



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR MOUNTS BAY ACADEMY

Name of School:	Mounts Bay Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Les Hall
Hub:	Cornwall Hub
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	The Leading Edge Academy Partnership

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	28/11/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Leading
Date of last QA Review	09/03/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	24/01/2022

1. Context and character of the school

Mounts Bay Academy is a thriving Learning Community of around 1000 students with the success of every student at the heart of its curriculum ethos. Student numbers have increased due to the popularity of the school in the community. Students often travel several miles to attend the Academy due to the unique ethos and array of opportunities available.

The Academy is in a coastal, low-income area but has achieved success in bucking the national trend of low performance by building a good reputation for good discipline, great teaching, and outcomes. There are more than the usual number of students with issues linked to social care. The Academy serves an area with the highest levels of deprivation in Northern Europe according to the most recently published data using the Multiple Deprivation Index.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Leaders have fully achieved the EBIs from their last review. They have supported the further development of dynamic grouping and assessment strategies that cater for all needs in the classroom, so that all students are making the best progress possible from their individual starting points.
- The school has a strong and dynamic senior leadership team, who continuously go beyond the expected to ensure that all students have access to a wide and rich set of learning experiences. To support the delivery of learning, middle leaders are provided with both the autonomy and support to ensure that they make a proven, discernible contribution to implementing, monitoring, and refining the curriculum. The impact of their work is shown in several areas, most notably the introduction of opportunities for staff to explicitly teach vocabulary within all subject areas.
- Communication is a strength and results in staff, parents and students being clear about what is expected of them, leading to consistency, trust, and respect at all levels. Students are rightly proud to attend Mounts Bay, as shown by a Year 11 student who reported, 'there are lots of opportunities at our school, you will never get bored!'
- Mount Bay's leadership carefully considers evidence-based learning, which has facilitated quality work with peers from across their Trust and in other settings beyond their school. A positive example of this work has seen the generation of enquiry questions, such as 'who wins when cultures collide?', which consistently deepen students learning.
- Leaders ensure that all staff benefit from focused, timely and highly effective professional development and can demonstrate the sustained impact of this. Regular 'teach meets' ensure that continuing professional development (CPD)

is targeted to meet identified needs and is embedded throughout the school. The success of the school's recent CPD is shown by the consistent teaching of tiered disciplinary vocabulary which has supported high quality learning opportunities across departments. A focus for current CPD is the development of a High Performing Learning (HPL) framework, which will further support staff in focusing on student's cognitive development, supporting them to achieve higher grades in their GCSEs.

- Shared accountability is a feature of the school's continuing success. Leaders routinely use 'check ins' to rigorously monitor teaching and learning in subject areas. This process has seen both middle and senior leaders support aspects of self-evaluation and produce detailed progress reports identifying their next steps.
- The leadership team has worked closely with heads of department to develop a cohesive approach to the teaching of diversity across the curriculum. The impact of this is evident within the school's tutor system, where students are encouraged to discuss connections between themselves and other members of the wider school community. Leaders' robust strategies to develop vocabulary has supported this work by providing students with the means to clearly articulate their opinions.
- Staff and pupil well-being is taken very seriously, and the impact of new initiatives and policies are routinely discussed by the school leadership. This has resulted in several practical measures, such as the employment of a Learning Support Mentor (LSM), who has improved student wellbeing. Joint work with staff to provide opportunities to further develop their professional knowledge, through engagement with national research hubs, has further supported the positive relationships between all members of the school community.
- Governors have actively sought validation of the school's work, and regularly complete visits which are linked to the school's strategic planning model. Through these they seek opportunities to gather evidence to test leaders' judgements on the impact of school development. Through high levels of challenge governors have encouraged staff to clearly articulate their approach on systems for fining attendance.

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

- ... leaders developed their ability to articulate the strengths of their subject areas and can illustrated these with real world examples.
- ... leaders developed a student leadership pathway, in conjunction with the school's existing frameworks, for all years in a range of subjects and skill-specific areas.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Staff have fully achieved the EBIs from their last review. They have continued to create opportunities for all students to be pushed outside their comfort zone through increased challenge, which develops their enthusiasm for new learning.
- Staff at Mounts Bay pursue a shared vision to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all students, which is embedded securely and consistently across the school. The impact of this vision is clear in well-presented books demonstrating coherently planned and well sequenced learning across a range of curriculum areas. The work given to students, over time and across the school, consistently matches the aims of the curriculum. It is coherently planned and sequenced towards building sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning.
- Positive attitudes in all lessons demonstrate students' engagement in their learning, as do their comments which show their deep level of learning such as, 'In my history lesson I have considered who is richest, the architect or the street sweeper. It is possible to make an argument for either.'
- Leaders have refined their curriculum provision to further accelerate students' progress. Recently an 'ABC' rubric has been developed to underpin daily teaching, and to ensure a consistent focus on attributes, behaviour expectations and cognitive performance skills. This focus has supported the development of curiosity and enquiry skills, as evidenced by a Year 7 student remarking 'I've not only learnt Spanish, but I've understood the rules of the language which allows me to make accurate guesses about unfamiliar words.'
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge, which is developed through well targeted professional development, allows them to provide precise feedback to further accelerate progress. Students value feedback which encourages them to reflect on strategies to improve their learning. For example, a Year 8 student stated, 'I am analysing a text, which means I am developing strategies to develop my understanding of the topic.'
- The Mounts Bay curriculum provides aspirational learning opportunities to prepare students for the next stages of their careers. The teaching of several areas, such as psychology investigations, are routinely supported by external speakers who encourage students to consider the career options available to them. In addition, students' proficient use of new technology provides key information to ensure that they can confidently access prior knowledge to develop their understanding of key issues.
- Improving levels of attendance and limited fixed term exclusions provides clear evidence of the positive learning culture, which is supported by Mount Bay's pastoral team. Each student is allocated a tutor who runs a programme

