



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR ST. JOHN'S MARLBOROUGH

Name of School:	St. John's Marlborough
Headteacher/Principal:	Ian Tucker
Hub:	Wootton Bassett Hub
School type:	Academy – Converter mainstream: Secondary and 16-18
MAT (if applicable):	Excalibur Academies Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	12/02/2020
Overall Estimate at last QA Review (if applicable)	N/A
Date of last QA Review (if applicable)	N/A
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	09/05/2014

1. Context and character of the school

St. John's is a larger than average-sized, non-selective 11-18 co-educational academy. St. John's is part of the Excalibur Academies Trust, an independent multi-academy trust founded in 2012.

St. John's is the lead school of the Excalibur Teaching School Alliance. St. John's became a teaching school in 2016. The school leads continuing professional development. The alliance shares expertise from across a partnership of primary and secondary schools in Bristol, Berkshire and around Wiltshire. It provides school to school support, continuing professional development (CPD) courses, and works with Bath Spa University and Bristol University to develop and deliver primary and secondary School Direct ITT programmes.

Most students are of White British heritage, and the proportion that speak English as an additional language (EAL) is below the national average. The proportion of students with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and education health and care plans (EHCP) is slightly below the national average. The proportion of students eligible for pupil premium funding is also below average but has been increasing.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The headteacher holds high expectations and has rapidly improved outcomes for all students. As a result of his relentless commitment to excellence, disadvantaged students at the academy now make more progress than non-disadvantaged students nationally. At St. John's, aspirations are high, and no student is left behind.
- This is an academy where values matter. Students and staff demonstrate respect and pride in their learning community. Students are actively encouraged to make a difference to the future of the planet.
- The leadership of continuing professional development (CPD) is excellent. Staff and students benefit from the academy's status as a national teaching school. There are a wide, varied and personalised range of training opportunities, including secondments onto the leadership team. Middle leaders are enthusiastic about the training opportunities offered. For example, the coordination of the whole trust Excalibur Day of training was a factor in closing the gap last academic year. Training reduces staff workload and increases student engagement at the same time. Leaders regard training as high priority, and the budget for this aspect

is protected. There are regular teaching and learning briefings which have a positive impact in lessons.

- There is a strong vision and strategic direction for the academy. The headteacher has built an ethos where middle leaders are accountable and drive positive change as the engine room of the academy. Middle leaders understand the need to leave no student behind and coordinate a variety of interventions for them. Leaders and teachers work together to drive the academy forward. Teachers are rightly proud to work at the academy.
- Middle leaders appreciate the clarity around the academy's key priorities and goals. They have embraced the new quality assurance document as an effective process, and this is now becoming common practice in the academy. Fortnightly line management meetings mean that standards remain high, and middle leaders feel that their ideas are listened to and valued. They are well prepared for challenges and appreciate the open door policy of the academy. Middle leaders are continuing to sharpen their monitoring and evaluation skills, so that teaching improves further and is consistently of a high quality across the curriculum.
- Students are offered an ambitious, broad and academic curriculum. Subject leaders have carefully considered the intent, implementation and impact of their curriculum. As a result, students are challenged, and outcomes are positive.

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

...leaders continued to share high quality teaching and learning strategies even further across the academy in order to best meet the needs of the increasing number of disadvantaged students.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Students are positive about their learning. They conduct themselves extremely well in lessons and are unfailingly polite and considerate. They are highly enthusiastic about their school and there is a tangible atmosphere of mutual respect across the academy. Students show increasing levels of resilience and respond well to challenging learning activities.
- Students are encouraged to be independent thinkers and learners. They are confident in answering questions and justifying their positions. For example, in a Key Stage 3 mathematics lesson, the teacher asked students to explain and define a prism to their partner, and every student immediately did this with great enthusiasm and focus.
- Teachers are passionate about their subjects. Their expert knowledge is delivered authoritatively, and they focus upon key words and terms in examination technique. They frequently check for understanding and often anticipate and

address students' misconceptions, taking care to model the thinking process to students.

- Students are challenged by the curriculum and their teachers. For example, in a Year 8 history lesson, students were able to learn more complex reasons about why Parliament won the English Civil War.
- The high standard of presentation in students' books demonstrates excellent attitudes to learning. Students follow school expectations, and the level of challenge in books is appropriate. Faculties have autonomy in their feedback policies. Where self- and peer assessment takes place, the targets are specific and helpful. There are clear student responses to feedback, and often a real sense of dialogue between the teacher and students.
- Students are taught to be global citizens, and to celebrate diversity. There is a vibrant LGBTQ+ display in the library. Students' personal development and wellbeing is strong. Students understand their role in modern Britain and appreciate diversity and equality. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, students learned about the dangers of racist attitudes following the coronavirus.
- The environment for students is calm and purposeful. The school is part of a landscape that is classed as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Students are aware of the importance of the environment and take a lead in campaigning against climate change.
- Students benefit from the school enrichment programme. All students are actively encouraged to participate and benefit from sports, projects, creative and performing arts clubs and activities.
- The academy works hard to work with parents. For example, Year 11 parents' evenings are attended by 95% of parents.
- The permanent CEIAG coordinator provides guidance, and there are one-to-one interviews to help Year 9 students make appropriate options choices. The academy is a Gatsby Gold Award winner. Last year, every single graduate from the academy went onto education, employment or training.
- Progress measures have followed a three-year upward trend and are above the national average. This is the best performing non-selective school in the county, with results exceeding a local independent college. The overall performance of the academy is in the top four out of fifty-seven (7%) throughout Wiltshire (only selective schools sit higher). Most subjects are in the first quintile for progress. The accuracy of the academy's previous predictions in their tracking and assessment strongly suggests that progress measures will improve further for current students, in future years.

