



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name: Micklem Primary School

Address: Boxted Road
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP1 2QH

Head/Principal: Elizabeth Ormonde

IQM Lead: Elizabeth Ormonde

Date of Review: 17th May 2021

Assessor: Kasia Fejcher-Akhtar

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: Schools in Search of Excellence

Ambassador: Roger Leeke

Date of Next Meeting: 26th May 2021

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: TBC

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

- Paperwork submitted prior to meeting.
- Paperwork available during meeting.
- Visit to school.
- School's website.
- Tour of the school.

Face to Face Meetings:

- Headteacher.
- Early Year Leader and SLT.
- Chair of Governors and Governor with Safeguarding responsibilities.
- SENCO.
- 2 Teachers.
- 2 Teaching Assistants.
- 7 Pupils.



Summary of Targets from 2019-2020

Target 1: To share good practice with the provision of SEN support and social and emotional interventions across the school.

The schoolteachers took part in a lesson study research project aiming developing inclusive teaching and learning approaches. This has been in response to a growing number of pupils who presented with social and emotional difficulties on entering the school. The project has been led by a senior member of staff in three sets of action, research culminating in developing improved provision for some groups of children. After Easter, the project was extended to Teaching Assistants with a view of upskilling staff. Having built up the Teaching Assistants' competence and confidence with new approaches, the next step the school had endeavoured to take is to identify the gaps in effective support provision and redeploy Teaching Assistants to ensure even coverage across the school. This is happening in a form of specific "spot" intervention, tailored to individual needs as opposed to following commercial schemes of work. A few Teaching Assistants, with particular strengths, furthered their training to focus first of all on interventions. This has been very successful and continues through spring and summer terms. Due to extensive training, TA's became real learning partners within the classroom.

The Learning Mentor has received Drawing and Talking training particularly effective with SEMH children. The project has allowed the school to fulfil their ambition of being proactive in using SEMH interventions, to support pupils who present with SEMH, and prevent it from escalation.

Target 2: To further develop ICT to support specific learning needs.

The school invested time and collaborated with the local SpLD researching ICT to support specific learning needs. As a result, they purchased a Clicker software with the site licence with the aim of eventually using the software across the school. The Clicker was initially used with Year 2 as part of morning intervention. As the pandemic forced the school to teach remotely, having the Clicker has proved beneficial to both staff and pupils. Teaching Assistants were trained in its use and, in spite of being overwhelmed at the point of introduction, this new resource and finding themselves out of their comfort zone, they embraced the training and became competent in delivering individualised interventions. This positive start motivated staff to further their skills ICT in other to maximise their effectiveness when supporting individual, or a group of pupils.

Another successful piece of ICT introduced to pupils during the this and the previous academic year are the Chromebooks, popular with pupils in Year 5 and 6. On the day of assessment, children were observed accessing books in their English lesson. In addition to its popularity, these electronic books have been credited with the greater engagement in writing by reluctant writers. The school is well stocked in technology and is working now on embedding technology in all classes.



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Target 3: To continue to develop the reintegration of the pupils currently in nurture provision to be able to access the classroom learning.

Due to a high number of pupils with SEHM and additional learning needs, the school has developed nurture provision so that pastoral care and targeted curriculum were delivered to the most needed and vulnerable pupils. Currently, the nurture group runs daily in the afternoon led by SLT member of staff.

The school created a triage-based assessment system that is used to measure progress and inform about the level of support needed for each child. There is acute awareness of "getting it right" so that the pupils receive the right amount and level of intervention and that there is flexibility of increasing or decreasing support. The desired outcome of the nurture provision is that pupils are reintegrated with their year group and access the classroom learning when they are ready.

Since having this target, the school has significantly changed its approach to early identification of barriers to learning as leaders are taking a more strategic, proactive approach that is reflected in the School Development Plan. This thinking is translating into better outcomes for pupils.

Target 4: To develop ways of extending Early Years provision to meet their needs earlier.

The school reflected on the last few years of its nursery intake and acknowledged that the children admitted present with increasing wider range of needs. The issues were to do with the children's developmental stages and deprived background that slowed down their language and communication skills acquisition. In addition to that, many children had specific social and emotional needs, and some SEN.

The school introduced a Wrap Around provision for its youngest pupils and offered extended hours with lunch time and after school clubs. After one year in operation, the take-up was too low to justify its running. Leadership assessed the situation and produced an alternative proposition. They reviewed the nursery admission policy and are currently trialling accepting children the term after they are 3 years old.

As a result of these changes the intake of nursery children has gone up and those attending benefit from improving their language and communication skills. Inadvertently, the school faces new challenges of having children who are developmentally very different.

The school continues to consider further developments of extending Early Years provision to meet the pupils needs earlier to increase effectiveness of their practice and early interventions.

Target 5: To share best practice to complete consistency in lessons.

SLT monitoring of teaching and learning, and subsequent HIP visit led leadership to setting a target related to achieving consistency within lessons. To facilitate these, the subject leaders were allocated additional time to support staff to raise expectation across the school.



