



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name: Micklem Primary School
Boxted Road
Hemel Hempstead
HP1 2QH

Head/Principal: Liz Ormonde

IQM Lead: Liz Ormonde

Date of Review: 19th May 2022

Assessor: Kasia Fejcher-Akhtar

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: SISE

Ambassador: Roger Leeke

Date of Next Meeting: 22nd June 2022

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: TBC

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

- Paperwork submitted prior to meeting
- Paperwork made available during meeting
- Visit to school
- School's website
- Tour of the school
- Displays and photographs
- Physical environment
- Assessor's observations
- Unplanned, casual conversations with staff

Face to Face Meetings:

- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- SENDCO
- Early Year Leader
- Specialist Forest School Teaching Assistant
- Pupils
- Parents



Summary of Targets from 2021-2022

Target 1: *To embed a whole school approach to managing and maintaining wellbeing and good mental health.*

In line with its Wellbeing Policy and emerging issues, the school has recognised the need to develop more of effective strategies for pupils and adults to maintain and regulate good mental health. They used a basket of assessments e.g., REST, Boxall Profiles, and a range of tools e.g., Roots and Fruits, Zones of Regulations, Anxiety Mapping to obtain detailed profiles of learners and their behaviour to based personalised interventions. In addition to already successful use of Jigsaw PSHE scheme that has become part of the school language and assisted with planning of additional support for struggling pupils, the school focused on training to understand the SEMH pupils needs. Their INSET in January 2022 focused on “trauma and attachment,” “STEPS approach to behaviour management” and “Zones of Regulation” programme.

Considerable work went into planning and developing whole school approaches and bespoke interventions to support children's emotional understanding of situations by implementing Zones of Regulations. Its visual aspect has been particularly effective with non-verbal and pupils with limited ability to read. Staff modelled to pupils how to use the resource by applying it to themselves and talking openly about how they felt. Zones of Regulations proved to be incredibly positive, and it continues to help pupils to think about their emotions and consider strategies that would help them to regulate behaviour. There is evidence (Roots and Fruits analysis) that pupils now understand and can reflect on their behaviour and consequences for them and others. To benefit and make Roots and Fruits a neutral strategy, the school uses this method in English lessons when analysing fictional characters. This assists with embedding the strategy in every day practice and familiarises pupils who do not present with behaviour issues with an effective tool that they see used in their setting.

Since the school embraced STEPS as the whole school therapeutic approach to behaviour management, there has been greater emphasis on and positive shift to pupils taking control of their behaviour and using reparation as an effective tool. The school uses a combination of many programmes and strategies to enable their large group of SEMH pupils to lower their anxiety levels and simplify emotional turmoil so that when they are in a calm state of mind, they can access learning. Due to an increased number of SEMH pupils admitted to the school each year, this combined approach has become a feature of the school.

The number of SEMH pupils admitted has had an impact on staff wellbeing therefore school reached out for help to local services (DESC) to secure support. It resulted in arranging therapeutic supervision for adults which staff valued and appreciated, in the knowledge that thought had been put into ensuring their wellbeing.

Leadership and staff are relentless in maintaining successful interventions and researching new ideas and provision. This is illustrated by the school next step when they expressed interest in becoming a partner educational setting for the NHS Mental



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Health Support programme, which they hope will open doors to other professionals and services.

Target 2: To further develop the core offer for all children in order to support actual or potential SEMH barriers.

The Inclusion Leader and the team had reflected on the assessments (REST, the Boxall Profile) and the interventions offered to all pupils with needs, and in particular SEMH children. The data obtained and knowledge of their pupils prompted further investigation to better identify all SEMH needs, including those that don't manifest in challenging behaviour. The aim was to develop an appropriate provision by considering accumulated experience and knowledge as well as involving external professionals. Leadership and key members of staff are relentless in their pursuit of specialists' advice and trying to engage external agencies. Although this was not always forthcoming due to services being overstretched, the school has increased its knowledge of what is available locally and able to signpost parents and carers.

Following a member of staff initiative, the school researched and introduced the Forest School, which is now in full operation. This is an example of the strength of leadership echoed by the motto displayed in the Headteacher's office: "Leaders become great not because of their power but, because of their ability to empower others," that support was given, and a successful provision developed due to one passionate members of staff approach and request for training. The Headteacher was open to ideas and empowered the member of staff who did not have experience in leading activities at that point. After obtaining her training with "Down the Wood," the Forest School Lead introduced the sessions gradually, modified the content over the time and extended sessions to include more pupils. Since January 2022, the Forest School has been run as part of curriculum for all thus fully inclusive outdoor learning provision. Forest School facilities are utilised at breaktimes and are very popular with children. On the day of review, the assessor had an opportunity to observe interaction, enjoyment, communication, and leadership skills pupils demonstrated when they accessed activities offered at the Forest School. Some of the children presented with a range of needs such as autism and SEMH, which were not barriers to engagement with the provision.

The school stated that an intensive research, staff training and development of SEMH provision has only begun and there are further plans to build on current accomplishment.

Target 3: To implement a strategic approach to supporting language and vocabulary needs throughout the school.

