

School Requesting Support

Date of Review	6-3-2024
School name	Melland High School
Principal	Sue Warner
Vice Principal	Jill Cinan, Julie Barnett, Zoe Edgar

Review Team

Names of colleagues involved in the Review Team	Tim Long, The Challenge Academy Trust Helen O'Brien, Head of School, The Orchards School Matthew Parker, Sentient Education Ltd
---	---

Context

Melland High School has received regular external reviews with the most recent one being November 2023. The consistent judgement has been that the school continues to be Outstanding. Following discussions with school leaders, it was agreed that we should focus upon how well colleagues at the school can articulate how they achieve the success that do in preparation for any Ofsted Inspection.

Dashboard

Areas of vulnerability – these are not Ofsted grades but are based on the snapshot seen by the review team on the day.	
Quality of Education	
Behaviour and Attendance	
Personal Development	
Sixth Form	

Key:

	Secure elements were seen in this area
	Some elements leave this area vulnerable and require immediate work
	Exemplary elements seen in this area

Themed Areas

- Quality of Education
- Behaviour and Attendance
- Personal Development
- The Sixth Form

Strengths overall

- The Academy's curriculum is carefully planned and well sequenced across all Key Stages. It has breadth and covers the National Curriculum. It is well informed by educational research and has been subject to exhaustive external review and scrutiny. Component knowledge has been carefully identified and is well sequenced. The curriculum is ambitious for all and is subject to significant and effective adaptations appropriate to the context of the academy. There are clear, overarching principles that inform each of the individual pathways thereby providing a coherent vision that underpins the curriculum.
- The pathways within the curriculum are exceptional in providing both breadth and depth to the curriculum. The combination of different pathways and their inherent flexibility mean that the diverse needs of the students can be appropriately addressed; it is a curriculum with the student at the centre.
- The academy's DNA is characterised by the principle of responsiveness. All staff, the academy's chosen pedagogies and the marshalling of resources, for example, are managed in such a way as to ensure the academy can respond dynamically and strategically to the existing and emerging need of students at all times. This is superbly executed because the academy has integrated this principle across all tiers of the organisation. For example, CPD has a clear programme but is flexible enough to change nimbly and swiftly where appropriate. Similarly where a student might have been struggling to access the planned curriculum, they remain looped into their broader learning so that they can be redirected back to the planned curriculum when appropriate.
- The student is the centre of all that happens. Where things don't go to plan-something the school plans and prepares for, the question asked is "What can we do better?" not "Where did the student go wrong?" Staff know students extremely well. Additionally, because the student is at the centre of all decisions, staff work carefully to ensure that they can see themselves in their own learning. This could be by bringing alive abstract concepts like the Anglo Saxons through cosplay or by contextualising the character Scrooge in a Christmas Carol by asking students to reflect upon whether bullies can ever be forgiven.
- The academy has very strong systems including in the Sixth Form that are routinely followed by all staff, thereby ensuring that the experience of students is predictable and consistent producing a learning environment where students feel secure, confident and willing to take risks.
- The academy relentlessly looks to overcome any barriers to learning, especially in terms of cognition, learning, behaviour and attendance.
- In the Sixth Form, the authentic links to employers and work opportunities- including the use of alumni, is exemplary.
- Safeguarding is systemically strong and successfully addresses a wide set of risks especially with regard to the next steps in students' learning.

Areas for Development overall

- The school is characterised by the responsive nature of all it does. There is a risk however, that in being responsive some strategic goals and ambitions might appear to be compromised. To mitigate this risk the academy should consider foregrounding the fact that the academy's main aim and strategic goal is precisely **to be** responsive. This would provide a context and safety net within which it can be entirely responsive whilst avoiding any risk of hyper-personalisation or drift away from key objectives. Ensuring, therefore, that the systems that track this responsiveness are both visible and credible is essential.
- The academy has a strong, knowledge-rich curriculum and through its expert understand of pedagogy is able to execute its delivery with striking success so that students can "learn more and remember more." These adaptations and pedagogies are so deep rooted that at times colleagues forget to mention them. It's worth colleagues reminding themselves that successfully

addressing issues like reading, adapting the curriculum, supporting long term memory, avoiding cognitive overload etc. are precisely the pedagogies that other educational environments struggle to deliver with impact. Equally, the overarching principles of the curriculum including “Powerful Knowledge”, “Vocabulary”, “Specialist Pedagogies”, “Flexible Curriculum Pathways”, “SMSC” and the identification of Threshold Concepts provide the perfect scaffold for any structured conversation of individual subject areas when it comes to articulating the curriculum.

- The academy has thought in detail about how to scale up its current provision given the expansion in numbers. Its ability to action this fully is compromised by the persisting uncertainty surrounding budgets and this needs addressing as a matter of urgency.
- The school is acutely aware of how any expansion must build capacity for leaders, pastoral staff and the Safeguarding Team and this work needs to start imminently.
- Phonics is one of the academy’s key priorities. The consolidation of its approach is exemplified through the introduction of a daily phonics lessons. The opportunity to spread this more widely across the formal curriculum is in progress as is the ability to articulate clearly the school’s approach to avoid any ambiguity of understanding.
- The infographic that illustrates the curriculum pathways is a linear continuum. However, colleagues said on several occasions that the experience of students is often not linear. The academy might therefore wish to illustrate how a student journeys though their own curriculum alongside the more abstract model of curriculum design.
- The academy is modest, but potentially modest to a fault. There is nothing wrong in championing where its strengths lie- especially as it can identify why it achieves the success it does, since success on the scale of Melland’s does not happen by accident.

Tim Long TCAT