



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School: Homerswood Primary and Nursery School
Kirklands
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 7RF

Head/Principal: Debbie Shirley

IQM Lead: Maxine Wilson

Date of Review: 25th June 2021

Assessor: David Bowden

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: Anglian Inclusion Group

Ambassador: Roger Leake

Date of Next Meeting: 30th June 2021

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: TBC

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

Documents: evaluation report, website, policies, Ofsted report.

Discussions with: Head, Acting Deputy Head, Acting Assistant Head, Inclusion Lead, SENCo, Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Parents and Governor.

Additional Activities: Virtual video tour of the school.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic the assessment was conducted virtually.



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The schools project is entitled 'Pupil Aspirations Project in Years 5 and 6'. This project focuses on improving aspirations and developing a mindset for achieving in education and study. It aims to help children develop a knowledge of opportunities and careers and to improve self-esteem and confidence, providing them with a future destination to focus on. This project also aims to enable these children to develop the skillset and mindset to be all they can be as they transition into secondary school and further.

The project over this last year has focused on several different aspects outlined below:

Girls Development Group

At the start of the academic year, through assessment using the Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale, a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, and qualitative findings, the school identified a group of girls in specific need of work to develop self- esteem, confidence, communication and friendships. The school put in place specific work to address the development needs of this group. Following this work, the school reported positive differences in the group's presentation, confidence, and friendships. Where necessary further referrals to extended services were made to help further improve outcomes. The school feels that the process used with this group (assessing self- esteem development needs through specific assessments and putting interventions in place) will continue in the new academic year, identifying a new group with specific needs (not necessarily be gender based). Due to the impact of Covid, the school felt they could not implement as much work as they would have liked with this group but hope in the new academic year, work of this type will be uninterrupted.

Secondary School Mentors

The school had planned to use children from a local secondary feeder school as mentors for their Year 5 and 6 children. Due to two sets of school closures, and strict safety rules and restrictions, the school was unable to implement this but look to carry this forward in the new academic year.

Visitors Discussing Careers

The school wanted to have a range of visitors from different careers coming in and highlighting to the children the opportunities open to them in their lives and careers. Due to Covid restrictions the school only managed to have a local PCSO visit, discussing positive and negative choices they may encounter in life. The school wishes to develop these visits in the new academic year once restrictions are lifted.

Developing University Links

The school wished to work alongside the University of Hertfordshire to further highlight the opportunities in education and careers to the children. Due to Covid restrictions this was not possible, and they will carry this action forward in the new academic year.

Extra- Curricular Clubs

The school audited and established the wide range of interests of the children and offered clubs based on these interests, (for example, sewing, painting, coding, and gardening) to give the children further opportunities and draw relevance and reference to skills that can be utilised in a range of jobs and careers. Due to Covid restrictions



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these clubs had to stop but are due to restart in the new academic year. The clubs are led by members of staff in areas they are passionate about.

Develop The New 'Pathways Curriculum'

The implementation of the new curriculum for foundation subjects was scheduled for January 2021. Despite Lockdown, this went ahead using the schools' virtual platforms to implement new schemes and programmes. This 'Pathways Curriculum' has key focuses on developing 'Footprints' which are experiences children should have by the end of primary school (such as, riding a horse or going on a residential visit) and 'Golden Pathways' which are key elements of learning, (such as using technology, speaking, and listening, writing across the curriculum, and debating) that thread across all areas of learning. This 'Pathways Curriculum' has been developed with input from all stakeholders and has been well received by parents and children. One child explained, "We are really excited about the pathways curriculum. We get to tick off experiences we have on our pathways pad." The children keep their pathways pad throughout their school life, and it allows them to see and reflect on all the experiences they have had at Homerswood.

Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions, the school were unable to offer the experiences they wanted to but aim to put this back on track in the new academic year.

Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project:

1. Well-being is a strong focus at the school. They use a well-being scale and shared language of wellbeing understood by all stakeholders. This has fed into the school's flagship project, in terms of assessing and recognising children in need of input to develop confidence and self-esteem. As such, the school aims, this coming academic year, to re-evaluate children's self-esteem on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (RSES) and assess them against the Strength and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ). Using the results of the RSES and SDQ to evaluate improvements in cohort from the previous year. Using the results and alongside outcomes in Year Group Reviews, establish groups of support (as was the case with the previous year's 'Girls Group') and specific support programmes and interventions for these children.
2. Develop a plan of action to ensure the school enlists and organises a selection of visits from individuals to discuss their careers. To do this the school has agreed to contact people from a variety of fields (medicine, teaching, STEM, fire service, Journalism). Additionally, the school has agreed to contact www.speakersforschools.org, who provide free speakers from a variety of career backgrounds to motivate and inspire children. The school also discussed utilising the variety of career backgrounds and experiences held by its staff - creating displays staff's career journeys and getting them to speak in assemblies about these career journeys.
3. Re-establish links with the local feeder secondary school, to develop mentors for Year 5 and 6 children. This will allow members of the secondary school to inspire and engage Homerswood pupils, discussing their pathways and schooling achievements. Alongside this, the school hopes, under secondment, to gain a



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member of support staff from the secondary school for the summer term to work with Year 6 children, aiding transition.

4. Ensure where relevant that teaching and learning incorporates aspects that enhance aspirations and self-esteem: lesson plans will show links to real life experiences (and potential career pathways related to curriculum content) as well as incorporating the use of working together and collaboration between pupils. The school recognises the importance of monitoring to ensure this is being implemented, alongside pupil feedback to assess the impact this has.
5. Continue to develop the school's new 'Pathways Curriculum' and assess its impact through monitoring of planning and outcomes, pupil and parental experience surveys and questionnaires. Integral to the new curriculum are the 'Golden Pathways' which are key elements of learning. Subject leaders must ensure these are thread across subjects to ensure the success of the school's 'Pathways Curriculum.'

The Pupil Aspirations Project will have its impact measured by assessing outcomes in the RSES and SDQ assessments of selected pupils. Impact will be measured termly to analyse continual next steps of the programme.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The school feels the cluster meetings have been useful, allowing them to meet with colleagues from other settings, virtually, despite school closures, to discuss and share good practice. Over the course of these meetings, the school have gained valuable insights into EHCP funding, ways to develop staff and pupil wellbeing and oracy skills and whole class reading. The school is currently trialling aspects learned around whole class reading in their setting.

Overview

Homerswood Primary and Nursery School promotes high expectations for the whole school community in a supportive and caring environment. Inclusion, success for all and a sense of community are at the forefront of everything Homerswood does; this was evident when speaking with a variety of stakeholders on the day of assessment. One parent - governor explained, "The school is exemplary at promoting inclusion understanding and acceptance. This shows in the inclusive environment that the children are in everyday... where all additional needs are catered for." The Headteacher explained that there is a diverse set of needs within the school, but the school manages its capacity to give the children what is needed, whatever their needs at the right time. Concurrently another parent explained, "No matter what my child's needs are, they are always supported." The school's recent Ofsted report said, "Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its leadership." Another parent explained, "There is a great community feel in the school...It is a lovely environment where all the children are happy, and all the staff are kind." The school works hard to communicate with parents and other stakeholders to maintain this sense of belonging and community and it utilises its website and social media pages effectively to do this, especially when showing all the fantastic enrichment activities the children are involved in. It is also clear that the school plays an important role in developing its local



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community through charity work (also visible on its social media pages and website). Most recently, the school took part in a charity sleep out for Herts Young Homeless, raising money for young, vulnerable people.

The sense of inclusion and community was evident from the attitude and behaviour of the children interviewed on the day of assessment. When asked to sum up the school in one word, one child answered: "Family...we are inclusive, everybody gets to speak and have their say. We know everyone and we are friendly and welcoming to everyone." The children were incredibly polite and very encouraging of each other to participate in conversation, showing excellent speaking and listening skills.

