



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR FIVE ISLANDS ACADEMY SCHOOL

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| Name of School: | Five Islands Academy School |
| Headteacher/Principal: | Mrs Rachel Gibb |
| Hub: | Cornwall Hub |
| School phase: | All Through |
| MAT (if applicable): | Leading Edge Academy Partnership |

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| Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review: | Leading |
| Date of this Review: | 29/03/2023 |
| Overall Estimate at last QA Review | Leading |
| Date of last QA Review | 23/05/2022 |
| Grade at last Ofsted inspection: | Special Measures |
| Date of last Ofsted inspection: | 18/09/2018 |

1. Context and character of the school

Five Islands Academy (FIA) is a vibrant, exciting, and unique Church of England VC all-through school from Year R to Year 11. It occupies four sites on St Agnes, St Martin's, St Mary's and Tresco, with students taking short boat journeys between each island daily. St Mary's base is the largest and educates pupils from Reception to Year 11. Secondary students who live on the other islands board weekly at FIA's designated boarding facility, Mundesley House.

Although the school has a PAN and maximum capacity, no child is refused entry. The population comes from socially and economically diverse backgrounds, with many pupils being White British. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups has grown as the Isles of Scilly become marginally more diverse, but these numbers are still very small. 25% of students have identified special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND), with 11% having education, health, and care plans. There is no provision for Further Education on the Isles of Scilly and so all students leave the islands to attend college or sixth forms.

FIA's vision is to make the most of the islands' unique environment to equip students for their next learning adventure and set them up for the lives they choose to lead in the future.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Leaders have fully achieved their EBIs from their last review. They have supported students to articulate the impact that attending school has had on their education.
- The school has a strong and dynamic senior leadership team, that continuously goes beyond the expected to ensure that all students have access to a wide and rich set of learning experiences. To support the delivery of learning, middle leaders are provided with both the autonomy and support to ensure that they make a proven, discernible contribution to implementing, monitoring, and refining the curriculum. The impact of their work is shown in their development of a regular cycle of internal quality assurance, which has seen subject leaders implementing effective changes to curriculum provision.
- Communication is a strength and results in staff, parents and students being clear about what is expected of them, leading to consistency, trust, and respect at all levels. Students are rightly proud to attend Five Islands Academy and of the positive difference that the school has made to their lives.

This was shown by a Year 8 student who proudly reported, 'people are kind at our school. You are not judged'.

- FIA's leaders regularly share evidence-based learning with peers from other settings beyond their school. There is clear evidence that the sharing of FIA's strategy for broadening students' vocabulary has supported other schools to roll out plans for developing innovative approaches to language acquisition.
- Leaders ensure that all staff benefit from focused, timely and highly effective professional development. During the last twelve months, continuing professional development (CPD) has focused on refining the school's curriculum. This has allowed leaders to successfully implement a broad and balanced 3-16 curriculum which is robust, rigorous, creative, and underpinned by a clear vision of the needs of all students. A strength of the school's CPD model is its ability to meet individual staff's interests and ambitions. This has seen staff engaging in sessions with other schools within the Trust and provided opportunities for them to regularly share their curriculum overviews, as well as planning opportunities for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary learning experiences for students.
- Leaders have developed a cohesive approach to the teaching of diversity across the school. The impact of this is evident within the school's use of texts, such as Francesca Sansa's 'The Journey', which provide students with opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of key themes linked to discrimination, equality, diversity, and wellbeing. Leaders' robust strategies to develop vocabulary has supported this work by providing students with the means to clearly articulate their opinions.
- Staff and student well-being is taken very seriously, and the impact of new initiatives and policies are routinely discussed by the school leadership. This has resulted in several practical measures, such as collaborative planning sessions, which have reduced staff workload. The effective use of release time to provide curriculum leaders opportunities to monitor their subjects, has also contributed to the positive ethos within the school. The focus on student wellbeing and restorative behaviour, has further supported the positive relationships between all members of the school community.
- Leaders engage effectively with parents and the wider community and can provide a range of evidence showing the positive impact of this work. A particularly successful focus has seen the further development of the school's boarding provision, which continues to provide opportunities for students, including the most vulnerable, to explore and express their character and build the skills they need for resilience, empathy, and employability.

