



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School: Kings North Church of England Primary School
Church Hill, Kingsnorth
Ashford TN23 3EF

Head/Principal: Iain Witts

IQM Lead: Amanda Love

Date of Review: 10th November 2021

Assessor: Kenny Frederick

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: Inclusion South East

Ambassador: Kenny Frederick

Date of Next Meeting: TBC

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: TBC

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

Discussions with:

The Executive Headteacher

- The Deputy Head
- The Assistant Head – SENCO
- The Office Manager
- The FLO (Family Liaison Officer)
- Various Middle Leaders
- Four ELSAs
- Two Governors

Additional Activities:

Extensive tour around the school and playground to see the children and staff at work.



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The school's progress from the previous year were based on the project focus of developing leadership capacity across two schools. The targets were as follows:

Target 1: *To develop the capacity of Leadership by developing a model which delegates leadership at all levels and support growth and school improvement.*

This target has been met in full and is ongoing. However, the school Kingsnorth was supporting is now functioning under its own steam and they have appointed a new Headteacher. Ofsted have graded them as a good school and the Leadership has been graded as outstanding. This means the target has been well met but will be ongoing as the school moves forward to support another school.

Target 2: *To improve the outcomes for all pupils through refining the process of 'Quality First Teaching' so that standards improve, and progress is sustained.*

The school have reintroduced their monitoring process and have been looking closely at Quality First Teaching across the school. The outcomes show that practice in this area is good. However, I have suggested that there is more of an emphasis on further professional development going forward as measuring any aspect of teaching is not a tool for improving the quality of teaching unless it pinpoints specific strengths and areas for development.

The target has been met in full.

Target 3: *To produce a 'Model' for improvement that demonstrates capacity, that can be used in the future and with other schools, that shows impact on school improvement and how this can be achieved.*

This target has been met in full.

Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project:

The school has produced a detailed project and action plan going forward.

To develop a model of Leadership and Development across two schools, under an Executive Headteacher and Joint Local Governing Body, developing leadership structures and capacity for improvement.

This will include the sub projects below:

- To develop an 'Outdoor Nurture Provision' based on the principles of Nurture UK.
- To develop a 'Satellite' SEND provision. (This is in the discussion stage and meetings are being held to discuss feasibility).



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The Impact of the Cluster Group

The Cluster meetings arranged for the last academic year did not happen because of the covid pandemic. However, the school participated in previous cluster visits pre-pandemic.

Overview

It was a great pleasure to visit the school and to see it at work. I was able to meet the inspirational Executive Head and his Deputy and Assistant Head as well as several other members of staff. I also spoke to many pupils during my walk around the school and found them to be articulate and open and they were keen to tell me about their school. Staff were equally proud to tell me about their work. They believe their contribution is valued and they are clear about the vision and values that the school promotes and are fully aligned to them. Belonging to the Aquila MAT has been beneficial to the school and the staff who work there. The Assistant Head/Senco is an expert who shares her expertise with other schools, and she has a good understanding of inclusion in all its guises. Staff and pupils (and parents) trust and support her to do the best for the children who need additional support.

I arrived on National Science Day and found the children and staff immersed in a special Science Curriculum Day and they were all dressed in outfits that represented different people working as scientists of some kind. They were able to tell me about what they were wearing and why and were fully engaged in their activities.

The school is part of the Aquilla Multi-Academy Trust which now has 15 primary schools. When the school joined there were only four schools in the Trust and the Headteacher told me they had chosen the Trust very carefully because they could align themselves to their vision and ethos. The Trust allows the school a great deal of autonomy in the way they work but provides a certain amount of support that is valued by the school. The school was rated a 'good' school when they joined the Trust and therefore, didn't need a huge amount of support, they are able to get on with it. The Trust schools in the local area carry out peer to peer reviews, which is a great way of sharing good practice and learning from each other. The Covid pandemic has meant that this collaborative work had to stop, but there are plans to revive it in the near future. The Trust is fairly new and is still evolving different parts of its work including Senior Leadership Programmes. However, there are some courses provided at Middle Leadership Level and many staff have participated in them. Aquilla does not prescribe school curriculum or pedagogy... the school has designed its own curriculum around its own vision and values.

The Headteacher told me that because the school is not classed as vulnerable, they have a lot of autonomy from the Trust. The CEO of the Trust line manages the Headteacher but there is not much direct involvement. The Local Governing Board are very good and provide a great deal of expertise around policy development and local issues. Although the Trust provides many model policies the school personalises them to suit their context. There are good connections with other Heads in Trust and in the local area and there are many amongst that group who support each other.



