QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR CLAREMONT HIGH SCHOOL

Name of School:	Claremont High School
Headteacher/Principal:	Nicola Hyde-Boughey
Hub:	Chrysalis
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	Chrysalis Multi Academy Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	31/01/2024
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Leading
Date of last QA Review	23/01/2023
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	13/05/2015

Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all levels	Leading
Quality of provision and outcomes	Leading
AND	
Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs	
Area of excellence	Embedding a reading culture across the school to develop literacy Accredited
Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	The Co-Curriculum, 23/01/2023 PD/Coaching and Professional Development at our school and across the Hub, 23/01/2023
Overall peer evaluation estimate	Leading

The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.

1. Context and character of the school

Claremont High School Academy is a larger than average secondary school and sixth form. The academy established the Chrysalis Multi-Academy Trust with Sudbury Primary School in 2017. Claremont is a lead hub school for Challenge Partners across eighteen schools and twenty thousand students. Claremont's headteacher was appointed as executive headteacher of the trust in 2019 and she is also the Challenge Partner Hub leader. The school is very popular and oversubscribed. Most students live locally to the school.

Claremont has earned a strong reputation for promoting music and the performing arts over many years. Ten per cent of places at the school are reserved for students with musical ability. Just over half of the students speak a language other than English at home. Almost three-quarters of the population is of Asian Indian origin, with the rest being largely of Black Caribbean and Black African students. There are a growing number of Eastern European students. The proportion of disadvantaged students is broadly in line with the national average. Claremont's aim is 'to prepare students to reach their full potential'.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Claremont High School leads positive change for the wider community. The headteacher holds a strong vision for all staff and students, who understand and live out these values. Governors work closely with leaders. They are very knowledgeable and a huge asset to the school, providing expertise to an impressive senior leadership team.
- There is a clear pipeline for leadership development. Leaders excel at recruiting and retaining the best staff. 'Talent spotting' is evident at all levels and there is a wealth of opportunity for career development. Staff have benefitted from the high quality range of training opportunities, leading to a high level of affiliation to the school's aims, vision and values, contributing to strong retention and a sense of common purpose and shared responsibility.
- The school's continuing professional development and coaching programme is exemplary. Excellent practice by staff is shared across the school and builds the supportive and collaborative culture of celebrating teaching and learning. There is an embedded professional learning community across the school.

- The teaching and learning team have a clear view of their current priorities, such as memorisation techniques, and have a carefully considered approach to the planning and delivery of training and then subsequent quality assurance of lessons. Quality assurance is comprehensive and embedded with regular learning walks, deep dives, work scrutiny, pupil and staff voice. This helps to triangulate evidence and to ensure that next steps can be accurately identified.
- The balance between whole school consistency and subject level autonomy is strong. There are well understood whole school approaches towards areas including reading and literacy. These include 'identify, define and apply', with clear marking and consistent codes, the use of tier two and tier three language, and reading ages as a differentiation tool. This is balanced with a high level of subject autonomy to decide non-negotiables, routines, systems and curriculum choices.
- Claremont is a highly inclusive school. The school achieved the Inclusion Quality Mark Centre for Excellence Award in 2019 and has secured this in every subsequent year, as well achieving Flagship Status in 2023. The school is recognised and accredited as a Centre of Excellence for Inclusion. The inclusions board works together to monitor the wellbeing and progress of all students. The school is highly inclusive. The diversity board promotes equalities, including LGBTQ and disabled as protected characteristics.
- There is a holistic overview of how attendance fits within the wider picture, with clear links to the mental health strategy, pastoral care, and ongoing work with disadvantaged students. Leaders recognise that the key to good attendance is ensuring that students feel safe and confident in school. Parental communication is an area of strength. There is regular communication, and targeted communication whenever there are concerns. This helps students to excel.
- The careers programme is carefully mapped across the school. Students receive high quality information and guidance through a combination of tutor time, curriculum, assemblies, special events and individual interventions, as well as the Unifrog programme.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if…

… leaders at all levels encouraged the building in of discussion time between students before the teacher asked them targeted questions.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- There is a very calm and purposeful learning environment and a culture of high expectations and challenge. One student remarked that "it's cool to work hard." Leaders, staff and students live out the school's core values of 'excellence, respect, aspiration, enjoyment and perseverance'. There is a strong rapport between staff and students, with a warm atmosphere and a safe environment for students to take risks in their learning. Students support each other very well in lessons.
- Subject leaders have a strong commitment to excellence. They work closely with the teachers in their department to plan coherent and well sequenced curricula which are ambitious for all students. Teachers succeed in 'teaching to the top' and provide scaffolding where appropriate. Outcomes are consistently strong and always in the top 20% for English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers know their subject disciplines very well indeed. They challenge students, give dynamic explanations and ask carefully crafted questions to co-construct learning with their students. They make complex concepts relevant and easy to understand. For example in economics, teachers ask students why a graph is drawn in a certain way and what this demonstrates, encouraging students to draw on their prior knowledge and understand the multiplier effect. Teachers model the thinking process well, and frequently use concrete examples to help students understand abstract ideas.
- Teachers use assessment for learning well to check and develop students' understanding. In many lessons, teachers ask incisive questions to correct any possible misconceptions and encourage students to respond in detail. Diagnostic low stakes assessments are used at the start of lessons to enable teachers to address any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge.
- Students take great pride in their work. Students' work across all subjects is very well presented and organised and demonstrates a well sequenced curriculum and strong progress over time. Individualised feedback in books allows students to know how to improve and progress. Students' work is often exemplary and there is much evidence of their determination to act upon their teachers' feedback and to keep improving.
- There is an embedded culture of literacy across the school. A love of reading is encouraged through library lessons, reading challenges and logs, and quiet reading in tutor time. All staff across the school have been upskilled to be teachers of literacy. Whole school approaches such as 'identify, define and

apply', reciprocal reading and strategies to decode unfamiliar vocabulary, are used routinely in lessons and greatly benefit students.

