

Written Report

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Brentford School For Girls
School Address:	Boston Manor Road, TW8 0PG
Hub School:	Lampton

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Unique Reference Number:	139095
Local Authority:	Hounslow
Type of School:	Secondary
School Category:	Academy
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Number on roll:	814
Head teacher/Principal:	Marais Leenders

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	27-28 September 2011
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	17-18 th March 2015
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES

School Improvement Strategies	Outstanding
Achievement is:	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching:	Outstanding

Area of Excellent Practice:	Literacy
	Confirmed

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Brentford School for Girls appears to have moved beyond the good grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report on 27-28 September 2011 and is working within the outstanding grade.

Information about the school

- Brentford School for Girls is a slightly smaller than average-sized secondary school and is a single sex comprehensive school with a sixth form.
- Students come from diverse, social, linguistic, faith and ethnic backgrounds, and the school's minority ethnic figure is more than three times the national figure at 81%. The largest proportions of these pupils come from Pakistani, Indian, Somali and Afghan heritages.
- There are high numbers of pupils who speak English as a second language (49%), most frequently Urdu, Dari, Pashto and Hindi. Very high proportions have little fluency in English when they start school and standards on entry are below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action or a statement is slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is approaching double the national figure at 49%.
- There are above average numbers of students arriving and leaving the school other than at normal times.
- The school is part of the local Hounslow EIP, the Challenge Partner network and is a lead school in the 'Challenge the Gap' programme. It is also part of the Hounslow Consortium, sharing 6th form provision across local schools.
- The school creates a strong ethos around its Media Arts specialism and also holds the prestigious Arts Mark Gold and the British Council International Schools (full) awards.

School Improvement Strategies

WWW:

- Brentford School for Girls is a very nurturing community. The senior leadership team is passionate to maintain the positive and caring ethos of the school based on creativity and drive for excellence, whilst striving to further raise standards. The school's capacity to keep improving is excellent with an ambition to maximise achievement for every 'Brentford Girl'.
- The head teacher's energy and commitment to academic excellence and to closing the gap for all students, with strong support from the senior leadership team and from staff at all levels, are a major reason for the school's outstanding success.
- The senior leadership team and other leaders have devised a number of creative and effective improvement strategies all of which have achieved excellent outcomes.
- This high level of commitment to success continues in the school improvement plan (SIP) for 2014-15. The document is detailed and reflects the continuous effort by the school senior leadership team to raise achievement across all key stages.
- Priorities are clearly identified in the SIP, with targets and actions linked closely to rigorous self-evaluation and the use of measureable success criteria. School procedures ensure a regular focus on identifying improvement priorities and effective self-evaluation.
- There is a strong alignment between the whole school improvement priorities, departmental improvement and individual performance management targets, ensuring whole school priorities are appropriately contextualised at departmental and individual teacher level.
- Since the last review, the school has introduced an effective system of self-evaluation to monitor the impact of new initiatives at all levels. This involves the use of department monitoring which is reviewed termly through line meetings. The monitoring activities include work scrutiny, learning walk, progress meetings and the interrogation of student progress data.
- Senior middle leaders (SML) are increasingly involved in conducting learning walks and carrying out joint lesson observations, as was the case during this review. The improvement in their leadership qualities is fundamental to an 'outstanding' school improvement strategies judgement.
- The SIP also provides evidence that the senior leadership has identified and is committed to adopting initiatives to close the gap for underachieving groups and to address the lower than expected level of attainment at KS5.
- The school continues to improve its sixth form reviewing arrangements to ensure quality assurance and monitoring arrangements across the consortium. It manages any student underachievement on a case by case basis.

EBI....

- ...the senior leadership team and department heads continued to look for ways to use data to set more accurate target for students at KS5 and there was a continuing focus on improving independent learning skills of students in order to make the transition from KS4 to KS5 less problematic.
- ...as part of self-evaluation procedures students were further encouraged to engage and to take ownership of monitoring their own progress and given further time to act on verbal and written feedback.
- ...department initiatives encouraged and checked student resilience and learning skills in the push to more consistent outstanding learning, especially in the sixth form.

