in its students, develop its staff at all levels and design innovative systems to support students' learning. Students have a say in the school's day-to-day life. This is evident in their involvement in initiatives such as the United Nations Rights Respecting School award and the student parliament.

### 2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The headteacher has created a compelling vision of a school in which students and staff alike are supported to become "a better version of themselves". This produces strong leadership of teaching which helps ensure that all students receive their entitlement to high level learning.
- A drive for consistency is evident in the school's continuing professional development programme. This is underpinned by the work of trainers from within the school's leadership. Training is shaped by the findings from the school's wide range of quality assurance systems.
- Staff are surveyed about their training needs and reminded of key training takeaways through the "Are you clear?" questionnaire. This is followed by whole staff or bespoke training.
- Leaders are involved in the monitoring of the quality of teaching through climate walks, student follows, teacher rounds and lesson observations. Staff are encouraged to seek out good practice in the classroom, thus improving their own knowledge and practice.

- Teachers work together in triads to sharpen their teaching practice, sharing their findings in the form of “golden nuggets” accessible to all on a bespoke IT application. In this way the creativity of teaching staff is disseminated and celebrated.
- The school’s distributed leadership approach and “can do” style leads to innovative practice. An example of this is the use of cover lessons for quality assurance purposes. When covering staff absence, leaders check with students on their progress in the subject, what they have learnt recently and their readiness to learn.
- Leaders respond to external challenges with agility. Post-lockdown trends in behaviour, anxiety and mental health issues have led to a review of breakout spaces, onsite alternative provision and some offsite options.
- Leaders engage staff, parents and students when implementing improvements to teaching and learning. This is evident in the “reading café” initiative, which engages parents who lack confidence in reading and helps them support their child.
- The quality of the school’s partnership work is exemplary. It impacts positively on local teacher recruitment and retention through its work as a hub for school-centred initial teacher training and as a leadership training centre. Teachers are developed professionally ensuring stability of staffing and quality learning experiences for students in Trust schools and beyond.
- Leaders pilot new initiatives before full implementation to pre-empt any organisational issues. This was done to good effect in the recent roll-out of mixed attainment teaching in core subjects.
- Sixth Form leaders focus on increasing learners’ resilience, raising students’ aspirations for their progression beyond school. Well-developed links with universities result in students experiencing several programmes run by higher and further education providers, including apprenticeships.
- Following the recent appointment of a leader on equality and diversity, LGBTQ+ themes are prominent in club activities available to students.

## **2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...**

...middle leaders were supported by senior leaders to develop subject curricula further, in light of initial outcomes, to ensure that ambition for all students is retained and nurtured.

...the evaluation of initiatives to support attainment, behaviour and attendance by all student groups, especially the disadvantaged, led to clear narratives about what has been achieved and how.

### 3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Strengths in teaching and learning were found to be the structure of lessons and staff subject knowledge. In the best cases, such as Year 11 science and PE, teachers adopted the “Bassett Lesson” format, with retrieval activities clearly integral to the start of the lesson.
- Students are engaged by their lessons and articulate well what they are studying and the context. In Year 12 sport science, students become the “resident expert” and are given opportunities within lessons to learn independently and then collaborate with other students on the completion of graphic organisers.
- Formative assessment processes also enhance engagement and exemplary practice was observed. Year 11 science students’ exercise books demonstrated meticulous, individualised feedback by means of the school’s IAct method. Students were thus able to articulate their learning about the “atmosphere” and about “forces” with confidence.
- Transitions between activities are well managed. The flipped classroom technique in Year 12 sports science required students to read about skills transfer in a coaching context then put this reading to the test in a practical activity.
- There is strong cohesion between the curriculum plan and the teaching observed in classrooms. This was evident in Year 7 mathematics lessons where the content matched the plan and the sequence of learning to date was clear. This inspires confidence in the students and reduces the risk of gaps in knowledge occurring.
- Year 10 mathematics lessons were observed to be sequential in their planning and drew on students’ prior learning. Previously students had studied straight line graphs and algebraic solutions to inequalities. This enabled students to use graphs effectively to find solutions in the lesson.
- Music exemplified a mastery approach. Students were expected to perform to a high standard at the keyboards. Aspects of posture and the techniques of playing the instrument were introduced to non-experts in a way that was fun but also constructive.
- Ambition was also evident in a skilfully designed French lesson in which all students were able to apply prior learning of five tenses, secure their knowledge of high frequency vocabulary and practise the accuracy of their pronunciation.
- Sixth form students are trained to listen to Year 7 readers. This was observed during tutor time, demonstrating strong leadership by senior students and a healthy commitment to a schoolwide literacy strategy.
- Reading was observed in tutor groups where a culture of reading was evident, texts having been selected by the English department. In the best cases, a

