



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



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

Head/Principal: Kim Wilmer

IQM Lead: Zoe Huggett

Date of Review: 16th June 2021

Assessor: Catherine Holt

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: South East 25

Ambassador: Kenny Frederick

Date of Next Meeting: 30.06.21

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: TBC

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

The school provided a great deal of information and in addition sent me further back up evidence.

- Flagship Review and Action Plan
- Access to online policies and school information
- Website
- Virtual Meetings
- Governor's Monitoring
- Parent's feedback and Class Dojo



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Virtual Meetings:

- Headteacher
- IQM Lead
- Children
- Chair of Governors and Staff Governor
- Staff

Additional Activities:

The Headteacher and Inclusion Leader took me through the decision, and the story behind, the project in the current climate of COVID-19 restrictions.



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The project that was planned for the academic year 2020-21, based on the school's existing Flagship project, was revised at the beginning of the year due to the momentous change in school priorities, linked to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Therefore, the targets reviewed below are not those that were set at the last review in July 2020.

The School's progress from the previous year is based on the project focus of "Well Being."

There were many instances where the curriculum was underpinned by ensuring that well-being was the focus. During the meeting with the Chair of Governors and the Staff Governor, they told me that a "Mini Eden Project" had been developed, where children are supported to use their life skills, gardening and cooking their produce, promoting both physical and mental health for the children. This has also had a positive impact on pupils' focus and concentration in class.

Staff have enjoyed the benefit of mindfulness sessions through Yoga, as well as a new approach to working. The Leaders have introduced a 'Well Being Day' for all staff, as well as working offsite in PPA time. Leaders continually monitor the well-being of staff and ensure strategies are in place for everyone to feel happy and motivated in their role to ensure positive learning outcomes for pupils. Staff said the Leaders "*expect your best but give you the support to give your best.*"

COVID-19, particularly the lockdowns, with the hard work of the school staff have strengthened relationships between home and school. There is a wide range of supportive resources available to families, which help with their well-being needs. The weekly (sometimes daily) phone calls and regular communications informing parents about what was happening in school was instrumental in developing trusting partnerships between home and school. The Class Dojo is particularly successful giving advice, resources, and links to parents. The Inclusion newsletters were also welcomed by the parents as they knew that they could get the support if it were needed. Once the school anticipated that lockdown was going to happen, they drew up the current list of vulnerable pupils and families (and kept that updated throughout) so they know which children they had to keep a close eye on and who needed special provision. The Inclusion Team visited families and where needed, delivered food parcels to the door.

The Headteacher highlighted the importance that, when valuable staff move on it is essential that the staff are trained to support colleague's well-being and can support and train each other. There is a School Counsellor, wide CPD opportunities in relation to being competent to provide well-being support to themselves, the children, and the parents. Training in Lego Therapy and Trauma Informed Practice has made a powerful impact on well-being.

I met with a group of children, which was a joy. When I asked them about how they had been, they told me that it has been "*quite tricky*" and that they had "*missed their teachers.*" They shared with me their experiences and how they have been supported during lockdown. The children unanimously agreed that any issues or problems or



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advice needed would be sorted out quickly by the staff. They gave me some examples, such as homework, emails or if someone was sad. I would like to say thank you to the group of children that took part. They were so articulate, positive, and honest. Despite the pandemic, the well-being of children, parents and staff has been enhanced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project:

A lengthy discussion was held with the Headteacher and the IQM Lead on the targets being the same as last year. We discussed the philosophy of mental health and resilience, as a prerequisite for effective learning. They were pleased with the impact of the well-being programme and planned for this to be embedded in school culture with a holistic, multi-media approach for 2021-2022.

Next Steps as discussed in the Flagship Review.

The key actions and next steps outlined in the Action Plan and Flagship Project are as follows:

Supporting the mental health and well-being of the whole school community, with particular regard to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The aims of the project are to:

- Adapt the Curriculum to ensure well-being is a key priority across the school.
- To increase staff skills and knowledge, so there is greater capacity for supporting well-being.
- Ensure that there is a range of appropriate resources for supporting families with well-being needs.
- Promote and support staff well-being.

The Head and Leaders have worked extremely hard and reflected on their practice, to develop the next phase of the Flagship Project. They have recognised that this needs to be with particular focus on staff changes and the COVID-19 Pandemic. The next steps for 2021-2022 are to embed and build on the Mental Health and Well-being Project. The steps work to ensure that children, parents, and staff, along with the Leaders, create an environment that promotes well-being, a key part in keeping them safe, helping them develop and ensuring they have positive outcomes into adulthood.



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The Impact of the Cluster Group

All meetings were held virtually.

Target 1: Remote learning – supporting engagement and SEN provision.

The school looked into ways to provide remote SALT and OT. As a result, the school offered remote sessions, by both phone and video to support parents with delivering SALT and OT at home. They also created resource packs of SALT activities which were sent home for individuals.

Target 2: Return to school – well-being and COVID-19 catch-up approaches.

Pupil and parent surveys have been carried out and responses were overwhelmingly positive. Parents showed enormous gratitude for the handling of remote learning, commitment to careful risk assessment to enable the children to safely return, particularly for children with EHCPs, and communication throughout. Suggestions for ways forward have been incorporated into the development plan.

Target 3: ASPIRE and Zones of Regulation Feedback on pilot OFSTEDs.

The school looked at ways to increase application of school values e.g., within lessons. They are discussing ways to do this as a team. The values are displayed in each classroom with a 'checklist' of what the value looks like and how children can demonstrate it.

Overview

As soon as you meet the Headteacher and IQM Lead, it is evident that they have created an atmosphere that continually ensures the well-being of all the community. This is at the forefront of their vision. Their vision to enable the whole Riverside Community to achieve, enjoy learning, and aspire to be the best they can be, has been adopted to encompass the importance of both the physical and the mental well-being of each person. The mantra supports a collaborative and inclusive approach to encourage everyone to be confident enough to make independent positive choices.

My virtual visit to Riverside Primary and Nursery School, was carefully and sensitively planned with a warm welcome. From the outset, the IQM Lead had organised the day to take into consideration all needs for the meetings. I met with a wide range of staff and children. The school visit was on-line, and this went smoothly.

The well-being of staff was carefully considered during the pandemic. It was recognised by the Leaders that all staff needed to have good mental health, so they could take care of the well-being of children and parents throughout the pandemic. Lots of information around well-being and good mental health was sent to staff during the lockdown. It was obvious in the meetings with staff that they felt supported and are able to support each other. They have been encouraged to look after each other and listen to each other. All the staff I spoke to felt supported and valued by the Leadership team. The Leaders are realistic in their view of what is working very well, and what improvements still need to be focused upon.



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During the meeting with the Governors, the Chair said that there was “*culture of transparency*,” and that the staff work collaboratively. Relationships with parents and carers is a strength of the school. Every response from parents to questions asked about their relationship with the school was positive. The Chair of Governors and Staff Governor were confident that the parents had trust in the school. The confidence and relationship building comes from the fact the Leaders are available to parents and they carry out their promises.

It was a pleasure to speak with the Chair of Governors, who is passionate about the school. He understood the next steps for the school and shared with me that, as there were new members of the Governing Body, they had needed to go back to basics. The monitoring visits are an important part of the Governor’s role.

Both Governors told me that the children know that staff will listen to them, and it has helped them settle into class and they are in a “*better place to be ready to learn*.” They added that some children still need the support, hence the decision to continue with the well-being project. They were fully supportive of the Headteacher and SLT. They said there was “*an ease of communication*” with staff and there was an obvious trust in the Leadership. The children all knew that the school’s philosophy was to respect one another and how they could work towards this. They also knew that everything is going to be ok.

An example of the impact of the well-being project was when one of the Year 6 children explained that, following the meeting with his counsellor, he was able to do well in his tests. The children articulated that they do have a voice in what happens within the school, and that they are supported by the adults within the school. Children are aware of the inclusive ethos of the school and are a central part of it.

The emphasis on Nurture and Well-being is visible throughout the school. This focus has meant that children are more ready to engage in learning. The vision to enable the whole Riverside Community to achieve, enjoy learning, and aspire to be the best they can be is prevalent. The Leaders are determined to focus on the whole person, with the positive results of improving the outcomes for all children. At the same time, Leaders ensure that staff feel supported and motivated to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning so that every child makes progress and if not, why not? How can we do things differently? The Leaders have also been successful in engaging parents through ‘Class Dojo’ which is the main communication with parents. The use of Class Dojo has had a significant impact on relationships between the staff and parents. It means that parents can be involved in learning every day and feel part of the school community.

I shared with the Headteacher and the IQM Lead that it was impressive that, during COVID-19 climate, they were continuing to lead the school in such a positive way and had put in measures to ensure that there was support and the learning of the children was still a high priority. The collegiate approaches used by Senior Leadership to plan and review, demonstrate value and respect for their colleagues.

I thanked the Headteacher and the IQM Lead for the rigorous planning and evidence and all the work it took to gather this. I thanked Zoe Huggett as she had given her time to



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ensure that this day went smoothly and was successful. I congratulated Kim Wilmer, as during my discussions, her staff and children were so loyal, they understood and were fully participating in the philosophy of the school.

It was a privilege to meet with staff and children so fully engaged with inclusion and with such positivity. Inclusion is articulated and evident as central to school ethos. The school supported the whole community to come together to support each other in their time of need. The school have gone to extraordinary lengths to continue to provide excellent support throughout the last year, to each and every child. They have done an amazing job. The school is fully committed to including all children and staff. All stakeholders understand the importance of mindfulness, resilience, and well-being. This means that they are encouraged to make positive choices regarding their learning journey, within the all-inclusive calm and happy environment. Thank you to all for such a well prepared, enjoyable, and informative day at Riverside.

I am confident to recommend that Riverside Primary and Nursey retain its Flagship status and is reviewed in a year's time. It is certainly well deserved.

Assessor: Catherine Holt

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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