

Name of School:	Hornchurch High School
Headteacher/Principal:	Serena Madhvani
Hub:	East London Hub
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	Partnership Learning Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	10/11/2025
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Effective
Date of last QA Review:	13/11/2024
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	05/02/2025

Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all levels	Leading
Quality of provision and outcomes	Effective

AND

Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and/or pupils with additional needs	Effective
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Area of excellence	Accredited
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Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	Professional Development, 29/11/2023
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Overall peer evaluation estimate	Effective
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Important information

- The QA Review provides a peer evaluation of a school's practice in curriculum, teaching and learning, and leadership. It is a voluntary and developmental process, and the peer review team can evaluate and offer 'peer evaluation estimates' based only on what the school chooses to share with them.
- The QA Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.
- The QA Review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. If you choose to share this report, or extracts thereof, externally (e.g. on your website or with parents), please ensure that it is accompanied with the following text:

Challenge Partners is a charity working to advance education for the public benefit. We are not a statutory accountability body. The QA Review does not audit schools' safeguarding or behaviour policies and practices. However, Lead Reviewers and visiting reviewers are expected to follow Challenge Partners' safeguarding policy and report any concerns as set out in the procedures.

1. Context and character of the school

Hornchurch High School is a smaller than average secondary 11-16 academy situated in the London Borough of Havering, Essex. Although regarded as broadly average for levels of deprivation, two wards in its catchment area buck this trend and have high levels of social and educational disadvantage.

One third of the school has students that speak English as an additional language (EAL). One third of students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, whilst those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are below the national average.

The school has emerged from a turbulent period early in February 2023 when they appointed a new headteacher. She and her team have successfully navigated some significant challenges including a positive Ofsted inspection in 2025. This period included a lot of staff change with over one third of the current staff being new to teaching within the last two years.

The school has been part of the Partnership Learning trust for nine years. The trust has a range of schools across all phases primarily based in East London and Essex.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- High ambition for students is evident in every layer of the school. A unified approach ensures that the 'why' and clarity of purpose are shared well with staff and students. This means that there are very high levels of 'buy in' from the school community, exemplified by the smooth implementation of agreed strategies and routines across the school at all times.
- Realisation of the ambition for students lays in the relentless focus on continually improving teaching and learning. Staff development is therefore central to the school's vision of raising standards through the delivery of a demanding academic curriculum. Time for professional development is highly prioritised and costed into the school day to allow departments collective planning time, alongside whole school continuous professional development (CPD).
- The school utilises an instructional coaching approach superbly to model new ideas to staff in the same way that it is intended for students. For example, in a pastoral middle leader training session, heads of year were discussing various methods of developing student leadership. They did so using established and shared teaching pedagogies which are already firmly embedded in the school and across departments. This means that impetus is never lost once an initiative has been introduced because it is constantly lived and practised in everyday routines at student and teacher level.

- This purposeful approach is replicated for subject curriculums and support staff. Consequently, there is a well-understood, shared meaning of all strategies deployed commonly across the school. This is especially helpful for a high proportion of staff who are early on in their careers because knowledge is spread quickly and delivered consistently by staff with precision well beyond their years of experience.
- The strength of coaching from senior leaders has developed middle leaders as the 'engine room' of the school. Subsequently, they are able to model with confidence with their own subject teams. They value CPD time very highly saying 'co-construction is a real thing; everything we do feels purposeful and everyone is included'.
- Students are prepared well for the next stage of their education with a bespoke programme of careers education. This means that students from Hornchurch have consistently stayed in sustained education and employment well above the national average since 2019.
- Through the personal development and enrichment programme, leaders ensure that students get a package of wide and varied trips, extra-curricular activities and workshops that build cultural capital.
- Form tutors have worked hard to foster a sense of belonging by establishing a class identity in tutor time. This enables students to see their effort and individual contributions as part of the whole and it works well alongside elected student leaders who ensure that student voice is heard. Students have a sound understanding of British values, such as the rule of law and democracy.

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

... leaders further developed student resilience to further progress students' agency.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- The curriculum has an academic focus and is constantly under review to ensure that students are being offered a relevant and useful learning experience. Leaders have been deliberate and brave in choosing appropriate courses to match their ambition for students. The mission to raise standards has led to research informed choices, such as 100% entry for languages in Year 11 this year. The school is also responsive to the area it serves and has addressed a local profile of higher than normal risk of obesity by ensuring that the year group takes a certificate in PE in Key Stage 4; this teaches students how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- 'Co-construction' is a commonly used term that staff and leaders use to describe how lessons are sequenced and planned. This ensures coherence

and provides on the spot quality assurance. Time is allocated for departments in the timetable to allow this to happen weekly. Leaders ensure that this time is prioritised and protected as it is a key element of school improvement.

