

<b>Name of School:</b>	Isleworth and Syon School for Boys
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Simon Fisher and Jo Higginbottom
<b>Hub:</b>	London West Hub
<b>School type:</b>	Secondary
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	N/A

<b>Date of this visit:</b>	15/05/2024
<b>Estimate at last QA Review:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Date of last QA Review:</b>	12/12/2018
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Good
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	14/11/2023

## 1. Information about the visit

In place of a QA Review, Isleworth and Syon School for Boys was visited by a Lead Reviewer who spent two days with them. The consultancy visit was structured as a collaborative evaluation with a focus on the performing arts, pedagogies and the school's enrichment offer.

***Please note that Challenge Partners is a school improvement charity and not a statutory accountability body. The QA Review does not audit schools' safeguarding procedures, handling or behaviour policies, however, Lead Reviewers and visiting reviewers are expected to follow Challenge Partners' Safeguarding Policy and report any concerns.***

## 2. Information about the school

Isleworth and Syon School is a comprehensive secondary school for boys, with girls joining in the sixth form. The school is situated in the London Borough of Hounslow in the Osterley and Spring Grove West ward. There are 1104 pupils on roll.

The original school can be traced back to around 1630. A school has been on the current site since 1939. The present school was founded in 1979 when two schools merged. In 2012, it converted to become a single academy trust.

Over a quarter of pupils in the school are eligible for free school meals, which is just above the national average. The school is diverse. Almost six tenths of the pupil population are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Over one third of these are Asian. The biggest ethnic group is Indian, who make up one fifth of the pupils. One in seven pupils are White British. One in ten are Pakistani. Approximately half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, which is well above the national average. Pupils come to the school from over 50 different feeder primaries.

Isleworth and Syon's ethos is to be 'outstanding in every respect through the constant drive for excellence across the school'.

### 3.1 Leadership at all levels - what went well

- The co-headteachers, supported by the senior leadership team, lead the school with compassion, care and ambition. Senior leaders share a determination to continue to foster a nurturing environment for all which support's pupils' achievement and their holistic development.
- Leaders at all levels, including trustees and middle leaders, have ensured that there is a focus on reviewing the impact of leadership to inform continuous improvements. All school leaders complete impact reports. These assist in the evaluation and development of the provision that they lead. For example, the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) impact report shows leaders have a clear overview of the additional needs within the school. The document also reviews the effectiveness of provision. Leaders are focused on securing onward enhancement to provision whilst respecting and celebrating the school's long history and heritage. The line management structure helps senior leaders to oversee the processes that support heads of department in leading monitoring activities. Evaluation information, which is quality assured by senior leaders, is transparently shared between leaders at all levels to allow knowledge and understanding to be transferred.

- The school's pupil leadership programme has a broad range of opportunities. These positions include literacy ambassadors and sports leaders. The leadership roles create a sense of ownership in the school for pupils and give them the chance to develop independence. For example, the student council is led by pupils themselves. Pupils chair their own meetings with minutes and actions.
- The school has refined their continuing professional development (CPD) offer. Leaders ensure there are follow up focus reminders after sessions to help secure improvements to provision and to help colleagues recall key facets that have been covered. Staff collegiately learn from each other. Support staff attend CPD sessions, which benefits them to understand whole school initiatives. Their attendance at CPD events allows their expertise, for example related to areas of SEND, to be shared.
- Departments work together to develop practice. Recently, staff collaborated whilst looking together at a group of pupils' recorded outcomes from across different subjects. Staff reflected upon what was going well for individuals and which successful teaching strategies were underpinning their success. They jointly reflected as to which approaches might then be implemented in other faculties. Department meetings have a strong focus on pedagogies. Staff liaise together as to how to best deliver the curriculum. The school's 'How We Teach' Booklet has been inspired by visiting another Challenge Partners school. Staff have developed descriptors related to pedagogy. These serve as a framework for a shared understanding of the school's approach to teaching and learning.
- Pastoral leaders at all levels work together to focus on whole school strategic priorities. The weekly 'social inclusion' meetings allow a wide range of leaders to jointly work together to problem solve and to develop the universal provision whilst tailoring bespoke aspects for certain vulnerable pupils.

### **3.2 Leadership at all levels - even better if...**

... all middle leaders further supported, developed and challenged colleagues to ensure greater consistency of provision across departments.

### **4.1 Provision and outcomes - what went well**

- The school is a calm, harmonious and safe environment. There is a tangible warm culture with the permeating sense of a close community. Pupils share strong relationships with adults and appreciate the care that is afforded to them. In Year 7 drama lessons on Greek chorus, teachers ensured that the sessions were supportive. Pupils demonstrated confidence and maturity in a self-evaluation task. They respectfully reviewed performances which had been recorded as videos from the previous week. Pupils were considered in their responses. During a Year

9 art lesson inspired by superheroes, the teacher's high expectations and her positive dialogue with pupils helped them to work independently whilst focusing on specific skills.

