

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Gorton Mount Primary Academy School
School Address:	Mount Road Gorton Manchester M187GR
Hub School:	Bright Futures Trust

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Unique Reference Number:	131543
Local Authority:	Manchester
Type of School:	Primary
School Category:	Academy
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Number on roll:	587
Headteacher/Principal:	Carol Powel
Chair of Governors:	?

Date of last OfSTED inspection:	11-12 May 2011
Grade at last OfSTED inspection:	Good

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	27-28 June 2013
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

Achievement is: 2

Quality of Teaching: 2

School Improvement Strategies: 1

Area of Excellent Practice:

Early Years Foundation Stage Confirmed

Impact on Challenge Partnership: The academy has a strong history of commitment to partnership work for the benefit of its pupils. It has worked with many agencies, schools and universities as part of its drive for innovation and this will benefit Challenge Partnership greatly. It is at the forefront of Montessori practices and has embarked on extensive, longitudinal research on the impact of these principles on children’s development. Gorton Mount recently became a member of the ‘Bright Futures’ trust and is particularly working with another Challenge Partner school, Stanley Grove Primary Academy, on joint and innovative initiatives.

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that based on the sample of teaching and learning seen during the review and validated by school records, including pupil achievement, Gorton Mount Primary Academy overall effectiveness is ‘good’. This compares with the good grade as judged by Ofsted in the school’s previous inspection report in 2011. As this review is framed within new Ofsted requirements, with more challenging ‘grade’ requirements, then this reflects very good progress being made by the school to achieve its aim to be outstanding. The review judgement of ‘outstanding’ for the present school improvement strategies is an added reason why the school has every right to be confident about achieving this objective. The school is aware that despite this outstanding aspect of its work they are still vulnerable to a good judgement for overall

leadership at an imminent Ofsted inspection as they still need to strengthen middle management and raise standards in literacy even further.

Information about the school

Gorton Mount Primary School Academy is a much larger than average primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and, whose first language is not believed to be English, is significantly high, with 45 different languages spoken in the school. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and who are supported by individualised school action plans, are significantly above the average. The proportion eligible for free school meals and pupil premium funding is much higher than the national average. The school faces challenges of significant deprivation in the lives of many of its pupils, more of whom move in and out part way through their schooling than is usual, especially at KS2. The school employs a significant number of therapists, learning mentors and other specialists to support the wide range of challenges it faces. This also includes a Roma Liaison Worker who works with the high number of Roma pupils on roll.

The school was part of the Greater Manchester Challenge initiative and converted to academy status in January 2012, as a member of the 'Bright Futures Trust'. There has been a very stable senior leadership team in recent times allowing various school improvement strategies to successfully raise standards and pupils' personal achievement year-on-year.

Pupil Achievement

- Achievement is good. Attainment has improved even further since the last inspection and predicted 2013 results show that reading, writing and mathematics will be close to the national average. This is a significant achievement given the very low entry points and the high levels of pupil mobility.
- There is a strong trend for some outstanding achievement in EYFS and KS1 and this reflects the level of expertise the school has in these areas of its work.
- There has been a strong commitment to use this expertise in KS2. The Montessori training for staff is certainly having an impact, with attainment and achievement sufficiently improved by Year 6 to such a level to enable the school to confidently claim to have many outstanding features.
- The school is aware of the importance of sustaining and improving literacy standards even further to be able to justify an outstanding grade for overall effectiveness.
- Those pupils who represent the 'stable' group and who remain at the school from the EYFS stage to Year 6 make outstanding progress. A significant proportion of these pupils enter the school many months behind their expected levels of attainment and with complex learning needs and leave with outstanding achievement.

- Pupils with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities, some of which are complex, make good progress. Many of these are now making outstanding progress because of the wide range of support given and this is a major reason why the school is on the cusp of being outstanding.
- The level of expertise that staff have in dealing with a range of complex needs and the support they give means the vulnerable pupils are closing the attainment gap on their peers. This is especially significant at KS1 and an improving trend in later years will be an important feature in the journey towards outstanding.