Pupil Achievement

- After arriving into the school with KS2 attainment levels below the national average, the 2014 attainment results were significantly above the national figure for 5+ A*-C grades, including English and mathematics.
- Average capped point score was also significantly above the national figure in these subjects, as was the overall added value progress figures.
- Value Added in the EBacc subjects was significantly above national averages, except in English. It was exceptionally high in MFL, placing the subject in the second percentile, and the school recognises the strength of its MFL team and uses them as teaching and learning mentors to support other teachers.
- The proportions of students making expected and more than expected progress in English and mathematics are above national figures. The school recognises the need to improve the progress of certain sub-groups – Level 4 entry in English and Level 5 entry in maths – to further sustain an outstanding achievement judgement. Projected 2015 results are encouraging in this respect.
- For disadvantaged students, the gaps are closing rapidly. 2014 data show that the gap in the headline 5ACEM figure has reduced to 6% between disadvantaged and other students in the school.
- The overall progress that White British students made in 2014, although not statistically significantly difference from the national average, is significantly different from the progress of students whose first language is not English (1009.3 compared with 1056.3). The school is aware of this issue has appointed a 'research post' and a 'WENG coordinator' to monitor the performance of this group and to introduce specific strategies to make improvements.
- The school uses PiXL fine grades and has had successes using these estimates to predict the 5ACEM figures accurately. The school is currently gathering data from its latest data point collection but there is still a large gap between the lowest and highest headline projections. In future reviews or external validations it is recommended that updated

conversion matrices are used to show how many students are achieving or exceeding their targets.

- The school has used ALPS target setting in the sixth form and presented data suggests below average progress in some subjects at both A2 and AS levels. The school is aware of these discrepancies and need to explain them more fully in terms of APS being lower than the national average on entry and that there were no subjects that were considered significantly below average.
- The school has put in place a raft of ideas and improvements and present predictions look set to secure a 'good' grade for sixth form provision. Improvements to improve progress across years 12 and 13 include:
 - Teaching staff have undergone moderation training to identify underachievement more accurately
 - Work scrutiny across departments and progress meetings with senior leaders ensures teachers are better held to account over their results
 - Low reading ages and literacy issues are being tackled through reading and academic writing interventions
 - Students who are underachieving in Year 12 have reduced the number of AS Levels they take, from 4 to 3
 - A referral system for students failing to complete home learning or class work has been introduced
 - Senior Tutors identify students underachieving across all three subjects and work with subject teachers and students to raise achievement
 - Teaching and learning practitioners work with Key Stage 5 teachers to help them to bridge the gap and ease the transition between Years 11 to Year 12
 - A "pathways into 6th form" programme introduced in Year 11 ensures that students are placed on the most appropriate courses for their ability, with facilitating subjects at AS having higher entry criteria than others.
 - The most recent data collection is based only on students whose grades are considered "secure", rather than borderline. This points to an improving picture of achievement for 12 out of 17 subjects at A2 and 11 of 17 subjects at AS.
- In order to further improve sixth form achievements further, the school needs to review the use of ALPS for target setting and to enhance it with a target setting system which is both aspirational and takes account of previous performance in similar subjects at GCSE.

Quality of teaching

The school's rationale for lesson observations was to look at a mixture of newly qualified staff and more experienced staff across a range of key stages and subjects.

