



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School	Riverside Primary School and Nursery St Edmunds Way Rainham Kent ME8 8ET
Head/Principal	Ms Helen Robson
IQM Lead	Ms Zoe Huggett
Date of Review	23 rd June 2023
Assessor	Ms Louise Simpson

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group	24 Carat
Ambassador	Ms Kenny Frederick

Next Meeting

Meeting Focus

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Spring 2022	29 th March 2022	Yes
Summer 2022	23 rd May 2022	Yes
Autumn 2022	10 th October 2022	Yes
Spring 2023	13 th January 2023	Yes

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Riverside Primary School and Nursery are committed and active members of the 24 Carat Cluster Group, both willingly contributing ideas and experience and taking away ideas to develop.

The Wainscott Primary Meeting resulted in links being made with Forest School Leads in order to further develop practice within the school. The visit to the Nurture Group was also useful as a target for this year of the Flagship Project is to develop Nurture provision across the Trust.

The Rivermead School meeting with the focus on Thrive and Zones of Regulation was also followed through with the Thrive model being investigated further, and Zones of



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Regulation being introduced across the 2 primary schools in the Trust. The approach was kick started with an INSET day in February for all staff. Assemblies, class activities and clear working displays followed. This approach was evident during the Learning Walks during the visit and articulated by pupils in the focus group. One child commented that, "Zones of Regulation are used to help everyone. If you can see someone is having difficulty and you are in the calm zone you can try and help them sometimes." They described it as "one of the ways the school helps you manage your behaviour."

Although unable to attend the session at Five Acre Wood School, there has now been a bespoke visit to see the outdoor learning in particular, which has initiated further discussion in the school on how its own outdoor learning could be enhanced.

Evidence

Discussions with:

- Senior Leadership Team.
- Parent Group.
- Pupils.
- Senior Leadership Team including Trust Director of Education and School Support Worker.

Additional Activities

- Observation of Reception Class Assembly for parents.
- Observation of Year 6 Art Lesson led by the Secondary School in the Trust.
- Learning Walks.

Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Project Title: Developing Riverside's Wider Inclusion Offer

The focus for the new Flagship Project over the last year was to develop a local outreach and support offer, enabling staff from Riverside to provide inclusion to support to other local schools. This was to reinforce the good practice demonstrated within Riverside and to strengthen the positive inclusive reputation of the school. In addition, there was a commitment to make a positive contribution to the development of SEND and Inclusion in Medway, a priority for the Local Authority.

Riverside School focused on 4 key areas:

Share practice in supporting high-needs children and young people in a mainstream environment

Riverside has provided both in-reach and outreach support to schools. There have been a number of visits from staff from other schools visiting the school to observe how children with EHCPs are well supported and have their needs met in mainstream classes. This has focused on a number of areas of support including strategies for



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



specific needs types such as Visual Impairment (VI). Since my last visit I observed new developments in practice which illustrate how strategies for supporting pupils with visual impairment continue to be developed to promote independence and inclusion in the mainstream environment. One example was the newly introduced use of transparent braille inserts into class reading books so that sighted, and pupils with VI, can share books together in a way which does not highlight individuals and also mainstreams the use of braille.

During visits to Riverside from other schools, a number of colleagues contribute to the sharing of practice including Teaching Assistants. Skilled practitioners also go to other schools to advise and support. The assessor for the Better Medway Health and Wellbeing award has requested the school to provide supportive visits for modelling good practice to other schools and offer coaching to staff following their retention of Platinum status after the last assessment.

The Inclusion Manager plays a critical role in attending local SENCo meetings and Zone Support Groups to share expertise and offer advice. This has also resulted in requests for visits and support.

Next steps

This offer will be sustained and further developed involving a range of staff in the school. How to measure the impact of this work in the short and longer term is being considered.

Participate in the Medway Local Authority SEND Panel, contributing to decision making around EHCPs.

The Inclusion Manager attends these panels regularly and is a key contributor to the decision-making process. Key issues arising from these panels are identified and the Inclusion Manager has been involved in ensuring that these messages and learning points are shared with colleagues at SENCo groups. This has resulted in an overall improvement in both the quality of requests for EHCPs and a greater focus on the required level and quality of support that needs to have been in place prior to the panel decision. Previously many decisions were refused or deferred through lack of appropriate information. At the last forum 5 out of 6 were issued due to the improvement in quality of the interventions and information provided.

Next Steps

Continue to influence practice across the locality by feeding back information to SENCo forums to maintain the improved quality of requests and maintain the high quality of information produced by Riverside.

Contribute to the planning and developments of changes to local processes which enable school in Medway to access outreach, training and High Needs Funding

The Inclusion Manager has fulfilled her commitment to participating in two Task and Finish groups convened by the Local Authority over the past year.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



One key involvement has been in developing the Local Authority Inclusion offer to schools, to improve practice across the board and ensure greater parity between schools with their offer to children and young people with SEND. The Inclusion Manager played a key role in disseminating information to colleagues in schools and sharing their feedback to the group.

The other contribution made was key involvement in developing proposal for a new local banding system for EHCPs and associated costings.

Next Steps

The Inclusion Manager will support colleagues in the Local Authority by helping them to understand the new banding system. She will also be involved in agreeing banding for existing and new EHCPs through the SEND Panel Meetings she attends. The Inclusion Manager is already considering how this will impact Riverside and planning ahead for these changes.

Develop a Trust Behaviour Hub

This has been a key development for the Trust with two hubs in place now. Led by the Inclusion Manager at Riverside, staff from the school have taken a leading role in creating and managing these. The Inclusion Manager with her experience and expertise has delivered INSET for all primary staff on Attachment and Trauma awareness and Zones of Regulation. This approach is being used in both Trust primary schools and was very evident during my visit to Riverside. Pupils I met with were able to articulate this very clearly when discussing how the school helps them to understand expectations and support with managing emotions and behaviour. They also mentioned a number of other strategies and systems with ease. In addition, it was clear that pupils in the school have a natural acceptance of how different strategies might be needed to support individuals in the school and spoke about particular needs with knowledge and compassion.

Next Steps

This area of work is a focus for this year's project and will include the development of a continuous Professional development (CPD) offer across the Trust focusing on SEND and behaviour along with creating a Trust Nurture Provision

Contribute to the IQM process by becoming an assessor and broaden understanding and knowledge through observing and developing best practice.

The Inclusion Manager has completed a number of assessments as an accredited Inclusion Quality Mark Assessor. We discussed how resources and good practice observed during her visits has been shared with Trust schools and others in the SENCo groups. This, along with participation in the Cluster Group has enabled an enhanced offer of guidance and support to schools.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



The Inclusion Manager has also co-facilitated a SEND training programme through the Thames Gateway Teaching school Hub (TGTSH), delivering the first year of a programme of CPD focused on supporting SEND in mainstream schools. The feedback has been very positive.

Next Steps

The Inclusion Manager wishes to continue as an IQM assessor and deliver Year 2 of the TGTSH offer and support colleagues to evaluate the impact of the training.

Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

To develop Riverside's local outreach and support offer, enabling staff and resources from the school to provide inclusion support to other local schools. This will both celebrate and reinforce the good practice in our school and strengthen our inclusive reputation, as well as enabling us to make a positive contribution to the development of SEND and Inclusion in Medway, which is a priority for the Local Authority.

As Year 2 of this particular Flagship Project, the focus continues as set out below. Bespoke targets for Year 1 were fully achieved and the targets for this year consolidate and expand on these successes:

Target 1:

To share best practice in supporting high-needs children in a mainstream environment.

The Inclusion Manager will continue to attend termly SENCo meetings and Zone School Support Groups. Year 2 of the Thames Gateway Schools Teaching Hub will also be delivered in 4 sessions over the year. At the request of the Local Authority, Riverside will also provide support to Medway schools aiming to achieve the Better Medway Health and Wellbeing Award. There will be a focus on collating evidence of impact for individual children and schools as a result of this support throughout this year.

The school would also like to be considered to be an Inclusion Quality Mark National Champion.

Target 2

To participate in the Medway Local Authority SEND Panel, contributing to local decision making around EHCPs.

The Inclusion Manager will continue to attend SEND Panel Meetings providing feedback to schools on the quality of their applications/paperwork to ensure the improvements made in this area are even more successful. She will also contribute to the new banding discussions utilising this experience to advise and support colleagues. This participation will contribute to the Local Authority Quality Assurance process.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Target 3

Develop a CPD offer across the Trust with a focus on SEND and Behaviour.

This will be achieved by the Inclusion Manager carrying out termly SEND and behaviour walks with other colleagues which will inform developmental feedback to staff.

The Teaching Assistant training offer and collaborative INSET/CPD offer with other Trust schools will be further developed.

The Inclusion Manager will also deliver Trauma Informed Practice training to the Trust's secondary school.

Behaviour workshops will be offered to teachers and support staff to discuss scenarios and strategies for both general behaviour management and individuals presenting with behaviour which is significantly challenging. The use of CPOMS for recording and monitoring behaviour incidents will be embedded and the data from this monitored, analysed and evaluated.

Training and support will be implemented as appropriate. A particular focus this year will be reviewing the impact on staff training both in the short and long term. This focus on impact will run parallel with the similar evaluations for support for external partners as this constitutes a significant commitment from the school.

Develop a Trust Nurture Provision.

Following visits to other Nurture Provisions and extensive research into models, Riverside will be working alongside the other Trust primary to set up a nurture setting for a small number of children based on identified need. This will be a formal bespoke process with dedicated job descriptions and recruitment. This first phase will be monitored closely for impact and adopt the Nurture UK model.

Next steps

The Inclusion Manager will work with the Director of Education to establish this provision which could be offered more widely to the Local Authority. The longer-term aspiration is to investigate whether this could develop even further with the creation of a new special school for pupils with SEMH needs.

Overview

This IQM review was my second visit to Riverside School and, again, it did not fail to impress.

There were positive developments clearly evident on my Learning Walks around the school. The environment continues to be engaging and purposeful with continuity and consistency evident around the school both visually and through observed practice.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



The focus for this year has been around supporting other schools and developing practice across the Trust. One tangible example on the day was the opportunity to observe a Year 6 Art lesson. This project was delivered by staff and Sixth Form pupils from the secondary school in the Trust. The pupils not only responded well to being supported by older peers but the session was thought provoking and produced some powerful artwork based on issues the young people felt passionate about e.g., women's rights, peace and equality issues. This was supported using mediums new to them. The feedback evidenced how this had benefited both sets of pupils as well as staff opportunities to collaborate.

There appears to have been a further injection of energy across the schools in the Trust to share ideas and practice regarding inclusion. During my meeting with the Senior Leadership Team there was real optimism about progress to date and plans for the future with the Director of Education instrumental in driving this at a strategic level with the CEO of the Trust also committed to developing inclusion. School specific areas have been identified for each school alongside the standardisation and progression of ideas. Trauma Informed Practice is one example of shared understanding, with a focus on addressing racism being a bespoke focus area in another school. The secondary school is developing primary style approaches and has embraced the idea of social stories at transition for some pupils. One of the parents commented that their experience of the secondary school was such that it was, "as if the good things happening at Riverside had rubbed off."

Whilst Riverside has well established good practice which can be shared across other schools, there is no let up with their own continuous improvement journey making good use of evidenced based research, some via the Education Endowment Foundation to enhance their offer. They also fully utilise the IQM cluster opportunities as well as searching more widely for specific ideas and strategies. Discussion in the meeting has already triggered a desire to visit another school with Flagship status not in their particular cluster to discuss the breadth of SEMH support.

The Trust inclusion focus group next year will involve a wider representation of roles to gain insight and ideas and to plan further CPD. The Director of Education and Inclusion Lead, working alongside the Trust Inclusion Lead, have aspirations to lead a SEMH provision.

Parents continue to be very positive about the school and about the holistic wraparound support it provides for both pupils and parents and caregivers. Whilst they discussed the detailed SEND provision offered to their children, one parent also commented that her children who were academically very able were "equally supported as individuals to achieve their potential." They also gave examples of how "knowing their children so well, meant triggers were avoided," such as pre-discussions if covering a topic where previous trauma might make the lesson difficult for an individual. Another commented that the "focus on our children as individuals has not changed as the school has grown."

Examples were given of effective 1:1 counselling, the continuation of care beyond interventions, and the wider support for families. One example provided was where the Inclusion Lead had supported the parent to understand the EHCP issued to a sibling in secondary school. Flexibility and accessibility were mentioned frequently with the



Assessor’s Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



school residential trip given as one example of how young people were able to feel comfortable to participate in a way that worked best for them with no pressure or stigma attached.

Like the children in the school who demonstrate acceptance and understanding of particular needs, the parents illustrated this also by commenting to another parent how they had noticed the progress and development of their child which was clearly very welcome. Another parent stated that what made this school special was that her child has a friend with no additional needs and she just sees her daughter as “just another friend who happens to learn differently.”

The Year R assembly which I attended was another wonderful example of inclusion in action and very well attended by parents and caregivers. This was an opportunity to show families through video clips, songs and activities the range of creative and innovative learning that has taken place throughout the year. All pupils were able to contribute and demonstrate their achievements and aspirations.

During the assembly I witnessed the way designated pupils supported desired behaviour by monitoring classes and providing visual prompts where needed for pupils regarding sitting, listening and being respectful. I did not observe one adult needing to do this, the peer responsibility and accountability was evident.

The pupils I spoke to summed up the ethos of the school describing the school values as “how we learn to make people feel welcome and wanted.” They spoke about difference and equality comfortably and with conviction using appropriate language. There is a real sense of acceptance and appreciation of diversity as you walk around the school in real terms. There are high expectations of all children and many opportunities to stretch dreams and aspirations through innovative arts, technology, environmental and community projects which become motivators for other pupils. One pupil confirmed my assessment when he commented, “I love this school, it’s a great place to learn whoever you are, it’s really inclusive you know, which makes it even more special.”

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 Louise Simpson

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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