



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR THE CHARTER SCHOOL EAST DULWICH

<b>Name of School:</b>	The Charter School East Dulwich
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Alison Harbottle
<b>Hub:</b>	South of the River Hub
<b>School phase:</b>	Secondary
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	The Charter Schools Educational Trust

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Effective
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	20/03/2023
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Effective
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	20/06/2022
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Good
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	16/10/2018



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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:

**Leadership at all levels** Effective

**Quality of provision and outcomes** Effective

**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** Effective

***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**

The Charter School East Dulwich is an average size co-educational secondary school located in the borough of Southwark. In terms of year groups, the school is now up to capacity, with the first Year 13 students about to undertake their examinations this summer. Pupil numbers are increasing as the school establishes a positive reputation in the area. The PAN for Year 7 in September is 240 and all places are taken. The demographic is mixed; some students are from areas of high social deprivation while others are from more affluent backgrounds.

Diversity is celebrated in the school. While White British is the slightly larger of the ethnic groups, over 40 other ethnicities are represented across the school. Around a third of students fall into the disadvantaged category which is just above the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is similarly average. However, the proportion of students with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is just above.

The development of the school buildings continues; phase 2 is still due for completion. There are plans for a specialist provision linked to autism to accommodate up to 10 students. Leaders are hopeful that this will open at the beginning of the next academic year.

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

- As the school has grown in size, the senior leadership team (SLT) has correspondingly increased. The SLT is now a strong, cohesive unit that has established a school that is growing in reputation. These leaders have a clear vision for the school and they lead by example. They acknowledge the continuing support from the Trust and the expertise at Charter East is now being widely spread across the other schools.
- The school values – Curiosity, Creativity, Care and Courage – form a central thread. The school aims to develop these values in every student. Rewards are also closely linked to students who embody these values. This has been successful but as the school has reached its final developmental stage, these values are to be re-modelled. Student Voice will play a major role in the new iteration of the school values. Once developed, the new values will be closely linked to the notion of 'Work Hard, Be Kind, Do the Right Thing' philosophy.
- The curriculum is well established in the school. Co-planning subject meetings have been a major contributor to its successful intent and design. The instructional coaching model in operation in the school enables subject leaders to monitor the success of the implementation of their subject in class.

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- Because of the close links across the Trust, the design of the Key Stage 5 curriculum aims to get the majority of students into some form of higher education course. The collegiate approach works well, where a small number of students attend Charter North School for some of their subjects. As the sixth form increases in size at Dulwich East, the curriculum provision will largely be in-house with less subjects being taken up by East students at North.
- The school is still 'young' in its existence and Charter East has begun to develop strategies that are proposed to be shared with other settings, both in the Trust and with other local schools. There is a great deal of cross-Trust collaboration and sharing of strong practice. Lead practitioners have replaced the old SLE and ELE system in the school and those staff members use their expertise to support others. Additionally, three colleagues at the school facilitate national qualifications training.
- Subject leaders are given the trust and autonomy to design and implement their curricula. They all have a clear vision for their subjects and are ambitious in the aims to achieve that vision. New members of this group are growing into their roles and monitor the teaching and learning effectively in their respective subjects.
- Staff wellbeing is a major focus for senior leaders. Meetings are positive vehicles for monitoring the wellbeing of colleagues to ensure that any potential issues, for example around workload, are addressed so that any chance of negative outcomes are greatly reduced. The 'open door' policy of the SLT is an additional means of enabling staff to raise any concerns. They are safe in the knowledge that they will be heard and support offered.
- The Data Driven Instruction (DDI) strategy has been introduced to enable subject leaders to raise the progress standards of Year 11 students. This facilitates impactful fortnightly discussions to monitor the performance of any students who are under-performing, for example the 'Golden 20' who need this in-depth attention. Impact has been significant and gaps in achievement are closing.

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

- ...there was more support to enable middle leaders to express the impact of their curricular actions more succinctly within their teams and as leaders.
- ...there were increased opportunities for leaders of smaller teams or responsibility holders to work collaboratively to achieve shared goals.
- ...there was continued training for less experienced staff in GCSE and A Level examination preparation to enable these teachers to provide more confident targeted support for students.

