MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Spring Term 2026 Quality Assurance Visit

Please note: *the final report should be returned to the relevant* ***SSQA by Friday 20 March 2026*** *Please make sure that the final report has been proofread, agreed with the school and that ALL sections are complete.*

The general information and action taken since the last visit should be completed by the school prior to the QA visit.

General information to be completed by the school			
School name	North Ridge High School		
Headteacher	Shauna Johnson	**Chair of Governors**	Tom Eccles
QA professional	Gary Handforth	**Date & length of meeting**	20.1.26 9:30-12:30
Meeting attendees and roles	**Staff: Shauna Johnson (HT), Sarah Darby(DHT), Kate Allely (DHT)**		
	Governance Board:		
Last Ofsted grades and date	Outstanding		
School's current judgement of Inclusion	Secure Standard	**School's current judgement of Personal Devt. & Wellbeing**	Secure Standard
School's current judgement of Curriculum & Teaching	Expected Standard	**School's current judgement of Leadership & Governance**	Secure Standard
School's current judgement of Achievement	Secure Standard	**School's current judgement of Early Years**	**N/A**
School's current judgement of Attendance & Behaviour	Expected Standard	**School's current judgement of Safeguarding**	Met

This term's Quality Assurance visit is designed to focus on both national and local priorities. The prompts in each section of the report are designed to **support discussions and exploration of the focus area**.

Progress against next steps identified in the previous visit		
Area	**Action taken**	**Impact**
Structured department: Consolidate TEACCH and Attention Autism practice across the department, ensuring consistent, embedded use of structured and engagement-based strategies. Complete rollout of pre-subject-specific curriculum pathways and associated training for staff.	SD trained as a level one Attention Autism practitioner. Training provided by SD to the department. Model lessons in all classes in 24-25 and for new teachers in Autumn term of 25-26. Resources purchased for successful implementation. Peer to peer support in place to share strong practice. New curriculum pathway written with 6 key areas – Early English, Early maths, independence, Wellbeing, Communication and play and leisure. Evidence for learning purchased and curriculum uploaded. 4 key teachers trained in using Evidence for Learning.	School self reporting: Lesson observations show increased engagement for pupils. Majority of lesson starters are creative and exciting and lead to progress within the lesson. Majority of pupils made good and better progress in communication. Curriculum roll-out in early stages. Initial learning walks and observations highlight creative, sensory teaching that is underpinned by play. Pupils are engaged in learning and

Extend sensory integration practice beyond Structured settings to ensure consistency across departments.	Shared planning for new curriculum. Observations and learning walks in place. Training in sensory integration room for staff in KS3 and 4 classes. OT referrals offered for all classes. Regulation and reset areas with associated activities in KS3 and 4 classrooms. Training and model lessons in Zones of Regulations provided by KA. Universal provision document in place for all classes so that class teams know what sensory provision is needed within each classroom.	spending more time in the classroom. Reduction in behaviour incidents for some pupils. Communication opportunities evident throughout the curriculum. Pupil evidence on Evidence for Learning shows that pupils are making progress. Currently in early stages of roll-out. Evidence of some good practice of zones of regulation – continued support to ensure this is embedded. OT contract ended – looking for a new contract.
6th Form provision: Strengthen assistive technology use in vocational contexts, building on existing communication-based provision. Continue to refine post-16 transition planning, with specific attention to real-world readiness and use of assistive technologies.	Purchase of mobile devices to use off-site that include 'natural reader' and with other AI apps for pupils Modelling of the use of 'Natural Reader' within the 6th form provision, specifically within the businesses as required	We are in the early stages of these areas, however the impact on the use of AI (such as Natural Reader' supports pupils in accessing their local community as independently as possible. Many of our pupils, due to their significant learning need, find reading extremely challenging even after many additional years following phonics support. This technology enables them to have the confidence to find information out for themselves such as shopping for food, accessing cafes, reading recipes and so forth.

Objective summary statement by QA professional. Any further action required?

