

Name of School:	Hermitage Primary School
Headteacher:	Adam Young
Hub:	Aspire
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	N/A

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	11/03/2026
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	N/A
Date of last QA Review:	17/03/2025
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	11/10/2023

Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all levels Effective

Quality of provision and outcomes Effective

AND

Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and/or pupils with additional needs Effective

Area of excellence Not submitted for this review

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence N/A

Overall peer evaluation estimate Effective

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' safeguarding 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

Hermitage Primary School is a one form entry single academy trust in Holmes Chapel, a large and growing commuter village in Cheshire East. It has a seven-place local authority funded alternative resource provision (ARP) for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Leaders have also created 'the hub' to support pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. The headteacher, who joined the school in September 2025, took over from a headteacher who had been in post for ten years.

The school's location has well below average deprivation, with a mainly white British pupil population. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is well below the national average, as is the proportion of disadvantaged pupils. The percentage of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is above the national average, with the proportion of pupils requiring special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) support close to average.

Following a recent consultation with all stakeholders, the vision, motto, and values for Hermitage have been revised. Therefore, there is shared ownership of the new motto, 'TOGETHER WE THRIVE', with the values of teamwork, helpfulness, resilience, innovation, value all and excellence underpinning and reinforcing this. High standards, strong values and excellent care are at the heart of the school's vision, through which pupils are equipped with the knowledge, skills, language, experiences and self-belief they need to 'thrive'.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The new headteacher drives the school with passion, dedication and commitment, supported by experienced senior leaders who know the pupils and families well. Together they embrace and drive forward the many strengths of this exceptionally well cared for school, located in beautiful surroundings. The proactive headteacher works closely with senior leaders, governors and staff to identify the next steps of development, so that no stone is left unturned in striving to provide the very best both academically and personally for every child in the Hermitage 'family'.
- As a single academy trust, Hermitage works with the local authority and other schools in the local cluster. External professional development is accessed through subject associations, consultancies, the Challenge Partners hub, and research. Subject leaders share their expertise with teachers and provide support and coaching according to need. A range of national professional leadership qualifications have also been undertaken.
- Governors and trustees take a keen interest in the school. They are provided with clear information, which they see in action through their involvement in the wider life of school.

- Parents spoken to were overwhelmingly positive. They appreciate all that the school does, including the opportunities to join their child in class during 'learn with me' sessions. As one parent said, 'I am happy with everything about the school, there is nothing I would want to change'.
- Hermitage pupil parliament has a pivotal role in school leadership, with representatives from all year groups acting as class counsellors who inform parliament. The local MP joined a Year 5 and 6 debate about mobile phones in schools during National Parliament Week. A range of other pupil leadership groups sit alongside this, including playleaders, anti-bullying ambassadors, the eco crew and Year 6 buddies who support Reception children. Pupil leaders are proud of their school. They take their roles very seriously and are confident that because of everyone's high expectations, behaviour is 'top notch'.
- Being at the heart of the local village, pupils have opportunities to engage in a wide range of community events, through the Holmes Chapel Community Partnership. School leaders have also set up a 'Bridge the Gap' project where grandparents, parents, toddlers and residents of local care homes are invited each month to join classes on a rotation to participate in crafts, board games, wellbeing and mindfulness activities.
- A wealth of curriculum linked visits and opportunities to enhance cultural capital include Year 6 performing at The Hallé, Year 3 and 4 pupils participating in Young Voices at Manchester Co-op Arena, and a Year 3 visit to the Etihad Stadium to explore regeneration and land use. Annual residential visits for each year group from Year 3 to Year 6 and a biannual trip to France, along with breakfast and after school provision and a range of varied clubs, offer wider curriculum enrichment and personal development opportunities.
- Visits to a Mosque, the Jewish Museum and local Church and visitors, including an Imam and a humanist, support pupils' understanding of diversity, British values and protected characteristics well. Alongside 'No Outsiders', religious education, PSHE and carefully planned curriculum opportunities, including career aspirations, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

... the monitoring schedule was further refined to enable subject leaders to monitor the implementation of their expectations alongside senior leaders.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Positive relationships, together with the development of independence and curiosity, support the strong start children receive in Reception class. Work is

planned for further development of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision, especially outdoors.

