



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School St. Bede's Catholic Junior School
Appleton Village
Widnes
Cheshire
WA8 6EL

Head/Principal Mrs Faith Tiernan

IQM Lead Ms Stephenie Lloyd-Green

Date of Review 22nd October 2024

Assessor Mr Chris Davey

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Inclusive Allsorts

Ambassador Ms Sarah Linari

Next Meeting 25th January 2025

Meeting Focus TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2023	13th November 2023	Yes
Spring 2024	13th March 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	17th June 2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	10th October 2024	Yes
Spring 2025	24th January 2025	
Summer 2025	17th June 2025	

The Impact of the Cluster Group

On 13th November 2023, at the Fermain Academy, the Assistant Headteacher, Deputy DSL and Pastoral Lead attended the Inclusive Allsorts Cluster Meeting. The meeting was a secondary school visit to observe SEMH, and in particular, the life skills part of EHCP, focussed on preparing children for adulthood and life skills work. In St Bede's, the team now try to offer as many aspects as possible to do with basic skills and life skills (including support for children with visual impairments such as road crossing support). There is a very child-centred approach, with decisions always made about the children and for the children, giving them choices to diffuse situations. This overlaps with the creation of a high-quality learning environment, focused on being very welcoming to children.



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On 13th March 2024, the Assistant Headteacher attended St Michael's Academy, focusing on SEMH, EAL and OPAL. Similar ideas were shared to what St Bede's have already successfully implemented and discussions took place to further develop and enhance the school's OPAL offer.

On 17th June 2024, the Deputy DSL and Pastoral Lead attended Rudheath Academy where the focus of the meeting was wellbeing, enrichment and behaviour management. There were discussions about the 'My Happy Mind' theme and the school's uniform swap-shop as well as discussions about breaking barriers down (e.g. the Police and stigma) informing the children of St Bede's what the Police do to help and support them.

This term, on 10th October 2024, the staff attended the most recent Inclusive Allsorts meeting in Wales. The focus of the meeting was the impact of triads – for the pupils and not the staff team! As a result, the school will now trial a new idea of children working together on a theme, in triad groups (teams of 3 schools). There could be some joint projects during possible enrichment weeks and this work could very naturally link with the new 'Leader in Me' project for 2024 – 2025, as it clearly adapts the curriculum, tailoring it to suit the needs of the children in St Bede's.

Evidence of other collaborations

- Primary Learning Network – with 8 schools working together whereby Headteachers, Senior Leaders and SENDCos meet, all from Widnes schools. It is a clear and supportive cluster approach with real collaboration, geographically selected but then spread across all Halton schools for LA-wide communication.
- SEN Sufficiency Board – to get a broader Northwest picture (a network of leaders that meet per term).
- AHT and DHT network – a new conference and new network. St Bede's senior leaders are now taking the lead role across the network in support of other leaders across Halton.
- Mental Health Support Team, internally, leading to staff meetings and assemblies that include all in the school community, with very clear links to the work of the wellbeing ambassadors in developing what the offer of support is in school.

Additional Activities

- Scrutiny of the school website
- Analysis of documentation sent before the assessment day
- Learning walk of the whole school
- Observations of Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL)
- Pupil interviews
- Meeting with Senior Leaders
- Meeting with teaching staff (core subject leaders)
- Meeting with Teaching Assistants
- Meeting with parents/carers and 1 Governor



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project of ENGAGEMENT

'We want all pupils to be inspired and excited to attend school and to actively and positively engage in school life. We want to increase parental engagement in their children's learning'

Engagement was a real focus across the whole school, specifically chosen to support passive learners as all staff wanted children to be less passive, to increase the pace of work for all pupils. Staff wanted to push children, especially those who were more able. Engagement of all pupils in their learning felt like a natural step. As a result of the project, leaders introduced 'Most Valuable Pupil' (MVP) instead of 'Star of the Day' to the whole school, adopting a more inclusive approach. This approach also tried to include parents more through coffee mornings (which could have up to 100 attendees) with a clear theme (such a reading or poetry) and by engaging parents through mental health and emotional wellbeing workshops, which proved to be a good way in. The engagement project also had a particular focus on SEND, to support parents in identifying the right needs of their child, as it has been mutually acknowledged that it was not always a SEND need (as in it could have been an emotional need).

Engagement with the wider community was also of significance as part of the project, especially through the school's high-profile Catholic life and Mission, from the Parish, in school, with children and parents. Lots of small events across the year that have a high impact on engagement, through a low-threat environment that encourages parents in with the right 'hook' (for example through Tea and Talk). A parent commented, "I feel so much better, I don't feel that it's just me anymore".

