



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



Overview

The work to make Bishop Martin Church of England Primary School as inclusive as it can be continued apace in the past 12 months. The process of planning, monitoring and evaluation is very strong and well-embedded throughout all areas of leadership in this school. The Centre of Excellence Plan is no exception, and this has resulted in impactful targets which have further developed the school's inclusive practice so that it is even more central to the ethos of the school and therefore everything that happens within.

Changes in leadership in the past 12 months, with the former Head of School now the Executive Head and the former Deputy Head now Head of School, have been managed extremely smoothly and it is obvious that the leadership team is cohesive and effective. They are all equally passionate and have deeply shared values and a collective vision. The Inclusion Lead is incredibly knowledgeable and passionate, and his practice has a real impact on colleagues and the practice of others in school. All groups of stakeholders talk more confidently about inclusion than they did 12 months ago.

There is a sense that the great initiatives that were already in place are coming together and that the collective result is greater than the sum of its parts. Inclusive values are firmly entrenched within the school's DNA and all groups of stakeholders recognise and are proud of this.

Parents are extremely proud of the school. The things they like include, "the small 'village-y' feel" and the fact that "all adults know the children." "The passion of the teachers." The fact that "Children feel incredibly safe." "The well-rounded [balanced] curriculum" and the scope it gives for "Every child to succeed." And finally, the wide-ranging enrichment and extracurricular activities on offer.

They feel that the school's offer for Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Wellbeing is incredibly strong and that "the leadership team is on the side of the children." They say that great support is in place when children are in need, for example, when they're struggling to get to school in the morning. Other children "learn to show patience, empathy and compassion."

A parent told me how their child has benefited from adaptive learning, which has reduced cognitive load for them and given them strategies which enable them to stay regulated when in school. The school works well with support agencies and other partners, with examples such as the connections with Liverpool Football Club and Seedlings mentioned by parents.

A recent coffee morning to support and signpost parents, when they encounter SEMH difficulties, was widely welcomed. Parents added that these difficulties are never seen as negative, and children are encouraged to talk and be open.

Parents feel that they get a lot of information about the curriculum. Knowledge organisers are sent home, and parent information sessions have increased in the past 12 months, which has been a welcome improvement.



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Governors are very proud of the school's values and ethos. They take a great deal of trouble to hear the voices of stakeholders and see the impact of action plans first-hand. They are aware of how children are supported to have access to the curriculum and the importance of this. They see the explicit protocols in practice and observe the positive impacts they have on children. This provides a good example of effective, targeted monitoring.

They have seen the impact of the 'Knowledge Jars', which were introduced to improve retrieval through repetition, observing their effectiveness in lessons first-hand. They talk knowledgeably about the way the assessment system has been adapted to improve provision for pupils with additional needs who are working below key stage expectations. They are aware that the diagnostic element of the school's assessment system has been used much more productively as a planning tool in the past year and that it creates effective and manageable targets.

They are also aware that the wellbeing of staff is their responsibility and take this very seriously, ensuring that there is a good balance between the production of challenging development targets and the additional burden and or workload these may create for the staff team.

Teaching Assistants have been very positive about school developments in the past 12 months. They feel that the curriculum structure is "visible", and targets are clearer. They feel that links with prior knowledge and between subjects are much stronger than they have been in the past. They are positive about 'Learning Jars' and have found that they motivate children.

They recognise that a key role of theirs is to support and encourage some children to access the curriculum and they are very positive that the improved use of assessment has assisted in this. They value the clear targets which are produced by the assessment system and say that they can be used flexibly within curriculum time. Discussion highlighted that there is a great deal of strength and experience within this group which enables them to make the best use of this important information.

They feel that the target for SEMH and Wellbeing has been impactful, recognising that the development of the universal offer has resulted in children being much more self-aware and able and willing to discuss their feelings. Children are taught strategies to manage dysregulation, and it is not seen as a negative. They feel that the training they have had, particularly the 'Trauma Informed' training has empowered them to help effectively when they are needed. They see the impact of the shared language that has been developed through this training and they are encouraged to find out more and continue to use this approach. They feel that they extend this approach to parents and that they are often the key contacts that parents confide in.