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The school is popular with parents and most children live in the local area. I was told that the population of Ashford has changed over the last twenty years and is growing quickly with families from a wide socio-economic group and increasing numbers of pupils who have English as an Additional Language. The school is now more multi-cultural than it has ever been.

The school building is relatively new and has been extended a number of times, so that it is accessible to children with a variety of needs. It is well maintained and is obviously respected by the pupils and is looked after by a dedicated Premises Manager. The Premises Team are key to the success of the school, and they are very involved with children in all sorts of curriculum areas. The school is easily accessible for all pupils.

The school does not have a particularly high number of pupils with SEND. There are eight children in Year 6 with EHCPs and few elsewhere in the school. Twenty two percent of the school population are on the SEN register. There are forty-four pupils who receive Pupil Premium funding. Currently there is only one looked after child but it is anticipated this number may change. The intake of pupils with EAL needs has meant the school has needed to ensure teachers are properly trained to meet those needs in the school. They have introduced the Bell Foundations programme to provide the framework for this training.

The school is fully staffed, and they have recently recruited some new Teaching Assistants. The school values staff at every level and Teaching Assistants are paid to attend training and INSET Days. All staff are treated with dignity and respect. I met the Office Manager, who is the wellbeing champion and she told me there is lots in place already but it's a developing process. Currently, they are applying for a wellbeing award. She told me that there are appraisal processes in place for all staff, including cleaners and mid-day supervisors. As part of the award process there is a survey of parents and staff about wellbeing and the services provided by the FLO during the Covid particularly. The FLO has been 'highly commended' for all the mental health support she has provided.

I met with four members of staff who were trained as ELSA's - one was the Assistant Head/Senco, and one is the FLO, and one is the SEN Assistant, and the others are Teaching Assistants. They all have broad job descriptions but also carry out their roles as ELSAs. The Family Liaison Officer described the way she had been working during lockdown. She talked to parents about their children and the fears they had when they came back and provided lots of children and parents with support. She said that the fall out for many children has been identified and addressed. Many children came back with tics brought about by severe anxiety. They used lockdown to complete the ELSA course (run by Aquilla) as they knew that children would come back with more needs than they anticipated. The ELSAs are assigned children to work with and have planned actions and interventions and will start work with them next week. They told me the EP does group supervision with them as this is a condition of the qualification. Children are identified by the SENCO and class teacher (in consultation with parents). The work is on a one-to one basis. They observe the child first and identify any concern and look at the bank of interventions available. They use solution focused activities when working with children. They may also use drawing and talking activities. There is regular refresher training, and each supervision means somebody brings something to the table to



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discuss. I was told the school has signed up for the Nurturing Programme to be implemented across the whole school. The school use Boxall Profiles to assess pupils that they will support. The aim is to develop a Trauma Informed Approach and training is currently being planned.

Teachers are encouraged to learn from each other through involvement in peer work and the school is involved in peer reviews with a number of other schools. We talked about CPD, and decisions made around it. They use IRIS Connect to look at their own lessons, often with a colleague or leader and this puts teachers in control of what is being judged. They take responsibility for their own professional learning. Performance Management has been developed into a coaching process and they make sure it happens in school time. The paperwork around Performance Management has been refined to make it more manageable and more of a reflective process. The process has been reviewed and revised many times and will continue to evolve until they are all happy with the model. Talking to some of the teachers they commented that the discussion part of the Performance Management process is useful, but they think there is too much unnecessary paperwork. Everybody has been trained as a coach and then they are paired up to form coaching pairs. I asked how decisions are made about who is paired with who and was told its more of a logistical exercise than anything else – who is not teaching at the same time. The aim of coaching is to continue the process of improving the quality of teaching across the school.

I was able to meet some of the subject leaders and we all agreed their role was a tough one. As a primary teacher they had to be able to teach every subject but as a subject leader they have to develop a deep knowledge and understanding of a particular subject so they can advise others and inform the curriculum in that area. The school is big enough with enough teachers to cover every subject and now have an expert curriculum team. Training is provided for all subject leaders and help is provided to help them develop their action plan.

One of the Middle Leaders I met is a student teacher mentor and she works in the school and for the Aquilla Trust supporting student teachers. I was told the school is to become a Researcher Hub School. Many of the Middle Leaders I met had already completed or were currently completing their NPQL or NPQSL qualification. They all told me that the school is involved in trialing many different initiatives but assured me that these were within their capacity and there was no initiative overload. They told me that there is currently a lot of investment in subject leaders – with good reason. Being part of the Aquilla Trust means there are many opportunities to meet with others doing similar roles and there are various Trust training programmes for ITT. One of the subject leaders worked with Aquilla to help to develop the music curriculum. Most of those I met had had some input into supporting the other school and they said this was good experience for them and was helpful to colleagues.

