



**VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP QUALITY  
ASSURANCE REVIEW**

**REVIEW REPORT FOR  
THE HARROWBY NATIONAL  
ACADEMIES TRUST**

<b>Name of School:</b>	The Harrowby National Academies Trust comprising; Harrowby Church of England Infants School The National Church of England Junior School
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Anne Platt
<b>Hub:</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>School phase:</b>	Primary
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	The Harrowby National Academies Trust

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this virtual Leadership Quality Assurance Review:</b>	LEADING
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	03/02/2021
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review:</b>	EFFECTIVE
<b>Date of last QA Review:</b>	20/11/2019
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Harrowby Infants School: GOOD National School: REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Harrowby Infants School: 13/12/2017 National School: 13/6/2018



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#### Quality Assurance Review

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

<b>Leadership at all Levels</b>	Leading
<b>School Improvement Strategies</b>	Leading
<b>Approach to recovery and remote learning</b>	Not applicable
<b>Area of Excellence</b>	None submitted for this review
<b>Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence</b>	Not applicable
<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate</b>	Leading

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



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#### 1. Context and character of the school

The Harrowby National Academies Trust was formed in 2012 from a federation of the two schools. The trust is led by an executive headteacher, with heads of school in the infant and junior schools. The two schools share one board of trustees. The junior school is a larger than average four-form entry junior school based in a conservation area in the centre of Grantham. Pupils join the junior school directly from Harrowby Infants School and one other neighbouring infant school which is not part of the trust. The Christian ethos across both schools is strong and contributes to a distinctive Christian character. The motto for both schools emboldens pupils to 'Aim High Believe, Fly High Achieve'.

The ethnic background in both schools is predominantly White British. There is a larger proportion of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) in the junior school than both the infants school and the national average. In both schools, the proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above the national average. The proportion of pupils entering the junior school with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above the national average while those with an education, health and care plan is below.

The school works with a local learning partnership; a cluster of eight schools working together to raise standards. Activities include moderation of pupils' work within the core subjects. The trust also contributes to the work of a range of initial teacher training providers. Mobility levels amongst pupils in the junior school fluctuate significantly, with a number of in-year admissions.

#### 2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- The schools in the trust are very well-led. The experienced executive headteacher has developed close-knit senior teams that encapsulate the Christian ethos of the schools. Although both heads of school have adopted new roles, they are extremely knowledgeable and are leading their respective schools expertly through this difficult time.
- A tremendous sense of unity pervades the trust. Leaders at all levels, class teachers and support staff all work in close collaboration to ensure that policies and strategies are implemented with unerring consistency. As one senior leader suggested, 'staff willingly volunteer – they're not *volun-told!*'. Everyone is passionate in ensuring that pupils' needs are always at the forefront of their planning. This has undoubtedly benefitted pupils and parents alike.

- Across both schools, teamwork is highlighted by the consistency of approach by all staff. Collectively, everyone provides as much routine and structure as possible that enables pupils to build on their learning and maintain high standards. Parents commented on the significant impact the lengths teachers go to has on their children's wellbeing and learning. This includes regular emails and/or phone calls which foster valuable two-way communication.
- Continuing professional development (CPD) is contributing to raising standards. For example, award-bearing courses, such as the NPQH and NPQSL, are resulting in leaders gaining greater awareness of their roles, thus enabling them to enhance pupils' learning. One teaching assistant is undertaking a physical education apprenticeship to further her own knowledge and skills as well as to be able to support others.
- Effective coaching and the sharing of best practice empowers staff and provides a wealth of professional development. This is leading to teachers in both schools sustaining exceptional levels of teaching despite the current challenging circumstances.
- Leaders set high standards and they have expectations of all staff to follow their example. However, the non-negotiables they set are 'collaboratively derived', as one senior leader remarked. This demonstrates that everyone is involved in deciding on the best modus operandi that suits their skills and the needs of the pupils, leading to greater impact.
- Senior leaders have developed a highly efficient system of monitoring and evaluation. Through the use of live documentation that is constantly updated, staff monitor learning forensically, resulting in innovative pedagogy. As a forward-looking trust, leaders are always eager to examine ways to further improve.
- The trustees have a clear knowledge of both schools, their Christian distinctiveness, remote learning provision and next steps which enable the schools to be powerfully cohesive. They echo the staff philosophy, stating, 'children come first here'. Trustees provide constructive support to leaders and all staff, recognising the collective caring approach. One trustee said, 'care was in place here long before COVID!'.