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

...teachers continued to move the cognitive load on to students, encouraging them to think harder in all subjects.

...the curriculum for low prior attaining students was further developed, to ensure the upward trend in outcomes continues.

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

- Since 2017, the Progress 8 score for disadvantaged students has improved by +0.52, a significant improvement. Disadvantaged students in 2019 made better progress than non-disadvantaged students nationally, with a progress score of +0.14. This demonstrates a significant improvement as a three-year trend. In mathematics, disadvantaged students outperformed non-disadvantaged students in 2019. The performance of disadvantaged pupils places the academy in the top four out of fifty-seven (7%) throughout Wiltshire.
- The curriculum is ambitious and has been redesigned to meet the needs of disadvantaged students and those with additional needs. School leaders ensure that students can choose subjects which contribute to their overall progress.
- High quality teaching and challenge for all means that disadvantaged students perform well. Teachers receive whole-school training at the start of each year, to ensure strong provision for this group.
- There is rigorous tracking of all students, and interventions in the academy have a positive impact. These include Year 7 catch-up, emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) groups and invitation-only clinics for Year 11 and 13 students. Teachers know their students well and can articulate their targets clearly.
- There is a strong culture of care and support for students. Students receive a range of practical support, including a free breakfast, revision packs and school uniform. Disadvantaged students receive printed resource packs, along with appropriate resources for practical subjects. Heads of year have an emphasis upon disadvantaged support, for example helping with Show My Homework.. Disadvantaged students make up 75% of the Brilliant Club, and participate fully in PE clubs, the drama production, and the karaoke choir.
- Students with additional needs receive personalised support from the SEND team. There is a strong culture of care, ensuring that no student is left behind. When this cannot be through quality-first teaching, there is an expectation that intervention is swift and effective. The inclusion leader and higher level teaching assistants monitor students, who are screened on entry to the school to ensure that the appropriate type and level of support is applied. There are eighty-five different intervention groups delivered by the higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs).
- As a result, outcomes for students with additional needs are also improving, with an upward trend. Students achieved -0.35 progress in 2018, this moved to -0.18 in 2019. The current progress of students with SEND is projected as +0.37. Given

the accuracy of previous predictions, this shows a clear improvement in outcomes for students with additional needs.

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

...teachers continued to focus upon personalised provision for students in their classes, so that strong outcomes for students can be maintained.

5. Area of Excellence

AoE title: Leading in professional development

Category: Leadership and ethos

Sub Category: CPD – Teachers

Accredited

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

St. John's has been a teaching school since 2016, with a track record of providing high quality continuing professional development (CPD) within the Excalibur Teaching School Alliance. St. John's is the lead school within this teaching school alliance and has thirty-seven alliance partners. The academy is an excellent leader in professional development, both within the academy itself, and as a lead teaching school.

The academy works with partnership of primary and secondary schools in Bristol, Berkshire and around Wiltshire, providing school-to-school support and CPD courses. The academy works closely with Bath Spa University and Bristol University in the initial teacher training programme (ITT).

There are clear pathways for teachers in their CPD. The academy offers internship opportunities. For NQTs and RQTs there is a structured in-house programme, with participation in the North Wilts Federation NQT provision. Support staff and teaching assistants undertake further training.

The academy offers many leadership opportunities within the Excalibur Academies Trust. Teachers and leaders learn from work shadowing and secondments to the academy leadership team. They can also lead and manage projects, including action research. In addition, the academy trains and deploys specialist leaders of education (SLEs) who play a key role in the leadership of CPD.

Staff are encouraged to share good practice in a variety of ways. These include subject networks, Chartered College of Teaching and Women Leading in Education events. There is an active teaching and learning group, which promotes outstanding teaching strategies, regularly shared with all teaching staff. Feedback is positive, and staff have experimented with different classroom approaches, contributing to the successful culture of discussing and adapting effective teaching methods.

The CPD model identifies expertise within the academy, the trust, and sometimes beyond. Staff have ownership of their own CPD, and there is a culture of self-improvement. Career development is openly discussed, and staff are supported to achieve National Professional Qualifications. There is clear progression onto the academy's own in-house Exceptional Practice Programme (EPP). This is open to teachers with the potential and capacity to be an exceptional teacher.

5.2 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?

The CPD programme is linked to the Academy Improvement Plan and aligned with school improvement and pupil outcomes. Evaluations from staff are positive. They can explain how their practice has improved as a result of the CPD opportunities they have taken.

Over the past three years, there has been an upward trend in outcomes. Progress 8 scores have improved from +0.04 (2017) and +0.15 (2018) to +0.42 (2019) which is above the national average.

The progress of disadvantaged students has improved from -0.38 (2017) and -0.18 (2018) to +0.14 (2019) which is above non-disadvantaged students nationally. The performance of disadvantaged pupils places the academy in the top 4 out of 57 (7%) throughout Wiltshire.

SEND students achieved -0.35 progress in 2018, this moved to -0.18 in 2019. The



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current progress of SEND students is projected as +0.37. In mathematics, disadvantaged students outperformed non-disadvantaged students in 2019.

5.3 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?

Name: Emma Hawes

Title: St. John's CPD Lead, Excalibur Teaching School Director

Email: ehawes@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk

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

Nothing at this time.

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.