

Name of School:	William Byrd Primary Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Sarah Roberts
Hub:	Compass Hub (North Primary)
School type:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	The Middlesex Learning Partnership

Date of this visit:	14/07/2021
Estimate at last QA Review:	Not applicable
Date of last QA Review:	Not applicable
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Requires improvement
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	05/12/2019

1. Information about the visit

In place of a QA Review, William Byrd Primary Academy was visited by a Lead Reviewer who spent 2 days reviewing the following areas with school leaders:

- Area 1: Leadership at all levels.
- Area 2: School improvement strategies.
- Area 3: The quality of teaching and learning.

2. Information about the school

William Byrd Primary Academy is a large, three-form entry primary school with its own nursery, located in West London, near to Heathrow Airport.

The school serves a diverse population, with pupils originating from a wide range of countries and cultures. In total, 14 out of the 17 possible ethnic groups are represented, with almost one third of pupils being Asian or Asian British. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is very high. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average, as is the number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Levels of mobility are higher than typically found in schools nationally which can make the analysis of progress over time quite problematic.

The school became a sponsored academy with the Middlesex Learning Partnership family of schools in 2017. The head of school was appointed to the role at the same time, and there have been significant changes to the senior leadership team since.

3.1 Leadership at all levels – What went well

- The inspirational head of school speaks with confidence about the school and the variety of systems that have been introduced to bring about improvement. She is ably supported by the executive headteacher, and the senior and middle leadership teams. Prior to the consultancy, the key school improvement documentation was made available. This was detailed and informative, reflecting leaders' aspirations to secure a high-quality education for all pupils.
- The school's five guiding powers were developed by the staff and pupils. These attributes are well known by everyone in the school, and detail the expectations made of all learners. The powers include being kind and respectful, resilient, curious, cooperative, and aspirational. The terminology used empowers the pupils and embodies the proactive ethos apparent.
- The leadership team receives an appropriate balance of challenge and support from the executive headteacher, the academy trust and the local governing body. This takes the form of regular and timely line management, sharing of best

practice and support or secondments provided to ensure that the leadership team is at capacity.

- Senior leaders show a firm commitment to developing the practice of all leaders and teachers. There are opportunities to take part in five progressive continuing professional development (CPD) pathways. These include activities such as instructional coaching, taking part in team teaching, shadowing or buddying with a senior member of staff, and having time to reflect on leadership traits and their impact. Individuals are also encouraged to work with colleagues across the trust and more widely, often leading workshops, moderation activities or professional development sessions. This outward-looking approach is helping to develop the leadership team effectively, benefiting both succession planning and staff retention.
- Leaders at all levels know the school and its pupils very well. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and supportive, which lead to a respectful culture, making William Byrd Primary Academy a happy and productive place in which to learn.
- Leaders speak with conviction about the school's principal aim to prepare pupils for their secondary schooling, both socially and academically. The enrichment calendar includes a wide range of religious festivals and the celebration of different cultures through assemblies and themed immersion days. Extra-curricular activities include many sports and activities, such as musical theatre, rollerblading, knitting and creative writing. Inspirational visitors to the school and interesting visits further develop pupils' cultural capital by broadening their outlooks, as do the links with Heathrow Airport where the aspirations of pupils are informed by consideration of different career options.
- Leaders and teachers have forged strong links with families and the local community. Leaders always have a visible presence at the start and end of each day, which ensures that any concerns or issues are dealt with quickly.
- The wellbeing of staff is considered very carefully, with the wellbeing committee having representatives from all areas of the staff team. Recent initiatives include developing a new staff workroom and increasing communications with weekly bulletins and briefings. Leaders are also committed to providing all members of staff with regular non-contact time to work on individual projects. Teaching staff talk warmly of the support they receive and the collegial relationships they enjoy with colleagues, as exemplified by regular activities such as marking parties and shared moderation.

3.2 Leadership at all levels – Even better if...

...the practice of the recently appointed senior leaders became embedded to secure ongoing improvements across the school.

...there was greater clarity around the analysis of assessment outcomes.

4.1 School improvement strategies – What went well

- Consistent and thorough monitoring processes are in place to quality assure the teaching and learning. This includes a proactive programme of learning walks, with paired subject, year group or senior leaders, together with regular and purposeful book looks. Monitoring and triangulation checks help to confirm that school-wide expectations are being fulfilled and pupils are mostly progressing well.
- The school team has developed its own ambitious curriculum, which focuses on knowledge acquisition alongside the development of key skills. A thematic approach is taken when appropriate, although much of the learning is achieved through discrete subject teaching. Detailed knowledge organisers provide a framework for each theme, with quality texts exposing pupils to a variety of literature; for instance, Year 5 pupils have recently been studying 19th century poetry and Year 4 have been enjoying reading 'The Hobbit'.
- Subject leaders clearly know their respective subjects well, speaking with passion and conviction about the curriculum. They support teachers and other adults with their pedagogical and subject knowledge, playing a pivotal role in medium-term planning. Consequently, the subject knowledge of all adults is strong, being further informed by the bespoke progression documents and informative knowledge organisers.
- The learning environment is bright and engaging, particularly with classroom English displays which celebrate pupils' work and the consistent strategies being used to improve pupils' reading and writing skills.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) benefit from a range of early language interventions. Typically, children enter the school at levels below the national average and quickly make progress from their starting points. Notably, those children who had attended the school's nursery and disadvantaged children achieved more highly than their peers in recent assessments.
- The inclusion team works closely together to support the most vulnerable pupils effectively. The team is led by the SEND coordinator, who also has responsibility for EAL pupils. There is a commitment to focusing on quality first teaching through an inclusive approach, whenever practicable, with the curriculum being adapted to help meet individual needs. There are clear expectations that teachers have ultimate responsibility for all pupils in their classes, which further enhances the inclusivity. All adults regularly take part in specific CPD activities, such as SEND 'TeachMeets', when best practice is shared throughout the staff team. Specialist inclusion support staff work across the school, with timetabled, systematic intervention activities for groups or individual pupils, depending on their needs. Due to the proactive nature of the provision, case study evidence indicates that EAL and SEND pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points.
- The funding received for disadvantaged pupils is used to focus on targeted interventions for both academic and pastoral support, including attendance. As a

