



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR JUNIPER HILL SCHOOL

Name of School:	Juniper Hill School
Headteacher/Principal:	Claire Garnett
Hub:	Aylesbury Vale Hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	26/02/2024
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	This was the school's first review.
Date of last QA Review:	Not applicable
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	05/07/2022

1. Context and character of the school

Juniper Hill is located in Flackwell Heath, a large village near High Wycombe. There are 422 pupils on roll. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with additional needs. The large majority of pupils has a White British heritage.

Indoors, the classrooms are spacious and well-equipped. There is a multipurpose hall, an attractive library and a nurture room. Additionally, there are specialist rooms for speech and language therapy, cooking and small group work. Outdoors, there are extensive hard and grassed areas, which include a sensory garden, a large adventure play area, a climbing wall, table tennis tables, table football games and a stage. An orchard is used for forest school and includes a pond, wood for den building, a mud kitchen and hazel and willow branches for whittling.

A thriving parent-teacher association supports the school in developing and maintaining the outdoor areas and raises considerable funds to provide additional resources, for example, the school minibus.

The local authority is currently building a Social, Emotional and Mental Health Unit (SEMH), 'The Nest', in the school grounds. This is scheduled to open in September and will provide support for pupils who have experienced emotional trauma. Juniper Hill will be the first mainstream school in Buckinghamshire to have a SEMH Unit.

The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher and three assistant headteachers with responsibilities for teaching and learning, standards and attainment, and inclusion. Five middle leaders lead phases and core subjects.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The leadership of the school is based on the ethos of growing leaders for the future. There are clear whole school roles and responsibilities for senior leaders with more phased-based and subject responsibilities for those in a middle leadership role. All share an ardent commitment to ensuring all pupils do as well as possible. Leaders at all levels work collaboratively in the cohesive pursuit of this aim.
- The headteacher is passionate about providing opportunities for all leaders to develop their knowledge, skills and experience, to benefit the school and their own careers. Leaders are increasingly involved in supporting other schools, notably in removing barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils and in promoting cooperative learning (see Section 5)
- Governors have a wide range of expertise and strike a good balance between supporting leaders and holding them to account.

- The school's motto, 'kindness, enjoyment, achievement', aptly describes the warm and purposeful learning environment. Relationships are excellent. Pupils spoke fondly about their teachers. Their comments included, 'School is exciting and enjoyable', 'The teachers are kind, they help me with my maths', and 'Lessons are fun, there are lots of activities to do.'
- Pupils have a clear idea about equity and fairness and talked proudly about their roles as members of the school council, the litter squad, and the faith team. Through a well-founded diversity action plan, leaders broaden pupils' awareness and understanding of different cultures, drawing on resources from Ripple Africa¹, Refugee week and the Walk Centre². Year 6 pupils plan and teach lessons to educate younger pupils about lives outside their immediate experience.
- Teachers new to the profession are strongly supported. One described how helpful she found the weekly meetings with her mentor. After discussing issues around friendship groups, for example, a course in 'managing girl friendships' had been arranged. She found the clear progression of skills outlined in subjects, such as art, particularly helpful. She remarked, 'I know what my children have done previously, which means I can challenge them to develop their drawing skills'.
- The use of 'trust-based observations' (TBOs) empowers staff to be reflective and develop their own practice. One teacher observed, 'I think that the nurturing language used in TBOs has seeped out into the way we have conversations with each other about our own practice and that of others'.
- Leaders are developing expertise across the school in Attachment Aware Trauma Responsive (AATR) approach in preparation for the new SEMH unit.
- Leaders have built strong partnerships with local organisations, including the Rotary Club which sponsored a poetry competition, the Women's Institute which provided a 'book bench, and a local farmer who allotted space for growing pumpkins.
- Among many recent visitors to the school was an ex-pupil, now an eminent professor of algebra and number theory, who spoke about shapes and patterns. A credit evaluator talked to pupils about avoiding on-line fraud.

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

...the school development plan was presented in a more accessible way to provide a clearer picture of key priorities, leaders' responsibilities in driving initiatives and the resources allocated to each target.

