



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School	Five Acre Wood School Boughton Lane Maidstone Kent ME15 9QF
Head/Principal	Mrs Peggy Murphy
IQM Lead	Ms Karen Robinson-Jones
Date of Review	19th November 2024
Assessor	Ms Melissa Hendry

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group	24 Carat
Ambassador	Dr Kenny Frederick
Next Meeting	13th Mar 2025
Meeting Focus	TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2023	15th Nov 2023	Yes
Spring 2024	12th Mar 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	26th Jun 2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	14th Oct 2024	No
Spring 2025	13th Mar 2025	

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Five Acre Wood School finds their participation in the cluster group very valuable and often observes inspirational practice that they are able to bring back to their own settings to further impact pupil progress.

Staff find the cluster group very open and supportive, allowing time for reflection on their own practices both at a whole school level and for individual children.

Specific actions which have followed the meetings have included:

- Observing 'sensory street' provision at another setting was described as "inspirational" and the practice was reflected on and replicated in a way that is appropriate for pupils at Five Acre Wood.
- Observing practice in 1 setting led to a recommendation that an AHT and Learning Approach Lead, visit the school to observe the good practice and moderate their own.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Evidence:

- Broad range of supporting evidence provided prior to review day.
- Learning walks.

Meetings with:

- Middle leaders.
- AHTs.
- Family support team.
- Curriculum lead.
- Support staff.
- Learners.
- Parents.
- Headteachers.

Additional Activities

- Lunch in the train café, served by students.
- Joining a cooking session.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Empowering Learning and Engagement: A Trauma-Informed, Holistic Approach to Positive Behaviour Support with Therapeutic Integration.

To embed the principles of nurture across the school.

Five Acre Wood is a PROACT-SCIPr-UK® school (Positive Range of Options to Avoid Crisis and use Therapy – Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention).

Staff training is deeply aligned with nurture principles to help staff understand and support their students holistically. Training focuses on developmental awareness, proactive behaviour strategies, and creating emotionally safe environments. Ongoing support and professional development have been crucial in ensuring that staff can consistently apply both behaviour management and nurture principles to meet the individual needs of their students effectively.

Senior Staff are PROACT-SCIPR-UK® Instructors and Principle Instructors. In addition, staff are trained in the nurture approach. These staff all support staff as well as the Senior Leadership Team, Learning Approach Leads and Curriculum leads to ensure that the trademark behaviour of Pupils First is at the heart of everything they do.

Inset training in September 2024 to recap principles of nurture through PROACT-SCIPr-UK® has been delivered to all staff.

Behaviour and Relationships Policy has been reviewed to ensure principles are reflected in this.

Careful consideration is given to meeting the diverse needs of students by tailoring the curriculum offer, adjusting class sizes as necessary, appointing staff with the right expertise, and implementing a trauma-informed approach for those who require additional support.

Across Formal Primary and Secondary, 2 specific cohorts have been set up. These cohorts focus on a trauma-informed curriculum and supporting pupils with particular social and emotional needs to engage with learning in a different way. Leaders appointed a teacher who previously worked in an SEMH-designated special school to lead both classes.

A satellite provision consisting of a vocational training group has been set up to provide a different expression of learning to those who have particular social and emotional needs.

This ran successfully for a group of boys in 2023-2024 and in Term 6 was rolled out to a group of girls.

Leaders have employed 2 members of staff in the Snodland satellite to work.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



The satellite has employed 2 staff members to work with individuals and groups on a range of interventions including online safety and Fearless to offer further support.

Leaders have successfully adapted the way the 'nurture' provision runs within the school to better reflect the importance of inclusion. For example, the 'nurture nest' is being used for targeted teaching around emotional wellbeing and pupils are being integrated into classes across the school.

To introduce a tiered Positive Behaviour Support system where levels of support for pupils with emotional regulation needs are clearly defined.

This is embedded across the school. Introducing a tiered Positive Behaviour Support system with levels of support for pupils' emotional regulation clearly defined, has had a significant impact on both student wellbeing and staff's ability to support individual students. The use of Positive Support Plans (PSPs), starting with universal Section 1 strategies and progressing to more individualised Section 2 supports and interventions which can involve external agencies, has ensured that each pupil receives the appropriate level of support based on their specific needs.

This structured approach helps to prevent the escalation of emotional and behavioural issues by offering early intervention while providing more intensive support for those requiring it.

As a result, it promotes a more stable, predictable learning environment, reduces behavioural challenges, and improves pupils' ability to engage in learning, while fostering collaboration with external agencies for more complex cases.

All students have Section 1 of PSP completed which lists transactional and interpersonal supports that they require. Behaviour is monitored at Pupil Progress Meetings and PSPs are tweaked and reviewed based on these conversations.