culture of reading had grown which inspired enthusiasm for reading for pleasure. In a Year 9 tutor group students stated they wanted more reading time in school.

- Heads of faculty have developed the learning journeys of their curricula and students across year groups can give examples of how these are used in lessons. For example, a Year 9 student had been absent, but said she could track what she had missed thanks to the learning journey map in her book.
- Curriculum leadership is a strength, with middle leaders reporting that leaders had supported them in overhauling the content of many subjects, notably in mathematics, English and Modern Foreign Languages.
- Assessment practice has been refined to ensure an effective balance between formative and summative modes. Leaders aim to ensure clarity and consistency of practice across year groups.
- Student voice is a strength in the school's strategies. It is used to help implement class-based teaching initiatives on themes such as anti-bullying, the environment and wellbeing. Student "ministers" deliver change, for example in increasing bins around the school and introducing wooden cutlery.

### **3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...**

...questioning was designed to engage all students consistently and deepen the thinking processes of students, and more frequently tailored to the needs of disadvantaged students and those with SEND.

...there were more opportunities for students to be active in lessons so that they do not feel that they are passive learners.

### **4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well**

- Teachers use class and student profiles via the in-house "echo" system to good effect, resulting in tailored interventions with students who might find lesson content or concepts challenging.
- The embedding of classroom routines is strong and consistent, resulting in students with SEND engaging with the learning in class quickly and effectively. In the best planned lessons, such as in Year 7 mathematics and music, this enabled these students and others to move at a high pace with no time wasted between activities.
- Techniques for the identification of special educational needs are effective. This results in a strong flow of relevant, timely and up to date information from the SENCO to teaching staff. As a result, students with SEND are enabled to keep up rather than having to catch up.

- In the best cases, the class profile was annotated by the teacher to indicate which strategy worked best with which SEND student. Further to this, the teacher was observed to assist Year 11 lower attaining students and those with SEND discreetly with scaffolded questions to support their write-up of the method for constructing an experiment on “forces” in physics.
- The tracking by leaders of attainment and attendance by disadvantaged students and those with additional needs is meticulous. This drives a range of strategies, academic and pastoral, to support these students in their learning.
- The school has adopted Education Endowment Fund (EEF) initiatives to enable bespoke interventions with vulnerable students to have maximum impact.
- Leaders with oversight of disadvantaged students and those with SEND set much store by the quality of relationships between students and staff. This is demonstrated, for example, in the quality and outcomes of mentoring programmes. Further support is available through the “MyTutor” online facility.
- Vulnerable students benefit from access to a “success lounge” offer and, along with other students, a “centrepiece” quiet space for peer mentoring and support by staff and sixth form students (who have been appropriately trained).
- “Small pod” and “big pod” facilities are nurture-based facilities staffed by trained colleagues. Students whose timetables have been adapted in light of their needs receive specialist teaching and therapeutic support.
- Additional support is provided to students with SEND so that they can access the personal development curriculum as effectively as possible. This includes dyslexia-friendly presentation material.
- In a Year 9 history lesson there was evidence of disadvantaged students performing in line with others in their class through book work and targeted questioning used to reinforce concepts being introduced in the teaching about the origins of World War II.

## **4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...**

...the gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged at GCSE could be narrowed further and the narrative about the school’s work with these students captured and clearly told.

...there was consistency of implementation in the classroom of the information produced by the SENCO on students with SEND and the disadvantaged and also in its evaluation, especially around reading.

## 5. Area of Excellence

Not submitted for this review.

### **Following the QA Review**

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

For further support following your QA Review, schools can 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 (SLP) 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. (<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)