



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School: St Mary's RC Primary School

Head/Principal: Mylene McGuire: Executive Head Teacher
Joanne O'Mullane: Head of School
Tracey Collins: Head of School

Address: Clare Road
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IQM Lead: Joanne O'Mullane

Date of Review: 23 November 2021

Assessor: Jenny Scott

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: Northwessians

Ambassador: Sandie Isherwood

Date of Next Meeting: **8th December**

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: TBA

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

The assessment took place online. Discussions with the following key staff took place:

- Executive Headteacher.
- Heads of School.
- Assistant Head Teacher.
- Pastoral Manager.
- Class Teacher/ Parental Coordinator Lead.
- Federation Director of Learning.
- Parent.

The website and a range of videos were also shared



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The school's progress from the previous year is based on '*Developing a sensory provision to support pupils with SEMH needs and their families both in the school and the wider community, providing inclusion for their most vulnerable pupils.*'

In 2020-2021, the school worked extremely hard to develop their sensory provision whilst balancing the demands and restrictions that COVID brought. Due to bubble restrictions, the school had to temporarily use the space they had allocated for a sensory room, as a staff room. This has now been reverted back to a sensory room and resources/opportunities will be developed further over the forthcoming year so that the children will be able to access them. Sensory stations were developed during the whole school closure in 2020 and they continue to be utilised in classrooms. The school has invested in an impressive scooter park, which is now complete. This forms part of the sensory regulation provision. Messy Play was also established within Reception as part of sensory and therapeutic provision.

During the spring term lockdown (2021), support was provided for parents of high need SEND pupils who had particular self-regulation challenges at home. The school's behaviour support specialist provided regular telephone consultation for parents offering advice and guidance. The school's play therapist continued therapy online and also provided 1:1 support for parents/carers, in particular for a family being supported by children's services. Sensory stations were sent home for those vulnerable children where parents were unable to access restricted opening either by choice or if CEV. There was a graduated response to welfare calls for the most vulnerable families so that early support and interventions could be identified and doorstep home visits could be planned. There was a well-planned remote learning offer in place. Teachers provided online lessons and learning activities and non-participation was addressed and supported. The school continued to offer a varied curriculum. This included virtual music lessons, art lessons and a visit from an author. Sensory opportunities were encouraged at home as part of home provision.

The school have continued to use and develop their Forest School provision. Forest school activities formed part of the Remote Learning offer as well as the offer for children who were attending school.

Once the school reopened fully, after lockdown, children's wellbeing and staff wellbeing were identified as a priority. Staff wellbeing was supported through: weekly wellbeing breakfasts, weekly wellbeing newsletters, therapy support and reduced workload. In May 2021, the school achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA), which reflects the high quality support and collaboration they offer to their parents.

The Flagship project was reviewed in the summer term 2021, based on children's presentations during the wider school opening, in particular due to the challenges in Early Years (EYFS) and children having a disjointed foundation year. Children presented with limited language and emotional dysregulation. The school identified the need to implement a Zones of Regulation strategy. They also recognised the need to adopt a whole school approach to de-escalating behaviour, using a common, shared language. The Inclusion team met with the Zones of Regulation trainer to action plan the implementation for Key Stage 1, from September 2021. EYFS and Key Stage 1 staff



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identified an area needing to be developed i.e. sensory support. They felt it should be an integral part of their provision rather than standalone support.

During the autumn term 2021, the Key Stage 1 outdoor provision was developed to provide sensory opportunities. Workstations in classrooms throughout school and soft play became available. The development of Messy Play was implemented in Year 1 and ongoing, bespoke Continuous Professional Development remains in place. The Zone of Regulation boxes are now available in each class and can be accessed by the children. Pupils at risk of exclusion are responding well to the Zones of Regulation and, whilst difficulties persist, they are starting to access more learning within the classroom. Relax Kids is also now part of the curriculum and all pupils will access throughout the year.

Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project:

The project focus will remain the same as last year due to the unsettled period in schools, over the past 18 months.

Next steps for the project (Year 2021-2022)

Due to the challenges the last two years has brought about for schools, St Mary's staff have decided they would like to further develop and enhance the sensory provision across school. Their actions include-

- To continue to embed Zones of Regulation.

