



Quality Assurance Review

Reviewer 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. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Participating in a QA Review provides an excellent CPD opportunity for the Senior Leaders who form the review team. As a reviewer some of the key aspects of the review that you may have the opportunity to experience are:

- Observing best practice
- Discussion with colleagues
- Visiting a school in a different context from your own
- Taking part in review activities including lesson observations, meetings, work scrutiny and learning walks
- Coaching from the Lead Reviewer to both hone your observation skills and help articulate the conclusions you draw from your review activities
- Having an active role in an audit of a school using the latest Ofsted framework

At the beginning of the review you will be asked to choose an area from your skillset that you would like to develop (this can be chosen in discussion with your Lead Reviewer). This will feed into how you complete your Self-Evaluation Form (Appendix 8), which your Lead Reviewer will write a comment on at the end of the review. We also ask that you share this with your Headteacher or colleagues when you return to your school.

Testimonials

“The CPD for me as a professional was excellent”
Headteacher of a secondary school in Sussex

“The best CPD I have ever had in order to develop my own school practices”
Senior Leader at a primary school in Leicester

“CPD for review team is second to none”
Senior Leader at a secondary school in Birmingham

“This has been one of the best CPD experiences I have had, and I really enjoyed working with my fellow reviewers” *Senior Leader at a secondary school in Manchester*

Reviewing cross-phase

The QA Review sometimes offers the opportunity to review cross-phase, for example by placing primary school reviewing on secondary reviews. You may review any of the following types of school: Infant, Junior, Primary, Middle, Secondary, All-through, PRU, Special.

National network

Challenge Partners is a national network and the widespread location of the schools that we review is a reflection of this. To make the most of the breadth of expertise within schools across our network we aim to place reviewers in a variety of locations.

“I felt inspired, confident in my own ability to do my role but above all, I learned so much from others”

Senior Leader at a secondary school in Devon

The CPD experience of the review can be further built upon each time you review. No two schools’ reviews you take part in will be the same, and each time you review you will become more experienced and have more confidence in the conclusions you make.

3. 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.

Reviewing two schools in a week

Where possible, reviewers from secondary schools are scheduled to review two schools in one week.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM		Review School 1 8am-5pm	Review School 1 8am-12pm	Review School 2 8am-5pm	Review School 2 8am-12pm
PM	PRA School 1 from 1pm-4pm		PRA School 2 1pm-4pm		

Reviewing one school in a week

Reviewers from primary schools, special schools and PRUs are usually scheduled to review one school in a week, though they can choose to review two if they would like. Reviewers from secondary schools may also review one school in a week due to circumstance or personal choice.

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

4. Before your review

Once your place on a review team has been confirmed with Challenge Partners you will receive a confirmation email with the details of the school you are reviewing. A reminder email will be sent to you around one month in advance of the review and will include the contact details of your Lead Reviewer and team members. You may choose to contact one another to introduce yourselves before the review.

Accommodation and travel

We recommend that you contact the relevant school office for accommodation suggestions and information about local transport options. Sometimes review teams also wish to contact each other in advance of the review to coordinate accommodation arrangements to socialise or to continue discussions during the evenings. It is expected that your school will pay for your accommodation and travel in recognition of the development opportunity that the review provides.

Review preparation

Before you take part in a review it is important that you read the latest Ofsted report of each school that you are reviewing in order to gain an awareness of its context.

Checklist

Tick once completed

- Arrange travel and accommodation
- Read the latest Ofsted report for each school you are reviewing
- Print lesson observation forms (appendix 6)
- Print learning walk forms (appendix 7)
- Print the Self-Evaluation Form (Appendix 8)

5. During your review

Pre-Review Analysis

To prepare for the review the Lead Reviewer will meet with the review team for the Pre-Review Analysis (PRA). The PRA takes account of the documentation provided and identifies possible questions for discussion with the school. Please note that Challenge Partners does not send out schools' data to reviewers in advance due to the sensitive nature of some of these documents. Similarly, any documentation looked at over the course of the review must be left at the school and not taken home with you.

Review day 1 and 2

Each day will begin at 8am and will begin with a meeting between the review team and the school's Senior Leadership Team. The exact nature of review activities you will undertake depends on the timetable created by the school, but you can expect to experience some of the following:

- Between 4 and 5 paired lesson observations of 30 minutes followed by a discussion with the Senior Leader you are paired with
- Meetings to discuss a certain area of the review e.g. achievement
- Learning walks
- Meetings between the review team and the school's SLT to discuss the day's findings and firm up points that will be used in the school's report

The review report

During the review you may be assigned one of the following areas to look into and you may be able to contribute towards its section in the report. The final report will be written by the Lead Reviewer.

- 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
- *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

6. After your review

It is important that when you return to your school you share your completed Self-Evaluation Form (Appendix 8) with either your Headteacher or your colleagues. You may also wish to share with your school any other learning experiences gained from participation in the review.

“From the review the learning I take back to my school is valuable and relevant. It provides an opportunity to reflect and review back in school with fresh eyes”

Senior Leader at a secondary school in Northamptonshire

You will also 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/seniorleaderfeedback>

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.