QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR ST HILARY SCHOOL

Name of School:	St Hilary School
Head teacher/Principal:	Kelley Butcher
Hub:	Cornwall
School type:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Leading Edge Academies Partnership

Estimate at this QA Review:	OUTSTANDING
Date of this Review:	22/05/2019
Estimate at last QA Review	GOOD
Date of last QA Review	20/02/2017
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	GOOD – 12/06/2013 GOOD – Section 8 inspection – 07/11/2017
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	Last full inspection – 12/06/2013

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Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising of host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

School Improvement Strategies	OUTSTANDING
Outcomes for Pupils	OUTSTANDING
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	OUTSTANDING
Area of Excellence	ACCREDITED
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	None submitted at the last review.
Overall Estimate	OUTSTANDING

Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

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1. Context and character of the school

- St. Hilary is an average sized primary school situated in a rural setting close to Penzance.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds; there is one pupil for whom English is an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are in receipt of support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below the national average although the number with an education, health and care plan is above.
- The school became a 'stand-alone' academy in July 2011 and is a founding school in the Leading Edge Academies Partnership (LEAP) in April 2019. The headteacher has begun supporting Five Islands School on the Isles of Scilly.
- The school holds a number of national awards but was notably re-accredited with the Dyslexia Friendly Award in 2018.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Progress from previous EBIs

- The leadership team have been proactive in addressing the EBIs from the previous review, albeit some time ago. Challenge is now an embedded feature of teaching, and increases in the number of pupils gaining greater depth standards are evident. The cultural change is clear, and pupils expect to be challenged in class. In turn, teachers have also raised the expectation that pupils will achieve high quality outcomes. The subsequent re-structuring of the school improvement plan has resulted in a more precise document that has greater clarity for all stakeholders.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- The school is exceedingly well-led. The experienced headteacher and her senior leader group form a united team that leads by example. They know the pupils and parents extremely well and collectively they are passionate in ensuring that all pupils receive the best possible learning experiences. They do everything in their power to ensure pupils and staff live up to the school's motto – "To be the best that we can be."
- Leaders and many other staff members have been at the school a considerable time, giving stability to the school, but they form a very outward-looking staff that is constantly looking for new approaches, striving for even greater outcomes. The ethos of the school centres around securing the best possible results for pupils but this is not simply restricted to academic success. There is a definite focus on contributing to pupils being knowledgeable, well-rounded young people.

- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and ambitious, providing detailed EBI actions to lead to continued improvement. The school improvement plan denotes clear priorities for the whole school, combining subject improvement plans with more encompassing issues to move the school forward.
- The distributed leadership model is successful because middle leaders thrive on the responsibilities with which they are entrusted. They enjoy their roles and welcome the opportunities for the professional development they provide.
- The action plan for mathematics has been constructed to raise outcomes that are more in line with reading and writing. This has gained success because improvements are seen through what leaders term 'intelligent practice.' Methodology is embedded, adding to consistency in the teaching of this subject.
- Research-based continuing professional development (CPD) targets have a high priority, often linked to teachers' performance management. Teachers have the opportunity to focus on individual areas that they feel will improve their practice and have a positive impact on the pupils they teach.
- The utilisation of Basecamp software is growing as an effective method for pooling knowledge and resources that can be employed in school and with others across the trust. This extended means of communication and collaboration has been highly successful in sharing good practice and ultimately raising standards. It also prompts teachers to undertake tasks that are required of them, increasing awareness of their involvement in school improvement.
- Leaders have set higher expectations in the quality of work through the activities that teachers employ to engage their class and bring learning to life. This has gained success because pupils have become more eager, enthusiastic learners and teachers have greater awareness of how to raise standards. This is also reflected in the improvement in outcomes over time.
- The school has a number of nationally recognised awards but there is an emphasis on the process being more important than the end product. Leaders see the hard work that goes into securing the award as being an important developmental progression for the teachers leading each initiative.