- The well-embedded phonics scheme is supported through additional catch up and opportunities for parents to support their child at home. Consequently, outcomes in phonics have been above the national average for the last three years.
- A love of reading is promoted well through attractive class libraries, Accelerated Reader, an outdoor book swap, and bronze, silver and gold reading awards. Interesting texts which capture pupils' interests are carefully chosen as a stimulus for reading and writing. For example, in Year 6, everyone was enthused by the chosen text Room 13 which stimulated a letter of complaint requiring pupils to draw on prior learning. In Year 4, speech and drama were the focus as pupils prepared to write a narrative linked to their text Escape to Pompeii and The Romans history unit. Outcomes in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 have been above the national average over the last three years at both the expected and higher standards, with a current focus to attain equally well in writing.
- A rigorous focus on times tables from Year 2 onwards has significantly improved outcomes in the Year 4 mathematics tables check. An emphasis on revisiting prior learning in mathematics through 'fast 5' and 'fast 10' daily questions, along with catch up interventions, also supports this rigour to challenge every pupil to achieve their potential.
- Long term plans in wider curriculum subjects incorporate the local area, innovative people, and a focus on diversity. These connect across different subjects and to prior learning. For example, as pupils study ancient civilisations, in different year groups, they can articulate using timelines how their work develops over time from the Stone Age, Iron Age and Ancient Egyptians in Year 3, to Ancient Greece and the Romans in Year 4 and the Vikings in Year 5. Learning is enhanced through visits and visitors. For example, Year 3 visit Tatton Park where tools, artefacts and opportunities to build shelters using sticks and animal skins immerse pupils in Stone Age life. This learning is reinforced in English lessons as pupils read the text Stone Age Boy. Year 4 on a visit to Chester see for themselves the Roman walls, whilst Year 5 enhance their learning at Jorvik Viking Centre.
- A bespoke trial method of teaching science, where lesson two is taught several weeks after lesson one, with other science topics taught in between, is popular with pupils. They were able to articulate their learning as each topic builds up over time in a book bespoke to that topic.
- High expectations of presentation of work and handwriting are consistent across all subjects and classes. Pupils are eager to learn and engage well. Partner talk enables them to share their ideas and thoughts and think deeply about the questions posed. Work is planned to review and refine activities in a few units of learning in some subjects to further enhance opportunities for creativity and independence.

- The recently revised shared vision is lived out and reinforced daily through strong relationships, high levels of care, and exemplary personal development and conduct. Consequently, Hermitage is a happy place to be where pupils want to come to school and attendance is above the national average. As one pupil wrote in a poem, 'Every child who walks through the door adds another heartbeat to the home we all share'.

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

- ... a more consistent system of question level analysis from reading and mathematics summative assessments was used across the school to address gaps in learning.
- ... there were increased opportunities in moderation writing for each year group teacher to work with their peers from other schools.

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

- Leadership and provision for pupils with additional needs are a key strength. The knowledgeable SENCO ensures a thorough and systematic approach to identifying and addressing the needs of vulnerable pupils. Close working with parents has been developed to strengthen partnership working. Consequently, Hermitage is building a strong reputation for supporting pupils with additional needs.
- Most pupils with additional needs work alongside their peers in classrooms, with adaptations and support from skilled adults who know the pupils and their needs well. The SENCO provides advice and support to teachers to ensure that support plan targets are precise and EHCP actions are consistently focused upon.
- The alternative provision funded by the local authority for pupils with ASD is well led by a specialist teacher who works closely with the SENCO. Provision is adjusted to meet the bespoke needs of individuals and, where possible, pupils join their peers in class for some lessons, class visits and during breaks and lunchtimes. Programmes, including Attention Autism, engage pupils well. Pupils in The Den also build life skills through local visits.
- The Hub, a separate school funded bespoke provision, also supports pupils with SEMH needs who integrate with their peers for most of their learning.
- A range of targeted support led either by a specialist or staff trained to deliver the intervention includes Lego therapy, colourful semantics, sensory stories, fine motor skills and ELSA for emotional literacy support. A speech and language therapist also provides individual support.
- Catch up programmes, including for phonics and basic skills, take place in the afternoons. Further developments to accelerate progress for those pupils who

need support to achieve age related expectations or the higher standard are part of the current school improvement plan. Pupils requiring additional fluency and comprehension are also supported daily, either through the Beanstalk scheme or by staff.

- A 'soft start' is provided for pupils who need this, and a craft club is available to support pupils in developing social skills or for those who find social times challenging. The educational psychologist is providing training to enable staff to deliver 'circle of friends' and Wellcomm training has been undertaken.
- Small step tracking is in place for pupils who need this, alongside close monitoring of progress to identify and address precise need.
- Pupil premium funding is used well with current priorities on home reading, the provision of additional technology, staff support, and enabling disadvantaged pupils to access the wide range of experiential learning that Hermitage offers.
- Disadvantaged pupils are closely tracked academically and for their attendance and pupils' barriers and potential solutions are discussed in detail at pupil progress meetings. Attendance at clubs and residential trips is also closely monitored, and supportive action through financial support or to address other issues is timely. Therefore, disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs have access to the same wide-ranging opportunities to develop cultural capital and life skills as their non disadvantaged peers.

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

... outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were closer to those of their non-disadvantaged peers.

5. Area of Excellence

None submitted for this review

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 partnership of schools and trusts 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 partnership of schools. 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/teaching-learning-toolkit>)