



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School: Riverside Primary School and Nursery
St Edmunds Way
Rainham
Kent
ME8 8ET

Head/Principal: Ms Kim Wilmer

IQM Lead: Ms Zoe Huggett

Date of Review: 9th July 2020

Assessor: Jane Whitehurst

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: Inclusion South East

Ambassador: Amanda Love

Date of Next Meeting: To be Agreed

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: To be Agreed

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

The school submitted accurate documentation of their own evaluation of progress including a review of their Action Plan. Other documentation reviewed as part of the process included the school's Self Evaluation and Improvement Plan, Governor meeting minutes, School Council Minutes, Art Week Timetable, Pupil Subject Lead minutes and Newsletters. Other evidence that was used to complete the review included the DFE website, Ofsted Report and the school website.

Discussions with:

- Headteacher.
- IQM Lead/Inclusion Manager.
- Teachers.
- Governors.
- Year 5 and Year 6 Pupils.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Additional Activities:

A review of the school was undertaken using Zoom because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. From the online meetings, an action plan for 2020 were discussed and agreed. The meetings highlighted the commitment and passion that the school has to Inclusion.

Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

This is the Year 1 review of the school as an IQM Flagship School. The school had identified a project linked to enhancing pupil engagement in whole school development. "Improving Pupil Voice across the school and developing employable skills in children for the 21st century."

The team have focused on the development of pupil leadership in the curriculum as well as enhancing the skills of the School Council. The development of new roles across the school to champion pupil voice and develop pupil involvement in decision making and action planning linked to curricular subjects and well-being across the curriculum was an aim of the project. Leaders were keen to involve pupils in the development of the school curriculum as well as enhancing the curriculum so that pupils had opportunities to develop the skills required for future employment and their ability to maintain their well-being.

The school has had an interesting year with an Ofsted inspection in November 2019 followed by the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Spring term and subsequent closure of the school. The school has been able to make some progress with regard to developing the project although leaders were aware that not all of the original targets had been completed.

Leaders in the school recognise the significance of learning from other schools. As part of the initial research into increasing pupil voice and pupil feedback, the Headteacher visited the Gypsy Hill Federation who had developed Pupil Empowerment across their schools. The schools across the Trust had very different backgrounds and had developed their own pupil empowerment strategy to encourage the children to contribute to changes within the school. One of the key impacts of increasing pupil voice and feedback as part of whole school improvement had been to develop pupil confidence and also improve the children's oracy skills. The value of increased confidence and good oracy skills is a key benefit to future life skills and confirmed to the Headteacher and the team that pupil empowerment would "give them more of a voice" and impact on the lives of the children at Riverside helping them to be more "employable".

The School Development Plan reflects the initial developments of pupil empowerment that the staff team had planned within the sections Behaviour and Attitudes and Personal Development. The strategic objectives were identified as "outstanding behaviours and attitudes are modelled to pupils by pupils" and "develop pupils' leadership skills, characters and talents. Empower pupils to make meaningful change to the school." The actions planned to achieve these objectives included increasing Pupil Leaders across the school. The school had established Digital Leaders and planned to



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



develop Pupil Curriculum Leads (PCL's). The role of School Councillors was to be further developed so that pupils gained an understanding of how to facilitate change.

The Pupil Subject Leader programme is "very much in its infancy" although pupils were identified who were passionate about a subject area. One of the pupils proudly explained how "his sister had come up with the idea" of pupil leaders. It was evident from talking to all the pupils during the review that they were very proud of their roles. They were able to explain some of the actions that they had been involved in prior to the school closure. The Pupil Art subject leads' had been very involved in planning the Art Week which had been very successful. Pupils described with enthusiasm "appearing in assembly to explain what was going on during the Art week.....really cool." Other members of the team had met with the staff subject leads and held meetings and considered ideas. The MFL lead described the idea of planning a "celebratory French day" to raise the enthusiasm for the subject as ideas included cooking and tasting food as well as using the language. Reading has been a whole school priority which has meant the Reading Lead had been quite involved in developing ideas from leaflets for World Book Day to a PowerPoint presentation focusing on helping children learn tricky spellings. All of the children considered that they had been able to help promote their subject and that attending weekly meetings had helped to sustain the interest. Staff leads also commented on the value of the approach reflecting on the increased "confidence and ideas" that the children had, including "having special subject days that increased the visibility of the subject." As the relationships had only just been established before school closure staff considered that it would be good to maintain the roles with the same pupil leads for the next academic year. It would certainly be a recommendation from this review.