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Leaders have reviewed and adapted the Teaching and Learning Policy that sets very clearly the expectation of each teacher and classroom. There was plenty of evidence of staff adhering to the new policy during the learning walk. Each class had the core subjects displays with a variety of pupils' work. The marking and feedback to children was consistent and understood by them. The organisation of the classroom space and the daily routine were in line with the policy.

The subject leaders are currently being coached by the Headteacher to conduct a subject deep dive.

This target is linked to the curriculum development that has been impacted by the pandemic, lockdown and pupils needing to adjust to different ways of accessing the curriculum. Thus, further work on developing whole school approaches to consistency in lessons is to continue.

Target 6: To further develop strategies for engaging parents with their child's learning.

The school conducted surveys to gauge parents' opinion regarding interventions, attendance, and other provisions. This is part of an ongoing work on engaging parents with schoolwork and especially, to find ways of improving participation of hard-to-reach parents.

There have been many different avenues trialled including staff visits home. The school has had a significant success with improving attendance, primarily due to school having a rigorous monitoring system. The role of Learning Mentor was crucial in engaging parents when traditional method of face-to-face communication preferred by many parents was curtailed by the pandemic. Attendance data show improvement from 95.3% to 96.5%, as well as reduction in persistent absentees and exclusions.

The school uses a 'Book of Brilliance' to allow for better links between classroom learning and home reinforcement. The seesaw app initially aimed at setting homework, proved to be useful as a communication tool between school and parents too.

The school make huge effort to reach out to parents and will continue to offer a variety of options for parents to involve them in their children education. For some, remote sessions worked quite well, therefore, leadership is to continue communication via electronic devices but also meet face-to face when appropriate. A case study available on the day of assessment illustrates the school's absolute commitment to win parental support and convince the parents that the best place for their children is in school.

Target 7: To further develop governor responsibility roles and their effectiveness in supporting individual staff and practices within the school.

The Chair and the Governor with Safeguarding Responsibilities attended IQM meeting, they expressed their support for the school's inclusive ethos and values in discussion and the policies they were involved with recently: Early Years Admission and Teaching and Learning Policy.



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The governors recognise that the school's diverse community benefits from the work the school does on inclusion and see its positive direct impact like improved pupil progress due to interventions.

Inclusion agenda is present in the Governing Body meetings. Current social distancing requirements have disturbed the smooth running of the GB and created some vacancies. Leadership has been proactive in contacting the LA brokerage with a view of recruiting new governors.

The Safeguarding Governor has made a visit to school and discussed: wellbeing and work/life balance, staffing and funding for arrangements for SEN, Pupil Premium, EHCP. HNF funding and a high level of need within Year 4.

The school continues to collaborate closely with the governors to develop their understanding and confidence to fulfil their role.

Target 8: To further develop ways of engaging with local residents to build up a picture of local skills to enhance creative learning opportunities.

Pupils of the Micklem School have been the main driving force in engaging with the local residents and promoting their school in the recent academic year.

They embarked on a number of projects that served the community and demonstrated the school's teaching of citizenship and the importance of contributing and sharing with others.

Some of the major achievements have been purchasing a defibrillator, being part of a press release produced by Energy UK and shown at the Houses of Parliament and creating messages and drawings for the local care home.

The school is taking active steps to fulfil their vision of engaging with local, national, and global communities. They aim to positively reflect the diversity of their community in everything they do.

Agreed Targets for 2020-2021

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

- JIGSAW PSHE scheme purchased including the JIGSAW REST assessment tool to support identification of levels of resilience and engagement.
- Staff to build on outcome from REST assessment too by being aware of JIGSAW resource that can be used in teaching resilience.
- Recovery Curriculum focus.
- Learning Mentor more specific focus for targeted groups.



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- Peer mediators' selection process, training and established.
- Wellbeing policy (for staff and children) implemented.
- Year 6 transition workshop (x3 Ollie Foundation).
- Year 5 and 6 mental health workshops (Herts Young Minds).
- REST assessment revisited to evidence impact in year 1 of JIGSAW.
- Implement Zones of Regulation throughout the school.
- Refocus on resilience (a new learning power) and review.
- Four Learning Powers.
- JIGSAW review and refresh.

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

- Seeking external professional guidance earlier, including for the youngest nursery children.
- Take part in Forest Schools and use to identify potential Forest School Leader, book training, seek Governor support and budget funding, develop Forest School action plan.
- Research and identify a whole school screening tool – consider both the REST tool and Boxall Childhood Project, consider National Nurturing Schools Project, organise nurture/attachment CPD for all staff.
- Additional CPD and training in SEMH/Nurture approaches for an Early Years Practitioner and a KS1 Teaching Assistant to support in class and, where needed, out of class children with emerging SEMH needs.
- Forest School sessions run and part of the curriculum for all.
- Forest School sessions delivered to specific groups as intervention.

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

- Implement a tiered approach to language development.
- Screen in both Nursery and Reception using Wellcomm, use the outcomes to develop both whole class, group, and individual interventions.