¹ The Ripple Africa Trust Foundation is dedicated to promoting gender equality in Nigeria.

² The Walk Centre is an organisation committed to helping the children and families of the Hilton slum area in Nakuru, Kenya

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Leaders are keen to ensure the curriculum is relevant and accessible to all pupils. Staff have worked collaboratively on curriculum design to ensure all have ownership of its development. The assistant principal for learning and teaching, for example, worked with all stakeholders to review the provision in art and geography. The high-quality work evident in these subjects is a testament to the success of these initiatives.
- Working with the Chiltern Rangers³, the school has introduced a 'Butterfly Curriculum'. Each year group is championing a common butterfly. Pupils are learning about their butterfly, its habitat and most importantly its food source. The school has planted a new hedgerow that includes the different food sources of the butterflies they are studying. As a result, pupils are learning the importance of protecting and conserving the natural environment.
- To help ensure all pupils participate in enriching experiences, each has an 'eleven by eleven' passport. Each activity has space for pupils to describe it and to reflect on how it relates to school values, such as curiosity, courage, independence and community. The 11 activities include, holding a live insect, competing for the school and performing on stage.
- Pupils make rapid progress in phonics and reading due to the considerable expertise of teachers and support staff. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the 'I am a clever writer' programme. Its impact is evident in the strong progress they make, including for pupils who are disadvantaged or have additional needs. Pupils writing across the curriculum shows increasing sophistication. When writing about Florence Nightingale, a Year 2 pupil wrote, 'Today, wards are much cleaner and shinier'. A Year 4 pupil used a rhetorical question as he wrote, 'Did you know people have suggested that the wizard Merlin... was responsible for Stonehenge'.
- Across the school, pupils demonstrate well-established learning behaviours and achieve very well. Lessons are well paced and expectations for all are high. Reception children are clear about what they need to do. They respond to the brisk pace and teachers' encouraging comments such as, 'Well-done, that was super quick' and 'I'm counting down from 20 to 0 and I want you all on your spots.' As a result, learning time is not wasted and all children are engaged.
- The cooperative strategies outlined in Section 5, were evident in every lesson visited. Teachers nurture a very strong learning environment. In a Year 6 class, one pupil lacked the confidence to share her idea. Her group immediately helped and encouraged her to answer. The teacher remarked on their kindness and asked their classmates to reflect on their own social skills.

³ The Children Rangers are based in High Wycombe and aim to enhance the environment involving members of the community.

- Teachers use a wide range of additional tactics to promote learning and achievement. They routinely model expectations. In Year 5, a teacher used mathematical representations and sentence stems to model discussions with partners. During art lessons about William Morris in Year 1, teachers used WAGOLL⁴ to set expectations of the outcome, shared ‘handy tips’, and thought aloud to great effect.
- Teachers’ use of questioning is a key strength. Art lessons in Key Stage 2 included ‘Look at Lowry’s painting, look at the background, what can you see?’, and ‘Whose perspective could this have been painted from?’ Teachers’ subject knowledge and their use of subject-specific terminology across the school, make a significant contribution to pupils’ strong progress across the curriculum.
- The ‘Choices’ programme followed in personal, social and health education includes complex issues, such as exploitation, grooming and belonging. As a result, pupils are learning the skills of problem solving, reflecting on the impact of their actions and developing ways to overcome peer-pressure. This helps to prepare them for leaving Juniper Hill and transitioning to secondary school.

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

...during forest school activities there was further emphasis on pupils developing their knowledge of fauna and flora.

...there was a consistent approach to teaching spelling across the school.

...pupils’ work in mathematics included clear evidence of the reasoning tasks they have undertaken.

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

- Provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs is first rate. The approach to support for pupils with additional needs is to adapt teaching to enable them to cover the same ground as other pupils, learning alongside their classmates whenever possible. The Kagan grouping outlined in Section 5 plays a significant role in this. All four pupils in each group have equal status, which contributes to their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils with additional needs learn through eavesdropping on the conversations of their peers and the more confident pupils are on hand to provide immediate support if necessary. Explaining things to other pupils also reinforces their own learning, promotes patience and empathy, and their understanding of how people learn in different ways.