The children interviewed were able to articulate their part in the development of the school's new 'Pathways Curriculum,' which was introduced in January this year. They explained they how they had met with the Headteacher as Pupil Leaders to discuss decisions and determine the 'Footprints' of the pathway's curriculum (which are experiences children should have by the end of primary school such as, riding a horse or going on a residential visit). The children described their excitement about this element of the curriculum. They were also clear on how much they enjoyed the curriculum in general and the opportunities it gave them to have a variety of experiences within lessons and through visits and excursions. Most recently the entire school went on a walk in their local area and produced writing based on this experience.

Enrichment is a fundamental aspect of the curriculum at Homerswood as the school feels it is imperative to offer and show children the variety of opportunities and experiences that are available, especially in terms of developing aspirations. Despite school closures and Covid, the school has found ways to enrich their curriculum. They recently received visits from their local PCSO, attended an art gallery virtually and took part in Young Chef of the Year. The Young Chef of the Year allowed all Year 5 children the experience of cooking a three-course meal on a budget. It is this sort of experience, fundamental to growing up, that the school wishes to provide within its 'Footprints' section of the 'Pathways Curriculum,' preparing children for transitions in life. The Acting Deputy Head explained that the curriculum at Homerswood is detailed, and resource heavy, to provide children with a wide variety of hands-on-experiences. One of these resources, praised by teachers and children on the day of assessment was 'Votes for Schools,' which is a subscription service that provides weekly resources for class teachers to prompt discussion on current challenging issues. These issues, presented by the Headteacher each week, debated in class and then children vote online to a question surrounding these issues. Parents felt this this resource was excellent as the debates in school had developed topical debates in their households also, promoting discussion and talk in the home. The school also provides a wide range of clubs, based on the children's interests to further develop opportunities outside of the school day. Having previously offered clubs such as coding, sewing, gardening, and painting, they are looking forward to opening these up again as soon as Covid restrictions pass.

The school's learning environment lends itself well to curriculum enrichment. The site has large open spaces, which lend themselves well to outdoor activities, play, and exploration. The children have access to a Forest School in the grounds of the school. The classrooms seen on the virtual video tour were well organised and resourced effectively, ensuring children had everything they needed to access the curriculum.



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The Headteacher spoke passionately about the school's curriculum and the development of all subjects. Articulating the impact the schools 'Pathways Curriculum' would have on its learners, describing it as, 'A pathway to grow, be curious and discover.' On the school website, the school clearly displays the intent for their curriculum. For each subject they also show the expected outcomes which they describe as 'Gold Standards.' These gold standards demonstrate, for each year group, a progression of the knowledge skills and understanding of the curriculum in each subject. Accordingly, the school's website shows a clear breakdown of curriculum content and shows how themes and concepts are revisited across year groups, using effective interleaving strategies to bolster learning. The Headteacher explained that subject leaders have an excellent understanding of each of their subjects. Each term the subject leaders monitor their subjects, through observations, book trawls and conversations with pupils, then create an impact report to assess the next steps of their subject. As the 'Pathways Curriculum' develops, it will be important for the subject leaders to ensure the 'Golden Pathways' are thread across all subjects, ensuring the school's vision for their curriculum is fully embedded.

During national lockdown, due to Covid-19, the school had implemented an effective virtual learning platform and parents reported they felt fully supported with home learning. Through their website they offered clear expectations of learning and advice and support to help extend learning. Teachers delivered live lessons and Teaching Assistants delivered 1:1 and intervention groups virtually. The use of technology is integral to the school's 'Pathways Curriculum' and is thread into the schools 'Golden Pathways.' All children have access to 'Chromebooks,' and these are used across the curriculum to enrich learning. Where necessary children can access programs such as Clicker, using technology to bolster and assist learning development.

