



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



**School:** St. Mary's RC Primary School  
Clare Road  
Levenshulme  
Manchester M19 2QW

**Executive Head Teacher:** Mylene McGuire

**Head of School/IQM Lead:** Joanne O'Mullane

**Date of Review:** 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**Assessor:** Matthew Cuss

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

**Cluster Group:** Northwessians

**Ambassador:** Matthew Cuss

**Date of Next Meeting:** TBC

**Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus:** TBC

### **Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:**

#### **Discussions with:**

- Headteacher(s) and Inclusion Lead discussions about IQM Project and whole school priorities.
- Action plan review with IQM Lead.
- Meetings with teachers, across all age ranges and roles.
- Meeting with a range of support staff during tour relating to IQM and varied inclusive roles within school. 'Zones of Regulation' meetings to support self-regulation session, 'Pastoral Support' session, 'Outdoor Provision' meetings to support emotional wellbeing understanding and 'The Inclusive Curriculum' session.
- Flagship target review with leaders. Meeting with Pastoral Manager, Key Stage One Phase Leader/Parental Engagement Coordinator, Inclusion Lead, Federation Outdoor Development Lead, Federation Director of Learning and a meeting with a parent.



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### Additional Activities:

- Morning Welcome, reflection time.
- Scrutiny of Class Resources.
- Tour of the school.
- Learning walk.
- Scrutiny of website, social media, teaching and learning timetables and learning platforms.
- Evaluation of Annual Progress.

### Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The school's progress from the previous year is based on the project focus of 'To develop a sensory provision to support pupils with Special Educational and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and their families both in the school and the wider community, providing inclusion for the most vulnerable pupils.' These aims are assessed in the final year of the three-year project and the assessment day also included how to develop sensory provision further.

During the IQM (Inclusion Quality Mark) assessment of the school's progress towards completing this project, it was evident that pupils feel safe and supported, regardless of any specific needs they may have. It was evident that the work on self-regulation, resilience and confidence has helped build children who are keen to learn and who are interested in asking questions and finding out more.

The inclusive work on communication has helped the children become more articulate when expressing their needs to adults, in a range of ways, as well as being able to have polite discourse. This is supported as the staff have very high expectations for pupils to be successful, but in a way that is in competition with themselves and setting challenging targets together. These targets take into account social needs as well as academic needs and they are interlinked as vital for success. This is how all learners achieve well, as their academic data and personal interviews support.

There is a strong culture of trust therefore, all school-based relationships between adults and pupils, regardless of role, are exceptionally noteworthy, as is the behaviour of the children. There is a lack of frustration, which can often lead to conflict, as the work on communication through self-regulation, resilience and phonics/reading has allowed children to communicate confidently in their own personalised manner. When children are engaging with new inclusive concepts, their peers support each other, as they are taught to show consideration and politeness towards their peers. Children understand they are in a 'safe space' where they are protected and can get help. It is not to be underestimated that a lot of hard work takes place to maintain this atmosphere and staff develop their own skill set which often has to be hardy and creative.

Leaders are focused on all subjects being challenging and inclusive; they have thought carefully about the key knowledge for all learners, and this starts with the inclusive and nurturing provision in the Early Years setting, which is building 'hands on' and inquisitive learners, willing to try and fail and rebound as part of the process. This means they are then well prepared for Key Stage 1, emotionally as well as academically.



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When providing new strategies and resources for the children, related to Messy Play or 'Zones of Regulation', staff receive highly effective training to deliver the curriculum and are confidently prepared and skilled in their delivery. They know the concepts and preparation needed for success from a 'theory' point of view. Having training and support like this means that they can then make sure that pupils develop their understanding alongside them. This is echoed in all areas, as staff are confident and skilled in teaching all subjects, supported by the environment and trust of leaders. Reading has been key within the children's self-understanding and as the children begin their reading journey, the teachers across the school promote that love of reading, as a tool in discussing any difficult concepts, ideas or through difficult times. Interventions promote reading in a sensitive way to allow vulnerable children to access the emotional and academic support of reading.

When trialling and piloting new ideas, it has paid dividends that the Support Staff know their pupils so well. They are a vital part of the process and are emboldened to identify any pupils who may have specific needs. Leaders have given them their trust and have also made sure that they ensure staff know the reasons 'why' they are asked to access new strategies, equipment, and training. They are all 'on board' because they are listened to and given responsibility.

The Leaders and their Extended Leadership Team have made needed and creative decisions to look at this project, as it nears the end. They see it more as a start, already looking at furthering the use of Talk Partners and Cooperative Learning Structures, which will be introduced as a mechanism to support discussion and dialogue even further, for all learners, building on the previous successes of this project. They have spent time thinking about next steps and how teachers and all staff can support any pupils who have fallen behind to catch up quickly. This is why, by the time pupils leave the school, the vast majority become confident and fluent readers. Leaders want this success to lead into more critical thinking and the use of metacognition-informed teaching strategies, to allow pupils to tackle problems appropriately and succeed even more.