Structured Department - Attention Autism (Attention for Learning) & Curriculum Pathways:

Progress against these objectives was evident during the visit. Attention for Learning (Attention Autism) practice was observed in action, with staff demonstrating confident delivery and pupils showing strong engagement. The sensory-structured curriculum pathway was visible across the four classes visited, with clear evidence of play-based, sensory learning and continuous provision approaches. Staff articulated the rationale for differentiated classroom structures and could explain how the new curriculum connects to pupil needs.

Universal provision documents were referenced during discussions and appear to be embedded in practice. The environmental modifications described (regulation and reset spaces, classroom adaptations) were observed and leaders discussed their impact on pupil engagement and behaviour.

Overall, the school has made substantial progress in embedding structured approaches and the sensory-structured curriculum pathway since the last visit. Evidence from observations, learning walks and discussions with leaders broadly supports the claims made in the self-evaluation.

Sensory Integration:

Evidence of sensory provision was visible across classrooms (regulation areas, reset spaces, sensory resources). However, the level of systematic implementation across all departments could not be fully verified during this visit. The school's assessment that this remains in 'early stages of roll-out' appears realistic. The loss of OT contract support may impact future development.

6th Form Provision:

The 6th form provision was not visited during this QA visit.

Next Steps:

- Continue to embed zones of regulation practice with consistent staff training and support
- Secure new OT contract to maintain sensory integration development
- Ensure systematic monitoring of sensory integration implementation across all departments
- Consider 6th form provision for inclusion in summer term visit to verify assistive technology implementation and transition planning progress

Strong Foundations (QAP to complete)		
*The revised Ofsted framework places a renewed emphasis on establishing and building on **strong foundations** in communication & language; reading, writing and mathematics in <u>all</u> phases of education, so that pupils can access the rest of the curriculum and gain later success.* **During this visit, QA professionals should undertake a learning walk across the school to explore how foundational knowledge is being developed and how gaps are being addressed. During this learning walk, QAPs should talk to leaders, staff and pupils; look at work in books and review teaching and learning approaches (whole-class and within any targeted interventions).**		
Prompt	**Comments**	**Supporting evidence**
How has your curriculum been designed so that <u>all</u> pupils secure the knowledge they need for future success in **all subjects**?	Leaders described a curriculum designed around developmental readiness rather than age-related expectations, with multiple pathways (sensory-structured, structured, SLD, experiential and post-16) reflecting pupils' differing cognitive profiles and preparation for adulthood. They emphasised a spiral curriculum model in which key knowledge and skills are revisited and consolidated over time, with a strong focus on functional literacy and numeracy, communication, independence and wellbeing.	Learning walk across sensory-structured, structured and SLD classes Professional dialogue with senior leaders

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	Evidence from the visit indicates that this rationale is largely reflected in practice. During the learning walk, pupils were observed revisiting foundational knowledge through routines, environment and adult interaction, with learning structured around repetition, small-step progression and conceptual variation rather than rapid content coverage. Leaders were able to articulate how curriculum learning connects to longer-term independence and post-16 pathways. The curriculum design represents a coherent and appropriate response to pupils' complex learning profiles, supporting pupils to secure essential knowledge for future learning and adulthood, with some curriculum pathways still in the process of embedding consistently.	and teaching staff Observation of classroom routines, environments and learning sequences
How has your curriculum in all subjects been designed to extend pupils' **language** and **vocabulary**	Leaders emphasised that language and communication underpin all curriculum areas, reflecting the high prevalence of speech, language and communication needs across the school. They described explicit identification of key vocabulary within curriculum planning, supported by symbols, signing and modelling, with vocabulary revisited across subjects to support retention and transfer. Evidence from the learning walk showed consistent adult modelling of language, structured communication opportunities and use of symbols and signing to support understanding. Classroom routines and interactions were language-rich, with adults deliberately extending pupils' responses and reinforcing key vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Overall, language development is clearly prioritised across the curriculum rather than confined to specific subjects or interventions. This integrated approach supports pupils to build and generalise vocabulary over time, aligned to their cognitive and communication needs.	Learning walk observations of adult–pupil interaction Observation of language modelling, symbols and signing Professional dialogue with staff during learning walk