of personal, social, and cultural activities and provides personal mentoring. Examples of themes covered during tutor time include 'developing confidence' and 'internet safety'. These sessions provide regular opportunities for collective reflection, sharing of values and a stimulus for important cultural, social, and curricular topics. This focus on personal development ensures that all students behave with consistently high levels of respect for others. They are self-motivated, resilient, and persistent learners as demonstrated by a Year 11 student who commented, 'due to the strong relationships we have developed over time with our teachers we are determined to always do the best that we can do at all times.'

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

- ... staff consistently highlighted examples of students' progress, both in the short and long term.
- ... opportunities were provided for students' successes to be celebrated equally in all subject areas.

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

- Leaders have fully achieved the EBIs from their last review. They have continued to provide opportunities for staff to further develop their pedagogical toolkit for further engaging disadvantaged students, with a focus on the development of oracy, co-operative learning techniques and effective scaffolding strategies.
- The school leadership team articulates a clear vision that 'Mounts Bay gives all disadvantaged students, and those with additional needs, opportunities to allow them to break free from the cycle of low expectation.' This encourages all staff, parents, and students to work closely together to ensure that those with additional needs are consistently provided with high quality learning opportunities. It has also seen these students provided with a range of enrichment opportunities, such as visits to Wisconsin and Nepal.
- There is a clear expectation in the school that all students, regardless of their background, can deepen their learning through the High Performing Learning Programme. The success of these students is celebrated by all, whether it is

demonstrated by their employment in a trade or their graduation from the University of Cambridge.

- Teachers are aware of the importance of their role in addressing learning gaps for vulnerable students. They are supported by enthusiastic leaders who ensure that they have the resources to identify students' specific learning barriers and identify key objectives to address these. Teachers receive regular monitoring from the SEN team which provides immediate feedback. Recent CPD needs identified by this monitoring has seen discussions on flexible groupings and the use of digital technology to further develop independent learning strategies.
- Effective SEN provision is provided within the school's iCollege provision, which houses a wide range of professionals, such as wellbeing tutors and mental health services, to support vulnerable learners. This provision equips students with the skills needed to achieve the most out of life and to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.
- The individual needs of disadvantaged students are known, and support is put into in place for all staff to identify and share barriers to learning. High quality teaching and learning, which focuses on disciplinary literacy, is a clear focus for the school. The prioritisation of vocabulary accusation supports them achieving the best possible outcomes from their starting points. An example of the impact of the school's high expectation in this area was shown by a Year 8 pupil who explained, 'sibilance is a type of sound, which can be used as a form of alliteration'.
- The school's effective range of partnerships with external providers ensure students with additional needs have a smooth and purposeful transition into the next stage of their careers. A particularly positive example was shown by the successful post-16 journey made by a previous student after speech and communication support from the school.
- Leaders have maintained a positive relationship with parents by developing their understanding of the support their children receive at school. This is shown by the school's clear message that, 'we are opposed to all forms of overt and covert prejudice, harassment, discrimination and actively aim to educate everyone at Mounts Bay to recognise that every person is equal and should be treated with respect.'

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

... leaders continued to develop a range of strategies to develop both the reading skills of these students and their enjoyment of texts.

5. Area of Excellence

Student leadership and student voice.

Accredited

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

Student leadership has been developed at Mounts Bay Academy over several years. The area has been significantly focused on during the last 18 months due to the reduction in collaborate learning practices, and the subsequent lack of confidence felt by some students, during the Covid Pandemic.

The student leadership system is well developed and includes both the year group/tutor group structure as well as the house system. Students are invited to apply for the head of house position and, after a challenging recruitment process, become the senior student leadership team. This group meets with the principal once a week to discuss key aspects of school improvement.

In the last two years the school has also provided younger students with the opportunity to apply to become junior prefects. This ensures that there is a clear succession plan for student leadership and ensures that its impact is evident in all areas of school life.

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

All learners have benefited from student voice in terms of the fabric of the school site as well as changes made to everyday life. An initial stimulus for student leadership was the development of the school's CUBE building, a project where students worked with architects through the whole process. The success of this project led to student involvement in all aspects of key changes and developments in the school.



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Recent building projects, including the remodelling of student toilets and the installation of LED lighting, have had significant input from students.

Student leaders have also had regular opportunities to represent their school at community events, such as the Penzance Expo and local memorial services for Remembrance Sunday. They have also worked with other schools and regularly provide support at primary sports days.

The positive impact of this work can be seen by a sustained improvement in student's confidence as they work with others to develop their character and leadership skills.

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

Darren Payne

Senior leader

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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>)