

Name of School:	The Pensby High School
Headteacher/Principal:	Kevin Flanagan
Hub:	Aspire Hub
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	N/A

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	15/06/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	N/A
Date of last QA Review	N/A
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	18/01/2018

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
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Quality of provision and outcomes	Leading
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AND

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

Area of excellence	N/A
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Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	N/A
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Overall peer evaluation estimate	Leading
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***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

Pensby High School opened in 2015 as an 11 to 18 mixed secondary modern. It is one of 13 non-selective schools on the Wirral Peninsula. Its history dates back to the 1950s when a boys' and a girls' school occupied the current school site. The school is popular. Five years ago, there were 633 pupils on roll, including 70 in the sixth form. Today, 851 pupils are on roll in this 890 place school. The majority of the school's pupils have not been eligible to attend one of the six grammar schools on the Peninsula. There are more boys than girls in the school on a ratio of 3:2.

Pupils' attendance, despite the pandemic, is in line the national average. Levels of overall and of persistent absence are better than the national averages. A quarter of the pupils' are eligible for Free School Meals and very few pupils have English as an Additional Language. 16% of pupils are identified as special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Less than one percent of pupils have an educational health and care plan (EHCP). Of the 80 full time equivalent staff, 50 are teachers and the remainder are support staff, of which 5 are progress mentors.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Pensby High is on a continuous journey of school improvement. Leaders know which practice works well and what needs closer attention. They deal with issues consistently, appropriately and promptly.
- The headteacher provides inspirational and 'positively memorable' leadership, based on his experiences of different schools and a dogged determination to provide absolute clarity about Pensby High's purpose. In his own words, 'Everyone has a voice' and middle leaders are expected to reflect this in their leadership of subjects and pastoral teams.
- Subsequently, leadership is carefully and effectively devolved. The quality assurance process is not hierarchical. Everyone in a subject team is included in this activity. Subject staff will contribute to 'book looks' and senior leaders will compare these views with theirs. Triangulation is transparent because continued investment with staff has secured consistent improvement.
- School leaders have introduced triads across subjects to improve collaborative professional development. Senior leaders have learnt that staff will give and gain more through this way of working. This enables them to be inspired to even greater effort. Staff are proud to work here because their contribution is valued. For example, staff provide an excellent extra-curriculum offer that pupils want to attend. Some also take on additional responsibilities to strengthen their practice.

- Senior leaders have deliberately championed the school's motto of Care, Respect and Inspire (CRI). The school's six core values, attitude, resilience, independence, confidence, pride and aspiration are explored in depth in tutorial and assemblies. Subsequently, leaders can plot a direct link to improvements in pupils' engagement. Most pupils talk about these values with ease.
- Senior staff are on top of the leadership of pupils' attendance. Posters around school prioritise 100% attendance. Pupils are in no doubt that their attendance rates could be better. Consequently, pupils rise to this challenge.
- Leaders have introduced a 40 minute, single sitting lunchtime this year, which pupils enjoy. Pupils have more time to socialise and to take advantage of Pensby High's extensive enrichment programme. This change has worked well because leaders have created a truly inclusive school. Pupils voluntarily say that school is 'very accepting' and 'supportive'.
- School leaders have expertly planned an innovative curriculum which is delivered well. Subsequently, pupils' knowledge and understanding has accelerated. Pupils follow the full national curriculum at Key Stage 3. From Easter in Year 9, pupils start their GCSE courses, which ensures each can study four GCSE subjects with breadth and depth.

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

... leaders continued to make sure that pupils accessed a broad and exciting curriculum in all subjects and beyond, securely and consistently.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- High standards are engrained in this school. Teachers make it clear that a pupil's circumstance and previous school experience are never an adequate explanation for poor attitudes and behaviour. Pupils know they must mirror the high expectations adults set in the workplace. As a result, pupils want to learn and are keen to succeed. They are respectful and active members of Pensby High.
- Pupils treat the school setting with high regard. For example, the pupils' toilets are free from graffiti. Scuff marks on the walls in corridors are rare. The site is free from litter. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent and consequently, these go a long way to support a well-kept school environment.
- Pupils are punctual, and it is unusual for a pupil to be out of lessons. All pupils go to where they are timetabled. Some of them prefer not to be asked questions by an adult whilst walking to a lesson, as such conversations will delay their arrival to class.

