



Quality Assurance Review

Headteacher Handbook

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The QA Review in numbers



798 Senior Leaders trained as reviewers

93% have reviewed
outside of their
teaching school
alliance in 2012/13

8% have reviewed a
different phase from
their own in 2012/13



Over 200 schools have received a QA Review

Approx. 3000 lesson
observations have
taken place in 2012/13



Alongside 23 Ofsted-accredited
inspectors

1. Introduction

We believe there is much that is good about our schools, yet we also know that there is more we can all learn. Building a healthy educational system requires a moral commitment to sharing and learning. Collaboration is at the heart of all we do in Challenge Partners, and the activities within the group are underpinned by an ethos of open accountability and trust. Within this we recognise the importance of strong quality assurance.

Challenge Partners' quality assurance and assessment is built around a professionally-led peer review focused on teaching and learning. The review highlights areas of strength, including outstanding knowledge within hubs and across the Partners. It also identifies areas for development, bringing key challenges to schools for the coming year.

The Challenge Partners Review is not an Ofsted inspection and should not be viewed as a mock inspection. The strength of the review lies in how it allies the rigour and professionalism of Ofsted with the care and collaborative approach of a partnership. This is a joint exercise between the review team and the school. All observations and meetings include a member of the school being reviewed working alongside the reviewers. Discussion about the findings and even the writing of the report are a collaborative effort between the review team and the school's senior leadership team. This approach enables honest and open conversations about where the school is and where it is going, for the benefit of all concerned.

Another of the significant benefits that the review brings is the development opportunities for senior staff. By nature of being a peer review, conducted by current practitioners, those on the review team receive a rich developmental experience as they step into another environment working alongside an Ofsted-accredited inspector.

“This has singlehandedly been the best CPD I have personally undertaken in many years. Being reviewed and being part of the review team is an invaluable experience and I would wholeheartedly recommend it”

Headteacher of a primary school in Birmingham

Reviewers can take these experiences and learning back to their own schools.

As you participate in the review we trust you will find it both a beneficial and enjoyable experience. The guidance within this document is designed to ensure that all reviewers follow a standard procedure during the Quality Assurance Review, so that every school and every individual involved in the process benefits as much as possible.

2. Aims of the QA Review

The QA Review aims to provide:

- Initial audit for schools joining Challenge Partners
- A quality audit trail for Ofsted
- Key challenges for the school for the next year
- Identification of areas of excellent practice within hubs and across the partnership
- Development opportunities for senior staff

The review comprises both data analysis and a school visit. It identifies areas of strength ('What Went Well') and those for development ('Even Better If') and provides the basis for an appropriate course of improvement measures. The review does not look at the same areas as Ofsted, neither should it be considered as a mock inspection; however the review is undertaken in the context of the most recent Ofsted framework.

For good or outstanding schools

The QA Review is particularly useful in being able to provide challenge to a school which may be less likely to receive regular Ofsted inspections. It can highlight areas of best practice and estimate where a school is since its last inspection.

“The best decision I ever made as a Headteacher was to join Challenge Partners. This review proved that.”

Headteacher of a primary school in London

For improving schools

The review can identify areas of strength and celebrate them, as well as provide opportunities to share best practice.

For schools in special measures

The standard review model may not be appropriate for schools in special measures, in which case a discussion would take place to agree a format which would be most helpful to the school.

3. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

CPD is an important aspect of the QA Review for all involved:

For Teachers

Teachers who are observed will receive feedback on their lesson observation within the framework of 'What Went Well' and 'Even Better If'. Feedback is intended to be developmental, and therefore, conclusions about these observations cannot be grounds for disciplinary proceedings or dismissal. It can, however, be used in conjunction with personal development plans.

For Middle Leaders

In choosing an Area of Excellent Practice you may choose a particular subject area to be put under scrutiny. For middle leaders this can be an affirmation that their department is a high-performing one, because after being confirmed as an Area of Excellent Practice, the department's details will be put into the Challenge Partners Subject Directory.

For Senior Leaders

As the QA Review is a joint process between the review team and your school, your Senior Leaders will be at the forefront of this collaboration. For each lesson observation, meeting or learning walk you timetable, a member of the review team will be paired with a member of your Senior Leadership Team. Together they will discuss and come to an agreement about the quality of learning. Your Senior Leaders will also be responsible for providing feedback to the teachers who have been observed during the review. You may also choose to select your best Senior Leaders to undertake the QA Review training: meaning they will be able to participate in a QA Review at another Challenge Partners school. Training takes place at a hub level at least once a year; in order to take part in this training your chosen Senior Leaders should meet the following criteria:

- Be an outstanding practitioner
- Be on the school's Senior Leadership Team (including Headteachers), be a Challenge Partners Subject Leader or a Specialist Leader of Education
- Have a successful track record, supported by impact evidence, of working effectively within their own school and/or a group of schools
- Have evidence of successfully using coaching and/or facilitation skills
- Have excellent communication skills, with the ability to work sensitively and collaboratively with peers and colleagues
- Have an understanding of what constitutes good and outstanding elements of school practice and have the ability and confidence to articulate this
- Have the capacity to attend a review (3 days) at least once in the academic year
- Be available to attend reviews nationally

4. Peer Review

By nature of being a peer review the members of the review team that come to visit your school will be outstanding practitioners from other Challenge Partners schools. They will have received training by our Head Reviewers in lesson observations, making judgements, and peer review protocols. During the review the team will be quality assured by the Lead Reviewer who will validate their judgements.

