

Academy Review Process

Academy name	Dixons Allerton Academy (KS2)
Date of review visit	Monday 19 September 2016
Lead B11 Consultant	Peter Cox
Peer Headteachers	Terri Leighton and Justine Oldham

The academy's self-evaluation and outcomes of this review

	Academy self evaluation grade	Review grade
Overall effectiveness	2	2b
Leadership and management	2	2a
Teaching, learning, assessment	2	2c
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	1	1c
Outcomes	2	2c

Key to review fine-grades:

1 =outstanding; 2a = strongly good with outstanding elements; 2b = securely good; 2c = good but not secure; 3a = requires improvement but with good elements; 3b = requires improvement; 3c requires improvement but not secure; 4a = inadequate (SW likely); and 4b = inadequate (SM likely).

Information about this review

- This review was carried out using the latest Ofsted guidance published in August 2016. The headteacher of the academy provided the plan for the day, which included meetings on the self-evaluation form, data and leadership and management, including that of teaching and learning. Further separate discussions were held on pupil progress data.
- Learning was observed in English and mathematics lessons and a scrutiny of progress made by pupils in their books undertaken.
- During and at the end of the review discussions took place between the reviewers and senior members of staff as to the findings of the review and the ways forward.

Discussions were focused on helping the academy prepare for any possible forthcoming inspection. Much of the detail on what to improve was given verbally in these discussions.

Risks identified by the academy

- Two risk areas were identified by the academy that are responded to within the text below and summarised here. They are:

1. What is the quality of teaching and learning, given the comparative high number of NQTs who are in their first term?

The quality of teaching and learning was judged to be good. This was confirmed by first-hand observations, work in pupils' books and 2016 outcomes. It is acknowledged that there is a high proportion of NQTs who have only just started at the academy and, once they become established, are likely to deliver more consistent teaching and learning across the academy. This in turn will help those groups of pupils identified as not making enough progress, to do better.

2. How do we demonstrate progress in key stage 1?

Develop and implement a system of assessing the learning of pupils more frequently so that the academy is less reliant on the assessment of pupils at the fixed points in the year.

Leadership and Management

- The academy opened three years ago and until only recently the leadership and management team was the headteacher because of the small number of pupils on role. As time progresses year groups are added to the academy and the current number is 292, including those in nursery, reception and Years 1, 2 and 3. Because of the increasing number year on year, a deputy headteacher was appointed from September 2016, whose previous school was outstanding.
- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the academy and sets about turning this vision into reality with energy and commitment. He and the deputy are very committed to securing the best possible outcomes for the pupils.
- The senior leadership team structure is appropriate, with three TLR holders reporting to the deputy and headteacher. The TLR holders' responsibilities cover the three areas; Early Years, key stage 1 and mathematics. Mathematics teaching was seen to be strong on the day and is evidence of the impact of the improvements secured, as mathematics had been an area of concern previously, with teachers' subject knowledge needing to be strengthened.
- The leadership team is very proactive in challenging and developing staff performance and has the right procedures in place to secure improvements.
- Academic standards have a high priority, but so too the personal development of the pupils. This is clearly evident in the creative curriculum that provides ample opportunities for pupils to explore and develop their skills and understanding in a

range of practical and creative experiences, such as woodwork and clay work. These are not merely fun activities, but provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills as well as those additional skills needed for personal and social development.

- There is a positive culture of high expectation and the addition of a deputy headteacher since September will assist greatly in securing further improvements. Areas of weakness have been identified from the 2016 outcomes and interventions put in place. For example, it became clear from the 2016 results that unacceptable gaps in attainment existed. For example, non-disadvantaged girls in Year 2 (currently Year 3) did not perform as well as those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This bucks the national trend. Other areas requiring attention are boys' literacy and mathematics skills in Year 1 and disadvantaged pupils' phonics scores in Year 2 tests.
- It is clear from the discussions around the identified areas to improve, that a more reliable system of assessing pupils' progress in classes be introduced so that teachers can easily report back to senior leaders the progress of their group and individual pupils at any one time. This could take the form of a 'flight-path' that indicates clearly whether any pupil is working at or towards the expected point, given their age. This would then inform any intervention/catch-up actions and would provide a more regular picture of learning to senior leaders.
- The academy's SEF is largely accurate. The commentary is convincing and the 'next steps' as detailed under each section precise. Leadership and management are good and potentially outstanding. The review team have not agreed with the academy's judgement on this aspect, but feel confident that with the new deputy headteacher helping drive the academy forward and the accurate identification of the areas to improve, then an outstanding judgement is achievable.