⁴ What A Good One Looks Like

- Support plans are individualised and reviewed termly. Adaptations within classrooms and withdrawal sessions include visual support, the use of a standing desk, motor skills practice, life skills practice and memory games. Teachers and support staff are adept at using such strategies.
- The SENDCo and the assessment lead keep a close eye on pupils' progress and have frequent discussions with staff about what is working well. Assessment information and case studies indicate that pupils with additional needs make good, and often exemplary, progress from their individual starting points.
- Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils do not miss out on trips and enrichment activities and subsidise their attendance at breakfast club. The summary of outcomes for disadvantaged pupils shows that those without other barriers to learning typically reach, and often exceed, the expected outcomes for their year group. They are often among the pupils who reach a great depth in their learning.

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

No significant areas for improvement were identified during the review.

5. Area of Excellence

Cooperative learning and pupil engagement.

Accredited

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

- As part of the school's Covid catch-up recovery premium, leaders made the strategic decision to train the teaching staff in the use of Kagan⁵ structures. Three members of the leadership team initially completed the four-day training course in the spring/summer of 2021. All staff were trained the following September and provided with workbooks and teaching materials. Subsequently, all staff have completed the four-day course. Staff have completed additional courses, including 'Brain Friendly Teaching' and 'Building a Classroom Community'.

⁵ The Kagan approach aims to promote positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, and simultaneous Interaction.

- A Kagan trainer visited in December 2022. He observed lessons and provided coaching and 'in the moment' support.
- All teaching staff agreed a performance management target in 2022-2023, to focus on embedding the first five essential structures of the Kagan approach: Rally Robin, Pair Share, Round Robin, Rally Coach, and Stand Up, Hand Up, Pair Up.
- A member of the Governing Body attended all four training days. During parent consultation evenings in September 2022 and 2023, parents were introduced to the Kagan structures. Staff meetings are organised using the Kagan team structure.
- The review found that Kagan structures are making a significant contribution to pupils' learning behaviours and wider personal development. Examples of this included:
 - Reception teachers utilise Kagan structures to create an atmosphere where all children feel safe to contribute. 'My Alien has three eyes - one more than me!' offered one child. A classmate added, 'Mine has an antenna!'
 - During a lesson in Year 1 about describing characters, the use of Kagan teams⁶ enabled all pupils to understand their role in the task, resulting in high levels of engagement.
 - The use of Kagan structures *Mix, Pair, Share, Insider Circle and Outsider Circle* during a Year 5 mathematics lesson enabled all pupils to orally rehearse and consolidate their ideas and thoughts before sharing with the rest of the class.
 - Pupils in Year 6 were sharing their ideas and either building on or challenging their peers' ideas and opinions. The use of *Round Robin* and *Stand Up, Hands Up, Pair Up* led to high quality discussions and collaborative learning around complex issues.

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

- The school has identified a substantial and sustained impact of cooperative learning, regarding both academic achievement and personal development. During the review, lesson observations and discussions with pupils indicated that cooperative learning was well established and having a positive impact on pupils' progress during lessons, their learning behaviours and their social interaction.

⁶ Teams usually consist of four pupils, each with a specific role assigned by the teacher.

- Internal school data shows very good attainment and progress across the school. Key Stage 2 outcomes in 2023 were significantly higher than those nationally. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 2 were 93% in reading, 80% in writing and 92% in mathematics. The results at a higher level were 34%, 16% and 36% respectively.
- Scaled scores in 2023 were 109 in reading, 107 in mathematics and 108 in spelling, punctuation and grammar. In June 2023, 95% of Year 1 pupils passed the phonics screening check.
- Over the course of a year, pupils work with most of the children in their class, as they change Kagan teams every half term. This means they get to know their classmates and widen their friendship groups. Teachers plan a team and a class builder activity once or twice each week. This again helps to build relationships. Attendance has improved and the number of incidents of bullying has reduced.

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

Name: Claire Garnett and Cara Duhan
Title: Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher for teaching and learning
Email address: headteacher@juniper.school, cduhan@juniper.school

Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

For further support following your QA Review, schools can 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 (SLP) 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. (<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report

(<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)