“The team were experts in their own field and gave constructive feedback”

Headteacher of a primary school in Luton

“Team were great, lots of good ideas shared as well as a rigorous review of school”

Headteacher of a secondary school in Northamptonshire

The number of reviewers on the team that come to your school will depend on the number of pupils at your school and will be equal to the number of reviews we will allocate to your trained Senior Leaders to participate in at other schools.

Number of pupils at school	Number of Senior Leaders on your review team (<u>not</u> including Lead Reviewer)
< 300	2 reviewers
301-500	3 reviewers
501-1600	4 reviewers
> 1600	5 reviewers

5. Before your review

You will receive a reminder about your review, and a confirmation of the members of your review team, by email about 3 weeks before your review. You will also be contacted by your Lead Reviewer in advance of the review. Before the review team arrives at your school, the following preparations should be made:

<p>Prepare a timetable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use Appendix 4 as a guide• Ensure that the review team have time to discuss findings, and at least half an hour for lunch• Discuss any queries with your Lead Reviewer	<p>Brief teachers being observed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the teacher to provide you with a lesson plan if they are happy for it to be shared with the review team• Make them aware how many people they can expect in their classroom (maximum of 3), and when
<p>Brief your Senior Leadership Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure they understand the collaborative approach of the QA Review• Make arrangements for the Senior Leaders involved to come off timetable	<p>Make arrangements for the review team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organise a room the team can use as a base during the review• Arrange for refreshments and lunch to be provided• Print hard copies of your documentation for the PRA

When briefing your staff about the tone and purpose of the QA Review you may wish to explain the following:

The tone of the review is developmental in approach; relying on a collaborative but challenging dialogue between the school being reviewed and the review team. This process acts as a channel for constructive and open discussions about how effective the school is and suggests areas where the school could be more effective. It is intended that the review is as beneficial for the professional development of all the individuals involved as much as it is a useful audit for schools. The Senior Leaders that form the review team are all outstanding practitioners, and they are quality assured by the Lead Reviewer throughout the process. The findings of the review are compiled into a report that is written by an Ofsted-accredited inspector. It is up to the Headteacher to use and/or publish the report as they see appropriate.

6. During your review

Outline of the review week

The review of one school takes place over 3 days: this includes one afternoon for the Pre-Review Analysis (PRA), one full day of review activities, and one morning for further review activities and the concluding discussions.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
AM		Review day 1 8am-5pm	Review day 2 8am-12pm
PM	PRA from 1pm- 4pm		

Pre-Review Analysis (PRA)

The PRA will take place at your school in the afternoon before the review begins. It will involve the Lead Reviewer and the review team looking at your school's documentation. All that is needed is a room and refreshments as well as hard copies of the required documentation. The PRA takes account of the documentation provided and identifies possible questions for discussion with the school. Reviewers are briefed to make sure that they do not take any of the documentation outside of your school. The documents required for the PRA are listed below:

Tick once compiled

- School Improvement Plans (SIP)
- Self-Evaluation Analysis (SEF)
- RAISEonline
- Data relating to Sixth Form e.g. ALIS (if appropriate)
- Previous Ofsted report and any survey visit reports
- Completed Area of Excellence form (Appendix 3)
- Any previous Challenge Partners QA Review reports (if applicable)

Review day 1 and 2

Each day will begin at 8am and will begin with a meeting between the review team and your SLT. The exact nature of review activities undertaken will depend on the timetable that you create, but you can expect your school to experience some of the following:

- Lesson observations of 30 minutes followed by discussion time
- Meetings to discuss a certain area of the review e.g. achievement
- Learning walks
- Meetings between the review team and your SLT to discuss the day's findings and firm up points that will be used in the school's report

The review report

The findings from the review activities will feed into categories that make up the sections of the review report. All findings for the report will be discussed between you, your SLT, the Lead Reviewer and the review team. The report will then be written by the Ofsted-accredited Lead Reviewer and then quality assured by one of Challenge Partners' Head Reviewers. The areas covered are:

- Summary of estimates and overall review evaluation
- *Context of the School*: Taken from the most recent Ofsted report
- *School Improvement Strategies*: Summary of 'What Went Wells' and 'Even Better Ifs' about the effectiveness of school improvement strategies, using Challenge Partners grade descriptors that draw elements from Ofsted criteria about Leadership and Management
- *Achievement*: Data analysis based on Ofsted criteria
- *Quality of Teaching*: Summary of 'What Went Wells' and 'Even Better Ifs' about the quality of teaching based on Ofsted criteria
- *Quality of Area of Excellent Practice*: Evaluation of strengths and aspects of exemplary practice
- *Partnerships*: An evaluation of the impact of partnership activities on school improvement and/or Challenge Partners

You should receive your report within two weeks after your review has taken place.

7. After your review

Using your review

In School: Feedback should be offered to the individuals who have been observed. From a whole school perspective, the findings can inform your SIP and SEF in coming years, as well as the services you may seek out from the expertise of the partnership.

In your hub: You are encouraged to share the review report with your hub to facilitate the collaboration and learning process with these schools. It is suggested that you meet together with your hub to discuss the outcomes of the review and determine how you can best work together to capitalise on strengths and address areas for development in your hub. The review should also inform where a hub will invest in teaching and learning in the coming year.

“Our review was a very positive experience for all involved. It will enable us to be even better prepared for our upcoming inspection and move other issues forward”

Headteacher of a secondary school in London

Feedback

You will be sent an email inviting you to offer feedback on the review process the week after your review. This online survey can also be accessed by visiting:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QARheadteacherfeedback>

Completing this survey enables you to offer your opinion on what works well about the review process, and what could be further improved. Your time taken to fill in this survey is greatly appreciated.