The school has been developing its Leadership capacity and been supporting another local Trust school that had been having problems. The Headteacher has been the Executive Head of both schools for a few years now and several members of Kingsnorth School including the SENCO and Assistant Head have been providing support to the other school. This school is now under new leadership and no longer need Kingsnorth Support. However, the supported provided by Kingsnorth has been so effective the



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school they were supporting was recently inspected by Ofsted and was graded good. Not only that but the Leadership was rated outstanding. As part of the support offered to the local school staff in both schools have been given many opportunities to develop their leadership skills and expertise and they were able to benefit from participating in various national leadership courses. These helped to increase the leadership capacity in the two schools.

I had the opportunity to meet with two Governors – one is a coopted Governor as well as a parent and part of the PTA, and the other was a newly appointed Staff Governor. The more experienced Governor is also the Safeguarding Governor, and she is very knowledgeable in this area. She is a parent of two children in the school and she told me that her role as part of the PTA does not conflict with her role as Governor. She says that it is difficult to get parents involved in the PTA so they have tried to run a series of Parent Forums and the FLO organises this and hopefully, these will resume soon.

We talked about the way the Governing Body works and their relationship with the Trustees. All the meetings are clerked, and the induction (for the new Governor) process has been very thorough. The Trust are represented at all meetings, and he advises the governors on what they should do (or not do) in different situations. His input is very useful. Governors have not been able to visit the school during Covid and meetings have been online. However, it is hoped that these will be face-to-face this year. Similarly, individual governor visits to the school are now being scheduled. Governors were involved in agreeing risk assessments during the last eighteen months and have been kept fully informed about the school actions.

The Covid pandemic took its toll on the school, but staff came together to support the children and each other. The school used TEAMS and SEESAW (which they bought into) were used during lockdown. They did not do live lessons but pre-recorded them and they found this worked well for the children. The school stayed open throughout the lockdowns and then became a HUB for other schools (during the last lockdown), so they had high numbers of pupils attending. They really wanted to support the community and ensure essential workers could get to work. They also wanted to support the more vulnerable children and ones who found themselves struggling at home. There were a number of children who thrived during lockdown. They liked working at home and being able to pause the lesson and rewind meant they could work at their own pace. Since returning to school children have settled well but had to relearn how to learn in a classroom.

Accountability processes are robust and across both schools the Leadership Teams have observed and monitored 'Quality First Teaching'. This has been followed up by moderation of books and data. These have followed up with Pupil Progress Meetings that have been attended by SLT Team Leaders and Governors. There has been a focus on 'Vulnerable' groups including those with SEND and the ability for these groups to make accelerated progress and close the gap. School Improvement Plans have been used across both schools to develop teaching and learning, with a clear focus on QFT and improving outcomes for both schools and all groups of children. I hope that the focus will be more on continuous training and development rather than monitoring. Measuring does not necessarily improve the quality of teaching.



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One of the school targets was to produce a 'Model' for improvement that demonstrates capacity, that can be used in the future and with other schools, that shows impact on school improvement and how this can be achieved. The idea was to capture what they have done with the school they were supporting it so they can use the model supporting another school. Staff at Kingsnorth have been used to support change and lead developments in teaching and learning, and leadership. There are opportunities for them to research and develop their capacity using strategies that have a proven impact on teaching and learning. Staff are also using IRIS, which is an iPad-based system for monitoring lessons and share these with each other teachers developing capacity.

I talked briefly to the Head, Deputy Head and Assistant Head about safeguarding processes in the school and was pleased to hear they have a Safeguarding Team that work together to support vulnerable children. The safeguarding policy is in place and includes all the new amendments required. Staff receive regular training around safeguarding and know what to do if they have concerns.

The school have managed to not only survive the Covid pandemic but appear to have thrived and moved forward despite the challenges. Staff and pupils are shown great respect and they feel valued. I spoke to many pupils who had a range of needs and they told me how the school has supported them and makes sure they can take part in all the activities the school provides. They appreciate all that is done for them.

I am happy to recommend that Kingsnorth School retains its Flagship status and is reviewed in a year's time. It certainly deserves it. It is a truly inclusive school.

Assessor: Kenny Frederick

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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