



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR THE WYMERING SCHOOL

Name of School:	The Wymering School
Headteacher/Principal:	Sally Rogers
Hub:	Beacon Hub
School phase:	Specialist Provision Age 9-16
MAT (if applicable):	The Delta Education Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Not Applicable (N/A)
Date of this Review:	20/01/2025
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	N/A
Date of last QA Review:	First quality assurance review
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	New school awaiting first graded inspection
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	N/A

Quality Assurance Review



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

Leadership at all levels N/A

Quality of provision and outcomes N/A

AND

Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs

Area of excellence Identified for the next review.

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence N/A

Overall peer evaluation estimate N/A

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' ng 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

The brand new Wymering School, opened in 2023, sits imposingly on Cosham hillside, with exceptional views down to the historic, maritime city of Portsmouth, and the harbour below.

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Wymering is a specialist provision for pupils aged 9-16, with 66 pupils working onsite, while nine have a specialist offer that is built around individual inclusion timetables. All pupils have educational, health and care plans (EHCPs). All pupils have challenges relating to social communication, alongside associated special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The most common diagnosis on EHCPs is autism and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

The number of pupils in receipt of pupil premium is double the national average. Boys make up more than 80% of the pupil cohort. The range of complex mental health needs across the cohort is exceptionally high.

Pupils tumble into school excited to catch up with the myriad of school pets, from the three cats, school dog, rats, and tortoises (to name a few). You can hear the calls of 'Morning Basil' as the red labrador visits all the classrooms, while leaders meet pupils to develop their ideas for a 'cat cafe'.

The Wymering mantra is to 'Do Good, Feel Good'. One pupil explained, 'I love this school. I've been at other schools, but not like this one,' and it shows, reflected in the caring and loving relationships, that are part of the school's trauma-informed practice.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Since being appointed, the headteacher and senior leaders have built their vision of The Wymering School from the ground up, with precision and at pace. When first appointed, the new build was not complete and was behind the target for its handover date. The head and deputy headteachers met parents and carers and undertook consultations in separate office spaces, discussing what the school would be able to achieve for pupils with complex SEND without a school to walk around. Since then, the school has scaled incredibly quickly, with admissions at 10% over the stated pupil admission numbers, and with tribunals for places a constant feature. By delivering their vision of what can be achieved for their specialist cohort, in a very short time, parents and carers appreciate the difference the Wymering school is making to the lives of their children.
- The leadership team has expanded and extended, reflecting the reality of the school maturing to its full complement of pupils and staff. The extended team ensures that the specialism of understanding and practice matches the deep thinking and careful planning that the pupils need to overcome their exceptional barriers to learning. With the extra capacity developed, senior

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leaders deliver their agenda for school improvement and quality assurance, while 'working through others,' developing the senior leaders of the future.

- Pupils at Wymering benefit from superb mental health support, engineered by leaders, from the planning stages of opening the school. Within the team are specialists with masters degrees in understanding mental health support. Alongside the universal offer staff provide for all pupils, some benefit from individualised specialist programmes, bespoke in design, to help tackle more serious self-esteem, low mood, anxiety and anger, and grief and loss issues. With early intervention, alongside working with the local child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) team, pupils whose education could easily go off track when they have rising mental health needs, get the support they need to keep on track, and access the opportunities they have in order to lead fulfilled lives.
- Middle leaders have passion and enthusiasm for their key mission of developing and supporting pupils and staff across the school. Planning and progression models are engineered to meet the needs of pupils in each class. Where the curriculum follows a thematic scheme, as used across Key Stages 2 and 3, pupils' progress is documented on the school's assessment platform, *Earwig*. Pupils have their progress carefully tracked, and opportunities to stretch learning are identified quickly where pupils have a 'spiky profile'.

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

...leaders revised the SEF to ensure that in its initial pages it fully explained the complexity of the cohort, and the core functions of the blended curricula.

...supporting activities had clear direction and expectation to ensure that learning opportunities are consistently maximised for all pupils.

...the school put forward an 'Area of Excellence' for the next review, sharing their understanding of 'building positive relational practice with pupils with complex SEMH and associated mental health needs'.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- The curricula offer at Wymering is consistently evolving and being refined to ensure that it matches pupils' needs. There is a blended offer that flexes to meet the needs of the pupils. This includes therapeutic interventions so that pupils can access their school lives, the EHCP long-term targets that hold the aspirations of the families and the child, and adapted academic content that matches the pupils' interests and prior gaps in their learning. With a curricula

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that really reflects the needs of the pupils, pupils are well-prepared for their lives as neurodiverse adults.