This will be achieved through ongoing Continuous Professional Development for staff and commitment through the cross federation working party.

- To continue to develop personalised sensory provision and sensory room.

This will be achieved by enhancing the sensory resources and providing outreach support from the Play therapist and Behaviour Support Specialist.

- To develop messy play in Year 1.

This will be achieved by providing additional Continuous Professional Development to Year 1 staff and developing continuous provision in Year 1, in order to smooth the transition from Reception.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The IQM lead was able to attend most of the cluster group meetings last year. She contributed to the first meeting by sharing how their school was supporting children and families during the lockdown and what their remote learning policies and procedures were. This allowed them to share and exchange ideas with other schools.

The second meeting focussed on pupil engagement with remote learning and Mental Health and Wellbeing. The pastoral manager shared the school's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy. She also promoted conversation and provision planning for Relax Kids across the whole school. The school was unable to send a representative to the final meeting, however as a staff they reviewed their own catch-up programs, ready for autumn term, 2021.



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Overview

St Mary's RC Primary School is a larger than average sized primary school, with 352 pupils on roll. It forms part of a federation with its sister school, St Cuthbert's. The review took place online due to the ongoing pandemic, however it was clear from reading previous reports and action plans; navigating around the website and as the assessment began that St Mary's is a highly successful and inclusive school. St Mary's represents everything that is best practice about inclusion.

Their aim is to provide a happy, caring and stimulating environment in which every child's uniqueness is celebrated and can grow with Jesus as their example.

St Mary's Mission: 'Love one another as I have loved you'

Their welcome videos for parents and informative website instantly demonstrate their mission and their high expectations. It is clear that the children are at the heart of everything they offer and provide, and that parents are seen as pivotal in developing the whole child. There is significant emphasis placed on staff and children's wellbeing and staff strive to ensure that children are emotionally secure and ready for learning. Leaders and staff are passionate about children's learning and development and there is an agreed understanding about what Inclusion is and what it means for their school community. Everything they do is value driven and led.

The development of the sensory provision across school is a whole school priority. It is evident through discussions with staff that everything St Mary's choose to develop and implement, is very well thought through, planned and purposeful. They involve all stakeholders in processes and adapt provision regularly, as needs change. They are not quick to assume something is embedded but instead spend time reflecting on impact and ensuring that all staff are taken on the implementation journey. Staff training is clearly given very high priority and staff engage in regular CPD. Shared leadership allows staff to lead on different areas of an overarching target e.g. developing the sensory provision - staff leading on Forest school, Messy play, Zones of Regulation, the Inclusive curriculum and parental engagement. Staff are relentless in their drive to ensure the quality and impact of their developments are of the highest standards and that there is consistency across school.

The Inclusion leader has implemented the Zones of Regulation approach in order to encourage a shared language and understanding around feelings and emotions, and to encourage children to ultimately become more independent in managing these. There are four Zones of Regulation - Red, Amber, Green and Blue. Red represents a very unhappy/angry mood; amber means children are starting to feel annoyed and frustrated; green means content and calm and Blue represents low mood/sadness. Each class has a box with resources to support each emotion. The Inclusion leader recognises this will take time to embed but she can already see a positive impact on some children who are accessing this. She is ably supported by the pastoral leader who works effectively with parents and external services to offer support to the children and families who require it. The team invest in Emotional Literacy support for children needing intervention. Careful consideration is given to the children needing this intervention and staff have a very good knowledge of their children's needs. Staff make the most of every opportunity during the school day, to teach children how to be kind to one another. They invest in 'Positive playtimes' so that children are supported in



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different play activities and social skills and kindness are modelled to children and reinforced. The Inclusion leader is now developing a sensory room, where children will be able to access a range of activities and resources, such as soft play.

The Early Years leader has been working closely with the Inclusion team to develop messy play in Key Stage 1. She recognised the impact this intervention had on children's communication and PSED levels and quickly agreed with staff that it would be an ideal programme to implement with specific groups of children in EYFS and Key Stage 1. She is keen to ensure that the staff are involved in the messy play journey and coordinates the training, along with the school's play therapist, so that the intervention is delivered consistently and correctly.

