



**VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP QUALITY  
ASSURANCE REVIEW**

**REVIEW REPORT FOR  
DELCE ACADEMY**

<b>Name of School:</b>	Delce Academy
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Kate Taylor
<b>Hub:</b>	Inspire Partnership
<b>School phase:</b>	Primary
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	Inspire Partnership Academy Trust

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this virtual Leadership Quality Assurance Review:</b>	Effective
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	19/04/2021
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Not applicable
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	Not applicable
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Inadequate
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	08/05/2019



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#### Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers, agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

<b>Leadership at all Levels</b>	Effective
<b>School Improvement Strategies</b>	Effective
<b>Approach to recovery and remote learning</b>	Not applicable
<b>Area of Excellence</b>	Not applicable
<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate</b>	Effective

*Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed peer evaluation estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.*

*The peer evaluation estimate included on this report has been collectively agreed between the lead reviewer, review team and host school. The estimate is based on the evidence seen as part of the virtual Leadership Quality Assurance Review.*

*Whilst every effort has been made to triangulate the evidence presented during the review, it is important to note that the nature of working remotely means that the estimate given only encompasses that which is able to be explored virtually.*

## **1. Context and character of the school**

Delce Academy is a larger than average primary school. In September 2016, the school began its transition from a junior school to an all through primary school. The school is currently undersubscribed, with smaller class sizes in the Early Years and Key Stage 1. The school was rebrokered and opened in March 2020 as part of the Inspire Partnership Academy Trust.

The school has a designated specialist provision for pupils with social, emotional, and mental health needs, the Delce Education Centre (DEC). The proportion of disadvantaged pupils attending Delce Academy is well above the national average and the impact of the pandemic has resulted in a further rise in numbers. The majority of pupils in the school are from a White British background. Mobility is high due to families being housed in temporary accommodation and then moved further afield. Consequently, many families travel long distances to attend school, and some are unable to fund the daily travel costs.

The headteacher was appointed to the substantive post in April 2020. The school is currently being supported by senior staff from the Inspire Medway Hub.

### **2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well**

- After a period of turbulence at leadership level, the headteacher has galvanised the senior leadership team and together leaders have created an oasis of calm for their pupils. Typical of pupils' views, one commented, 'When I come to school I feel happy.'
- Leaders are resolute that a culture of high expectations permeates the school. Their vision, 'excellence for all,' is echoed by the staff, parents, and governors. For example, a governor stated, 'All of our children deserve the very best and we will not stop until we achieve this.'
- Leaders have set high expectations to establish an enabling learning environment. The engaging displays across the school showcase the increasingly higher standards of work that pupils are expected to achieve. Furthermore, the physical learning environment, including in the DEC, has undergone a radical transformation so that pupils' surroundings are enriched and purposeful.
- The pastoral team rigorously monitors the needs of all pupils including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. Barriers to learning are identified early and personalised support is then provided. Consequently, pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils are better engaging with their learning and making more progress. A pupil said, 'Morning 'nurture group' helps me settle into school before going into class. This makes me feel

better.'

- The 'Global Curriculum' integrates opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of British Values. Through reflecting on the school's local community, pupils are given opportunities to explore their own identities as well as become agents of change. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils created an online appeal for a local food bank.
- Induction processes for new staff are robust. This is because there are well refined procedures in place to ensure that all staff are delivering high-quality pedagogical practices in their lessons. This is evidenced through the schools internal and external quality assurance processes.
- The school's strong pastoral work with its pupils and their families underpins the school's improvement strategies. As a result, the focus on building relationships at all levels, especially with parents, is becoming increasingly strengthened. For example, there are several case studies evidencing the successful work of the 'home school' support worker to help families gain appropriate support for their mental health and wellbeing.

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

...all middle leaders continued to be supported and challenged in driving forward the school's improvement plans.

...the curriculum is further enhanced by making more connections with pupils' local context.

## **3.1 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils, and those with additional needs- What went well**

- Leaders remain resolute to drive further improvements in the school. They have an accurate and honest view of the school's performance. Regular visits to classrooms provide leaders with a clear overview of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. Leaders use the information gathered to inform detailed school improvement planning.
- Well planned behaviour strategies coupled with effective continued professional development (CPD) have resulted in staff consistently applying the school's behaviour management approach. Pupils now understand the higher standards of conduct that are expected. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour have sharply

reduced. Parents have noticed the improvements in behaviour as reflected in a parent's comment, 'Behaviour has really improved. We now don't hear about poor behaviour.'

- Staff plan collaboratively using the termly overview documents and curriculum maps. This ensures coherence and progression within subjects and across year groups. For example, the curriculum map for history demonstrates how pupils will build cumulative historical knowledge and skills as they progress from one year to the next.
- Teachers said that they value the high-quality CPD that they receive. This is contributing to securing a committed and enthusiastic workforce and improving the quality of provision for pupils. For example, a member of staff commented, 'The training that we are receiving is helpful and good quality. I am really excited that things are changing and that the team is now pulling together more. I feel happier at work.'
- Leaders' success at challenging low expectations is evident in the improvements to phonics and reading provision in the school. Phonics outcomes are steadily improving, and the new library offers a wide selection of books. This has led to increasing pupils' enthusiasm for reading for pleasure, as reflected in a pupil's comment, 'It is nice to read and relax. You feel like you are somewhere else.'
- Promoting pupils' wellbeing is a high priority and it is purposefully woven through the curriculum. To this end, all pupils benefit from daily mindfulness sessions as well as more targeted strategies, including the use of the Supporting Nurture Understanding Growth (SNUG) provision. Pupils and parents spoke positively about the impact of this provision. For example, one pupil said, "SNUG has helped me as I know I can talk to someone in there and they will support me.'

### **3.2 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs - Even better if...**

...all non-teaching staff were equally adept at effectively supporting different groups of learners.

...learning opportunities for the most able pupils were maximised so that this group of learners consistently achieved as well as they could.

#### **4.1 Approach to recovery and remote learning - What went well**

- The school successfully addressed the anxiety that pupils and parents expressed about returning to school after the first national lockdown. This was because leaders based their plans on the excellent knowledge of their local community. A governor noted, 'The staff mission to support families over the lockdown has been outstanding.'
- Through considered thought for pupils' wellbeing and mental health, leaders implemented a range of strategies and established a shared dialogue for the school community to express themselves. For example, a core text was carefully selected for the whole school to discuss. Pupils' work was then used to create 'a museum of hope' and a video was subsequently shared with the school community.
- Pupils' engagement in remote learning was closely monitored and rigorously followed up by staff. As a result, pupils' engagement in learning tripled over a three-week period. For example, for those pupils who had not engaged sufficiently, phone calls and 'doorstep' visits were undertaken to ensure that pupils accessed their learning.
- Since all pupils have returned to school, teachers have used a range of information to establish any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. The curriculum has been amended to help pupils catch up for any learning they have lost. For example, targeted pupils are receiving extra help in English and mathematics to ensure that their basic skills are secured.

#### **4.2 Approach to recovery and remote learning - Even better if...**

...pupils and staff continued to use the remote learning platform to keep their well-honed skills up to date.

...even more disadvantaged pupils engaged in the school's remote learning offer.

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

The school will reflect on the report and consider what further support they would like to access from Challenge Partners.

**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.**



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**Schools can also 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 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.**