- Learning is underpinned by strong relationships with pupils, which enables pupils to take risks within their learning and to challenge themselves. Lessons are well structured and predictable, and pupils benefit from a work-reward approach that suits their attention and focus levels. The use of digital literacy platforms supports high levels of engagement and allows pupils to work with increasing independence. Digital literacy enables mistakes to be quickly rectified. This way, pupils learn that mistakes are part of the learning process.
- Staff offer immediate feedback on pupils' work, and help them to celebrate their successes, identifying the next steps for learning. The school's support staff team has ownership of recording progress against pupils' EHCP targets and are able to articulate pupils' individual progress and offer evidence-based judgements about when pupils have securely met a target. With careful assessment in place, pupils' progress can be recorded and refined for each pupil's annual review.
- Wymering pupils have often had a very poor experience of education prior to coming. Many have triggers that link to academic tasks. To get around this, Wymering is a school where the staff are incredibly skilled at introducing 'sneaky learning'. As one pupil explained, 'I love it here... we don't do maths,' having followed a complex recipe in Food Tech, and taking part in the construction of the 'Wymshed' (a self-built shed on the school site). With the anxiety linking to academic learning negated, pupils have the chance to fill their days with their learning.
- Digital learning is a priority for Wymering. Staff have accessed courses and apprenticeships to ensure current and relevant developments across the school occur. One colleague recently achieved 'Technology and Digital Apprenticeship' of the year. Priorities have included *TEAMS*, *Canva*, and *Clicker* to support staff and pupils in developing the digital curriculum. Consideration has been given to what IT skills will be required beyond Wymering, to enable pupils to communicate effectively and have the relevant life skills required. Digital understanding is pursued with passion, enthusiasm, and careful consideration for new developments.
- The physical education offer is based upon pupils' needs and interests, which is closely linked to pupils' sensory programmes. Activities are planned around themes such as 'teamwork', 'community links', and developing 'gross motor and fine motor skills'. Pupils are prepared for making the lifelong correlation between physical activity and how they feel. For example, during a Key Stage 4 lesson, staff coached pupils to 'do good, feel good on the trampoline'. With their sensory needs addressed, pupils are able to spend more time regulated and enjoying their school day.

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- The Key Stage 4 curriculum has been refined to meet the needs of the current cohort of pupils. A range of qualifications are offered, enabling all Year 11 pupils to have places at local colleges in September 2025. Personal development at Key Stage 4 is exciting, and offers preparation for adulthood experiences, such as developing independent travel training. With a sharpened focus on ensuring pupils have the right content at the right time, pupils in Key Stage 4 are well prepared for the next steps of their education journey.

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

...as the first cohort leaves the school this year from Year 11, ex-pupils' success at engaging with their planned next employment, education, or training package was recorded across a five-year cycle, adding to the school's alumni and careers, education, information, advice, and guidance offer.

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

- The Wymering curriculum equips pupils to better access and enjoy the wider community. In the last term there have been 53 offsite trips, including paddleboarding, swimming, *Flip Out*, *Pompey Pedal Cycling*, residential trips, visiting local parks, and the golf driving range. The school even achieved a successful whole school trip to the panto. The list is extensive, with the staff team striving for more. All off-site trips support pupils' management of their sensory needs and communication skills, and enable them to understand appropriate behaviour, including when to leave the fun behind. As the pupils are encouraged to try new experiences, their confidence and self-esteem increases. These positive outcomes impact family wellbeing, as the pupils develop their capacity to access more experiences in the wider community.
- The therapy team at Wymering school is embedded into the school's weekly practice. Pupils, and sometimes their families, work on speech and language therapy communication targets, alongside sensory profiles. The growing staff have had their skills developed via a professional development offer including *social stories*, *Wordaware*, and *Lego Therapy*. Pupils use these to access their learning across the school day, either being supported by the school's universal offer, or with more specialist interventions. As the whole school community improves their communication and regulation understanding,

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pupils get more and more chances to thrive and develop the skills they need for adulthood.

- The complexity of the cohort means that the school has an uncommon intersectionality of mental health needs, including exceptional anxiety, self harm risks, suicidal ideation, CAMHS needs, disordered eating and/or having medication to support sleep. The school has developed a means to capture this, so that staff are aware of the varying support and key indicators they need to be aware of. With pupils' challenging needs identified, the staff have all the information they need to try and ensure they can best support pupils.

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

...there was an even earlier introduction to career-based experiences from Key Stage 2 forwards, so that wherever possible the pupils are being prepared for a life of purposeful experiences and/or work (supported or unsupported).

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 hub networks 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 network of schools.



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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/teachinglearning-toolkit>)