The School Councillors had met with the Governor to discuss their roles and how they could make the school better. They had "asked questions about their jobs" and been very interested to hear "about their roles and what they do for the school." They were particularly impressed that the Governors had "someone to take their notes" as part of their meetings. They were also interested to "find out that the Governors had lots of meetings." The School Councillors were very clear about their role in school "we are going to make school better....it is our chance to say how things can be improved." The children were also conscience of the responsibility of their roles representing the other pupils as they had been voted into the role. They were also aware that part of that responsibility included "pupil voice and asking children from their year group what should happen to change the school." It was evident from the conversations with the School Councillors that the impact of meeting with the Governors as well as the clear guidelines about the role had enabled them to understand the responsibility of leading change in school. Staff commented that the regular meetings that had been established over the year had enabled the routine of the role to be developed as well as ensured time to talk for the School Councillors. Staff had noticed that "children really enjoy doing it and particularly having Key Stage 1 pupils accompany them to the meeting."

The school team had introduced the role of Digital Leaders last year which has also had a positive impact on pupil empowerment. Pupils were again, proud of the opportunity to hold the role of a Digital Leader which they had to apply for. If they were accepted for the role, they were able to attend weekly training to become "fully fledged Digital Leaders." The children had planned to work on e-safety and had planned a series of



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



sessions prior to school closure which as the staff lead commented they “were very excited about the potential lessons” and so were disappointed not to be able to deliver. Staff commented on the positive impact of the role particularly with regard to “giving fresh ideas and the sense of empowerment that the children developed.” The children were also very “up to date on different apps” so it was useful to be able to share information regarding new releases – the positives and negatives.

Leaders had developed a member of staff as Pupil Well-being Champion and ELSA sessions had been offered to some of the children. During school closure the school developed a Well-being page on the Class Dojo communication system. The team found that this was a positive way to support parents as they were able to share advice and also signpost to resources for well-being support. Leaders are considering alternative approaches to the development of well-being across the school following both the school closure and the member of staff leaving the school. Planned developments include staff CPD to develop further understanding of emotional well-being and the impact of SEMH needs on behaviour as well as the development of a wider well-being team. Leaders will also consider how to develop the PCL's and School Council member roles in ensuring that well-being issues are addressed within the curriculum particularly taking into account the new RSE requirements.

Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

The team at Riverside have successfully begun their journey of pupil empowerment. It was evident from the review that the children are very proud of the opportunity to be engaged in school development and that they are keen to continue with the roles and promote the subjects. Staff commented on the positive impact of the roles and reflected that a next step would be to extend the number of pupil subject leads so that there would be an improved opportunity for discussion and ideas within the meetings.

Leaders have also considered the development of the recovery curriculum that the team needs to implement from September to “plug the gaps and ensure that precision teaching, if used, has an impact.” This will be a key area of focus. Those pupils who have returned to school commented that they “definitely prefer to be at school.”