Quality of teaching

- Teaching is good overall with many outstanding features. Teachers are totally committed to their pupils and they thrive in a very supportive and cohesive learning environment.
- Bearing in mind the significant improvement in pupils' attainment and achievement it is abundantly clear why the school talks confidently about the recent improvements in teaching standards.
- The school is rightly proud of its inclusiveness. Observing lessons the review team found it impossible to pick-out those pupils who have significant learning and social needs, such was the harmonious nature of the learning environment.
- These improvements, especially in KS2, are enabling the school to begin to maintain the good to outstanding progress, evident in the earlier years, right across the whole school.
- The combination of Montessori and Assessment for Learning approaches is having a significant impact on pupils' motivation to learn. In all lessons visited pupils were displaying excellent independent learning skills and a strong desire to learn.
- Teachers plan stimulating lessons and the pupils are excited about their learning. As a result behaviour is excellent and there is a calmness and purposefulness in all classrooms visited.
- The school has recently introduced a more rigorous assessment tracking system which is improving teachers' ability to observe learning more accurately to plan for the next steps in pupils' learning.
- These procedures are proving very beneficial in dealing with pupils who arrive at the school in later years. Assessments are accurate for these pupils and teachers are able to get them on track very quickly.
- On the journey to outstanding the school now needs to step-up the procedures already in place to accelerate pupils' progress even further. This is not solely a drive to raise standards but to have equitability of progress across all year groups in KS2, so that all pupils make at least their expected progress.

School Improvement Strategies

- The review finds that school improvement strategies are outstanding due to strong leadership in most of the key areas of the schools' work. However, this review did not thoroughly evaluate the impact the governing body makes to school improvement.
- The headteacher has been the inspirational leader and visionary in developing a strong ethos for Montessori principles; combined with emotional literacy and a therapeutic approaches these factors are central to the emotional, social and intellectual needs and development of all the children.
- There is an exceedingly strong commitment to these inclusive and holistic approaches by all staff. Because of this, and a commitment to ongoing training, pupils receive a consistent approach throughout the school that supports their development and wellbeing.
- The professional development of teachers is a high priority and very well linked to school priorities and ongoing development plans. This is clearly seen when staff share their expertise in year groups by supporting other colleagues.
- Good gains have been made in further developing a more creative curriculum since the last Ofsted inspection. Teachers have worked hard to improve the learning environments so that learning becomes more exploratory and active. This will support an outstanding grade for leadership at the school's next inspection.
- Assessment for learning is well used in the day-to-day practices in classrooms and teachers evaluate progress in pupils' developmental skills with good observational methodology. Pupil peer reviews work well and contribute to the positive learning behaviours of pupils.
- Assessment tracking procedures enhance this process and when used well informs the next stages in learning. More consistent use of these processes is the most important next-stage development to gain the Ofsted outstanding award.
- The inconsistent progress across KS2, for relatively small numbers of pupils, is happening because teachers do not always use the information on pupils' progress and previous achievements to question and challenge them enough. Also, although marking is consistently done it is not always giving pupils the next steps in their learning.
- Further empowering curriculum leaders to lead and manage progress in their subjects would alleviate the levels of inconsistency in pupil progress across KS2 and also provide more credibility for the school to evaluate leadership to be outstanding.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

The area of excellent practice presented by the school is its Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The review confirms this as a confirmed area of real excellence that the school can share with other partners. The school provides a Montessori Early Years provision because it feels it meets the developmental needs of the high number of vulnerable pupils on roll. The school strongly believes in the benefits of pro-social behaviour from such a system and strongly links it

with the other areas of emotional skills development it provides. Visits to the EYFS by the review team confirmed this area of excellent practice. There is consistent provision across all groups which give children many opportunities to explore, investigate and solve problems. Staff plan together to maintain the consistency of opportunities for all children in all EYFS areas of learning and they also have clear and workable procedures for recording the next steps in children's development. The school expertly carry Montessori principles into KS1 and can evidence and link higher attainment in reading, writing and maths and much improved social and learning behaviours to the introduction of these processes.

Quality of Impact on Challenge Partnership

The 'Bright Future Trust' has begun to share its principles of effective professional development of teachers within Challenge Partnership. As part of the school's development plans areas for development are undertaken via 'reflective enquiry', in conjunction with expert partners. The school is new to the Challenge Partnership and has not yet shared its areas of excellence with other schools in the partnership. It is advised to do so as there are elements of highly innovative practices relating to the support of highly vulnerable pupils and the development of independent and creative learning.

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.