



**VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP QUALITY
ASSURANCE REVIEW**

**REVIEW REPORT FOR
LANCOT CHALLENGER
ACADEMY**

Name of School:	Lancot Challenger Academy
Executive Headteacher:	Claire Probert
Hub:	Challenger
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Challenger Multi Academy Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this virtual Leadership Quality Assurance Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	24/02/2021
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Leading
Date of last QA Review	12/02/2020
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	17/07/2018



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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:

Leadership at all Levels	Leading
School Improvement Strategies	Leading
Approach to recovery and remote learning	Not applicable
Area of Excellence	None submitted for this review.
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence.	Equity of Provision 12/02/20 Creative Curriculum Design for School Improvement. 06/03/2019
Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate	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

Lancot Challenger Academy is a larger than average primary school located in Dunstable. The school is situated in an area of moderate social deprivation.

The predominant ethnic group is White British, with a relatively small group of other ethnicities. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is broadly in line with the national average, although the proportion with an education, health and care plan is above. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. There is a local authority provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs (Orchard Class) on site.

Leaders are very outward-facing and their support for other schools is always forthcoming. Lancot is the lead school for the Pioneering Partnerships programme, bringing together all of the local cultural partnerships. The executive headteacher is the hub manager for Challenge Partners and undertakes a great deal of outreach work with other schools. The head of school is an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), SLE and she supports the development of newly qualified teachers in the local cluster. The assistant headteacher supports local schools as an SLE for mathematics and enterprise. Other leaders are also involved in providing support to other schools.

The school's mission statement is, 'Embrace Challenge, Expect Excellence'. This is embodied in all staff and is embraced by all pupils.

2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- The concept of 'Team Lancot' is clearly evident in every discussion and interaction with all stakeholders connected with the school. An overwhelming sense of togetherness bonds leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, pupils and governors so that the school continues to thrive. Relationships among all staff remain positive and purposeful in equal measure.
- The executive headteacher is inspirational in leading the school so successfully, despite the current challenging situation. As she so eloquently stated, 'we don't just want to cope with the pandemic – we want to use it as a vehicle to drive things forward'. In conjunction with her skilful and influential senior leaders (SLT), they constitute a formidable team that works in unison to great effect. This is

evident in the way that the school has overcome the challenges created by the various lockdowns, leading to the instigation of the productive remote learning offer.

- Middle leaders share the school's vision and ethos linked to character development for all pupils. This is palpable in the confident leadership of their respective areas, thus enabling them to adapt their curriculum to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- As a result of the robust systems that are already embedded at Lancot, leaders at all levels responded swiftly and successfully to a rapidly changing landscape. The SLT has been resolute in ensuring that pupils' learning continues with minimal difference or disruption.
- Adaptations to the innovative curriculum throughout the current crisis have been minimal. A high degree of normality has been sustained for all pupils, whether they are learning at home or face-to-face in school. For example, staff have maintained whole school assemblies every Friday. As one leader suggested, they have attempted to 'keep everything normal in a world that is not normal!'
- Similarly, leaders have ensured that the extra-curricular offer has not been diluted by the current situation because they have guaranteed that activities, for example music and PE, should continue as usual. This has been much appreciated by pupils, giving them valuable diversions from academic learning. It has also been highly valued by parents, with one insisting, 'the willingness to put on extra-curricular activities shows just how good the school is'.
- Pupil voice plays a very important role in life at Lancot because, as one pupil stated, 'your voice will be listened to'. Leaders at all levels view communication as a prized two-way process. This was encapsulated when the head of school said, 'if we can inspire the staff and pupils, they can inspire us'.
- Governors share and champion the school ethos, and were highly praiseworthy of leaders' efforts to maintain the status quo at Lancot. One governor confirmed that 'leaders have not dropped the ball during Covid'. Governors truly value the work all staff undertake because as another stated, 'pupils are empowered by their Lancot life'.

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

...senior leaders provided further opportunities for middle and subject leaders to develop the strategic ownership of their leadership roles.

