

Name of School:	Ditton Park Academy
Head teacher/Principal:	Nick Caulfield
Hub:	London West
School type:	Secondary Academy
MAT (if applicable):	SASH Multi Academy Trust

Estimate at this QA Review:	OUTSTANDING
Date of this Review:	03/12/18
Estimate at last QA Review	Not applicable
Date of last QA Review	Not applicable
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	GOOD
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	20/06/17

Quality Assurance Review

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

School Improvement Strategies	OUTSTANDING
Outcomes for Pupils	OUTSTANDING
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	OUTSTANDING
Area of Excellence	None submitted for this review
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	Not applicable
Overall Estimate	OUTSTANDING

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

1. Context and character of the school

- Ditton Park co-educational community academy serves young people and their families in the south east of Slough. The academy is seen as a forward-looking school where leaders and staff value students and celebrate all of their successes. The academy is known for being friendly and open but with a clear set of values and expectations agreed upon and respected by all members of the school community.
- The academy genuinely believes in putting the needs of its students and the community first. This means leaders always work hard to make sure that they have the right curriculum for the students with a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities available. All staff are enthusiastic and ambitious, working together to build an exciting new academy which will learn from the remarkable successes of current Slough schools.
- The academy develops confident young people, who excel in their educational, personal and social development, achieving more than they believed possible. An expectation that lifelong learning not only underpins success in adult life but also will be a necessity in order to participate actively in the future economic world underpins the culture and curriculum of the academy.
- There is a much higher than average number of students in the academy from minority ethnic groups and students who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disadvantaged students is higher than the national average. The number of students who have support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is lower than the national average, as is the proportion of students who have a statement of SEND or an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Progress from previous EBIs

- This is the academy's first Challenge Partners review.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- The principal's exceptional leadership, combined with strong leadership at all levels, has created a powerful and convincing vision and culture within the academy. Leaders know their school extremely well. They know what is working effectively and they are clear about what can be improved.
- The academy's systems for school improvement planning are rigorous. The summary sheet filters through the whole development plan. Regular evaluation and red/amber/green (RAG) rating takes place to check the impact of the actions taken to bring about improvement. Currently, there are no red RAG rated areas. This demonstrates the continuing excellent capacity for improvement.

- Leaders are planning highly effectively for their inaugural sixth form and have marketed the academy well. Retention looks at this stage to be positive because advice and guidance has been strong. The sixth form is set to offer a curriculum which suits a wide range of student abilities. There is an informal arrangement in place with other local secondary schools with a view to a future consortium arrangement.
- Lead teachers manage their departments highly effectively because senior leaders, quite rightly, have full confidence in them. These leaders feel trusted to support and challenge their own teams. They carefully watch, monitor and tackle any underachievement of particularly vulnerable groups and, as a result, gaps between them and their counterparts have diminished.
- The leadership of mathematics has been a challenge but leaders have dealt with this creatively through the appointment of new colleagues. The academy networks exceptionally well with other schools and has taken the best of the practice to enrich provision.
- Leaders have managed staff induction exceptionally well since the academy's inception. Thirty new teachers have started every year as the academy has grown and three new members of the senior leadership team have been appointed. These staff quickly became part of the academy and bought into the culture and ethos.
- 'Teach to the top' is the mantra for staff and students. This has promoted higher levels of challenge for all including those students with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. The 'scaffolding' approach has instilled confidence in students to do well.
- Professional development, mentoring and coaching have been highly successful. Mentoring over a six-week period sets targets and encourages the development of particular skills following the observation of practice. Coaching has promoted a reflective culture and lead teachers have been empowered to grow their leadership skills which supports effective succession planning.
- The rationale behind the three-year Key Stage 4 curriculum is well thought through and ensures that students are given every opportunity to gain the highest grades across subjects. Leaders clearly state that it is 'what we think is right for the students.' The curriculum is responsive to the local community.

2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...

- ...leaders built upon the work already started to improve achievement in mathematics so that it matched that in other subjects.
- ...leaders thought carefully about the information presented to outside reviewers so that they did not sell themselves short.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Progress from previous EBIs

- This is the academy's first Challenge Partners review.

