



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT THE PENSBY HIGH SCHOOL

<b>Name of School:</b>	The Pensby High School
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Kevin Flanagan
<b>Hub:</b>	Aspire Hub
<b>School phase:</b>	Secondary
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	Not applicable

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Leading
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	17/04/2024
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Leading
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	15/06/2022
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Good
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	22/03/2023



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT THE PENSBY HIGH SCHOOL

#### 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

Quality of provision and outcomes    Leading

#### AND

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

Area of excellence    Not applicable

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence    Not applicable

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**

Pensby High School opened in 2015 as an 11 to 16 mixed secondary modern school. 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. The majority of the school's students have not been eligible to attend one of the six grammar schools on the Peninsula. There are more boys than girls in the school. The proportion of disadvantaged students is close to the national average and very few students have English as an additional language (EAL). The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above average. A small proportion of students have an educational health and care plan (EHCP). The school values are care, respect and inspire.

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

- The vision, determination and strong leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher have created a culture of high expectations and a drive for continual improvement. They are supported by a strong team of leaders who share the same ethos.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and adapted to meet individual needs. It is evaluated regularly by leaders to ensure that it meets the needs of students. The leadership team has shown integrity in not narrowing the curriculum or compromising on ambition.
- Across all subjects, leaders carefully consider the starting points of students when deciding what is to be learned in the curriculum. Leaders ensure that students benefit from subject content that builds seamlessly on the knowledge that they have already acquired. This is pivotal in helping students to make sustained gains in what they know, remember and can do. This is reflected in external examinations.
- Subject leaders have strong subject knowledge and support their teams well. Curriculum maps are accessible, detailed and provide a clear representation of the purpose, content and expected learning path for all students. Trackers are in place in all subjects. They allow teachers and leaders to identify gaps in knowledge and/or misconception and modify the curriculum accordingly.
- Frequent professional dialogue promotes collaboration, communication and challenge. Moreover, high-quality training and support ensure that all teaching staff make a significant impact on improving students' performance across the curriculum. Early Career Teachers are very well supported and feel that they can grow within the school. The school is a community in which there is strong and effective teamwork. Training and research are central to the aim of improving and sustaining the strong outcomes for every student.

- A wide range of extra-curricular activities, events and opportunities enable the development of students as individuals. Students are excited to sign up for activities, and participation in all events is very high, including for the most vulnerable. A high proportion of students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.
- Careers guidance in the school is having a positive impact on students' future aspirations. Leaders regularly organise for employers and higher education institutions to work with students. Students' work experience is very well managed. As a result, all students are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Staff and students are regularly consulted, resulting in the deployment of effective interventions. Students lead many aspects of the school life. Equality and diversity are at the heart of the school ethos. For example, students from the LGBTQ+ group meet regularly.

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

... leaders continued to be outward-facing and reactive to the needs of their students, staff and the community they serve.

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

- Exemplary behaviour was common during lessons and around school. Students are polite, open and articulate, making it a pleasure to engage with them. Excellent relationships between teachers and students contribute to students growing in confidence in their learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and teachers set high expectations for students. They ensure that activities are planned skilfully, with a focus on increasing the depth of students' knowledge and understanding, including for the most able. Subject leaders have ensured teachers are clear about what students should know and remember.
- A clear focus on key vocabulary within subjects allows students to consolidate their disciplinary literacy. Strategies to embed knowledge include the use of recall activities, visualisers, repetitions, mini-white boards, modelling and knowledge organisers. This results in long term acquisition of complex vocabulary.
- Teachers usually employ well-structured learning activities which progressively build skills and knowledge based on what they know about their students. In most books, there was clear evidence of categorisation and scaffolding of key concept via tables, Venn or spiderweb diagrams. For example, in Year 7 geography books, this allowed students to explore key

vocabulary and structure their thoughts and rationales around the topic of climates.

- In all lessons, activities are adapted to meet the needs of students, resulting in rapid progress. Transitions between learning activities are managed very effectively leading to no curriculum time being wasted.
- Teachers are adept at using questioning techniques to maximise students' engagement and to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Questions are used very effectively to clarify misconceptions, challenge students' thinking, demonstrate the use of specialist terminology and stimulate learning. In a Year 8 English lesson, teachers used different wave questioning to deepen students' knowledge of fiction and non-fiction. It included thought provoking texts raising students' awareness around the importance of reading across the curriculum – "What surprises you?": "I did not know reading was important for mathematics".
- There is a clear programme of regular assessments across the school. Assessments are accurate and give a clear indication of the progress students have made and the next steps required in their learning. In lessons, ongoing assessment ensures that students receive the support they need in a timely fashion (DIRT): "Teachers are very quick to support when you struggle". As a result, students revisit misconceptions and access next steps in learning rapidly. The use of benchmarks and criteria is frequent and, in the best books, purposeful (leading to next steps).

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

... subject leaders continued to review teachers' assessment in books, ensuring that feedback is systematically acted upon by students.

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

- Leaders have created a highly inclusive learning environment for all students, including those with SEND and the disadvantaged. They address weaknesses with determination in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. As a result of their approach, all students in lessons are ready to learn within a supportive and productive setting: "We are proud of our school. It is very inclusive".
- Teachers know which students in their class need additional help with their learning. Adults use the strategies that are set out in support plans to help students with SEND. Typically, this enables those students to access the

same curriculum as others in their class, including the same levels of ambition.

- Teachers have access to information about their students. All lessons visited included clear evidence of adaptation and curriculum modification to allow the low attainers to access the curriculum and progress over time. Support staff, including progress mentors, are highly skilled and know their students well. They use a variety of resources to best meet the needs of the most vulnerable.
- The behaviours for learning of all students, including the most vulnerable, are excellent. They have a thirst for knowledge and are not afraid to take risks, ask questions and challenge their peers. They are resilient when facing a problem and take the utmost care with their work. In a Year 8 English lesson, students with SEMH demonstrated very high levels of resilience as they benefited from positive interactions with their teachers and peers.
- Students who have SEND benefit from additional enrichment and personalised support. Both the SEND and behaviour teams work closely. For example, students at the earliest stages of learning to read are identified on entry to the school. These students receive effective support from trained staff through the Fresh Start programme (Read, Write, Inc). As a result, they quickly learn to read.
- A relentless approach to securing good attendance for all, including for the most vulnerable, has paid dividends. The school's overall attendance exceeds the national averages. Strong links with parents and agencies further enhance the progress of the most vulnerable as reflected in the outcomes of students with SEND and the disadvantaged during external examinations.
- The small but growing proportion of EAL students is very well catered for. Many are refugees with socio-economic challenges. Leaders ensure that all their needs are catered for, including supporting parents and working with external agencies.
- Students from deprived backgrounds have the same opportunities as their peers, including accessing enrichment activities to improve their cultural capital. They benefit from highly effective career guidance. The effective mosaic mentoring programme is focused on increasing the aspirations of the most vulnerable and long-term employability. Destinations are secured for all students, including the most vulnerable.

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

... none.

### **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>)