Leadership of Micklem School are acutely aware of generally lower than average level of communication skills pupils presents with on admission. This inevitably hampers progress across the curriculum and in acquisition of other non-academic skills. Lack of expressive language contributes to SEMH pupils' behaviour issues thus it was an additional reason for the school to target this need.

The school trialled successfully "Word Aware" in KS1 and rolled out to the whole school. The impact of the programme is most evident in English lessons as the expansion of



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vocabulary entails greater use of precise and interesting words in all aspects of English. This also supports improvement in attainment throughout foundation subjects. To further enhance acquisition of new vocabulary, the school purchased the online Widgeo programme that serves younger children as an age-appropriate resource but also is utilised for older children who benefit from visual learning aids.

During the last year, staff embedded use of WellComm to screen all nursery and reception children. The data obtained helps teachers “to plan individual and group interventions as well as adapting whole class provision where needed.” In addition to WellComm, the school uses the Nuffield Early Language Intervention; both tools are used to identify pupils' needs early and set up interventions to remove barriers to learning.

There are difficulties in securing speech and language support from external providers in Hertfordshire, therefore leadership have developed the role of one of Teaching Assistants, who showed interest and potential to become a specialist in SALT interventions. She has been growing in confidence in her new appointment, developing own resource bank and delivers effective interventions.

Agreed Targets for 2022-2023

Target 1: *To research and adopt a consistent approach to assessing small steps of progress: academic progress and SEMH progress.*

The school has trialled a number of assessment tools with different year groups and then extended their use to whole school to measure and evidence small steps of progress. Key members of staff intend to draw upon the work they have done and research best approaches available. The outcome will be implemented, built into a regular assessment cycle, and reviewed for staff to agree at what point the particular approach to assessment should be used. The established approach to assess SEMH pupils progress currently used by school (SDQs, Boxall, JIGSAW REST) will be scrutinised to ascertain if the school needs to use all of them, or to choose one only. The idea of this target is for school to gain evidence-based knowledge of available assessments and the best approach for their pupils.

Target 2: *To research, plan and implement the engagement curriculum.*

There is a cluster of pupils who do not access the curriculum. To address this, leadership will research, plan, and implement an engagement curriculum that will link these pupils with learning at the level appropriate to their cognitive ability and social/emotional needs. This aim will involve the school improvement partner, visits to other settings and other professionals. Parents of the identified pupils will be involved. In the true spirit of inclusive practice, the school will minimise the pupils' time away from their peer group to maintain sense of belonging and friendship.

Target 3: *To enable all learners to access the same broad and balanced curriculum.*



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The school has considered what a good quality curriculum looks like for all pupils and plans more work on how to enable all learners to access it. They will make best use of Google for Education tool that has proved to be successful and has potential to assist school with ideas for developing strategies and adaptations that can be made to enable new learning.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Members of staff attended a cluster meeting on 19.10.2021 at Wootton Park School. The theme of the meeting was about leadership: An all-through approach to learner leadership. The school commented on how they benefited from the sessions learning about the leadership throughout the school that they felt they could further develop at Micklem. It resulted in school taking English and maths toolkits for classroom use to develop the uses of these to support the independence and resilience of learners.

The Micklem Primary School hosted a cluster meeting on 20.04.22 (postponed from 09.02.22) with a focus on inclusivity: Inclusivity for all – empowering adults. The session was well attended, and the attendees were particularly interested in adaptations to provision at playtimes and lunchtimes and early identification of SLCN. The school shared their practice: challenges and successes evidenced in a programme for the day and discussions and follow up comments they received. The attendees found Micklem School's post pandemic adaptations to provision at playtimes and lunchtimes aspirational and took away concrete strategies and ideas of how adapt their provisions in view of the impact the pandemic had on pupils interaction with peers and adults.



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Overview

It has been a pleasure to be able to observe positive changes that Micklem Primary School has managed to achieve since the last IQM assessment a year ago, almost exactly to the date. This is despite having continued challenges due to school's geography and demography and a transition period from the restricted pandemic circumstances to a gradual opening up to bring school's life back to the pre-pandemic conditions and routines.

There is a well-established daily routine for all at Micklem Primary School that is evident right from the beginning of the day with parents and children arriving in orderly way and staff welcoming and assisting with emerging issues and adults' requests, the transition to the working day is quick thus learning time is not compromised. The school's values of learning, achieving, cooperation, reflectiveness, perseverance, and resourcefulness are modelled at Micklem School in a matter-of-fact way throughout the day. This attitude and practice have been further confirmed in conversations with staff, pupils and parents and observed during the tour of the school and an extra visit at lunchtime to the Forest School area. The values are "visible" because leadership has agreed and developed the school's values with the in-depth knowledge of their intake and what the children will need to acquire as part of preparation for adulthood and growing into global citizens. The school makes sure that the values underpin everything they do thus the values are part of the fabric of daily work. The values are ingrained in the consciousness of practitioners' through the school thus teaching them is natural and effective. At the same time the values lay the foundation for understanding and practising inclusion, so clearly at the heart of the Micklem School.