Building upon the clear success of the engagement project, leaders of the school have collaborated with Halton Local Authority and have started THRIVE from September 2024. St Bede's is in Cohort 1 and the leadership team believes that the THRIVE project very much supports the school's existing trauma informed approach. The Headteacher shared that the project is about capturing the children in KS2, allowing them to thrive, whilst supporting exclusions in Halton in KS3 and 4. The training consists of 12 three-hour sessions for the 2 leaders, as well as 4 three-hour sessions for the Headteacher. The project is fully DfE funded, and leaders of the school are very happy to engage in this pilot project. What the project does support is a whole school approach, alongside the existing internal level of St Bede's support (like a graduated approach for mental health), similar to SEND and Pupil Premium children.

The carefully chosen and well-known vulnerable pupil list identifies 'accumulated advantage' as the staff team is very aware of who they and their families are and is being very explicit in targeting those children and families. There is strong evidence that there is a proactive selection to offer those children life opportunities, and school staff have a very clear plan. There is such a clear, passionate strategy to look at children developmentally, and that all behaviour is communication. The Headteacher stated, "children join our calm, we don't join their chaos."

Staff have also introduced lanyards for certain children in support of best meeting their needs. When the child knows they need a sensory break or a break in support of their mental health and wellbeing, they are given a lanyard that says, 'I am on my break and



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my teacher knows where I am'. All St Bede's staff know that they are safe, staff are around, and no intervention is required, especially negatively. Children can seek out a specific adult who they feel they can talk to, someone who they feel very comfortable with. There is also a clear system in place to use the time as an opportunity to pass on a note, for example 'I came to see you' and later in the day, that staff member then visits the child to check in with them.

For part of the day, I met with teachers who lead the core subjects, the Reading Lead, Maths Lead and Writing Lead. All 3 teachers were very positive about the impact that the project linked to engagement has had and all passed comments about the development of engagement with parents and carers through meetings held in school as well as through the leadership of children for reading, writing and maths (which seamlessly links with the new project of 'Leader in Me' this year).

the Maths Lead said, "engagement with parents is now a lot more and we have curriculum meetings planned for the year ahead. Originally, uptake was low, but now we do workshops in school time, whereby teachers talk to parents for the 1st 30 minutes, then children come and join in the session and there is a much higher uptake. We have had very positive feedback, especially in support of the child's learning at home. The vast majority of parents seem to attend."

The Reading Lead commented, "We have a reading recommendation list that the children love to read. There is 1 reading meeting per term, we are trying to engage parents more with reading. We also encourage parents to access free courses online and we are specifically targeting Y3 and some of Y4. The school also shares phonics cheat sheets in support of children's learning that are very personalised."

The Writing Lead mentioned, "We have introduced an advent calendar for writing, seasonally themed writing in the form of a PowerPoint Presentation for each day of advent and we give out prizes. All staff said they find it such a lovely activity."

Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project: 'Leader in Me'.

The initial idea for the 2024 - 2025 project came from a meeting with the school's SIP (School Improvement Partner) about leadership opportunities for children across the school resulting from a leadership project course that had been successfully run in Liverpool. St Bede's, along with 6-7 other schools, collaborated by selecting their House Captains to attend a morning-long launch event. During this event, they discussed leadership and worked together with pupils from other schools to come up with a project for St Bede's. Upon their return to school, the House Captains that attended have clear plans to share their ideas and are planning to speak to the governors as well as possibly reaching out to collaborate with the Infant School (as they have the 'Happy Helpers' system in their school). There is a next meeting planned for January 2025 whereby all 7 schools will come back together to share progress against their chosen project.



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Collaborative work through this project includes the opportunity to visit other schools to learn, to have tours of other schools to see how they learn best, bringing great ideas back to St Bede's to impact upon leadership and ambassador roles across years 3-6.

Oracy is a key action for this Flagship project as it links very well with the 'Leader in Me' theme. Oracy targets in SDP for 2024 – 2025 specifically target pupil engagement through the use of different pedagogy in the classroom (for example: Debate club, poetry writing workshop and class assemblies that are delivered to the rest of the school alongside parents and carers). The development of oracy also includes the launch of a new assembly to celebrate houses (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), which include the Year 6 House Captains leading those assemblies (plus the House Captains lead worship when children and staff attend St Bede's Church).

We have reading mentors and multiplication mentors (children) – who go and support others every afternoon – they buddy up with younger, less able children and support their progress.

Staff also articulated that they are very aware that certain children need further support or guidance about jobs they can do in the future (as the school identified that some children didn't know what certain jobs were, or what the names of the jobs are). This is an agreed next step as part of the current project.



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Overview

While at St. Bede's Catholic Junior School, I had the total pleasure of 2 children and 1 member of staff leading me on the whole school learning walk, and from start to finish, the Year 6 tour guides were phenomenal representatives of the school community. How the 2 children conducted themselves was clearly a true representation that was so evident through all the children on the walkthrough.

Every classroom from Y3 – Y6 was a calm, industrious and effective learning space where all children were totally engaged in their lesson. Extremely positive working relationships were evident between pupils and from staff to pupils, with adult support focussed upon those who needed it most. Smaller classes or groups were being delivered by teachers and support staff to target specific groups of children in support of their learning, with a comment from the Assistant Headteacher that this works well for the school community to drive up standards.