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

- Senior leaders have a clear philosophy that all continuing professional development (CPD) should have a positive impact on supporting others. For example, the in-school CPD offer for middle leaders has enabled them to strengthen their leadership capacity and take further ownership of their areas of responsibility. This has allowed them to broaden the dissemination of knowledge to colleagues in order to consolidate the curriculum design and delivery. One middle leader commented that, 'every teacher is viewed as a leader'.
- All pupils' needs are taken into consideration, especially so for those with SEND in Orchard Class. The leader of this provision has successfully established a Whatsapp group for the parents of these pupils. This has enabled parents to access live lessons online to better support their children's learning. Through this medium, the leader reported that one-to-one teaching in their homes has resulted in levels of engagement that are 'mind-blowing!'.
- Key drivers for school improvement, such as curriculum design and Character Education, are well embedded and understood by all. Because the curriculum is entrenched, lockdown has provided an opportunity to test its robustness. The strong nature of collaboration among all staff has led to small but important changes, so that the continuity of learning is not lost.
- Leaders have ensured that disadvantaged pupils are well supported throughout the pandemic restrictions. This has included the provision of technology hardware to assist in accessing online learning. In addition, the strategy of Book in a Box has promoted a love of reading, where these pupils receive books in the post for them to enjoy and keep.
- The Fearless Queens strategy was already established to support girls in Years 5 and 6 who may have social and/or emotional concerns about school and learning. Leaders have adopted a successful mindfulness approach and have reviewed this provision in order to help quell girls' anxieties when they return to school. Pupil wellbeing is also well catered for through the very popular Google Hangouts, where pupils have the opportunity to chat and stay in touch with their friends.
- Leaders are also fully aware of the need to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff. A staff chat room was soon established to maintain communication and enable anyone to share worries or concerns. This has proved extremely helpful, as one teacher commented, 'no-one is afraid to express their views or problems'.
- The sharing of best practice has continued seamlessly through the staff Film Club. Teachers and support staff have the chance to view each other's live lessons. As a result, they experiment with new methods in their own classes.

Also, the Book Club gives staff chance to pass on resources they have used and found effective. This self-reflection and sharing of successful materials are having a significant impact in sustaining high quality pedagogy.

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...

None identified in this review.

4.1 Approach to recovery and remote learning - What went well

- SLT has been extremely pre-emptive and proactive in actions to establish positive strategies for home learning. The executive headteacher's attitude was that the pandemic 'could be seen as a challenge or an opportunity'. Leaders have undoubtedly embraced the former and capitalised on the latter.
- Leaders view the remote learning offer as merely an extension of the school's usual provision. This philosophy has enabled the curriculum, including the scheduled extra-curricular activities, to continue as planned. This has sustained high quality learning and maximum engagement. Pupils' involvement in remote learning has been closely tracked and substantiates the high level of commitment to their learning. Over 90% have frequently engaged.
- Staff have closely monitored access to remote learning by the disadvantaged group to enable interventions to be swiftly introduced when necessary to support these pupils. As a result, barriers to learning are removed so they are able to make as much progress in their learning as others.
- The adoption of Google Classroom has enabled all staff to provide work remotely. It has also led to the flourishing delivery of live lessons. Paper work packs have supplemented the virtual offer, so pupils have experienced and appreciated an exciting combination of learning media.
- Parents have appreciated the array of learning resources and methods their children have received. Many commented how they are relishing the opportunity to engage in and support their child's learning whilst acknowledging how hard it is to 'be a teacher'. One parent commented, 'I'm learning so much. Fronted adverbials – it's a whole new world!'.



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

No EBIs emerged during the review. Leaders, in conjunction with the wider staff and other stakeholders, are already in discussion about the impact of remote learning and how the successes of this offer can be integrated into learning when pupils are back in school.

5. Area of Excellence

None submitted for this review.

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

Lancot would embrace opportunities to collaborate further with schools offering a similar curriculum or provision.

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.