Weekly behaviour data is reviewed to identify areas of the school where further support may be needed at a cohort level. Termly reviews of support are in place for those pupils that have the highest levels of dysregulation.

Section 2 of Pupil Support Plans is in place for those pupils who need more targeted support. Personalised training is in place for teams that require more in-depth training around specific supports in place for pupils.

Debriefs and reviews of PSP are in place after any significant incident takes place. Regular PROACT-SCIPR-UK® /behaviour briefings are given to the whole school team and in individual learning approaches. Leaders may wish to look into how the option of a debrief can be added to existing recordings and reported.

To introduce a tiered mental health and wellbeing support package where there is a clear pathway for accessing support.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Introducing this tiered mental health and wellbeing support has increased the school's ability to ensure students receive timely and tailored interventions.

With a clear pathway for accessing support, they are able to provide universal support to all pupils while offering targeted assistance to those with more complex emotional and mental health needs. This approach fosters early intervention, and clearly outlines what class staff are expected to provide and allows staff to respond effectively to individual challenges.

It promotes a nurturing environment where every student feels understood and supported, enhancing their overall wellbeing and ability to thrive academically and socially.

The school employs a Play Therapist and Counsellor to provide in-school support enabling students to access targeted support much quicker. Tiered mental health and wellbeing support is in place with regular reviews of available agencies.

A school social worker has been employed to support at a family level.

SCERTS is embedded through the use of Person-Centred Plans (Personal Support Plans (PSPS) as a tool for supporting engagement and readiness for learning by identifying the transitional and interpersonal supports that need to be in place for each pupil.

By embedding SCERTS through tiered Personal Support Plans (PSPs) the school has been able to provide individualised support tailored to individual's needs and therefore increase student engagement, emotional regulation, and readiness for learning.

This approach has ensured that all staff should be aware of the necessary transitional and interpersonal supports a student needs to feel secure, manage emotions, and improve social communication, fostering an environment that promotes engagement and reduces disparities in outcomes.

For staff, the use of PSPs offers clear, structured guidance for planning and implementing effective teaching strategies for individual students. The tiered approach allows for continuous monitoring and adjustment of support based on each student's progress, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness as their needs evolve. This has resulted in a nurturing, inclusive, and effective learning environment for each individual student.

To increase staff awareness and understanding of how functional behaviour analysis can help understand pupils who exhibit behaviour of concern.

FBA has helped staff identify the underlying causes and triggers of challenging behaviours, shifting the focus from merely managing behaviours to understanding their purpose.

With this insight, staff can develop more effective, individualised strategies to address the root issues, such as unmet needs or environmental factors, reducing the frequency and intensity of behaviours. This leads to more positive outcomes for pupils, fostering a supportive and proactive learning environment while improving relationships between staff and students. Leaders are working on ensuring this is consistent across all classes.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Training was delivered on an INSET day and further top-up training has been cascaded by Learning Approach Leads as appropriate throughout the year.

The Behaviour Working Party is now working to develop a system for supporting teachers to write pupil support plans in a way that is informed by FBA.

Behaviour incident data is regularly reviewed, and where needed, staff can ask for support, or an FBA will be put in place by leaders.

Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Five Acre Wood will be moving on to a new project as defined below:

Improve Reading, Writing and Oracy Outcomes within the Primary Formal and Secondary Satellite classes

Leaders have been working on how to improve the English outcomes of students in the Secondary Satellite and have introduced the Functional Skills English Accreditation for Year 11 students. They are keen to review how they can improve individual student outcomes.

Reflections identified that they need to work on embedding these skills in all areas of learning. Last year, staff were trained on the Simple View of Reading, Pre-teaching Vocabulary and a year of using Twinkl Phonics has happened, but leaders still felt that staff had not bought into the idea that all curriculum areas should support developing these skills.

The IQM lead attended the IQM National Conference and was impressed by Lord Derby School's presentation on reinventing reading at KS3. They realized that this project incorporated many elements that were missing at Five Acre Wood.

The new project will be looking at the 3 elements of literacy over 3 years, starting with a reading focus and then moving on to writing and oracy.

Leaders will be considering how to embed in all areas of the secondary curriculum and how they can ensure primary students' learning has all the building blocks required to support achieving the best outcomes at secondary.

Leaders also intend to explore how they can support mainstream schools to improve reading outcomes for their SEN pupils.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Overview

I was delighted to be asked to complete the assessment at Five Acre Wood School. As a practising SEN Headteacher, it is a school that comes with a fantastic reputation and my experience did not disappoint!

Five Acre Wood is a warm, welcoming and supportive school with inclusion at the heart of the school ethos. There is a strong culture of positive relationships and a flexible approach to education where difference is embraced, and inclusion is celebrated.

Each student is known very well by all, and every effort is made to meet their individual needs and overcome barriers.