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How does your curriculum <u>prioritise</u> **accurate and fluent word reading**, **spelling**, **handwriting** and **mathematics**?	Leaders described a structured and differentiated approach to literacy and numeracy, recognising that pupils enter the school with significant gaps due to their SEND. They explained that phonics, reading, spelling, handwriting and mathematics are taught explicitly where pupils are developmentally ready, while alternative functional and assistive approaches are used where the more traditional routes are not appropriate. During the visit, pupils were observed engaging in early literacy activities, supported by concrete resources, repetition and modelling. Where phonics was not appropriate, pupils were supported through functional literacy strategies and assistive technology to enable access and independence. Overall, the curriculum prioritises secure foundations in literacy and maths through precision and adaptation rather than uniformity. This supports pupils to develop fluency and confidence where possible, while ensuring meaningful access to learning and preparation for adulthood where alternative approaches are required.	Observation of literacy activities during learning walk Review of functional literacy and assistive approaches in practice Professional dialogue with leaders and staff
How and **when** do you identify pupils' starting points in: - Communication & Language - Reading - Writing - Maths? Does your current approach identify **precise gaps** in each of these areas at an individual pupil level? How do you ensure that ALL staff who work with	Leaders reported that pupils' starting points are identified on entry through transition information, baseline assessments and EHCP outcomes, and are revisited at the start of each academic year and key stage. Ongoing formative assessment is used to refine understanding of pupils' needs over time. Evidence from discussions with leaders and teaching staff during the learning walk showed strong awareness of individual pupils' starting points, particularly in communication and early literacy. Leaders were able to explain how assessment information informs daily practice and curriculum adaptation. Overall, assessment processes appear sufficiently flexible and responsive to pupils' complex profiles, enabling staff to identify meaningful starting points	Professional dialogue with leaders and class staff Staff articulation of individual pupil starting points during learning walk

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pupils are aware of what these gaps are?	and avoid inappropriate assumptions based on age or prior provision.	
How do you support pupils to catch up quickly where gaps are identified, in: - Communication & Language - Reading - Writing - Maths?	Leaders explained that support for closing gaps is primarily embedded within classroom practice, rather than relying solely on withdrawal interventions. Strategies include increased quality adult interaction, adapted resources, repetition and overlearning, alongside targeted interventions where appropriate. Evidence from the learning walk showed targeted support being delivered within lessons, particularly for communication, early reading and functional maths. Where additional need was identified, pupils accessed focused interventions such as phonics, communication-based programmes and functional numeracy activities matched to individual gaps. Overall, catch-up support is timely, responsive and proportionate, with an emphasis on sustaining engagement and readiness to learn rather than accelerating through content.	Observation of in-class targeted support Learning walk evidence of adapted teaching and resources
Who delivers this support? How often? What training / professional development have these staff received to equip them with the skills / knowledge to do this well?	Leaders reported that support is delivered by teachers and skilled support staff, including a Level 4 teaching assistant with specialist training in areas such as Lego Therapy, phonics, AAC and maths. Support is delivered regularly, both within lessons and through targeted small-group or one-to-one sessions. Evidence from the visit highlighted confident and consistent adult practice across classes, with staff demonstrating understanding of pupils' communication and learning needs. Leaders also described ongoing professional development, peer support and modelling to sustain practice. Overall, staff delivering foundational support appear appropriately trained and supported, with expertise deployed deliberately to meet pupils' needs.	Professional dialogue with leaders regarding staffing and CPD Observation of staff practice during learning walk