Evidently, during the assessment it was clear that Leaders and all staff know their children so well, that they tailor the provision to the needs of their children in a creative way, but also ensuring life-long skills in relation to adapting and overcoming challenges. For example, when discussing this project, the school has already identified a need for further community engagement and recently opened their doors for an inclusion open day. They truly want to take this communication journey they have been on with IQM and share it with the community in even more creative ways. They have a desire to continue to embed the parent and carer involvement identified through home visits, stay and play, volunteering, parent supported swimming, lantern parades, art exhibitions, family allotments and see how far it can go!

I am confident that during 2022/2023 the objectives for the Flagship Project, as stated below, are evidenced within this report. St. Mary's provided a fully inclusive and detailed IQM project nearing its completion, which serves St. Mary's most vulnerable learners and families at their point of need.

### Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project:

Project Title: 'To develop a sensory provision to support pupils with Special Educational and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and their families both in the school and the wider community, providing inclusion for the most vulnerable pupils.'

Context: The project this year and throughout was implemented as the school was increasingly seeing a higher number of pupils with complex SEMH needs over a period of time. The school was experiencing this first hand and observing the impact of this on pupils' wellbeing, self-confidence and learning. The aim was to develop a whole school approach to SEMH, developing the provision to have an understanding of practical strategies and improve the emotional resilience of their learners.

In practical terms they looked to develop and embed tactile Messy Play as one approach to meeting the social and emotional needs of children and help facilitate engagement in learning. They looked to develop this within the context of a sensory room where interactive multisensory opportunities would support self-regulation and reduce agitation and anxiety, through exploring and developing relaxation techniques. Overall, the aim was in helping the children develop their own sensory feedback.

#### Target 1: To continue to embed 'Zones of Regulation'.

The Headteacher and Leaders are proud of every class having access to a 'Zones' approach, especially with this being securely implemented and in place for high need pupils with urgent requirements in this area. Due to this focus, it has proved to be successful, especially by 'High Need' dysregulated pupils. SHE (Social and Health) assessments highlight that these children are improving with their self and co-regulation skills. Part of the success is in staff ensuring throughout the project, that they have not lost sight of ensuring the school is a settled and calm environment. This is built through excellent relationships between pupils and staff. The environment itself is maintained through groups and clubs of children, as well as through care from each class to help maintain a sense of ownership and pride in all parts of the school. Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning, and caring is part of that process. When they are learning, they work well and with confidence, including with each other using the inclusive and kind vocabulary modelled by the staff. Being able to self-regulate creates an environment for all, with less disruption.

Leaders have a strong focus on pupils' confidence and self-expression. A range of well-organised activities, outdoor areas and well-deployed staff ensure that pupils have as inclusive an experience as possible, meaning that children can access their interests and skills, no matter their academic level. All areas, including those outdoor, have been well planned in relation to the breadth of experiences which help to develop resilience and perseverance.

To build on the success of this target, the school is part of a cross-federation team working with Senior Leaders and Subject Leaders to develop even more therapeutic approaches, with further robust monitoring of success in this area and wider evaluation of data. The aim is to then 'roll' these new ideas out to differing groups of learners, once the evidence supports it. There is a strong evidence-based approach within the school.



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### Next Step as discussed during the Flagship Review

Leaders highlighted a need to continue to develop the training to equip children to become fully skilled in accessing their 'Zones of Regulation'. They explained their ongoing staff training commitment in this area and how they will further this through a cross-federation working party. They acknowledge and are working to offset an implementation dip, due to the priority implementation of a Whole School Phonics programme. The Phonics programme itself, is needed to aid communication and underpin the IQM project and alleviate children's communication frustrations.

### **Target 2: To continue to develop the personalised sensory provision and sensory room.**

Leaders want staff to actively engage with sensory spaces across school and that has been fully developed within the 'Tulip Room'. Sensory opportunities will be further developed to match provision to evolve with the cohorts. The new Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) climbing area is starting to be fully utilised and is a perfect example of ensuring a cohort gets the specificity that they need. This will continue alongside school-wide training to support the whole school and their understanding of sensory processing difficulties.

Class teachers attended external training on the new EYFS framework during 2021. This was vital to inform approaches across the school. Therefore, the school's Curriculum has been adapted to address the changes to the framework. Once this was set in motion, self-moderation was used by Subject Leaders and evidenced the understanding and application of these new approaches.