2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if…

…leaders ensured the self-evaluation form fully celebrated the school's success.
…leaders further explored the strength of practice across the schools in the trust to continue the philosophy of sharing.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Progress from previous EBIs

- The EBIs from the previous review have been fully implemented and the effectiveness of the work leaders have undertaken to address them was clear to see in the classrooms that were visited as part of this review.

3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well

- High quality teaching and learning is an undoubted strength of the school. The consistency observed across all year groups is testimony to the talented group of teachers the school employs; this contributes directly to the excellent results the school achieves year-on-year.
- Lessons are well-planned with the appropriate level of differentiation that motivates all pupils. Wherever possible, teachers relate the lesson content to real-life scenarios so that the learning has true meaning for pupils.
- The mastery approach has had a positive effect on raising outcomes in mathematics and this was particularly visible in Year 1 and Year 5 lessons. In the latter, a pupil was at the front of the class having had some difficulty in calculating fractions and percentages. After a period of learning, the teacher skilfully questioned him and the pupil clearly indicated that he understood, showing immediate progress.
- Teachers are swift in celebrating success. This motivates pupils to work harder and they demand to learn more. The creative learning environment teachers engender also makes a telling contribution in stimulating pupils to learn.
- Positive relationships, built on mutual respect, abound in all classrooms. Pupils fully enjoy the frequently collaborative activities teachers provide and they willingly support each other to ensure their peers are not left behind.
- Challenge is set at the correct level because teachers develop progressive tasks that stretch all abilities. In addition, teachers have in-depth knowledge of their pupils, this enables them to challenge them on a more individual basis.
- Questioning tests pupils' understanding effectively, and pupils are confident in asking each other probing questions, indicating a high level of self-confidence. Teachers commonly build on prior learning. In a Year 2 English lesson, pupils were adding to their knowledge of similes as this was to form a leading theme in future lessons.
- High levels of engagement are a common feature in all classrooms, largely because pupils enjoy learning and are fully immersed in the lesson. Teachers utilise resources purposefully to enhance learning. In a Year 3 English lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to refer to the learning wall and use the 'No Excuse' cards on their table to improve the quality of their writing.
- Pupils' books highlight strong progress over time. Presentation is immaculate, particularly in their colourful project books. Science concepts are challenging, with pupils exploring some complex areas.

- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and contribute enormously to the progress disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make, exhibiting initiative and support in equal measure.
- Peer critique has been a new facet in teaching and learning since the introduction of the school's new curriculum. This applies to both pupils and staff but for teachers, it has encouraged staff to stretch their knowledge and practice, and to think and plan in more cross-curricular terms.
- Leaders closely monitor teaching and learning to ensure its high quality and areas that require additional focus; for example assessing writing, has given confidence and reassurance that teachers at St. Hilary are accurate in their judgements.

3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if…

The review team and school's leaders agreed that there were no whole-school EBIs.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- Pupils at St. Hilary School make consistently strong progress and attainment, which has been maintained for a number of years. Over the past three years, for example, attainment at Key Stage 2 has considerably exceeded national averages.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at broadly typical levels of development but make rapid progress. In 2018, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was above the national average.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check, performance was in line with the national average although the success rate for those pupils who were unsuccessful in Year 1 but gained the standard in Year 2 was well above average.
- At Key Stage 1 last year, pupils exceeded the national average in reading and writing at the expected and greater depth levels. In mathematics, attainment at the expected standard was below average, although it was well above the national measure at greater depth.
- Attainment at Key Stage 2 at the expected level was comfortably above the national figures in reading, writing and mathematics. At the higher standard, it was above average in reading, in line in writing but below in mathematics. In the grammar, punctuation and spelling test, over 90% gained a pass at the expected level, with those gaining the higher level just below. Notably, all boys passed the test.
- In the combined measure, St. Hilary pupils were well above the national figure at the expected level and broadly in line at greater depth. Progress was above the national figure in reading and writing, with mathematics just trailing the other two. Overall, results at the school show an improving trend over the last three years, with figures in most areas considerably above national expectations.