- Oracy and full written responses are promoted throughout the curriculum. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, students had to talk through their method using clear sentences with the correct terminology. Reading intervention uses data to ensure that the weakest readers are supported with appropriate intervention in order to improve their decoding and comprehension skills.
- Teachers model new content very clearly. The school-wide use of visualisers supports the 'chunking' of material and allows students to write about new ideas or practise new methods with confidence. Work is often scaffolded to allow all students access to tasks. Teachers circulate lessons well demonstrating a high level of class awareness in terms of who to support. This was seen in a Year 9 Spanish lesson and consequently the teacher ensured that the pace of learning was quick and secure, giving individual feedback as needed.
- A broad variety of assessment for learning techniques are used appropriately and executed successfully. For example, in a Year 11 geography lesson, pause and wait time was used effectively to give students time to think hard individually and in pairs to write detailed responses using prior and recently learned knowledge. There is also a real understanding of how to use assessment to identify misconceptions which are often anticipated and planned for.
- The laser focus on learning is mirrored by the culture for learning. Students are highly focussed because every classroom uses the same embedded routines, such as random selection. The consistency of high-quality implementation and very clear expectations of student conduct mean that classrooms are focussed learning environments. Therefore, engagement is equitable and high and low level disruption is virtually non-existent.
- Suspensions are low by national comparisons and have reduced over time. Students speak positively about lessons and agree 'that not a single second is wasted' in class. Their increasing agency is exemplified by 100% attendance to 'P6' lessons in Year 11.
- The use of data is a strength of the school and permeates all layers of self-evaluation and historical analysis. Data Driven Reports (DDR's) are an empowering example of this and allow all teachers to identify key groups of students who may need intervention and additional classroom support. The impact of this work is having tangible, positive results with a three-year rising trend of results which are now well above the national average for attainment.
- Similarly, attendance data utilises a forensic level of analysis to identify trends and individuals whom the school needs to support further to boost their attendance. The impact of this work means that last year the school achieved attendance rates above the national average.

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

- ... teachers encouraged active listening during all discussions and more confident projection as part of embedding oracy within learning.
- ... teachers optimised the rich assessment for learning opportunities to fully explore learning and misconceptions, making sure students had the time to do so.

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

- The expectations for students with SEND and disadvantaged students are as uncompromisingly high as they are for others. Teachers understand that they have a responsibility to scaffold learning so that they lead to the same outcomes for all learners. The knowledgeable SENDCo and her team provide easily accessible one-page profiles with the highest leverage strategies to facilitate the universal offer for students in classrooms.
- This forms the first layer of a graduated response that helps form a cycle of identification and support. The system of 'assess, plan, do and review' is highly inclusive, as parents and outside agencies work together with the school to ensure that the appropriate level of support is offered.
- Teaching assistants (TAs) are deployed wisely in classrooms to support the universal offer. The school invests time in their training to optimise their deployment. For each teaching pedagogy TAs are given training on how to support, facilitate or mirror that activity. A teaching assistant in Year 11 geography circulated the class without distracting students to quietly support those that were struggling. She was able to explain her role and how her training had ensured that TAs were not expected to create dependency by being 'velcroed' to students.
- Leaders firmly believe that equity in learning for disadvantaged students means being in class as often as possible with full access to the curriculum. Therefore, the vast majority of intervention and more focussed targeted work happens before lessons and after school. Disadvantaged students are supported after school with homework, providing technology and space for uninterrupted access to learning. All homework deadlines are set with disadvantaged students in mind to ensure that they have a week to organise their schedule to take advantage of these opportunities.
- Leaders track disadvantaged students' progress, attendance and participation in enrichment activities. They are subsidised for trips that would normally be out of reach for some families. This means that disadvantaged students receive the same cultural capital and global awareness development opportunities as others.

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

... leaders continued to focus on improving the attendance of disadvantaged students and those with SEND.

5. Area of Excellence

Everyone Thinking – you could be next!

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 employs engagement for learning strategies using a variety of assessment techniques that result in highly focussed learning. Students feel a sense of 'I need to be alert and thinking hard because I may be asked to contribute'. This is because there is an extreme focus on delivering high quality continuing professional development (CPD) that empowers teachers to use a variety of pedagogies that encourage interactive learning. Questioning is one element of this. The school has deliberate routines around think, pair, share, mini whiteboards and feedback using random selection. Planning for misconceptions is an integral part of lesson co-construction led by subject leaders. CPD centres around learning the 'why' of the technique before learning how to deliver it consistently using a highly structured and procedural approach.

Research-based evidence has helped shape the development of expertise. Lemov's Teach like a Champion research and professional development models from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) are evident in CPD and the consistency of practice seen in learning explorations. The delivery of CPD is particularly effective because everyone learns new pedagogy in the same way in which it is taught so no matter what your role in the school you experience what students do as an 'end user'. This reinforces expertise and practice in the classroom and demonstrates sustainability of the model as it evolves further.

Transferability is also validated by the work with other schools both locally and nationally. As part of a peer review partnership, leaders have worked jointly on developing a consistent approach to questioning with two schools out of borough. Hornchurch has also supported another local school in the trust to implement random selection. In doing this work, there has been further development of the

questioning model to develop structured implementation for student discussion routines.

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

Sustainability of this model is crucial for the school and is made more remarkable because of the context the school found itself in two years ago. A challenging recruitment climate coincided with a period of stagnation. A way for rapid improvement needed to be sought with a very young, inexperienced staff and new headteacher.

The results of the implementation of this model have vindicated the planning and decision making of the headteacher and leadership team.

The school is now able to fill its vacancies and offer a broad and sustainable curriculum with subjects like GCSE psychology.

Outcomes have improved dramatically from negative value added in 2022 to strongly positive in 2024. Attainment has also improved by over 8.5 points over a two-year period. This is attainment for all as the most disadvantaged have benefitted by raising their attainment in all measures over the same time period. The highlight has been a 50% improvement in the number of disadvantaged students achieving five or more higher grades, including English and mathematics. This is now the same as the national figure for all students.

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

Name: Jas Padda

Title: Deputy headteacher: Quality of Education

Email: jpadda@hornchurchhigh.com

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 content reports from across the partnership of schools and trusts including using AI tools to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector (sharing these with the partnership) each year. The QA Review reports remain confidential to Challenge Partners and the

host school. This ensures that schools embrace the review as a development process, acting as a catalyst for their ongoing improvement. This is the primary purpose of the QA review. However, our aim is that the thematic analysis will demonstrate the additional value of a sector wide overview, illustrated with real-life examples.

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 partnership of schools. The School Support Directory 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>)