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- Screen all children using the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI), embed the NELI.
- Continue to develop the skills of identified TA's to deliver language and communication interventions in KS1 and KS2 to identified children.
- Trial Word Aware following training in KS1, introduce and embed whole school vocabulary development through Word Aware, review additional CPD for staff.
- Continue to develop progressive approach to vocabulary acquisition through the foundation curriculum.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Staff who attended the cluster meetings felt they were worthwhile and valued the experience that they shared with colleagues. One of the first outcomes was the reflection on the curriculum development and how to be creative yet rooted in the locality, but at the same time provide a broad and exciting content for children. Staff were inspired to work more collaboratively, which they have found helpful. Having adapted a Google platform this enhanced practice and is something that the school continues to develop.

The school has positive feedback on the session they hosted, where the focus was on individualisation. The outcome has been embedded into the teaching where individual needs, differences and talents are recognised in children and teaching fine-tuned to enable these individuals to make progress, and to thrive.

As part of the cluster meetings, staff visited a special school, which they found extremely interesting. There were immediately noticeable differences, in terms of the visited school being newly built, with accommodation designed to meet the physical and emotional needs of the pupil population. Staff took lots of ideas about how to improve their physical environment to better suit their pupils but that was realistic to achieve. In addition to that, Micklem staff took away ideas and good practice, specifically relating to challenging behaviour in some pupils.

Overview

The Leaders of Micklem Primary School are working tirelessly to continually drive the school forward in improving its provision, including physical environment, in support of positive outcomes for all pupils. This was evident from the discussions with the Head, Early Years Leader and SLT, SENCO and two Governors, and confirmed by subsequent conversations with members of staff. This was further evidenced during the live school tour where plans were outlined and areas for improvement highlighted.

It became apparent that the leaders are realistic about challenges that lie ahead, but at the same time reflective in what they have already achieved; the process they have undergone, needed to achieve the goals they set for themselves, and for the school. These clearly demonstrate the determination and high expectations the leaders have of



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themselves. They know their school community very well and as leaders, they are quick to address any deviation from the expected high standards from staff, parents, and visitors alike. This attitude has been helpful to implement recent Covid's restrictions and secure smooth and safe running of the school on a daily basis after returning to full operation after lockdown.

There are clear structures and processes in place at Micklem School and the Head is ably supported by senior members of staff and SENCO, with the latter playing a pivotal role in ensuring that pupils with additional social, emotional, and other needs are provided for, ensuring clarity of direction, and understanding of expectations by all staff. There is a collaborative feel within the school, with everyone contributing to the vision and strategic planning for the future of the school.

All staff are included and 'buy into' the vision. The school's value of *"believing passionately that every child deserves to have a worthwhile and exciting day at school"* echoed in conversations and in lessons, is also reflected in displays and relationships between staff and pupils observed on the day of assessment. Even during COVID-19 lockdown, the staff embraced the remote style of teaching and learning without losing sight of the values the school stands for to continue to enthuse their pupils.

To further develop consistency in lessons, the school has recently reviewed their Teaching and Learning Policy, designed to enable staff to communicate expectations of the quality of pupils' work across the school and for the pupils to enjoy shared experience. This approach is in line with the work that has been conducted on developing independence and metacognition in pupils so that they feel more in control of their learning. Constant communication with all pupils about their well-being and learning ensures that they feel part of teaching and learning process, rather than just participants of formal education.

Through online platforms, as well as home delivered packs of learning during COVID-19 lockdown, and now in a fully operating school, the pupils remain engaged in education. The staff are checking on their well-being and understanding during the lessons and offer constructive feedback to enable *"a worthwhile and exciting day at school"* for all pupils. As soon as it was possible, additional activities resumed such as peripatetic music lessons to provide for gifted and talented. This means that all pupils are catered for, so they become confident and enjoy learning as well being together.

Inclusion was reinforced during the learning walk. It was clear to see how the staff were creative in every part of the school to embrace the challenges due to COVID-19 restrictions whilst continuing to meet the needs of its pupils. Leaders encourage SEN pupils within the provision to integrate with the rest of the pupils at every appropriate opportunity.

As a result of all staff subscribing to the inclusive ethos of the school promoted by leaders, the teachers, in turn, promote inclusion within all classes. Each class has a structure of support for all pupils that has been carefully mapped out, with effective use of TA's. The open and supportive climate created by leaders in the school means that teachers feel confident to take calculated risks and plan an innovative and creative curriculum to suit the needs of school's diverse pupil community. This has been a big



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part of the current school development and further work has been undertaken, including mapping of the subject skills across the Key Stages, and coaching on deep learning by the Head.

The leaders are clear about the vision and next steps for the school. They have reflective skills that guide them in their leadership, wanting the best outcome for all pupils, whatever their individual need and stage of development.

It was a pleasure to witness leaders' hard work and determination combined with sense of purpose; they demonstrated resilience, resourcefulness and research informed knowledge about education matters that puts them on the road to achieve further improvements and raise standards for all.

I have no hesitation in recommending that Micklem Primary School continues with IQM Centre of Excellence status. It meets the IQM criteria and is well deserved. I recommend that the school be reassessed in a 1 year' time, at the end of its 3rd year of being the Centre of Excellence.

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