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

- Positive relationships abound in the school. Staff and students are mutually respectful of each other, culminating in a very productive classroom environment. Lessons capture students' interest and they generally give of their best.
- Routines and classroom management are well embedded. Positive visible praise encouraged students in a Year 7 Spanish lesson and because the teacher employed the school's 100% Focus strategy, students were engaged in their learning right from the start.
- Engagement in learning is strong and most students display positive attitudes to learning. In writing their own definitions of various functions in a Year 10 mathematics lesson, students applied effective listening skills so that they could independently complete the task.
- Lessons are well resourced so that students have all the necessary 'tools,' and information to achieve the learning objective. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 10 art session where students worked hard, and their work modelled the success criteria.
- The use of planned independent tasks enhances and consolidates learning. This was exemplified during the scrutiny of PHSE booklets. In other areas, this notion also helps students to recall prior learning and they understand how that contributes to the current lesson content. This was clearly evidenced in a Year 12 geography lesson where the teacher's question to a student demanded that she had to recall previous learning about the movement of tectonic plates. She answered the question correctly.
- Teachers universally exhibit strong subject knowledge. In a Year 8 biology lesson, the teacher's insistence that students' use of specific terminology resulted in students 'writing like a scientist.' Similarly, the teacher in a Year 10 history lesson clearly imparted her expertise and encouraged an air of inquisitiveness while learning about the rise of the Nazi party. One girl was moved to ask, 'while Hitler was gaining overall power in Germany, what was the rest of Europe doing about it?'
- The structure and sequencing of the curriculum in all subjects was clear, guiding students to achieve the curriculum end goals. A Year 11 computer science session testified to students building on their learning over time.
- Teachers adopt a personalised approach to feedback which has greater relevance for individual students and assists them in the next steps of their learning. However, feedback to the whole group proved useful in a Year 12 chemistry lesson where the teacher made close reference to the examination board requirements.
- Student culture is strong. They take great pride in their school, which was noticeable in their adherence to uniform regulations and the litter-free environment. Student Voice is powerful because students know that they will be listened to.

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- Questioning in most lessons is challenging and calls upon students to expand on their answers and, on occasions, refer back to prior learning. This indicates that students are remembering more. Techniques such as cold-calling and 'bouncing' questions around the classroom are common, ensuring that students remain alert and ready to answer the next one if chosen. The teacher in a Year 10 PE lesson resorted to a 'no hands' approach to gauge understanding.
- In many lessons observed, the pitch and challenge for all abilities was generally appropriate. Clear instructions from the teacher in Year 12 mathematics lesson provided students with the information they needed to tackle some very challenging work.
- Developing disciplinary literacy and technical vocabulary has been a major focus, where an 'expert' teacher is tasked with leading on some area of these issues. Subject-specific vocabulary is identified for each block of work and is also a crucial part of knowledge organisers in each subject. Online Quizlet subscription enables staff in many subjects to accurately test students' understanding of key terminology.

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

- ...there was increased use of different activities within investigate and exhibit-style tasks to engage and enthuse all learners.
- ...there was further development of consistent 'teach to the top' planning to enable suitable challenge for the most able students.
- ...there was increased and more consistent use of effective teacher-led questioning to engage and stretch student thinking to develop active curiosity in their learning.

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

- Over a third of students in the school are in the disadvantaged category. The focus of teaching and learning strategies means that initiatives that work for disadvantaged students and/or those with SEND, will work for all students across the school. Quality first teaching and high expectations are the keys to their success.
- Disadvantaged students achieve well which is clear evidence of the effectiveness of the strategies that have been devised and implemented to support their learning. The curriculum is fully inclusive and any barriers to learning for this group are swiftly identified and overcome.

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- There are many support systems for this group. They are targeted for participation in extra-curricular activities and if it is required, financial support is made available to them to enable them to engage in trips and visits.
- 160 students are on the SEN register with 40 students having an EHCP. The full range of needs are encountered in the school although there are increasing numbers of students diagnosed with ADHD. Close liaison with the feeder primary schools ensures that students' needs are clearly understood on entry to Charter East so that the appropriate support is immediately actioned. The use of the Edukey software has been an invaluable tool in discovering what strategies have gained success in the primary schools and what additional work may be needed.
- Regular communication with the parents of students with SEND have been very helpful in all parties understanding the needs of their children. Parent Cafes have been very impactful in engaging more parents.
- The learning support assistants team act as 'advocates' and are linked to work with individual students with an EHCP. This gives these students a point-of-contact adult with whom they develop a close working relationship, built on trust and support. This works effectively in developing the academic and social development of these students.
- An English nurture group has been established to boost literacy in a small number of Year 7 students post-Covid. Regular review discussions lead to movement, both in and out of this group. There is also a support group in mathematics and for a small number of EAL students, there is an ESOL group to help develop their English language acquisition.

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

- ...there was more robust evidence of teachers utilising strategies in class with students with SEND, and increased consistency in teaching and learning to better meet these students' needs.
- ...staff had greater knowledge of the background of disadvantaged students to gain more understanding of how to support them in class.
- ...there was a continuation in training and accountability so that all teachers provided increased support for key groups of students.

**5. Area of Excellence**

Not submitted for this review.





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#### **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>)