- Pupils wear their uniform well and correctly. Their shirts are tucked in, and their ties well fastened. They also wear their physical education kit properly. Consequently, they and their teachers' energies can centre almost exclusively on learning without any unnecessary distractions.
- Pupils enjoy lunchtime for the right reasons. The school grounds offer extensive places where pupils can play team games and socialise. Those who eat in the canteen enjoy a pleasant experience. Pupils and adults, eat together and can choose a meal from a wide range of quality homemade food, which they appreciate. Pupils willingly engage in conversations with adults about their food choices and their lessons. Subsequently, the school's inclusive culture pervades every aspect of the school's operation.
- Mathematics teachers plan lesson starters very well, using the beginning of the lesson to go over prior learning, especially areas linked to number bonding. Semi-complex procedures such as the simplification of algebraic expressions and how to divide using fractions helped to keep these ways of 'doing maths' fresh in pupils' working memory.
- All pupils benefit from the school's ethics curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to consider the 'big question' when learning a new topic. It is not enough to know who invented the electric light bulb. Pupils need to think beyond the basic facts and explore questions such as, 'why do we need electricity?'. This helps them to forge links across subjects.
- Strong classroom routines engage pupils' curiosity. In English, pupils linked key themes through their reading of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Pupils identified the importance of 'patriarchy' in the play when analysing the relationship between Juliet and her father, Lord Capulet. These pupils made strong connections across this subject and through their personal development studies.
- Pupils' engagement with personal development is carefully tracked and analysed. Any gaps in participation are addressed promptly. Consequently, no pupils are left out.
- Personal Development classes are relevant to older pupils' interests. For example, in a lesson about this country's political system, the teacher quickly built on what pupils already knew about the country's main political parties. Within a short time, pupils had learnt about concepts such as democracy, the constitution and the 'royal prerogative'. Whilst, Year 7 pupils also responded well to a thoughtfully planned lesson about LGBTQ+ issues. Well sequenced tasks helped to keep pupils' working memory fresh.

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

- ... all pupils continued to learn well beyond the requirements of the national curriculum during Key Stage 3 through the continued use of well-developed schemes of knowledge and skills. This will help to build their wider experiences in learning and the broader context as they move through school and beyond.

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

- Leaders expect pupils with SEND to perform in line with their peers. Staff and pupils know their identified need is not an excuse. These pupils are part of 'can do' culture' and they achieve strong outcomes.
- A sample of pupils' work showed that they made substantial progress over time. Their teachers provided bespoke feedback which these pupils acted upon because their advice was clear and easy to address. As a result, twelve months on, these pupils wrote clear, informed and coherent sentences in well-structured paragraphs.
- Pupils with additional needs, especially those who are disadvantaged, benefit from the school's well thought out 'Care Respect and Inspire' programme. These pupils are not prevented from attending trips, visits and participating in peripatetic music lessons. These options are readily accessible and made affordable.
- SEND staff go out of their way to ensure pupils with additional needs read whole texts. These pupils will read in tutor time and for at least ten minutes in every English lesson. Their teachers help them to understand key words that are unfamiliar. As a result, pupils know how to decode new words and also to check their meaning.
- A new librarian has helped pupils with additional needs choose books to read outside of school. These pupils can go to the library at break, lunchtime and after school. Library staff know which books might interest these pupils, so that they have the same opportunities to read for pleasure as other pupils.
- Pupils with EHCPs are treated with absolute care and attention. SEND staff make sure section F of each EHCP is met with realistic tasks that are adapted to meet these pupils' needs. As a result, these pupils access adapted lesson tasks well.

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

... leaders continued with their successful work to support these pupils' learning in classrooms by drawing upon the successful practice and further developments within the school.

5. Area of Excellence

Not applicable

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

To work with Challenge Partners to review, analyse and revise at least one aspect of school practice that could be used as an area of excellence in the next QAR review.

Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, the main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities and CP will collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

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 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.