Teaching, learning and assessment

- During the review pupils were seen to be happy, confident and creative in lessons. They participate well in the innovative and creative curriculum that is designed to develop the whole child.
- In the stronger lessons pace of learning is evident and sufficient challenge is being set because of the high expectations and appropriate questioning. This helps pupils move on in their learning at a good rate.
- Pupils are given plenty of opportunity to develop their independence in safe and secure learning environments that are purposeful and calm.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the differences between groups of pupils and are going about diminishing these differences in the right way, although they would benefit from documenting the learning made by pupils more regularly.
- Where the quality of teaching is less strong, there are missed opportunities in providing sufficient challenge.
- Literacy and numeracy are challenged in pupils' books. Pupils are expected to practise the spelling of incorrect words written down by the teacher. Some pupils are expected to research the spelling themselves by referring to a dictionary and confirming to the teacher that they have got it! This methodology was tested out during the day with success.

- The development of working/learning walks would help support children further and the consistency of expectation and routines is currently underdeveloped in some classes.
- It is worthy of note, however, that there are three newly qualified teachers at the academy, one in each year group, who started in September and are three weeks into their careers. They work closely with a more experienced teacher in the same year group. All teachers are considered to be working at or beyond career expectations.
- The academy's SEF rightly identifies the need to improve the quality of mathematics teaching across year groups, underpinned by an effective curriculum. This is happening and teachers were seen to be delivering the new curriculum with confidence and as a result, learning was secure.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- Pupils attend regularly and in line with national figures. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, missing 15% or more lessons, is high at 6%, when compared to national data from 2015, 2.7%. However, in comparison to 10% or more lessons missed it is likely, subject to data being published, that the academy is within this range.
- Throughout the day pupils were seen to be very polite to one another and happy to engage in conversation with adults and visitors.
- Behaviour and attitude towards learning is very strong. Academy data suggest that incidents of behaviour contrary to expectations are reducing over time as pupils become more used to the high standards. Pupils appear eager to learn and are well prepared to do so, looking very smart in their uniforms and adhering very well to academy rules and expectations of behaviour.
- Punctuality to the start of the day is being tackled through strengthened engagement with parents and is having the desired impact of reducing the number of pupils who arrive late. Parents are very supportive of the academy, as demonstrated by their high attendance rates at the various meetings throughout the academic year.

Outcomes for pupils

- Attainment in 2016 was seen to be broadly in line with national averages, given that there was only Key Stage 1 teacher assessment data available. The academy were wise to have the teacher assessments moderated externally, which confirmed the academy's view that almost all groups of pupils were broadly in line with national averages. This is true in part, but there is evidence that some groups, e.g. non-disadvantaged girls, who did not attain as well as they could have.
- There is a gap between the disadvantaged pupils passing the phonics screening test and non-disadvantaged, although a significant number of disadvantaged pupils in the current Year 2 have SEN. The academy has recognised this and is using strategies that are designed to diminish the differences.
- At the end of Year 2, 67% of pupils were working at the age-related expectations (ARE) in mathematics and reading, with 7% and 18% respectively working at greater

depth (mastery). Writing was a little less successful, with 60% working at ARE and 10% at greater depth.

- Key stage 1 SATS results for mathematics and reading indicate a scaled score of 97+.
- Attainment targets overall were exceeded at the end of key stage 1. It is likely that ARE by the end of Year 3 when it comes, will be in excess of the 80% targeted by the academy. It is recommended that the target, by the end of 2 be increased to 100%, as by doing so there will be a better chance of a greater proportion of pupils reaching the attainment expected of them.
- Progress by the end of Year 2 is encouraging. The vast majority of pupils in Year 2 made at least expected progress in mathematics, reading and writing, with a significant proportion making accelerated progress. Similar success is evident for other areas of learning such as communication, disposition to learning, health and well-being and movement and agility.
- There is much to celebrate around the outcomes last year, but equally more attention needs to be paid to the achievement of the 'push children' who have rightly been identified as requiring more support. This is crucial if a higher judgement grade is to be awarded and movement in 'diminishing differences' between groups in school in comparison to groups nationally.

Effectiveness of the Early Years

- Not a focus of this review but will be considered on Tuesday 11 October 2016.

Areas of strength for academy to academy support

- Curriculum mapping and the non-negotiable expectations of teachers are a strength. They continue to be developed as the new curriculum unfolds. They are examples of good practice and would benefit from being shared across the trust and beyond.

Things the academy should think about

- Developing a method of capturing the progress being made by pupils between the calendared assessment points in order that swift action can be taken should evidence suggest slower than expected learning.
- Increasing the targets for the proportion of students reaching ARE from 80% to 100%.
- Ensure that the 'push children' make the necessary progress in their learning so that any differences in their performance compared with national figures are reduced.
- Iron out the inconsistencies identified by the academy and the review team in the quality of teaching and learning.

Areas requiring support

- Nothing other than those mentioned above, which the academy is aware of and which, by the end of the review, leaders were beginning to action. The collegiate approach across academies within the trust will doubtless support these improvements.