Staff are clearly more confident when purposefully playing with the children, modelling behaviour, skills and vocabulary, and they know the reasons why. The bottom 20% of children academically are always at the forefront of daily meetings to ensure quality care, provision, and information sharing. Staff share findings to determine who is on track/not on track and the subsequent next steps to move that child on in their learning; this is a universal step and is tracked closely.

Training will also continue in this methodically and research-informed approach with metacognition and critical thinking at the forefront of staff meetings into 2023. These plans are now in place.

### Next Step as discussed during the Flagship Review

To continue on this path and further enhance sensory resources. To look outwardly and access outreach support from Play Therapists and Behaviour Support Specialists. To ensure parents and carers are fully aware of the provision and benefits by enhancing signposting. This will add to the support for parents of pupils with special needs and parents of multilingual children, through reviewing and clarifying the provision and utilising the school website.



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### Target 3: To develop Messy Play in Year 1.

Target 3's focus is a key motivator for the staff met during the assessment day, as they already provide and make sure that Key Stage One sensory and continuous areas are constantly developed and nurtured. In-school training of staff has inspired and given confidence, with leaders explaining how it has 'upskilled' staff to support pupils with their sensory processing and the key implementation of nurture through Messy Play; this is all driven by staff.

To ensure the pilot activities were informed, encouraged and motivated, additional training was put in place recently for Year 1 staff. This then helped them develop the continuous provision in relation to supporting children and their emotional needs during the often difficult transition from Reception to Year One. The success of the use of Messy Play within this area, is now being considered, when children transition from Year One to Year Two. There is an excitement and drive to ensure Messy Play is purposeful and valued in the future at St. Mary's.

### Next Steps as discussed during the Flagship Review

Children to be assessed that they are confidently using the 'Zones of Regulation' terminology within their Messy Play to support their self-regulation and conversation in relation to emotions. This will be implemented via observations and pupil voice input. This will then be seen as a pilot to evidence successful implementation and then to 'roll out' across other phases of the school.

### The Impact of the Cluster Group

St. Mary's is an active participant in its Cluster Group 'Northwessians', attending meetings both in person and online in the past, using many of the related training within its own daily routines and sharing ideas with its own staff, for example:

- St. Mary's has offered to host in the future, related to its 'Zones of Regulation' project and other areas. It has sent special needs staff to the last meeting, who asked many questions and shared ideas with other cluster staff.
- St. Mary's has attended a Cluster Meeting related to Reading and Community engagement at a cluster SEND provision. A community reading strategy has already been organised at St. Mary's, informed through ideas from this meeting.
- From this meeting and others, St. Mary's has gained a great deal of inclusive ideas and resources through its IQM Cluster work, particularly for Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Early Years as well as ideas for a Sensory Room, Community Engagement and Forest Schools.



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### Overview

St. Mary's RC Primary School is a forward-looking, friendly Primary School with a clear and motivated staffing structure. It is a school ever growing in confidence, with a Leadership Team that want to promote resilience and mental health support in its staff and children. Staff are excited and motivated to share their progress in terms of inclusion as a whole and also in relation to their admirable and well-needed IQM Flagship Project.

Progression is also reflected in the provision provided for the children. For example, initial tours of the school demonstrated each area and space being primed for creative learning to meet the needs of the children. Strategies used across school are thoughtfully matched to the resourcing of both outside and inside areas, as well as 'breakout' spaces: with rooms such as the 'Tulip Room' being purposeful and having low stimuli, when needed. Outside learning matches perfectly to the areas of self-regulation taught across school, therefore children are engaged on their own level in a way that promotes choice and resilience.

The whole school is set up to match what the children have either voiced or shown they have needed. There are so many ways to engage with their learning environments that the children learn vital co-ordination, collaborative, tactile and practical life skills in a uniquely fun way.

It was clear that the speech-based interventions and confident communication observed in Early Years and Key Stage 1 classes was reflected in Upper Key Stage 2 classes, with children following areas of interest within the structure of formal lessons. For example, one young man researching the World Cup with excellent engagement. However, lessons don't just cover 'topics' or 'subjects' in isolation and are sure to include ways to promote resilience and self-regulation. This was explained to me further during the first meeting with the Inclusion Lead.

She explained the use of staffing and their individual skills that has allowed the school to utilise creative approaches in all subjects. It has also ensured the children most in need of support can have a tailored support alongside their peers. She was the perfect person to explain this, as her vision to develop this even further and her kind approach when meeting the needs of children with varied and complex needs, was inspiring. This is clearly reflected through the 'buy in' from staff. They share and feel passionately about ensuring every family is included, invited in and cared for at St. Mary's.

This was echoed by the school Pastoral Manager, who clarified what was needed and what needed to happen next as this phase of the IQM Project evolves. She has a well-earned and long-standing understanding of the different dynamics in the community and that is invaluable and utilised perfectly in how she is deployed. Like many of her colleagues, she is keen to ensure her skills are shared with others and succession planning is always in place.

She spoke with pride about the dedicated team of support staff who have taken to bereavement support so well. She went on to explain how they are a vital part of ensuring her planning in relation to emotional literacy and young carers, amongst other



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countless ways of supporting the families and children, is carried out successfully. She wants to ensure there is a clarity of identification of mental health needs and is determined to naturally evolve systems to help with this. The support that she and her team provide is therapeutic, sensitive and takes into account the personal nature of faith and background and also helps celebrate it.

How the strategies are promoted across school and into the home was detailed by the Key Stage 1 Phase Leader, who is also the Parental Engagement Coordinator. She is relentless in her work to listen to families and their needs and match what the school offers to those needs carefully. She is key in maintaining the openness and transparency with all stakeholders that has been so important in the school and in their successes. Working parties of parents are a regular occurrence and faiths or backgrounds are both shared within school through first-hand experiences. The children get to understand the backgrounds and skills of each other's families, leading to deeper understanding and support of each other.

She ensures that the community of families feel valued and welcome and keeps her finger on the pulse with parent forums, specially targeted parent coffee mornings, translations, weekly contact with families when needed and evolving the school email contacts. With her team, she grants parents ownership and pride of the school and works with them to provide more for the whole school community. Utilising skills of families to run events themselves and fostering a culture of trust and support. It was also noteworthy how the IQM Cluster Meeting she recently attended informed a new initiative to help add to what is already a wonderful array of community cohesion support.

The children were keen to explain how they self-regulate and how it is a natural and helpful way of navigating change, feelings and challenges. They said they were able to access support when they were finding it hard to take part in learning or deal with their day. One child was accessing his own research to add to the collective class work, alleviating stress, through using technology. Another child was accessing practical 'hands on' weaving skills to understand and engage with the curriculum, whilst also being able to explain the meaning of each colour used to represent the regulation zones and also explain why they might be needed.

The next meeting was with the Assistant Headteacher who was also a dedicated Federation Outdoor Development Lead. Their role was explained and the clarity and understanding of the role, as well as the accountability of it, shone through. They have a desire and laser focus to ensure that the outdoor provision is there to support emotional well-being. This was something they clearly have great passion and skill in relation to. The collaboration and willingness to ensure each area and space matched a curriculum or cohort need is not to be underestimated in its value.



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They are able to creatively match (and build) areas around school that enhance the life chances of the children practically and help them develop autonomy as lifelong learners. They shared this willingly with other settings, with an understanding of the 'bigger picture' in how their role can support as many children as they can reach. Climbing, woodman-ship, amphitheatres, weaving, allotments, outdoor learning, mud kitchens - each area is used and constantly being adapted to meet the need of each differing cohort.

Further meetings with the Headteacher and Inclusion Lead were vital in providing clear examples of how the school's inclusive curriculum has developed throughout the project, followed by an explanation of inclusion-based next steps. She explained a need from the community to have clearer signposting to areas of support outside of the school, to utilise the website and signpost support even more. This showed the project and the progress of it, with a tangible and deployment-based viewpoint. It was very helpful in painting the picture of the last three years of this project and how Leaders choose realistic steps forward, after each success.

Having an interview with the previous Headteacher, cemented many points related to the school's IQM targets, particularly in relation to the school and its development over time. She made it clear that a change of ethos over the last decade has provided the foundations for the trust and creativity being implemented in the present. Tough decisions were made. The sea change of approach is evident in the successful inclusion of all children and families, evident during this assessment. This explained the journey of how, for staff in 2022, there is a culture of reflective practitioners and how it has become so embedded.

The meeting with a parent also solidified the progress toward the IQM targets, especially in relation to their feelings in how their child is in the, "right place", how concerns were addressed and how open communication and relationship building was key in how her child is thriving today. She explained how the curriculum was so adaptive to his needs and how his interests are catered for. She spoke of how on a day-to-day basis families are supported, especially through transition between classes and how the other children's kindness helps her child remain happy at school.

The final feedback meeting with the IQM Lead made it clear why St. Mary's is an IQM Flagship school, as it was confident, open, and aspirational on its progress relating to its targets and the areas it wanted to develop. It was also rightfully proud as a whole staff team, to celebrate the vital work that has been completed. It has made determined and tangible progress in its IQM Flagship Project in all areas and as an engaged member of its IQM Cluster Group. The school actively promotes all the values of inclusion the children and families in the community require.



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I am therefore firmly of the opinion that the school continues to fully meet the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award 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. The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Flagship status.

**Assessor: Matthew Cuss**

**Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:**

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH  
Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd