



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School Riverside Primary School
St Edmund's Way
Rainham
Kent
ME8 8ET

Head/Principal Mrs Helen Robson

IQM Lead Ms Zoe Huggett

Date of Review 27th June 2024

Assessor Ms Emma Longley

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group 24 Carat

Ambassador Dr Kenny Frederick

Next Meeting Monday 14th October 2024, The Academy of Cuxton Schools

Meeting Focus To be confirmed

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Summer 2022	23rd May 2022	Yes
Autumn 2022	10th October 2022	Yes
Spring 2023	13th January 2023	Yes
Summer 2023	16th May 2023	No
Autumn 2023	15th November	Yes
Spring 2024	12th March 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	26th June 2024	Yes

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The school has fully engaged with the networking meetings for the Cluster group throughout the year. The Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) Lead intends to delegate members of her team to attend some future meetings to support their development and share good practice.

Evidence

Meeting with:

- School leaders.
- IQM Lead.
- Senior Leader from the Trust.
- Pastoral Team.



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Additional activities:

- Phone call with a parent.
- An extensive tour of the school.
- Observations of classroom practice and interventions.
- Conversations with staff and children during the tour.



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Riverside Primary School is an example of exceptional inclusive provision. Evidence observed during the assessment visit alongside the school's evaluation demonstrates that they have made significant progress during this academic year and continue to unequivocally meet the criteria for IQM Flagship status.

Leaders place high value on sharing professional practice and expertise, grounded in a philosophy of 'always learning'. The IQM review highlighted the inspirational impact of this approach, which is manifested in a clear vision for inclusive practice, a supportive culture, an optimistic ethos and the positively constructive and responsive behaviours of the staff. This environment nurtures children's self-regulation so they can participate fully in school life and access the curriculum effectively.

The vision for inclusion emphasises integrating children into learning alongside their peers, making necessary adaptations to support engagement and wellbeing. A significant strength is the school's nurture provision, excellence that has been recognised by multi-agency partners. Staff are well informed and adept at responding to children's needs. The school environment has been thoughtfully adapted to prioritise children's needs and stages of development, including the provision of safe outdoor spaces and appropriate resources.

At Riverside Primary School, all stakeholders promote an inclusive environment for all children, including those with high levels of need. Staff have established robust and supportive relationships with families, fostering an environment of shared learning and information exchange. This approach and ethos have been instrumental in the successful reintegration of children into school. For example, in instances requiring suspension, leaders have made thoughtful adaptations and involved families in decision-making processes to best meet the child's needs. A dedicated team works collaboratively to support the child and family, ensuring successful progress according to individual developmental stages. This collaboration enhances the school's ability to cater to each child's requirements.

School leaders have invested significantly in staffing and budget to train, mentor, support and challenge their teams to achieve ambitious outcomes for all children. This training is deeply embedded in the inclusive language and behaviours observed among staff and children, reflecting compassion and empathy. This has also led to the creation of new roles aligned with the school's inclusive vision, for example, a wellbeing coach who works towards an aim that all children and their families feel a sense of belonging and support within the school community.

The Inclusion Lead sustains a proactive role in driving local inclusion development. As chair of a local Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) forum and a participant in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) panel discussions, she explores ways to amend systems and policies at Local Authority (LA) level. Additionally, her involvement in delivering SEND training for a local Teaching School Hub allows the sharing of the exceptional practices embedded at Riverside Primary School with a broader audience, inspiring colleagues from other schools and fostering a commitment to supporting children with high needs in mainstream classrooms. She has a prominent



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role in local Inclusion and Behaviour Trust Hub meetings and led In-Service Training (INSET) sessions on neurodiversity and trauma-informed practice as part of the LA development programme. She also maintains her role as an IQM Assessor and participates in assessments to celebrate good practices in other schools, continually learning and sharing insights.

The IQM Lead has actively engaged in networking meetings within the Cluster Group throughout the year. Notable impacts include new ideas and resources for supporting children with high needs, enhancing Zones of Regulation, developing sensory circuits and introducing additional nurture interventions. The Inclusion Lead plans to delegate team members to attend future meetings in different settings, showcasing their expertise and supporting their development through the sharing of best practices.



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Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Leaders' strategic intentions and planned actions for the final year of their Flagship project reflect a strong commitment to inclusion, professional development and continuous improvement. These efforts ensure that all children can be included and supported, reinforcing the school's reputation as a leader in inclusive education. Leaders are committed to their ambitious vision of developing outstanding nurture provision. This enhanced provision will integrate academic learning, sensory experiences, speech and language therapy and social skills to support children with significantly high needs, who may find a mainstream classroom overwhelming. Adjustments to the nurture provision will enable a full day of support at each Trust primary school, expanding access and building on existing provision. This will support the development of children's executive functioning skills informed by a clear framework and is of particular benefit for those children who are working at academic levels significantly below age-related expectations. The provision will involve creative, sensory, play-based discovery learning led by well-trained professionals, ensuring children can engage in a mainstream setting.

Leaders will continue to adapt the provision for children with high levels of need, responding dynamically to their developmental progress. The school will participate in the Department for Education (DfE) funded LA project, Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS). This project aims to meet the needs of children with SEND in mainstream schools. PINS is founded on the vision that inclusion is essential for improving attainment, attendance and wellbeing outcomes, enhancing parental confidence and delivering a financially sustainable SEND system as envisaged in the National SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan. The PINS initiative will integrate health and education specialists and expert parent carers into mainstream primary settings to shape whole school SEND provision. It will provide early interventions at a whole-school level, upskill school staff and strengthen partnerships between schools and parents/carers.