result, these pupils mostly thrive in the school and make progress from their starting points.

- Incidences of poor conduct are very low, and pupils' behaviour for learning has improved greatly in recent years. Pupils cooperate well with their peers and are increasingly active in their learning.
- There are effective procedures in place to improve the attendance of pupils. This includes close liaison with the local authority and home visits whenever necessary. As a result, attendance is now similar to the national average.
- The school took a very proactive approach to delivering remote learning during the enforced school closures. Pupils responded well and, as a result, gaps identified in learning have quickly been addressed.

4.2 School improvement strategies – Even better if...

- ... the attainment gaps of disadvantaged pupils diminished further.
- ... leaders and teachers were to consider how the quality of learning was captured to best effect in books.
- ... all foundation subjects were developed to the same extent as the strong practice found with history and geography.

5.1 The quality of teaching and learning – What went well

- A key feature of teaching and learning across the school is the consistency achieved through the structured format taken in lessons. The structure includes high expectations of teacher modelling, questioning, a focus on vocabulary, talk strategies and an 'I do, we do, you do' approach to many tasks. Pupils are also provided with consistent opportunities for retrieval of their prior knowledge and reflection on the learning that has taken place in each lesson. As a result, teaching and learning are effective and pupils typically make expected or better progress across the curriculum from their individual starting points.
- The English curriculum is enhanced by a range of high-quality texts selected for each year group, related to their respective themes, with older pupils also having additional comprehension texts. Writing skills are developed through a consistent and methodical programme, which focuses particularly on vocabulary acquisition with grammar knowledge being incorporated. Phonics and early reading are taught through a systematic programme. All adults involved in the delivery show strong subject knowledge. These consistent and comprehensive procedures, supported by thorough and proactive monitoring, are securing improved English outcomes across the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading, with this important aspect of the curriculum being led by an enthusiastic 'reading for pleasure' leader. Classrooms have inviting reading corners with book recommendations and

displays of popular books. The whole school also recently took part in a reading for pleasure festival. A published author visited the school and pupils were also inspired by activities, including a superhero day, a nonsense poetry focus, and bringing their own perspectives to a non-word storybook.

- A mastery approach is taken to the teaching of mathematics, with particular focus on fluency and the constant consolidation of arithmetic skills. Teachers model concepts and methods with clarity and confidence, which enables pupils to quickly embed new learning. Pupils also benefit from 'maths-meet' short-burst sessions on a weekly basis which are designed to reduce any gaps identified from prior learning. The published programme used has been adapted to best suit the needs of the pupils, which is helping to raise standards and expectations across the school.
- The teaching and learning of history and geography have developed well, with many curriculum themes focusing effectively on different historical periods or geographical phenomena. In Year 4, for instance, pupils displayed great engagement when presented with a copy of an excerpt of the original Domesday Book, which had been sourced by an archivist linked with the school. The page detailed information for the local area which pupils could then relate to their studies of the legacy of William the Conqueror.
- A key feature of science learning is the practical activities that pupils enjoy which, alongside teachers' subject knowledge, support them to make sense of the different scientific concepts planned across each year group. A focus on the acquisition of scientific language and vocabulary is developing pupils' knowledge and understanding well, with links being made between ideas to help consolidate learning.
- Pupils speak very positively about their learning and school lives. They report being happy at school and speak with enthusiasm about the subjects taught and the special days experienced. Pupils clearly understand the guiding powers and relish the numerous opportunities provided to take on leadership responsibilities.

5.2 The quality of the curriculum – Even better if...

...the systematic approach to the teaching of mathematical reasoning was further developed across the school.

...there was greater challenge in English lessons, particularly for the most able pupils.

...high standards of presentation were more consistently found across the wider curriculum.

...teachers were to consider more opportunities for outdoor learning across all key stages.

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

School leaders have quickly become highly involved in the local Challenge Partners' hub, leading some workshops and training sessions, and taking part in others. They now plan for more leaders to undertake the Challenge Partners' training to broaden their experience by taking part in quality assurance reviews as visiting team members. Leaders also aim to access the Challenge Partners directory to visit schools that demonstrate areas of excellence in the areas they have identified for development.

This visit 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.