- The school community is diverse and harmonious. Students' personal development is supported well through the school curriculum programmes for Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships, and Sex Education. Students enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities which help them to build their confidence.
- There is a wide range of opportunities for more able students, which include the Thriving Minds, Crest Awards, Scholars Programme, and Brilliant Club. These experiences have developed the confidence of students and raised their aspirations.
- Many students graduate to the sixth form, where they receive high quality teaching across a range of subjects. Sixth form students appreciate their teachers and can give specific examples of where they have received support to achieve their goals.
- Students achieve strong outcomes at the school. Boys' achievement is higher than the average for boys and girls nationally. Girls achieve even higher than boys at the school. Students graduate from the school as well-rounded, successful and confident young people who are very well equipped to make a positive difference.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if…

… teachers built in discussion time to help students rehearse their own ideas and build confidence before responding to targeted teacher questions.

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

- The behaviour for learning of all students is excellent. There are embedded learning routines to ensure learning is purposeful. All students are engaged and take ownership of their learning. They work collaboratively in lessons and demonstrate a strong sense of teamwork and inclusivity.
- Leaders have established a robust process for identifying and supporting specific students of concern. The teaching and learning team promote strategies which benefit disadvantaged students, including retrieval practice, whole class questioning and literacy. School strategies to further develop

memorisation have been highly effective and benefited all students. Lesson structures ensure the repetition of key learning to embed in the long term memory. There is explicit teaching of exam technique and how to revise effectively for all subjects.

- Quality assurance always has a focus on the learning of disadvantaged students. Subject leaders are accountable so that real gains can be made within subject areas alongside whole school approaches.
- There is an extensive training and development offer for staff to meet the needs of students with SEND. Individual Learner Passports give teachers information and strategies on where students should sit in class, and ways to help support and encourage all students to participate.
- There is a comprehensive and intensive intervention programme for all students to ensure they are successful in a broad and balanced curriculum offer and have the very best chance of success. Identified students are supported with interventions, interviews and mentoring.
- Students gain literacy support through the paired reading programme and small group tuition from a literacy teacher. There are Lexonic passports in place for students involved in the programme so that further bespoke support is in place within lessons. Seating plans include students' reading ages to ensure literacy is a priority and that appropriate scaffolding is provided. Staff across the school from a variety of subject areas are trained in the Lexonic programme and are also able to deliver purposeful interventions to students. This has led to a clear shared vision across the school and substantial and sustained improvements.
- There is a strong focus and support for student and staff wellbeing. Leaders have rightly prioritised the need to promote students' mental health. The wellbeing and emotional support team provide excellent support. Staff are well trained. Leaders have created their own Olevi Outstanding Student Mentoring Programme. There are trained mental health first aiders. Over forty students work as mentors and support other students in the school.
- Disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs achieve very well. The school has significantly narrowed the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students in recent years. Disadvantaged students at the school make as much progress as non-disadvantaged students nationally.

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

… SEND leaders were further integrated into learning walk fortnights to quality assure provision for students with SEND in lessons.

5. Area of Excellence

Embedding a reading culture across the school to develop literacy.

Accredited

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

The school curriculum is built to ensure all students can access skills needed to be phonically aware and be able to decode words, to focus upon inference and comprehension of texts.

The school has been approved to have this area evaluated for the inclusions quality award mark. The external consultant stated:

“The next topic for discussion was the issue that will make up the IQM flagship project which has to do with embedding a reading culture across the school. A full detailed action plan was provided by the two members of senior leadership team who were delivering the project.”

The school has developed a programme which caters for the needs of all students at all levels in reading. There is a focus on the scaffolding of phonics and decoding for identified pupils through small group electronic work with trained staff including senior leaders. These students are given reading passports which all staff are aware of and form the basis of lesson planning and adaptations. The school has developed reading for pleasure in small groups for identified students with a trained member of staff. There is also weekly paired reading for identified students with trained year 10 and 12 students.

Every Key Stage 3 student receives weekly library lessons led by a trained staff member who supports group and paired reading.

Form tutors have been trained to deliver a whole school tutor led approach to reciprocal reading using agreed resources and quality assured by school leaders.

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

School outcomes are strong. Progress 8 scores in 2022-23 were +0.62 (89th centile). English Progress 8 scores were +0.8. 75% of students achieved 4+ in English and mathematics. 57% of students achieved 5+ in English and mathematics.

The use of the Lexonic programme is leading to improved reading ages. Students made an average reading age gain of 54 months and 20 standardised points.

From Years 9 to 10, 90% of girls and 88% of boys made progress, with 92% of Pupil Premium students making progress.

From years 10 to 11, 60% of girls and 64% of boys made progress, with 80% of Pupil Premium students making progress.

In lessons, students are now reading longer and more challenging texts and are able to write longer answers. Year 11 students now have strong comprehension skills.

The school has recorded the views of students who took part in this Lexonic programme. Students said: "It helps me learn new words and it helps me to be confident reading in front of others. It is interesting because I get to read new books…. From doing these sessions it is helped more with English skills and to find inferences within a text and find more things. These sessions are expanding my knowledge as well…. It helped my confidence with reading and helps us learn at our own pace…. I like this because it helps me with my English vocabulary."

The school's embedded reading culture has a positive impact on students.

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

Leigh Beauchamp/Kathryn Tora
Assistant Head/Deputy Head
Leigh.beauchamp@claremont-high.org.uk

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)