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

... leaders at all levels continued to take pride in their achievements and were able to succinctly articulate the impact of their leadership on developing students' character and resilience.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Staff at FIA have achieved their EBIs from their last review. They have continued to reinforce high standards of presentation across all phases and subjects.
- Staff pursue a shared vision to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all students, which is embedded securely and consistently across the school. The impact of this vision is evident in well-presented books and displays demonstrating coherently planned and well sequenced learning across a range of curriculum areas. The work given to students, over time and across the school, consistently matches the aims of the curriculum. It is coherently planned and sequenced towards building sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning.
- Positive attitudes in all lessons demonstrate students' engagement in their learning. Students are proactive in making tangible contributions to the life of the school and the wider community. This was demonstrated by a Year 4 pupil's comment that, 'our project week was fantastic! We made cool, funky projects using cardboard tubes!' The impact of FIA's ethos of 'Challenge for all', which provides a framework for students to develop as reflective and ambitious learners, was also described by a Year 11 student who in a design technology lesson commented, 'I have pushed myself to design a speaker case to help me become a project engineer.'
- Leaders have successfully implemented a strategy for reading which encourages students to interact with a variety of texts through the curriculum. This has included regular library sessions and the development of skills for reading comprehension across the wider curriculum. The positive impact of this strategy was demonstrated by a group of Year 11 geography students who were using their reading skills to explore the relative merits of cruise ships and long stay tourism. The school's reading strategy has also supported the development of students' curiosity across the broader curriculum, allowing them to make informed choices about topical issues. A positive recent

example has seen students, who were inspired by their reading on the impact of global conflict, set up a 'Scilly Welcomes' charity to support Syrian refugees.

- Teacher's strong subject knowledge allows them to provide precise feedback to further accelerate progress. Students value feedback which encourages them to reflect on strategies to improve their learning. For example, a Year 5 pupil who was challenged by the teacher to improve the quality of their descriptive writing responded with, 'Alan gasped with the look of happiness in his eyes.'
- The FIA curriculum provides aspirational learning opportunities to prepare students for the next stages of their lives. Opportunities are provided for students to develop life skills such as budgeting and meal preparation. The teaching of careers is mapped onto both the academic and pastoral programme and is routinely supported by external speakers, including freelance writers and representatives from the University of Exeter,
- A focused strategy towards improving attendance provides clear evidence of the positive learning culture, which is supported by all staff at the school. Each student experiences sessions which provide regular opportunities for collective reflection and a stimulus for important cultural, social, and curricular topics. This focus on personal development ensures that all students behave with consistently high levels of respect for others. The impact of this approach was articulated by a Year 5 pupil who stated, 'we always work together.'

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

... staff continued to provide bespoke transition at each phase of a student's education to meet their unique needs and context, to ensure that their next steps in learning are accessible and result in high levels of progress.

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

- The school leadership team articulates a clear vision that 'our approach is to enable students to overcome hurdles and achieve the highest standards.' This shared belief encourages all staff, parents, and students to work closely together to ensure that those with additional needs are consistently provided

with high quality personalised learning opportunities which meet their specific needs.