WWW

- In the majority of lessons it was evidently clear that teachers strive for outstanding practices in everything they do. This has been underpinned by bespoke, in-house professional development for all staff based on the mantra of 'creativity and excellence' in teaching and learning.
- Exemplar teaching is regularly shared via peer observations and these procedures are highly valued as the 'pot of gold' and exemplify the wide range of innovative research into pedagogical practices that exists within the school.
- The quality of support and mentoring for teachers new to the profession is of a very high standard and they display good and outstanding teaching standards.
- School improvement strategies linked to improved literacy skills were clearly evident in music, German, RE, geography and science, where teachers used a variety of reading, writing and oracy skills to improve learning in other subjects.
- Meticulous planning in the vast majority of lessons takes into account different student learning needs and preferred ways of working. Planning also has explicit references to assessment opportunities and student learning is checked using mini-whiteboards, post-it notes, peer discussions and, in outstanding lessons, specifically targeted questioning.
- The review found many teachers use differentiated tasks and questioning based around their knowledge of their students' progress. Targets are clearly signposted in lessons; tasks in science are well scaffolded to help students to reflect on their learning and understand their next-stage targets.
- Staff have excellent knowledge of their subject areas which enables them to explain and model the intended learning well. In the best lessons teachers expect their students to model to classmates, therefore creating excellent stimulus for extended learning conversations.
- Students' attitudes towards learning and their engagement in lessons is outstanding. There are clear structures to support students, especially with specific subject interventions, and student-staff relations are excellent. Students are consistently on task and are engaged with work-related conversations.
- Resilient and independent learning is commonplace and a Year 11 drama lesson was a perfect example of how students are grouped with clear tasks and then take their personal responsibility very seriously to produce outstanding work.

EBI...

- ...when ambitions to monitor and improve the quality of teaching, based on individual student needs and linked to class progress data, are fully embedded.

- ...when further consideration is given to the whole-school effectiveness of the use of progress data, including the 'diagnostic' elements of marking, to determine aspirational targets and to check how well students respond and act on these to make the best progress. (Most pertinent to the sixth form).
- ...questioning more consistently creates opportunities for teachers to assess understanding and/or misconceptions in learning, strategically uses students' responses to develop learning for others and allows appropriate thinking time for them to develop their answers.

Area of Excellence

Whole-school literacy is confirmed as an area of excellence. This will be of use to other schools who are looking to set-up a recognised 'team' of professionals to drive forward whole-school literacy initiatives via a 'Literacy Action Plan'. The school uses literacy 'experts' to deliver other curriculum subjects, for example in humanities. The review saw this positively, where teachers weave in specific literacy foci to improve the enjoyment of learning and to improve subject-specific skills. These initiatives clearly reflect the aims of the literacy plan:

- Embedding literacy through humanities and other subjects;
- Promoting a love of reading and improving reading ages;
- Developing academic writing across the curriculum....and
- Facilitating specific literacy interventions to raise standards and accelerate progress.

The school evaluates these strategies as improved learning opportunities and raised standards. They are very much part of the annual school improvement strategies and a recent success story in raising standards in literacy within a focus on 'British white girls' achievement. In addition to this specific success, similar strategies are in use to improve transition from Year 6 to Year 7 and also transition into the sixth form. The 'core' team continues to share this expertise by providing key links to departments within the school and also to other schools in the local community.

Partnerships

- The school continues to value the Challenge Partner review process and was fully committed to the professionalism of peer reviewing.
- Via its stated aims and visions the school is very outward looking in the local, national and international communities. Parental views are encouragingly sought and transition periods from primary to secondary school are most valued.
- BSfG takes a lead role in the Hounslow sixth form consortium and as stated elsewhere in the review, this is having a positive impact on post 16 standards and achievement in the area.

- The school is a lead school for 'Challenge the Gap' and shares its expertise in the creative, performing and media arts with other schools in the community.
- The school values its role as a key 'community hub' and supports many local enterprise activities and is seen as a positive role model for 'Brentford Girls' as well as enriching their learning and experiences.
- BSfG has established excellent international links and partnerships with a strong international focus within the curriculum. Most recently it was involved in a British Council Comenius Project with both staff and students involved in reciprocal exchange to France and Sweden researching an anti-xenophobia project.

The school has not requested any additional support from Challenge Partners but continues to greatly value the annual review process.

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.