- Pupils readily and earnestly engage in their learning. In a Year 12 drama session involving synchronisation, students reflected in depth whilst making connections to assessment criteria. In a Year 9 assembly linked to mental health and the 'stress bucket model', all pupils maintained full attention to the practical strategies for supporting their well-being that were discussed with them. In a Year 9 music lesson, pupils felt comfortable to freely share their compositions with each other. They worked purposefully to create completed pieces of work incorporating previously taught elements.
- Teachers prioritise the teaching of key vocabulary. In a Year 7 art lesson, the teacher spent time skilfully explaining and modelling terminology such as 'transition' and 'feathering'. Pupils were then able to use this language correctly in context, whilst answering questions as to how they planned to use these techniques themselves. In Year 7 drama lessons, teachers helped pupils to understand and use words such as 'unison', 'echo' and 'cannon'. Pupils then applied those terms in their evaluations.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities which the school provides, including in sport, the arts, technical clubs, and music. Pupils recognise that these activities are inclusive for all whilst catering for those who demonstrate excellence. One Key Stage 4 pupil described how he had never played badminton before coming to the school. He attributed that the support he has received at the school, including through extra-curricular clubs, had helped him to develop to now be playing county badminton. Another pupil cited their involvement with the National Youth Theatre as being largely due to the school's encouragement and that he would never have applied without staff's guidance.
- In most lessons, teachers use feedback to share with pupils what success would be in their learning and explain misconceptions. In a Year 10 design and technology lesson, where pupils were making gear boxes for sweet dispensers, the teacher used a short, mini plenary to give insightful feedback to the class. Pupils were given explicit direction based on the checking of understanding, errors and skills that the teacher had identified from his circulation of the room.
- The overall culture of the school impacts positively on pupils' personal development. The school has 'colour awards'. Pupils receive 'flashes' for their blazers and ties in relation to their achievements, behaviours and overall contributions. Pupils aspire to these. Pupils describe feeling a strong sense of belonging to their school. Pupils' connection to the school supports the higher than national average levels of attendance.
- Performing arts, as described by the drama leader, is the 'lifeblood of the school'. All pupils study music and drama in Key Stage 3. One boy in Year 12 studying

drama felt that performing arts impacted on all pupils and gave 'a new level of creativity to the school'. A group of students who are taking A-level drama, felt that teachers had greatly encouraged their interest in the area throughout their time at the school. They had been further 'sparked' by opportunities such as workshops from external providers such as the National Youth Theatre, The Old Vic and The Globe Theatre.

## **4.2 Provision and outcomes – even better if...**

...in practical subjects there was continued development of more regular communication about what success looks like to pupils in lessons for their learning.

...in practical subjects there was continued development of teachers' use of assessment for learning to quickly identify and share common errors and misconceptions to help move learning forward at every opportunity.

## **5. Area of Excellence**

### **Performing Arts: curricular and extracurricular contributions to the school**

#### **Accredited**

#### **5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?**

The school is a boys' comprehensive set in a locality with areas of relative socio-economic deprivation. Leaders have prioritised the promotion of the performing arts to support the inclusive culture within the school and to champion social mobility. They have created an offer for pupils which includes all, through their innovative and inspiring curriculum design whilst providing exceptional opportunities.

Leaders for the subjects are passionate and knowledgeable. They proactively champion high standards in the area. Leaders have forged excellent partnerships with external agencies. These connections have created opportunities for pupils with organisations such as the English Speaking Union, Royal Academy of Music, Abbey Road Institute and the University of West London. Leaders have fostered relationships with local and national theatres that allow pupils to have a breadth of experiences linked to performing arts.

The school already offers support to many other schools in performing arts. Leaders from the school have worked with colleagues from both primary and secondary schools.

This assistance is in regard to curriculum development and how to develop a range and depth of enrichment activities.

## **5.2 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?**

End of key stage examination results are consistently strong in drama and music for pupils at the school.

Many pupils across the school thoroughly enjoy the performing arts, including those who do not choose to study the subjects at Key Stage 4 and 5. All pupils engage in the area and value its importance. Pupils appreciate the impact it has on their personal development. They recognise that performing arts have promoted values such as trust and respect and given them a wider appreciation of valuable cultural capital. Some pupils studying drama in Year 12 described their experiences at the school linked to the subjects as being 'transformative'. Pupils with little to no musical experience prior to secondary school are now performing and composing due to the provision at the school.

The school has many pupils who make successful applications to renowned opportunities through the Royal Academy of Music and the National Theatre. Pupils who were spoken to appreciate the invaluable support that the school has given them to achieve this.

The school hosts six events each academic year which involves pupils from across the school. These headline occasions, such as the 'Summer Arts', are well attended by pupils, families and local residents. The performances have a significant impact on the wider community.

The 'technical crew' initiative involves a team of pupils managing staging and production. They attend extra-curricular clubs and take immense pride in helping to support the delivery of performances. The 'technical crew' is led by a sixth former who receives training and development from staff. The 'technical crew' includes many pupils who previously had no interest in performing arts. They are now included in this area which strengthens their connection with the school.

## **5.3 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?**

Tom McDonnell, curriculum leader for performing arts

Email: [tmcdonnell@isleworthsyon.org](mailto:tmcdonnell@isleworthsyon.org)

## **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 report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

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.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice (SLP) events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events 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>)