The school provide an Inclusive Curriculum and adopt a Growth Mindset in their approach. The Federation's Director of Learning is very knowledgeable about the curriculum offer and is very conscious of providing an inclusive curriculum that can be accessed by all but adapted, when needed. During the lockdown, the school acted quickly so that they could provide online learning immediately for their pupils via Seesaw. The staff team provided daily teaching, tasks and assessment for children and ensured that any children who were not engaging, were visited, supported and often offered paperwork packs instead of the use of ICT. Reading Eggs supported the teaching of reading and Teaching Assistants supported interventions and the delivery of lessons in school. Staff were keen to ensure that the children still received a broad and balanced curriculum. An example of this was the weekly delivery of music lessons. The music teacher did not let the fact that the children were not at school, prevent her in exploring music with everyday household items, instead of musical instruments. The Director of Learning now continues to lead the team in delivering a catch-up curriculum and addressing gaps in learning, in each year group. She is also keen to further develop the curriculum by planning in more opportunities to celebrate diversity and culture and tackling global and environmental issues.

The school recently achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award. It was very clear after speaking to the coordinator that this award was very well deserved as the school have a real determination to ensure the parents are fully involved in their children's education. Everything that the school implements is centred around their families. They genuinely value their feedback and input and encourage participation in all areas of school life. Newsletters and class pages on the website, ensure that parents are given the most up to date information about what their children are learning in school. During the lockdown, school was very mindful of their role in the community and went to great lengths to ensure their families were served. They delivered food parcels, visited vulnerable children and delivered work packs, laptops and Chrome books so no child missed out. They also offered a teacher helpline for parental support - parents could phone the helpline and ask advice on any aspect of school, such as the home learning and/or ICT equipment.

The school consult with parents over new policies and initiatives. They have regular parent forums where information is discussed and parental opinions and questions are shared. A recent forum was held to discuss the RSE curriculum and the next one to be held will focus on the Zones of Regulation.



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Parent learning is also given priority at the school. Parents are invited into school to access workshops such as: art, pottery, English and maths. Celebrating diversity is high priority for the school and parents support with the learning of other cultures and countries by visiting school to share their experiences and knowledge with children.

Staff support parents that have external service involvement and parents feel that there is a collaborative approach to supporting children, with the child at the centre of the support. The parent spoken to in the assessment was very complimentary of the support she had received, along with her child, from the staff, over the years. She commented on the range of support her child had received, which involved play therapy, Lego therapy and counselling. She commented on the fact that children are not 'labelled' and the staff mindset is around finding solutions - not problems. She feels that communication from school is very strong and clear and school make as many adjustments and adaptations as they need to in order to achieve success.

During the meeting with the Assistant Headteacher, it was clear that his passion for outdoor learning not only permeates through his own school, but also through the schools in the borough that he offers support to. He has worked very hard, along with the team, to develop the outdoor learning provision so that all children can access it as part of their quality first teaching entitlement. The well-established forest school provision is accessed by children of all ages and lessons are built into the curriculum. It offers a 'magical' experience to children and provides many with experiences that they would not normally have. Typical lessons include den making, gardening - looking after the allotment, carving, weaving and making bird feeders. Some classes are also taken off site to further develop their forest school opportunities. The children have access to a Peace Garden, Scooter Park and Castle area. Activities are thoroughly planned out with the school's values at the heart, once again. The impact of the outdoor learning has been an increase in pupil attendance and engagement; improvements with behaviour, especially for those children who find this challenging at times, a much greater awareness of real-life environmental issues and children feeling an overall sense of achievement for the work they produce. The school achieved CAFOD's 'Live Simply Award,' in recognition of all the Eco work they do in school.

To summarise, it was a pleasure and privilege to conduct the Flagship review at St Mary's. The school is highly inclusive and the children, and families, are at the very heart of the school community in everything that they do. It is clear that practice and policy are value driven and school improvement is well planned and purposeful, so that the children receive the very best experiences. The staff are warm and welcoming, and they have the highest expectations and aspirations for their children. I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Flagship School. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Flagship Status and is reviewed again in 12 months.

Assessor: Jenny Scott

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH

Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd