



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



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

Head/Principal Ms Joanne O'Mullane

IQM Lead Ms Joanne O'Mullane

Date of Review 26th November 2024

Assessor Ms Alyson Tolley

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Northwessians

Ambassador Mr Matthew Cuss

Next Meeting TBC

Meeting Focus TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2023	4th Dec 2023	Yes
Spring 2024	11th Mar 2024	No
Summer 2024	4th Jul 2024	No
Autumn 2024	13th Nov 2024	Yes
Spring 2025	TBC	
Summer 2025	TBC	

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Date	Location	Topic/s	Outcome/s
4th Dec 2024	St Mary's Moss Side	Inclusion Tour, UNICEF Rights	Attended by Hannah Bickerton. Hannah returned to school enthused. From the visit, she developed a higher profile display in relation to UNICEF Rights.
11th Mar 2024	Grange School, Matthews Lane, Manchester, M12 4GR	Foci: · Sharing best practice at Grange School; Sensory Processing,	Booked to attend but was unable to attend due to a critical incident.



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		Curriculum Enrichment, Engaging pupils with school ethos and SDP Sharing best practice from all cluster schools	However, staff have visited The Grange and been part of their outreach support.
4th Jul 2024	Kentmere Academy, Kentmere Avenue, Rochdale, OL12 9EE	· Sharing best practice at Kentmere · Training session on Functions of Behaviour	Unable to attend
13th Nov 2024	Irk Valley Community School, 10 Waterloo Street, Manchester, M8 5XH	FOCUS: School of Sanctuary /Pupil's physical development /Speech and language development/Staff wellbeing	Helen D attended: New SENDCo.

Different members of staff attend the cluster meetings, and they then cascade information to colleagues. The SENDCo who is new to post (but not to the school) attended the most recent meeting. She explained that staff find it interesting to visit other schools and have found them to provide especially useful information and an opportunity for leaders to reflect. The opportunity to network with other schools is beneficial and provides examples of the good practices they have observed through the outreach provided by one of the specialist schools in the cluster.

The Co-Headteacher explained that non-attendance at two of the meetings was because of issues in school and it was evident from the discussions I held with colleagues that they are keen to continue to foster their links with other schools to access further examples of good practice that can be modified to further support the exceptional inclusion at St Mary's.

Evidence

In advance of the review the school submitted an evaluation of their targets from last year alongside a clear and concise action plan for their project for the coming year and I was able to scrutinise these in advance. The timetable for the day demonstrated the IQM Lead (Co-Headteacher)'s knowledge and understanding of the school and their passion for pro-active inclusion.



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During the review, I was able to meet with a variety of stakeholders and the extensive discussions, a tour of the school and learning walks enabled me to gain a thorough insight into the outstanding and inspiring inclusive practice.

During the visit, the following meetings/discussions took place:

- Introduction and welcome with the Co-Headteacher/IQM Lead.
- Pastoral Manager.
- SENDCo.
- Meetings and phone calls with parents/other family members.
- Meeting regarding the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) and impact of parental engagement priorities.
- The Inclusive Curriculum.
- Impact of the Zones of Regulation.
- Meeting regarding the support and impact in relation to Emotionally Based School.
- Avoidance (EBSA).
- Adaptive Teaching.
- Learning council- pupils.
- Teachers.
- Teaching Assistants.
- Senior leaders.

Documentation:

- IQM Centre of Excellence review documentation.
- School website and policies.
- Ofsted report.
- Learning walks.
- Learning environment.
- Outside spaces.
- Photobooks.



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

2023/2024 Project:

1. To develop a cycle of Inclusion information sharing for parents through regular workshops across the academic year.

Leaders have worked tirelessly to continue to self-evaluate their approach to develop and embed parent partnership, recognising that parents and carers are the most experienced and knowledgeable person in relation to their child. The school was awarded the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) in the summer term (2024) for the third time in a row which reflects the school's commitment to this priority. This award has also been integral in supporting the development of parent support and engagement.

There is a school working-party dedicated to parent partnership with whole school representation, so all staff are aware of what work is being done to secure effective relationships. They seek termly feedback from stakeholders in an easily accessible format using Google Forms and use this information to prioritise termly parent forum meetings. These meetings are pro-active, they inform next steps and lead to change, for example, changes in school uniform and this gives parents confidence in the process. Parents are selected randomly to contribute to the forums so different parents become involved and have an opportunity to attend at least once.

The school have been committed to the development of providing SEND information and a multitude of information and resources for parents and staff are accessible on the website and they have direct access to a wide range of resources and signposting to support inclusion. This information is reviewed systematically, and leaders add to these as needed and as the needs of children in school change. This is particularly beneficial for those parents who are not always able to access support groups in the local community.

Parent workshops are established and form part of the termly monitoring calendar. These are linked to various aspects of inclusion, for example, a behaviour support workshop, e-safety (focussing on vulnerable groups and internet safety) and one on how to support learning. Parent voice has influenced the choice of topics and parent voice reflects the value they place on these experiences. Leaders' next focus is for the workshops to provide an opportunity for parents to network within the school community so that feel supported beyond the school gates.

The school now host the Manchester Parent Carer Forum Drop-in event, hosting two this year. They have continued to drive links within the community opening the events to the wider community, reaching out to support inclusion beyond the school. At the same time, they continue to support parents to develop their own understanding of neurodiversity, providing them with practical strategies to support their child and their family.

The SEND parent forum is also open to the wider community; parents feel that they have a voice and that their children are represented. Parents support each other



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effectively and often parents can problem-solve for other parents, which in turn builds trust and develops confidence. The SENDCo spoke with care and compassion about how these meetings also enable her to check on the emotional health and well-being of parents, acknowledging the difficulties and frustrations that some experience, in their determination to get the right support for their children.

Parent partnership also affords parents opportunities to feel empowered and they are encouraged to come into school and share their skills and experiences with the children. Consequently, children have practised real-life curriculum experiences with a nurse, and they have had the opportunity to try hair braiding, alongside musical experiences with a harpist and a pianist. This enrichment is fantastic for pupils as well as further enhancing parental engagement.

The school celebrates pupils' learning and commitment to school through several well-planned measures. Parents are invited to the standard Parents Evening and there is good attendance to these, however, they are also encouraged to come into school and carry out an activity with their child in class during the school day, they use this time to see the classroom 'in action' as well as look at their children's work. The school is understandably immensely proud of the high uptake these events have. Weekly newsletters are also effective in celebrating the children's achievements and these are also accessible via the school's website.

Leaders speak with pride at their involvement in 'CBeebies Time for School' which is an 'observational documentary' following the lives of reception children starting school. The programmes are extremely informative and as well as supporting new parents to navigate the start of their children's school career, it also launched staff to 'celebrity status' and they are recognised in the community and on one occasion at a concert in Manchester!

A recent introduction to 'Instagram' has provided an excellent opportunity to share the school's exceptional practice, as well as promote pupils' achievements. This is a highly effective means of communication for those parents who are unable to access face-to-face events. The Co-Headteacher spoke about how they can also use it to signpost parents to free events such as the forthcoming Levenshulme Christmas Window Trail. Whilst their use of this aspect of social media is in its infancy, it is still impressive and enables the school to highlight all the remarkable things that they are doing, as well as being able to reach more parents and establish connections.

2. The Development of Zones of Regulation

The 'zones of regulation' is clearly high profile and firmly embedded throughout the school, and this is evident in classroom and corridor displays as well as in feedback from staff and pupil voice. Its usage is consistent, and during the visit, staff and pupils were able to clearly articulate what the zones are and how it works.

Staff and pupils use a 'common' language when referring to the zones, 'Red, Amber, Green' were mentioned in discussions with pupils and they are consistently encouraged to self-evaluate their own behaviours, resulting in the same vocabulary being used to communicate how they are feeling. Staff reported how this is being



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adopted by parents, many of whom have clearly absorbed the information provided and have listened to their children who go home talking about it.

In classrooms, there are consistent visuals to support pupils with their self-regulation and develop self-help skills and it is evident that this is becoming routine within the school. Each classroom has RAG boxes and pupils are encouraged to independently access resources to support their regulation. During my meeting with the learning council, a Year 6 pupil was able to tell me what zone he was in at that time and why, this is a common theme with all children.

Staff have become competent at recognising when pupils are moving into the different zones and are consistent in their approach to support children. In doing this, they are also modelling to children what they need to do, for example, 'take yourself into the green zone.'

All classrooms use the same resources in relation to emotional regulation to guarantee consistency. An 'emotional ladder' is used to guide pupils to self-reflect and is a useful tool. Staff foster listening opportunities as part of the learning routine; pupils are encouraged to write any questions or concerns on post-it notes rather than having to 'talk' directly to staff. Pupils clearly value this activity and were able to express confidently how they use it.

Parents talked about the traffic light system that are displayed in classrooms and used to effectively support children to manage their time. Initially, this was used as a personalised learning tool to motivate and encourage engagement, and they spoke about the impact this has had on their child and how they felt the tool is now benefiting other pupils.

The Learning Council is a group of Year 6 pupils, and they talked about their school experiences in an incredibly positive way. All Year 6 pupils are prefects, and they explained to me that they wear green jumpers which enable younger pupils to be able to identify them quickly and seek out support at play and lunchtime. They presented as eloquent and confident young people and exuded pride about their school, and their experiences. Pupils also spoke about 'Give me 5' which is another tool used consistently and effectively across school to enable them to communicate effectively.

Next Steps

- The school will continue to support parents through workshops and wider networking opportunities to encourage them to access support beyond school and connect with other families.
- Continue to build on the excellent use of social media as a wider support mechanism for information and reach out beyond school.
- Continue with cycle of CPD for new staff in relation to adaptive teaching, Zones of Regulation, and Colourful Semantics.



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Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Flagship development will take the form of two projects this coming year.

The school will continue to enhance and develop their 2023/2024 project and the focus of this was to develop a cycle of inclusion information sharing for parents through regular workshops across the academic year. They will also continue to develop and promote social media, for example, Instagram, to reach a wider parent audience and to share the offer of support groups for parents. They acknowledge that face-to-face can be difficult for some parents but want to make sure all feel included.

Whilst progress has been made with this, leaders recognise that they are on a journey and continue to strive to embed parent partnership as a key priority.

The second project is to develop and implement a whole school strategic approach to supporting children with Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and to further enhance attendance systems for all students. The rationale for this element is that the school have seen a recent increase in pupils with EBSA at Saint Mary's. Leaders want to upskill staff to prioritise early identification and planned support for pupils with or at risk of EBSA. This will be implemented through the enhancement of attendance monitoring systems to ensure pupils are identified early and access robust support.

Whilst leaders have previously been proactive in supporting pupils who have emotionally based school avoidance, they are now keen to focus on much earlier identification of vulnerable pupils who are at risk of becoming persistently absent and so pre-empting the need for support and intervention before attendance becomes a major issue. They were able to communicate early success stories and understand the impact of support and intervention in providing positive experiences for both children and families.

Leaders will all access EBSA training, and this will then be rolled out to all staff so that there will be a consistent and cohesive approach to identification, support and intervention.

The school uses the Manchester Council's attendance policy but has adapted the appendix to include visuals to ensure it is more accessible for parents. The policy is written and is awaiting ratification from the Governors.

The school is already on their journey to develop attendance awards through the introduction of 'potato heads.' Again, pupils were able to communicate how this works and how their teachers actively encourage them to monitor their own attendance as well as that of their class. Children were able to tell me what their current class attendance is and the reasons behind this figure. Encouraging children to track their own attendance encourages them to understand the impact of absence on learning as well as promoting responsibility and independence.



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Task (What)	Actions (How)	When and by Whom?
To identify and monitor Pupils at risk of EBSA	Analyse data to identify vulnerable groups, pupils at risk and pupils who are persistently absent. Implement support plans for pupils with EBSA.	Inclusion Team Attendance Manager
Update Attendance Policy	Review policy with stakeholders.	Inclusion Team Attendance Manager
Attend CPD	SLT to attend EBSA Training. Roll out whole school EBSA Training.	Inclusion Team Attendance Manager
Develop Attendance Rewards	Implement attendance awards for the whole class and individual pupils. 100% attendance and most improved.	Inclusion Team Attendance Manager



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Overview

The school's website describes St Mary's RC Primary School as a 'a vibrant, ever-changing and developing community with a happy, family-orientated environment, where many exciting things happen in and out of the classroom!' and this is a view shared by all stakeholders and is explicit throughout the school community and reflected in their policies and extensive practice. On arriving at the school, I observed families lining up down the road waiting for the opening of the school gates and I witnessed lots of smiling faces clearly eager to start their school day and access learning.

The school reception is warm and welcoming, and I was responded to promptly by a friendly face. The welcome I received from every adult and child throughout the day was heartfelt and felt personalised by pupils, parents and staff at all levels of the organisation.

Relationships are exceptional and walking through the school and meeting with stakeholders, I could see the positive ways in which staff and pupils interact with each other. There is mutual respect alongside genuine warmth and love, with staff commenting on how 'the school is a family.'

During the visit I met with a variety of stakeholders as well as taking an extensive tour around the school, visiting classrooms, walking through the all-encompassing outdoor spaces, and talking with the children. It was evident throughout my interactions with all that there is a powerful sense of pride in being part of St Mary's. The commitment to reflect and self-evaluate underpins everything they do with their mantra being 'What more can we do?' with a consistent approach to keep adjusting their practice to ensure inclusion for all.

Leaders go beyond in realising their vision and this is explicit; the Co-Headteacher frequently refers to 'best endeavours' in how they model inclusion, and it is evident that the external challenges they face do not deter their strive for effective inclusion. Meeting the needs of all pupils is at the forefront of what the school does with a variety of 'non-negotiables' in their inclusive offer, but leaders similarly realise that parent partnership and staff well-being are fundamental in enabling pupils to achieve their potential.

Parents spoke enthusiastically about how they feel supported alongside their children, describing the school as 'absolutely fabulous.' They feel the staff know their children well, treating them as individuals, with one parent describing the valuable communication that staff have with parents. She described the regular phone calls she receives to provide feedback about her son with 'even the negatives being phrased in a positive way.' Another parent spoke about different adjustments that the school makes for children, citing an example of how a teacher came outside to support a child to access the school through a different door than normal when he wanted to follow his older sister.

Learning spaces are bright and inviting, with space to provide flexible learning opportunities. Zones of Regulation displays are highly visible, and classrooms have well-resourced zones boxes to support their use.



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Each area also has task trays which have different resources and tools to support learning, including access to coloured overlays and talking tins with children using these independently. The school promotes the use of 'Red/Amber/Green' paper cups to promote a no-hands approach to learning and during visits to lessons, I observed pupils using these and engaging in learning independently as well as collaboratively across all key stages.

Desk shields are used in classrooms to support access to low stimulus environments and Year 5 and 6 rooms have 'break out' spaces outside where children can take time out to regulate or access intervention. The Early Years area is a large bright space with an area which uses the nurture principles. The Year 1 classrooms lead to an outdoor space, and the curriculum has been developed to make effective use of this area.

There are a range of other fantastic resources such as The Tulip Room which is an effective and well-resourced break out space. The exciting Forest Schools outdoor space is supported by a classroom and houses a range of resources. The outdoor resources are extensive and used effectively to support both groups and individual pupils; these include the Sunshine Space, the Willow Dome, a scooter park, a pond area, and a digging area to support and develop fine and gross motor skills, 10% of the curriculum takes place outside the school building and their commitment to developing and resourcing these spaces is commendable.

Leaders work hard to provide a haven for families and an example of this is the allotment within the school grounds that can be accessed via a keypad lock when the school is closed. This provision builds trust as well as providing a safe space for families to enjoy quality time together.

Leaders prioritise and allocate elements of the budget to fund external support and intervention. They buy in a specialist play therapist as well as support for messy play. Leaders ensure that support staff engage in these interventions to upskill school staff in future planning and delivery. To support the ever-growing need for SLCN, leaders fund a private Speech & Language therapist. They also employ sports coaches at lunchtime to provide different activities to engage the pupils, again this is funded from the school's budget.

The Co-Headteacher has been instrumental in working with the local authority to provide support for those at risk to reduce suspensions and exclusions and is part of the Alternative Provision pilot Group in Manchester whose remit is to develop strategies to reduce exclusions across the city. She has made links with local schools to support vulnerable children in the area. Currently identified pupils access gardening and other interventions 2 days a week and this has had an impact in reducing anxiety and supporting the development of self-regulation.

I met with the Chair of Governors, and he was very keen to emphasise the pride the governors have in being part of the school's Governing Body. He explained that they are 'immensely proud of the school' and they have first-hand opportunities to witness what goes on behind the scenes as well the end results. He discussed the links that the school has with the church and how this is 'strengthening a bond' with the local community.



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Staff health and well-being is a key priority for leaders. There is a robust monitoring and improvement cycle that is used to prepare staff well in advance of quality assurance processes and the learning walk and lesson observation schedule is planned so that staff do not experience undue pressure. CPD is calendared weekly but there is a flexible approach which means that there are weeks when there is no formal training. Further evidence of how well the staff is looked after and cared for is the excellent retention rate, with staff usually leaving because they are retiring or have secured promotion. Well-being Wednesdays promote positive emotional health and well-being with activities such as cake baking. Staff also receive cards and vouchers to acknowledge their contributions and hard work, and it was clear from my discussions with several staff at various levels of the organisation that they feel very valued and respected.

A further celebration for the school and its community was a visit by the Department for Education to the school as part of their research to understand what an inclusive school looks like and how this can be achieved. They were interested, in particular, in the value of home-school partnership and impressively, the outstanding practice at St Mary's will feed into government policy development. This is a further testament to the incredible inclusion offer at this wonderful school.

It was a real privilege and a pleasure to visit St Mary's and witness their exceptional practice. Inclusion occurs naturally and is rooted firmly in every aspect of the school due entirely to the efforts of the staff, led by the inspirational Co-Headteachers and their effective leadership team and staff.

The school continues to move from strength to strength in terms of its superb inclusive practice and 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. 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: Ms Alyson Tolley

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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