The suggested Action Plan that leaders had identified included:

- Reviewing how the pupil empowerment approaches have been implemented into Riverside practice so far.
- Embed pupil involvement in curriculum development.
- Develop the School Council's understanding of committees and facilitating change.
- Restructure the well-being team to ensure that pupil voice is represented and embed the focus on well-being throughout the curriculum.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



The focused development of the Recovery curriculum including the well-being of the community and the continued work on pupil empowerment will be an interesting second year as a Flagship IQM school for Riverside.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The IQM Lead attended the first cluster meeting of the year at Bower Grove School Maidstone. The focus of the meeting was well-being support for staff and children, managing Behaviour and Attachment. As the lead commented, the value of the meeting is that opportunity to reflect and also pick up ideas, “always find something when you visit a school and ahh we could do that.” The team were able to create a “Help’s Available” leaflet outlining the support available to the school staff based on the example shared at Bower Grove. The school was also able to incorporate some of the Behaviour and Attachment information into existing CPD materials.



Overview

The commitment of the team at Riverside to inclusive practice was evident throughout the review. All members of the team from staff, pupil and governors reflected the vision and values of the school – the “Riverside Attitude” as it is described on the website. The whole team had clearly “worked together, communicated with each other and shown respect” during a challenging time and year. The passion that the staff team have was reflected through the enthusiasm to engage during the review as well as sharing that members of the team who did not have a class at the moment were coming into school to complete lunchtime duties. As staff commented we are “part of a teamthere is a real feeling of fitting together even as the school expands.” The staff team valued the support that they had from the SLT commenting that they were always “very helpful every member of the Senior team is accessible.... as long as you are open and honest then you will be supported.... always notice when something amiss.” The respect that each member of the team holds for the other is highly evident from the comments.

The Governors are highly engaged with the school community commenting that they were “proactive in attending staff development days.” They also reflected on the “incredible staff focus on pupils” that they witness during those days as well. The value of being a Governor who is “part of the school community and has an opportunity to engage with the school” was very evident from the enthusiasm with which Governors described their role. The Governors were also very proud of the leadership of the school and the proactive way that leaders engage with staff. The recent example of the planned return to school where leaders had “ensured all staff were involved in the recovery plan.” Governors also celebrated the staff development opportunities that were created, commenting on feedback from staff “who had been promoted and had valued that their skills were cultivated” as well as observing that “upskilling and empowering people helps the reputation of the school.”

The Governors were very clear that the “children are proud of the school and demonstrate a desire to share their learning seeing themselves as learners.”

Governors had established Governor awards that they present each year based on the Seven values which helps to raise Governor visibility as well as pupils. The opportunity to visit the school and talk to the children was considered an important aspect of their monitoring role and it was evident that good systems had been developed to support that aspect of the role. The School Councillors were very clear that Governors “had lots of meetings and what they did in the meetings.”

The recent Ofsted in November 2019 celebrated the work of the school with an overall effectiveness of Good although recognising the amazing focus the school has on Personal Development and Behaviour and Attitudes as Outstanding. The importance of the school values – Enjoy, Achieve, Teamwork, Respect, Communicate, Independence and Resilience were reflected through the review with a variety of examples particularly during the school closure. The Headteacher had sent every child a postcard home during school closure to maintain the communication as well as staff phoning families regularly. Staff had focused on sharing work with pupils either online or delivering hard copies to maintain their focus on learning. Class Dojo had been used to deliver learning as well as support the well-being of the pupils and families through the



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



addition of an extra well-being page. Staff had shared Social Stories as well as videos of Eddie the school dog. The Headteacher has continued to send a weekly newsletter throughout the whole period of school closure and reopening of bubbles. The commitment of the whole staff team to the children was reflected with the comments for the children that they “are pleased to be back in school” and that “our teachers make sure learning is fun.”

The team at Riverside are passionate about improving children's lives and making the school approach work for all children. A comment from a pupil during the day noted that “with my younger brother, the school has been really helpful letting him interact with other people.” The comment demonstrates the determination of leaders and staff to support all children.

Having discussed the progress made since the last IQM review and the school's plans for the future, I am of the opinion that the school should continue to hold Flagship School status and be reviewed again in 12 months' time.

Assessor: Jane Whitehurst

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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