- Because disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND constitute small numbers in the school, their data should be treated with some caution. However, from their individual starting points they make positive progress.
- Pupil progress meetings have a direct focus on disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND to ensure these groups are making at least expected progress. Interventions can thus be tailored to their exact needs in order to identify what is successful. This personalised approach has greater impact because it embraces all aspects of their development, not just their academic progress. Part of the school's ethos encompasses the slogan that 'no child will slip through the net' and the approaches all staff take ensures this does not happen.
- Current in-school data is very favourable, indicating that the trend in improving outcomes is set to continue this year. The latest data harvest shows that attainment is high and above national expectations. Disadvantaged pupils are achieving closer to their non-disadvantaged peers and staff are focusing on diminishing differences further. Variations in boys' and girls' attainment are decreasing. Mathematics is showing considerable improvement, with pupils above the national average at the expected level at both key stages.
- Leaders are particularly encouraged by the percentage of pupils on track to gain the greater depth level in reading, writing and mathematics, which is a reward for their efforts in securing the higher standard for more pupils.

5. Area of Excellence

A Real Project Based Outcome approach to the curriculum.

Accredited

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?

Leaders have built on the strengths of the curriculum over time such that the enriched experiences pupils receive have resulted in consistently high-level outcomes. The basis of the curriculum links to the school's six core values - Ethical, Excellence, Equity, Empathy, Endurance and Evolution, linked to the age-appropriate skills and knowledge needed whilst developing the key competencies of thinking, self-management, working with others, using language, symbols and texts and active contribution. Teachers utilise research to deliver the content through 'Real projects' which begin with a driving question and finish with an authentic outcome.

Teachers employ ‘Project Tuning Sessions’ in the planning stages to present their driving question, project milestones and ideas for authentic outcomes. This termly process provides peer critique, knowledge and idea-sharing between staff. Both teachers and pupils are encouraged to bring their individual creativity to curriculum design, which allows everyone to feel empowered and provides ownership.

The unique approach teachers employ has enabled closer links to be forged with local businesses and charities, giving St. Hilary School an increased community profile. Opportunities for collaboration, communication and critical thinking right from the project planning stage, through to the authentic outcome are emphasized. A wide range of memorable trips, visits and activities supplement and enrich in-school experiences. Carefully mapped, inter-disciplinary learning, which uses links across different subjects or disciplines to enhance learning, is a key feature. This successfully promotes the development and application of what has been taught and learned. The recently formed LEAP partnership enables staff expertise, equipment and resources to be shared effectively.

Once each project has been completed, teachers evaluate and reflect on the project and its success. This reflective approach gives time to celebrate successes and further develop the curriculum. As a result, teachers feel valued and empowered which in turn drives high quality learning.

5.2 What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

Leaders have shared their curriculum practice with a partner school in the trust and continue to work with their leaders to redesign their curriculum. This has included support through the sharing of ideas and resources, and the use of Basecamp as a method of distributing research and information. As a result of this work, skills and knowledge progression documents are in place, project books are being used to showcase ‘beautiful work.’ Driving questions and authentic outcomes are now being used in each curriculum project. The authentic outcomes have taken different forms and have taken learning beyond the classroom. Through LEAP, St. Hilary is now part of professional research circles in a range of areas.

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

Academic outcomes across both key stages are consistently high. The development of this new approach in the last two years has undoubtedly contributed to these improvements. Sustained impact is evidenced in the high-quality work in pupils' project books, and the vibrancy in classrooms ensures that pupils are excited to learn in these creative environments.

Parental feedback has been very positive, and many have become involved in contributing to activities to enhance and enrich the curriculum. Pupils' independence has blossomed because the projects they become immersed in has encouraged a "can do" approach. Everyone is encouraged to do their best and take risks in their teaching or learning. When assessing the consistent quality first teaching and learning, the progress in pupils' books and excellent results they achieve, it is clear that the curriculum at St. Hilary is without doubt an area of excellent practice.

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

Name: Kelley Butcher

Title: Headteacher

Email: head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk

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

Nothing specific 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.