Some children were seen receiving bespoke one-on-one support, either for learning or for emotional intervention. Again, relationships and staff knowing the children well shone through. All children were able to talk confidently and with clear knowledge about their current learning and some, especially in Year 6, were able to skilfully articulate how to write persuasively – which was so very impressive.

The learning environment across the school is totally consistent, with high-quality working walls reflecting current work in support of helping children when stuck or as a reminder about current learning. A clothes rack in the corridor near the playground allowed parents and carers to come in and take what they needed for their child/children – including winter coats. This is incredibly supportive of some of the more disadvantaged families or families who have quite a few children in St Bede's. I was able to see prefects and ambassadors in action as they were putting the hall back to its normal state following Year 5 Prayer and Liturgy. The Y6 team were working very responsibly to do their job, something that they clearly took seriously.

Behaviour and attitudes were excellent throughout the learning walk and all children were fully included. Clear adaptations for some individuals with SEND were seen, either in the resources they were using or through adult support. It was clear that there were high expectations from the staff of the children but there were high expectations from the children of themselves. A teacher commented, "It takes every ounce out of us to be a primary teacher, but we love it."

A real feature of what St Bede's community offers is Outdoor Play and Learning – OPAL. Before playtime, learning support staff (a range of Teaching Assistants) set up the activities for the children in different zones on the playground for all children from Y3 – Y6 to access to enhance their playtime. I spent 20 minutes outside during playtime with the Year 6 OPAL Leader, who took his job very seriously, but who could also explain in very articulate detail how OPAL works, why the school have chosen to do this and how the children from Years 3 – 6 have all been trained to tidy all resources away at the end of playtime. And they did, seamlessly!



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When on the tour, it was observed that the school has reading mentors and multiplication mentors (children), who go and support others every afternoon as they buddy up with younger, less able children and support their progress.

When speaking to a team of 3 Teaching Assistant's (out of a team of 8 across the school), all positively commented that "inclusivity is huge. If the children don't do the curriculum of the year group, we make adaptations, whatever adaptations we need to make to help them learn. We constantly adapt learning to keep them in class. All members of the community are encouraged to take part in school life, we invite parents in at every opportunity, even to come and play outside (OPAL). We host coffee mornings for Macmillan, mental health and reading activities and there is always a high uptake. We have seen a big impact overall". A final comment from the support staff, "we love to work here. We have been for training with colleagues from other schools and we didn't realise what it is like in other schools, all visitors to our school say the same positive things about St Bede's when they come here".

St Bede's has identified speech, language and communication as a priority and as a result of that, Teaching Assistants undertake assessments for SALT for all children across the school (since September 2024). Children are screened as red, amber and green, and then per term, the children are re-screened and can ultimately be referred to a SALT therapist. Support staff then set up interventions for groups or for individuals.

It was a pleasure to speak to a range of Year 6 pupils as part of the visit. Just like the 2 children who took me on the learning walk, the group of 6 were great ambassadors of St Bede's and shared so much about the life of the school and what they were most proud of. They said, "I think we include people with disabilities. We do different sports, we have different lessons from different teachers, you get to work with different teachers, and we have lots of opportunities for representing our school such as prefects, ambassadors, reading, art, multiplication help and the school council. We help the Year 3's to settle in as well." Another child spoken to commented, "There are also wellbeing ambassadors to support children's mental health, for instance, if there was a Y4 who was upset, we can go and help, as sometimes children would prefer to speak to other children. We also do talent shows at the end of every year and there's a 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prize available. It showcases some quieter children's hidden talents."

When I asked the 6 children which 1 word describes their school best, their thoughtful responses were, "unique, inclusive, community, supportive, resilient, and independent."

When speaking to 2 Governors and a range of parents their passion and appreciation of the school shone through.

A parent commented how the staff have gone beyond the call of duty to best meet the needs of her daughter, offering reassurance, comfort and support. Other parents commented on how there is always support available, how staff are always on hand, and that adaptations were clear in support of inclusion, including children's preparation for high school. A parent stated that she felt that St Bede's was, "the best school in Widnes. My daughter now feels so empowered, she's been inspired. Her confidence has grown".



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The Foundation Governor said, "We have a very holistic approach, it is everybody's business, we know how certain children have been supported by the school. It's our culture, to help the 2 extremes of poverty and affluence. There is a real humanitarian ethos alongside our Catholic ethos and the parents interact well with staff. There's a togetherness, everybody wants the best for the children. We break down barriers, to relax families to be able to approach school."

St Bede's truly is a Flagship IQM school, in every way. All children, parents, staff and governors who I spoke to on the day agreed. The 'Leader in Me' project for 2024 - 2025 will only enhance the school's offer yet further, strengthening the clear bonds and expectations that already exist.

The school continues to move from strength to strength in terms of its superb inclusive practice and I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Flagship School. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Flagship 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 Flagship status.

Assessor: Mr Christopher Davey

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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