As a group, Teaching Assistants are also very positive and see the benefits of the school's future targets and they are open to being even more involved, particularly with regard to the 'Inspired Together' parent workshops, emphasising the strength of their existing relationships with parents and how these could be used to strengthen the sessions further.



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Pupils describe Bishop Martin as “fun”, “friendly”, “welcoming”, “exciting” and “safe”. “Teachers give you confidence and encouragement and make you feel comfortable, even if you are finding lessons hard,” they say. They enjoy the exciting opportunities and activities they are offered and are particularly enthusiastic about the skiing sessions they can take part in.

Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of what the terms ‘wellbeing’ and ‘mental health’ mean. “Wellbeing is where your health and your mind is good,” they told me. “Mental health is about your sleep, exercise and diet. It’s about your mood and being able to relax your mind.” They say that there have been many improvements in the past year, mentioning developments in the environment such as the quiet room, regulation stations in classrooms and the zones of regulation charts in which they can record their mood during each day. They told me that they used these and found them helpful. “One day, if you’re upset, the teacher will come and help. We also have ‘I wish my teacher knew...’ jars and you can let your teacher know if you’re feeling bad about something.” They say that teachers deal with their problems quickly and sensitively and they would have no hesitation in using these means of communication if they had any worries or concerns. They also understand that they can help when other pupils feel dysregulated, by telling an adult or through the Pupil Leadership Team Guardians who “make sure that everyone is happy”. Guardians have access to the zone of regulation charts in classrooms and seek out any pupils who they feel may need support in unstructured time.

Some of the oldest children remember when these things weren’t in place and say, “We didn’t used to have these things. It makes you feel better.” They are also very positive about developments in teaching and learning which help them to remember and retain more knowledge from their learning. They brought along one of their ‘Knowledge Jars’ when we met, and we had a lot of fun looking back at some of the knowledge they have acquired. The session demonstrated the effectiveness of this strategy.

Classroom teachers are very well informed with regard to the Centre of Excellence development plans and are very much on board. They confirm that the ‘Knowledge Jars’ are used frequently in lessons and said that they are “precious to the children”.

They explained that there needs to be a 90% level of retrieval for any elements of knowledge to get into the jar in the first place.

They are very positive about the improvements in the use of the Birmingham Toolkit to formally assess some children with additional learning needs. They say that the diagnostics are really useful and that the strategies which are identified through the assessment are incredibly helpful. They recognise that this has built their understanding of progression, and it is an incredibly helpful tool for parental involvement, improving early involvement in particular.

They are also positive about the way in which evidence can be collected, which is much less onerous and can happen as part of daily routines, proving beneficial for pupils as well as reducing workloads for teachers.



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They welcome the provision that has been put in place for children regarding SEMH and Wellbeing and are positive that their own wellbeing is well-considered and provided for. They are very grateful for the opportunities to work in triads with other teachers across the trust and to take part in peer coaching which they say is supportive but challenging. They feel that this provides very good support for their own mental health and wellbeing as well as developing their practice. They are really excited to do more 'Inspire Together' sessions for parents.

Subject leaders have already thought hard about how they will use the sessions connected to their subjects in the most productive way. They see the power of recent sessions, particularly the 'Prayer Trail' in which each class created a space in the outdoor environment for reflection and prayer and parents were invited to visit each of these areas as part of a trail. It is agreed that events like these increase the pride that children and parents feel about their school.

It has been an incredibly gratifying experience to visit this school for a second time and see the great progress that has been made from the already strong starting point at which they started their IQM journey. Bishop Martin really puts inclusion at the heart of its values and this vision is exceptionally well understood and shared by the whole school community. The Leadership Team are extremely skilled at planning, and their targets are incremental, thus increasing the likelihood of them being achieved, whilst, at the same time, they should prove highly impactful and beneficial. The pride that is obvious within the school community is well-justified.

I am firmly of the opinion that Bishop Martin C.E. Primary School fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Centre of Excellence. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence 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 Centre of Excellence status.

Assessor: Mr Mike Bousfield

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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