Since last year, the school has had some changes in SLT and teaching staff, but newly appointed professionals have stepped in successfully and there were no visible gaps in provision due to staff transition. On the contrary, a new SENDCO has more allocated time for her role and has brought with her a wealth of experience that has been skilfully utilised to improve early interventions for SEN pupils.

The school's current overall attendance figure is 93.5%, which is good in the context of the pupil population and difficulties they present with though below county averages. However, having discussed different scenarios and case studies as well as an in-depth study of an attendance record of one of pupils, I am satisfied that the percentage achieved is high and that the school follows DfE and Ofsted guidance to ensure that every child is in school when possible. Attendance remains a priority for the school and the Headteacher relentlessly reminds and explains to parents why it is paramount that their children are in school and on time, as it is the best place for them to be. Staff are extremely proactive in their efforts to motivate children to come to school and a Learning Mentor has a range of strategies at her disposal, effectively utilised with families she works close with. Leadership is aware that some parents do not have strong cultural capital, and they support them in every possible way to make sure that no child is disadvantaged. One of the ways of ensuring this is happening is through writing newsletters, composed by the Headteacher so they are informative, explanatory, friendly and encourage parents and other stakeholders' involvement with the school.



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The Micklem School has a well-designed, meaningful, and purposeful curriculum that aims at preparing children for next stage of education. The staff “aspire for every child to love reading,” which apart from educational benefits contributes to children wellbeing. They believe in exposing children to high level vocabulary and weaving concrete opportunities to build up to a meaningful point of learning into their curriculum. There is a big emphasis on outdoor learning; a newly developed Forest School, lead by a Forest School accredited leader, plays a big part in encompassing aspects of curriculum that lend themselves to outdoor environment. It has been reported in one of the newsletters that: “Lots of skills were developed in Forest School last week. Linked to our Design Curriculum Technology, children prepared and cooked a ratatouille as part of a Forest School session. This included clearing up after themselves.” When children, primarily those with SEMH issues, struggle to access the curriculum, the school's response is to design an engagement curriculum that is pitched at their level of learning and retains some engagement with the appropriate peer group.

The school demonstrates an inclusive approach to its curriculum design and evidences its effectiveness through planning, assessments, attainment, and pupil voice. Regular classroom learning is enhanced and enriched by activities linked to current events, or extra-curricular practical sessions. For instance, in May 2022 pupils at Micklem School were able to take part in: Taking Science Outdoors Week, Dance Through the Decades workshop, Geography Field Trip, Jubilee Theme Week, Urban Strides Motivational Assembly and visit the Sky Studios.

Pupils of Micklem School are very keen to talk about their experiences of school. In a conversation with the IQM assessor, they described the Assessment for Learning as: “teachers say something, they give you a tick and a post-it with information how to improve your work. They don't do any work for us.” Children are immersed in school life by learning in class on daily basis but also by taking on extra responsibilities. Pupils from Year 6 are proud of their role as Peer Mentors and understand the contribution they make to keep younger pupils safe and happy at playtimes. They are of the view that the school is good as it is, but “a pool table would be a good addition, as well as a couple of extra clubs.”

Clearly, the school's ethos and values are taught explicitly and pupils' behaviour and attitude within activities, over play and lunchtime show they are understood and ingrained. Pupils show respect for one another, they cooperate and look after younger pupils and support their peers. In a group conversation with the IQM assessor, a Year 6 pupil made sure that the youngest member of the group had had her turn to speak. Children are proud of their contribution to the effective running of the school, as they see themselves as being part of “leadership” when executing their roles in various parts of the school community.

The parents' views echo their children's enthusiasm; they confirmed that their children love to come to school to learn and be with friends. The school uses many channels to ensure that information reaches all parents and is updated in a timely manner. The parents are pleased to be allowed back onto school premisses and resume pre-pandemic face-to-face contact. Both the school and parents are resuming a more personal interaction now that the Covid restrictions are lifted and the doors are re-opened to welcome families into school.



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Micklem Primary School occupies a purpose-built building situated on a large piece of land within a built-up area with a mixture of social and private houses. Its facade is typical of buildings built in Sixties in that it is rather utilitarian and functional. The school recognises how fortunate they are to have all the outdoor space they do and maximise its use by encouraging outdoor learning, which has become part of curriculum. The new initiative of the Forest School makes a good use of the nature area and offer fantastic opportunities to promote good mental health and to engage pupils and families learning together. The site has plenty of scope for further development and the school, with its drive for improvements and therapeutic approach to behaviour management, will certainly utilise its potential in future.

The Headteacher and current Inclusion Lead, Deputy Headteacher and SENDCO, ultimately taking on a role of Inclusion Leader, and a wider team have worked together to ensure that the inclusive ethos prevails and that the pupils remain at its centre. They have high aspirations combined with a clear understanding of the whole school community and challenges that the school faces. Leadership gives unwavering support towards inclusive practice because they believe that through inclusion all children have equal access to increased life chances.

I have no hesitation to recommend the school for an award of IQM Flagship Award and that it is reviewed in 12 months' time. The next review will look closely how the school engages with research and how the school has consolidated aspect of inclusive practice as well as its interaction with its Cluster Group.

Assessor: Kasia Fejcher-Akhtar

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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