Leaders have embedded robust systems for monitoring and evaluating their provision that uphold a high level of accountability and responsibility. Annual SEND reviews, termly analyses of behaviour and wellbeing patterns, stakeholder feedback and celebration of children's achievements and progress data will all contribute to this comprehensive evaluation process.

Developmental feedback and further training will support ongoing improvements to meet the needs of all children across the school and the wider Trust. School leaders will continue to provide high-quality professional development and share best practices in SEND and behaviour management across the Trust and local networks. This includes trauma-informed refresher training for staff, sharing effective practices through the new combined Inclusion and Behaviour Hub and facilitating training for the Teaching Hub, including the new National Professional Qualification (NPQ) SENCo program. Leaders will provide support for colleagues to achieve accreditation for their health and wellbeing provision, recognising and celebrating the quality of their work. This commitment underscores a firm dedication to maintaining and enhancing their inclusive educational environment.



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Overview

Riverside Primary School, part of a small Trust comprising two primary schools and a secondary school near one another in Medway, Kent, stands out as an inspirational educational environment. The vision for inclusion is both ambitious and deeply ingrained, reflecting their commitment to high aspirations for all children. This is evident in their inclusive practices, staff expertise and the impact of their nurture provision.

The commitment to inclusive education is exemplary at Riverside Primary School. Through strategic leadership, robust staff development and a strong focus on collaboration with families and the wider community, the school ensures that every child can succeed in a supportive and inclusive environment. Leaders maintain this optimistic culture through weekly briefings, where staff revisit key principles of inclusion and the language and strategies that contribute to the school's aspirational environment. This practice ensures that all children have opportunities to be fully integrated into school life.

Staff are inspired by the culture and ethos modelled by strong leadership dedicated to living and breathing inclusivity, demonstrating resilience, bravery, adaptability, creativity and commitment. They model positive language about children and families and emphasise the importance of mutual care. Leaders are proud that children and families feel a strong sense of belonging, which has only deepened following a tragic event that affected the entire Riverside community earlier this year.

The inclusive culture at Riverside Primary School is unwavering, with support systems in place for all children, including those with severe and complex needs. Staff are relentless in providing the best opportunities for all children, continuously adapting their practices to create accessible spaces for learning. Staff utilise a range of assessments to support early intervention, enabling children to receive the necessary support and resources to develop independence and autonomy. Leaders are proactive in responding to children's needs and committed to long-term strategic planning to address wider SEND provision challenges. The school maintains a calm atmosphere, embodying the 'Riverside attitude' a culture that is, 'happy, helpful, and hardworking'. The school adapts its curriculum and environment to meet each child's developmental stage. During the visit, leaders provided unfiltered access to the school's daily operations, showcasing exceptional examples of inclusion in practice. Children were happily engaged in learning, supported by nurturing relationships and the Assessor observed the celebration of individual achievements, a practice embedded throughout the school.

The life skills curriculum at Riverside Primary School is a notable strength, featuring a dedicated area for cooking and a biodome for practical learning. This curriculum supports children's physical health and wellbeing and includes an aspirational focus on careers, allowing children to explore different roles and responsibilities. A notable example of high expectations was evident in the observation of an Early Years Reception class assembly, which celebrated the children's first year in school and their aspirations for the future. This event demonstrated the high standards set by the Early Years team, providing an exceptional start for their children. These interactions also highlighted the



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depth of staff knowledge and expertise and the inclusivity of the school's provision. One of the significant strengths of Riverside Primary School is its outstanding nurture provision and the high level of staff expertise in trauma-informed practices informed by evidence-based research. Staff are dedicated to upskilling their learning and facing challenges with compassion and empathy for the children's needs. They consciously regulate their emotions and consistently demonstrate empathy, bringing out the best in everyone. One staff member emphasised the importance of providing every child with the right tools to succeed, even if it means offering different strategies to meet their unique needs.

Staff understand that behaviour is a form of communication and employ different strategies to help children cope. The school's behaviour policy includes clear consequences and opportunities for children to make positive choices. Staff talked about the importance of, "kind moments" and "flipping to the positive" and spoke with pride about the difference this made to their children and families. These practices are evident in the relationships between staff and students and in the school's positive and compassionate approach to inclusivity and behaviour management. Practical strategies, such as using texts like, 'The Red Beast' to help children manage emotions, are implemented in a safe and supportive environment. Staff support each other through a system of 'tap in and tap out' that values collaboration and wellbeing. The school provides various support and interventions, including counselling, therapy groups and resources that enable all children, including those with disabilities, to access the curriculum.

Parents express extremely positive experiences with the school. One parent noted significant improvements in her child's ability to regulate emotions and spend time in class. She praised the school's restorative approach, clear boundaries and effective communication, which have helped her child build better relationships, manage behaviour and develop social skills.

Riverside Primary School is a beacon of inclusive education, characterised by strong leadership, exceptional nurture provision and a commitment to continuous improvement. The school's inclusive culture, strategic planning and dedication to professional development ensure that all children receive the support they need to succeed.

Thank you to everyone in the Riverside Primary School community who so warmly welcomed and immersed the Assessor into the life of the school during the visit. It was inspiring to experience the exceptionally inclusive culture that makes this an exceptional place for the learning and growth of everyone in the community.

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.



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Assessor: Ms Emma Longley

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. McCann".

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