The children's books show the high aspirations the school has for its learners. The children's books show excellent progress not just in learner development but also in their presentation skills. The schools feedback policy focuses on live marking and collaborative learning conferences between the teacher and the child, giving the opportunity for meaningful dialogue to develop learning and ensure progress. The Year 6 teacher explained that in their class the conferences take place each week with each child and offer time to discuss the child's work from the previous five days. Collaboratively, adults and learners decide on the next steps and the children work on these until the next conference in the following week. This method of feedback places the child at the centre of their learning and ensures they are part of the decision-making process when taking their learning forward- empowering them and giving them ownership.

To make excellent progress, the school has recognised the importance of developing language acquisition and understanding across the school. The English Lead explained that teachers provide rich and unobtrusive vocabulary teaching to ensure children have the language to access opportunities in learning and life, now and in the future. The school recently completed a vocabulary audit and found that the use of tier 2 language (high frequency words for developed language users e.g., coincidence, absurd, industrious) needed to be developed. As a result, teaching of language and vocabulary deals with the etymology and morphology of words, helping the children to gain a deep



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understanding of the vocabulary they use. The use of rich language was evident in the children's books, and it was clear that children had effectively had their vocabulary extended. The teachers also ensure that tier 3 (subject specific) language is explicitly taught prior to the children engaging in new topics and themes, allowing them to access the curriculum content more easily. The English Lead spoke with passion on this matter and was justifiably proud of the progress learners had made in terms of language development.

The staff are valued at Homerswood. The Headteacher explained the staff are strong, resilient, stable and share the values and the vision of the school. The staff spoken to on the day registered their commitment to the school. One member of the teaching staff explained, "I moved on at one point, working elsewhere, and then I came back home to Homerswood. There is a sense of community and pride about what we have. We address and support our children in a special way and provide a family for them and each other." A member of the support staff said, "I love working here. It is unique in its approach to supporting children. All children are supported, and they have an opportunity to express themselves." The Headteacher, with regards to support staff, explained that support staff are the backbone of the school. Each class have at least one Teaching Assistant alongside other support staff, dealing with specific interventions and needs of specified children. The Teaching Assistant I spoke to on the day of assessment was focused on her role in terms of the support they gave to specific children and in terms of the general support they gave within the classroom on a day-to-day basis. The member of staff also explained the training she had received to carry out specific work with children with Dyslexia. The school values the skills their support staff bring to the school. They have recently appointed a Teaching Assistant, with a specific speech and language speciality, to address speech and language needs, in house, across the school.

The leadership of the school is driven towards the collective goal and vision: providing an inclusive school that seeks to provide pathways to grow, be curious and discover. This vision was shared and articulated by all staff and stakeholders spoken to on the day of assessment. Governance has a strong grasp of the strategic direction of the school and are clearly supportive of its mission. The inclusion link governor explained that they were kept well informed by the leadership team about inclusion across the school. They explained how passionately the inclusion leader and SENCO spoke about inclusion across the school. The Acting Deputy Head articulated, with clear purpose, how the school utilises pupil premium and catch-up funding to raise standards and aspirations for all children, ensuring no children miss out on enrichment opportunities and inputting targeted interventions into the correct classes at the correct points in time; this is with a particular focus on interventions around language and vocabulary at present. The school recently commissioned a pupil premium audit, which found their spending to be effective and that governance was effective in this area. They are currently using their catch- up funding to implement tutors in school through the national tutor programme, to ensure the success of those children who were significantly affected by the national lockdown.

In closing, Homerswood Primary and Nursery school continues as an excellent example of inclusive practice. They have a strong community feel and stakeholders are proud to be part of this community. The school is focussed on providing the best outcomes for its young people and is focussed on being child centred in its approach. Parents and carers



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know and understand this, and feel continually supported by the school. 2020-2021 has been an incredibly challenging year due to the impact of Covid- 19 however, the school have made significant efforts in school improvement, most notably in launching their 'Pathways Curriculum'. They have a well- defined plan, in terms of moving their flagship project forward and we look forward to seeing the strong progress they will make with this in the coming year.

Assessor: David Bowden

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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