## **2.2 Leadership at all Levels - Even better if...**

- ...leaders further revised, where appropriate, the COVID catch-up plan to ensure that, on their full return to school, pupils are able to make accelerated progress.
- ...the impact of CPD for current support staff was reflected in improved outcomes for pupils.

### **3.1 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs- What went well**

- Relationships are strong in all facets of both schools. Staff know the pupils, their parents and home backgrounds exceptionally well. This means that appropriate strategies can be developed that will have the greatest impact. A successful example has been the adoption of the Google platform in its various guises. This has enabled staff to maintain a high standard of teaching in both remote and face-to-face learning. All stakeholders have welcomed the virtual aspect of learning, adding to the quality of education across the trust.
- By encouraging training through national programmes and other research, all leaders are embracing their own learning, which acts as a positive model for all staff. This guarantees that staff are up to date with relevant new strategies.
- The provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND works well to enable these pupils to sustain engagement in their learning. The highly skilled SENDco and her well-informed team provide bespoke support both remotely and in person when the need arises. This also enables teachers to help pupils when they encounter difficulties in their learning. The parents of one such pupil stated how valuable they found the support they received when their daughter needed guidance with her mathematics.
- Staff welfare is a major focus and strategies to support wellbeing are universally appreciated. Frequent phone calls, 'check-ins' and conversations enable staff to share any anxieties, knowing that they will be listened to and supported. Trustees are also involved, as they are keen to help staff when necessary, noting, 'a happy staff leads to happy learners'. All members of staff actively find ways to help each other so that everyone feels valued, loved and cared for, mirroring the schools' Christian distinctiveness.
- A recent strategy that has met with success has been the introduction of 'no screen' sessions. With large numbers of the pupil population learning from home, this break from the virtual learning platform has been welcomed by parents and pupils. While pupils have enjoyed the adoption of Google Classroom, the 'no technology day' reduced screen time has enabled pupils to enjoy a wider variety of learning experiences. This is to be repeated in the future.
- The addition of Google Classroom has also given parents greater opportunities to become more closely involved in their children's education. They are able to see that work has not only been completed, but also acknowledge the direct channel of communication with teachers. Parents were unanimous in their praise because they enjoy the closer engagement that remote learning facilitates.

### **3.2 School improvement strategies and the extent to which these address the needs of different groups of learners, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs - Even better if...**

...parents received additional training on Google Classroom to ensure they are confident with this technology in order to fully support their children's learning.

#### **4.1 Approach to recovery and remote learning - What went well**

- Leaders have successfully established a remote learning platform to ensure that pupils who have to learn from home are well supported. The close collaboration that exists between all staff, pupils and parents, is a striking feature of both schools. Hence, strengths and expertise are maximised in order to execute the remote learning programme to its greatest effect.
- The adoption of Google Classroom as a means of delivering lessons has helped all pupils keep pace with their learning. Likewise, the face-to-face provision in school for children of key workers and vulnerable pupils has been well-devised and is having a positive impact on sustaining previously seen rates of progress.
- The virtual platform has been designed so that pupils' mental health and wellbeing are considered from the outset. As a result, pupils are 'emotionally ready to learn', as one leader stated. In addition, bespoke lessons have been designed to meet the exact needs of pupils so that everyone can access the learning. Also, the previously mentioned break from using computers or tablets provides a welcome change in learning methodology.
- The positive relationships that exist between teachers, support staff and parents have engendered the full engagement of parents in support of their children's learning. Parents are highly praiseworthy of all strategies that the schools have put into place.
- Robust monitoring systems ensure that even in virtual lessons, high quality teaching and learning is the norm. The curriculum has been adapted to ensure that all learners' needs are catered for and, when lockdown restrictions are lifted, pupils will quickly return to their normal learning behaviours.
- Pupils receive regular feedback in a variety of forms from teachers and support staff. This certifies that parents have an informed understanding of progress, enabling them to better support their children at home.



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#### **4.2 Approach to recovery and remote learning - Even better if...**

- ...the curriculum was reviewed and adapted after lockdown so that 'focus' pupils are clearly identified to ensure that they make accelerated progress.
- ...ensure that all remote marking and feedback was timely so that misconceptions are identified early.

#### **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?**

The school already contributes to, and benefits from, the Challenge Partners Lincoln hub, in addition to the national conferences and other shared platforms.

**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.**

**Schools can also 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.**