3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well

- Routines are embedded because the academy teaching and learning file promotes what leaders expect from their staff. Consequently, leaders and teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve.
- Behaviour for learning is exceptionally strong. Students want to learn; they are very positive about how well they are doing and they 'love their school and their teachers'. Students manage their own behaviour well because the academy has set an agenda for independence which students respect.
- Most teachers provide students with effective feedback in books which promotes their significant improvement. In history and English for example, the teachers' written feedback was excellent. This is because training for teachers has had a clear impact and dedicated improvement and reflection time (DIRT) has worked well to inform students about aspects of their work they can do better. Students are able to articulate their learning exceptionally well.
- History was taught remarkably well because teachers' planning for progress was particularly effective. A lesson about the Spanish Armada was scaffolded highly effectively through a matching game which transitioned into looking at particular sources. There was ample opportunity for extended writing as a result.
- Excellent teaching in PE showed students' progression in balancing. They were able to choose from a variety of tasks and enjoyed demonstrating what they had accomplished. Students challenged themselves appropriately and chose the right level of work.
- In an English lesson which focused on the characteristics of Scrooge, questioning was particularly strong and promoted deeper thinking. As a result, students were able to identify and use literary devices highly effectively. The use of synonyms ensured that students' vocabulary grew markedly during the lesson. Marking is exemplary and students' responses demonstrate how much value has been added to their work.
- In business studies, a teacher promoted a thorough understanding of stakeholders through the analogy of an 'ostrich pillow'. Students were thoroughly engaged in deciding who would buy such an item. This idea was then linked to the real stakeholders of Ditton Park Academy.
- Staff are confident to try new approaches because classrooms are 'risk free'. The open-door policy welcomes visitors to classrooms which are attractive, pleasant places to learn.
- Students praise the work of the academy and how well they and their parents work with staff. One said, 'My mum and my teachers are working together to help me.'

3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if...

- ...all teachers were able to accurately gauge the pitch of the lesson with regard to 'teaching to the top'.
- ...responses to initial questions were probed further in all lessons to ensure that students were able to deepen their understanding fully.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- The academy was opened in 2014 so to date there have not yet been any GCSE results. The current Year 11 cohort is the first. Attainment on entry to the academy is broadly average and the predictions for Year 11 are showing that students are likely to leave the academy with results that are significantly above average. This is the result of the significant progress they have made.
- The aspirational target setting system promotes teachers' understanding and ownership of their data. Progress is clearly spelt out to teachers through the levelled flightpaths which students are expected to follow. Average grade trackers ensure that all staff are fully aware of the attainment and progress of the students in their classes which is reflected in their planning. Current progress in English, science and humanities is particularly noteworthy.
- SEND students also make effective progress and much is expected of them. Extensive work has been done to scaffold the learning of this group and, as a result, a significant proportion of students exceed expectations. There is additional intervention work put in place to help students to catch up and a clear focus on literacy and numeracy.
- The academy's internal data set shows that currently disadvantaged students perform well and that gaps between them and their peers are reducing over time across the year groups. Some disadvantaged students outperform their peers. As yet, there has not been the opportunity to gauge performance against the national other picture although leaders are of the belief that differences are unlikely to be significant.
- The current progress of other groups of students is very encouraging. Year 10 indicators show that attainment and progress is in line with the current Year 11 already which bodes well for the 2019 results. Progress across the academy in Years 7, 8 and 9 is consistent. The results of book looks and observations of teaching reflect the data which has been collected.
- Moderation across subjects has been rigorous and other local schools have been involved. Blind marking of each other's Year 11 practice papers has taken place and this has contributed effectively to the accuracy of the academy data. There have been some issues in mathematics which are in the process of being tackled and the impact so far is encouraging. Despite these issues, the current Year 11 are on track to make at least the progress seen nationally in 2017.
- Raising achievement plan (RAP) meetings take place regularly to identify any

student who is underachieving. Those students, who are members of more than one vulnerable group, are a particular focus. Similarly, health checks in Years 7 and 8 target any underachievement.

- Diagnosis, development and testing (DDT) effectively identifies the particular issues of some students. Staff are alert to this and focus well on particular individuals and groups, reporting regularly to the lead teachers who in turn report to a member of SLT. Consequently, staff are held to account fairly but firmly for the progress of their students.

5. Area of Excellence

Not submitted for this review.

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

Leaders will seek support from Challenge Partners as appropriate for their needs.

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.