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What decisions have you made about staff deployment, allocation of resources and timetabling to support pupils who need to catch up / close gaps?	Leaders described deliberate decisions to prioritise foundational learning through staffing, resourcing and timetabling. This includes daily timetabled independence and IEP sessions, flexible deployment of staff across pathways, and investment in specialist resources and assistive technology. During the visit, these decisions were evident in classroom organisation, use of regulation and reset spaces, and protected time for functional and independence-based learning. Adjustments to provision were also discussed in response to emerging SEMH and attendance pressures. Overall, leaders have structured systems to protect time and expertise for foundational learning, supporting pupils to close gaps without compromising wellbeing or engagement.	Learning walk observations of staffing deployment and classroom organisation Professional dialogue with leaders regarding timetabling and resourcing
How do you monitor the impact of the support you provide to pupils with gaps in foundational knowledge? What is this telling you?	Leaders reported that impact is monitored through a combination of progress data, small-step assessment, learning journeys, observations and feedback from staff and families. They recognise that quantitative data alone does not capture the full impact for pupils with complex SEND. Evidence from the visit suggested that leaders place significant weight on qualitative indicators such as engagement, regulation, independence and time spent learning, alongside progress measures. Case examples discussed illustrated how this information informs adjustments to provision. Overall, monitoring processes support reflective decision-making rather than compliance. While progress data remains important, leaders appear appropriately focused on whether support is improving pupils' readiness, confidence and independence over time.	Professional dialogue with leaders regarding monitoring processes Discussion of case examples and qualitative indicators Review of progress and learning evidence referenced during visit

Governors' reflections

What overview do governors have of: • The school's approach to assessment / identification of gaps • The ongoing support / interventions in place to support pupils with gaps in foundational knowledge • The training / CPD staff receive to enable them to close gaps quickly • The impact provision is having on pupil outcomes?	Governors were not present during the visit. Leaders described how governors receive information about assessment, curriculum and intervention through reports and meetings. Further evidence would be needed to confirm the extent to which governors can confidently articulate which approaches are having the greatest impact on closing gaps in foundational learning.	
Can governors articulate the programmes / approaches that are having the greatest impact?		

Objective summary statement by QA professional, including strengths and agreed next steps
North Ridge High School is developing a coherent and consistent approach to curriculum design and foundational learning, grounded in a clear understanding of pupils' complex learning profiles and long-term preparation for adulthood. Leaders articulate a strong curriculum rationale centred on developmental readiness, consolidation and functional application, which was largely reflected in practice during the learning walk. The use of differentiated curriculum pathways provides an appropriate response to pupils' diverse cognitive, communication and sensory needs. **Strengths identified during this visit include:** • A clear and shared curriculum intent that prioritises communication, independence and readiness for adulthood over age-related coverage. • Strong foundations in communication and language, evident through consistent adult modelling, structured interaction and language-rich classroom environments. • Thoughtful and proportionate approaches to literacy and numeracy, with clarity about when phonics and formal routes are appropriate and when functional or assistive approaches better support access and independence. • Flexible assessment systems that enable staff to identify meaningful starting points and gaps, supported by strong shared understanding of pupils' needs across class teams. • Embedded structured approaches, including Attention Autism and sensory-structured curriculum pathways, which are supporting pupil engagement, regulation and access to learning.

- Monitoring systems that balance progress data with qualitative indicators such as engagement, independence and readiness to learn, supporting reflective and responsive decision-making.

The school has made secure progress against actions from the previous visit, particularly in embedding structured approaches and developing curriculum pathways. Evidence from observations, learning walks and professional dialogue broadly supports leaders' self-evaluation.

Agreed next steps focus on consolidation and consistency rather than new initiatives:

- Continue to embed and quality assure sensory integration practice across all departments, ensuring consistency beyond structured settings and mitigating the impact of the loss of OT support through securing alternative provision.
- Strengthen systematic monitoring of sensory integration and regulation approaches so leaders can clearly evaluate consistency and impact across pathways.
- Ensure that newer curriculum pathways continue to embed consistently, with particular attention to staff confidence and shared expectations.
- Include the 6th form provision in a future QA visit (summer term) to verify assistive technology use and post-16 transition planning in practice.
- Maintain oversight of how governors are supported to understand and articulate which curriculum and intervention approaches are having the greatest impact on closing gaps in foundational learning.

Overall, North Ridge High School is well placed to continue building on its strengths. The focus for the next phase should be on consolidating practice, strengthening external support where required, and ensuring consistent implementation and evaluation across all phases and pathways.