- Teachers are supported by enthusiastic leaders who ensure that they have the resources to identify students' specific learning barriers and identify key objectives to address these. CPD needs are identified by monitoring and addressed through regular training sessions. All staff have access to the FIA's Harbour provision, which ensures that all SEND students are successfully integrated into mainstream lessons throughout the school.
- Effective SEN provision is provided for those students with the highest level of need through a range of initiatives including regular friendship circles and delightful therapy dogs. These initiatives bring together a wide range of expertise from within the school to support vulnerable learners by equipping them with the skills needed to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.
- The individual needs of disadvantaged students are known, and support is put into in place to overcome barriers to learning. The prioritisation of vocabulary accusation supports them achieving the best possible outcomes from their starting points. An example of the impact of the school's high expectation in this area was shown by a Year 8 pupil who confidently explained, 'you calculate compound interest by working out the percentage of the annual interest and adding it each consecutive year.'
- The school's effective range of partnerships with external providers ensure vulnerable have a smooth and purposeful transition into the next stage of their careers. All students regularly attend trips, with support provided for trips to the mainland and a 1-to-1 careers session. This aspires students to explore a wide range of career pathways in later life.
- Leaders have developed positive relationships with parents by helping them to overcome barriers to learning for their children. Staffs' willingness to implement bespoke interventions to support specific needs leads to a range of positive comments from parents such as, 'We have been impressed with the work our daughter has completed in her "Super Girls" group which clearly has had a positive impact'.

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

... staff continued to ensure that the teaching of reading and writing across the academy was suitably structured for all, to ensure high levels of progress and suitable outcomes for these groups of students.

5. Area of Excellence

Through School Curriculum Development.

Accredited

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

Students' learning has been transformed over the past six years through a focus on the FIA learning journey: a thoughtfully chosen curriculum and consistent, inclusive protocols for teaching. Leaders have a powerful vision for navigating together through this journey to nurture curious, collaborative, creative global learners with rich knowledge and confident oracy.

FIA's key concepts for all subjects have been robustly negotiated and agreed (and often adopted across the Leading-Edge Academies Partnership). Leaders have established knowledgeable curriculum leadership teams, representing both primary and secondary phases, who have worked together with the assistant headteachers to link up learning throughout this journey, from EYFS to Year 11 and beyond. The Subject leader teams have been empowered through building subject, and phase specific expertise through targeted professional learning. They therefore know securely how learning is sequenced, what that looks like in the classroom and how they can see the impact in students' work and talk and are able to take a lead role in the planning process and quality assuring planning through school.

Digital learning supports this collaborative, well-planned approach, through shared planning and a large library of learning resources on the FIA's learning platform, as well as subject-specific apps and platforms. Within the FIA curriculum, staff create exciting opportunities for authentic outcomes, creativity, outdoor learning, 'intelligent interdisciplinarity', communication and adventure, particularly through Project Weeks.

Senior Leaders work closely with Subject Lead Teams through rich 'Curriculum Conversations' to explore the impact of this development work and identify where it needs to evolve further. Leaders do not see the FIA curriculum as 'frozen in time', but constantly seek to improve, diversify and challenge it.

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

The impact of FIA's curriculum development project can be seen from the earliest stages of exploration of the Early Learning Goals in EYFS classes, through examples of writing and oracy in classrooms, to the creative displays of learning throughout the school.

Within a year of being placed in 'Special Measures' following an Ofsted visit in 2016, rapid curriculum development (the creation of knowledge-rich, robustly assessed, and sequential five-year Plans in every subject) saw Progress 8 at GCSE improve to +0.86, with 50% of Year 11 students achieving at least one Grade 9. This intensive school improvement programme has now been strongly sustained (Progress 8 average of +0.78 over the past four years) and extended throughout the students' school journey. This can be seen in the creation of Curriculum Narratives for every subject, tracing and evidencing development from EYFS to Year 11. Attainment at Key Stage 2 now exceeds the national average in both English (81%) and mathematics (91%). In 2022 FIA's KS2 and KS4 data was ranked in the top 1% of schools nationally.

The academic successes of the cohort of 2022 reflected the FIA curriculum's success of inspiring resilience, hard work and determination. On leaving school, this cohort all moved on to courses of their choice, successfully taking up places on a wide range of post-16 courses, including A Levels, T Levels, Diplomas, Apprenticeships and Supported Internships. Students' excellent progress across the wider curriculum, plus particularly strong results in English, mean that they have all thrived and enjoyed the next stages of their education and training.

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

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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>)