During my learning walk, I was bowled over by the confidence of some pupils to approach me and engage in meaningful conversation. All were keen to know who I was, and all proudly continued to engage with the sessions I joined.

Teachers skilfully engaged more disengaged students through individual interests, and Zones of Regulation was observed to be embedded and relevant to support students to self-regulate.

It was delightful to join a class during a cooking lesson where students were making sausage casserole. All were very keen to greet me and talk to me about their interests and were able to answer simple questions about what they liked about their school. A stand-out reply was "I love my school!"

Staff are overwhelmingly proud of what they do for their students and constantly strive to provide the very best provision for all.

Leaders are ambitious for and passionate about, the school and its place and importance within the local authority. The leadership team at Five Acre Wood strive to provide a model of openness and honesty to stakeholders. This is appreciated by students, staff and parents who readily share that they feel valued and listened to.

Stakeholders use shared and consistent language to describe their school, and I commonly heard the words 'valued', 'listened to' and 'high expectations' throughout my visit. This consistency demonstrated a common sense of purpose and identity.

Leaders at Five Acre Wood recognise that learning journeys for their students are as unique as the students themselves.

The school has an embedded culture that all students can achieve and as a result, they do! All students are supported to leave with a qualification appropriate to their needs. Very effective support structures are in place to ensure all are able to reach their potential.

A stand-out moment of my day was parents sharing the emotional journey their child has been on since joining Five Acre Wood. They spoke honestly of the trauma they had been through and the support and guidance that the school has offered them all.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



They told me of how the school “is there every step of the way with an ear to listen and a shoulder to cry on.” They went on to share that “without the team, we wouldn’t be where we are as a family”.

An example of exemplary practice observed was the school employing their own social worker. The knowledge and skill that this role brings to an already strong family liaison team is phenomenal, and such an asset to the school.

Staff make a conscious effort to enable learners to understand their diagnosis in order to support them to take ownership of it and learn what they need to do to be the best possible version of themselves.

As a result, the levels of self-advocacy displayed by learners is inspiring. Students from post-16 complete work experience with younger peers, and this provides students with fantastic role models and aspirations, demonstrating what is possible for them with the right support.

Leaders have taken this even further by creating an encouraging environment where staff share their own experiences of neurodiversity and mental health challenges with students, creating trusting, supportive and strong relationships.

Each learning approach has developed an effective curriculum that is tailored to the needs of its learners and is constantly reviewed to ensure its appropriateness. Leaders promote a flexible approach to the curriculums and encourage staff to take ownership of them. Leaders recognise a shift in the needs of learners transitioning into Five Acre Wood, particularly those with SEMH needs and staff CPD is tailored to ensure that skill sets are matched to learners' needs.

Leaders work diligently to ensure there is a holistic approach across the school to ensure that pupils learning and emotional needs are catered for. Inclusive practice runs through the core of the school and it is acknowledged by leaders that having a nurturing approach is crucial to establish a successful platform for learning to take place.

Zones of Regulation are successfully embedded across the provision at an age-appropriate level to support students as a tool to understand and manage their own emotions and behaviour.

Staff continually support students to recognise their own emotions with a strong empowering message of ‘it’s okay to not be okay’ while reinforcing strategies that they can use to begin to manage their emotions successfully.

Staff describe themselves as “family” who are “there for each other at all times.”

From talking to staff throughout the day, it is clear that staff are happy and feel valued the sense of teamwork and openness among leaders is inspiring and there is a real feeling of staff consistently going above and beyond to meet the needs of learners.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Pastoral support at Five Acre Wood is very strong, supporting students and their families with a range of issues and concerns. Pastoral leads have developed firm relationships with social care to ensure the best possible outcomes for students and their families. Pastoral leads seek to empower families.

Leaders are highly skilled at ensuring they have “the right people in the right places”, and this drives many of the inspiring initiatives that are in place.

Fostering individual staff member's skills and passions provides fantastic opportunities for all. A wonderful example of this is the ever-growing farm that provides a wealth of experiences for all students to be part of.

Throughout my visit, I was continually taken aback by the infectious levels of enthusiasm and entrepreneurial thinking that make Five Acre Wood such a wonderfully unique place to be. From planes, trains, buses, and boats, students are provided with the most wonderful learning environments to capture their imagination and further enhance their experiences. It really does have to be seen to be believed!

The whole community is incredibly proud of their school, and it is very clear to see why. Out-of-the-box initiatives such as the school's Woodstock Festival, the school's own record company, radio station and wonderful train carriage café, all provide life-changing experiences for the students that they are not likely to experience outside of school. The passion and drive by all to ensure that all students have the most magnificent experiences is inspiring.

It was an absolute privilege to visit Five Acre Wood School and to see all the good work that the staff are engaged in. Thank you for preparing the review day so well and taking the time to share your good practice.

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: Ms Melissa Hendry

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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