



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



**School:** Bygrove Primary School  
Bygrove Street  
Poplar  
London E14 6DN

**Head/Principal:** Fiona Durnian

**IQM Lead:** Charlotte Littlewood

**Date of Review:** 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Assessor:** Mary Hewitson

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

Cluster Group – Quality First Network

Ambassador – Rekha Bhakoo

Date of Next Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> July

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: TBA

### **Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:**

- Headteacher
- SendCo and IQM Lead
- Nursery Class Teacher
- Assistant Headteacher (Computing and Assessment Lead)
- Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO)
- Teaching Assistants (Individualised Provision)
- Class Teacher (Curriculum Computing Lead)
- Qualified Teacher of the Deaf

### **Additional Activities:**

Documents Shared:

- Demographic Review of Bygrove Primary School
- SEND Profile 2020-21
- Governors HT Reports (Autumn & Spring)
- Parent comments from Celebration Day



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### School Context

Bygrove Primary School is a single form entry school with Nursery provision. It is situated in the Poplar area of Tower Hamlets which has an exceptionally high level of deprivation and child poverty. There are 255 pupils on roll with 239 having English as an Additional Language (EAL). 85 pupils are in receipt of Pupil Premium funding and 40 pupils have identified special educational needs or disability (SEND). 15 have Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs). A further 36 children are considered to be vulnerable. The demographic overview published by the Borough in which the school is situated gives a concerning overview of the impact of Covid19 on the local community. For example:

- 20-30% increase in the demand for mental health services
- rich and poor gap widened
- longer term consequences of increased deprivation
- abuse and neglect hidden - resurgence of safeguarding referrals
- 20-30% increase in domestic violence
- negative impact on learning
- increase in crime as lockdown eases

Against this backdrop the school has managed to maintain a happy, safe place for all its pupils in which difference is valued and the inclusion of all is a top priority.

### Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

#### **'No one is Left Behind'**

'No One is Left Behind' continues to be a powerful message that succinctly defines the ethos of Bygrove Primary School. Courageous 'next steps' agreed a year ago have been carefully explored and implemented, taking on board the pressures and inevitable limitations imposed by Covid 19 and its impact on school life. Progress has been carefully documented which helps the celebration of success as well as future planning.

Senior leaders identified the contribution that an 'out of class' SendCo could make a whole school improvement, ensuring the inclusion of all pupils. As a result of school closures some pupils had 'fallen behind' in their learning and staff understood that there could be complex needs which might not be immediately apparent. To fully understand the learning needs of all pupils a whole school baseline document was created which compared data from September assessments in previous years. With a focus on reading, writing and maths target groups were identified and a whole school approach to intervention was established. Emotional well-being remained a high priority and the SendCo was able to ensure support for pupils who had not only suffered the consequence of Covid 19 at a personal level but also the death of a class teaching assistant.

Senior leaders have taken time to consider the outcomes of their review of comparative data at the beginning of the school year and have decided to continue to use and develop this data review process. It has assisted the monitoring of interventions by phase and subject leaders as they continue to develop 'catch-up' provision. Currently,



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unforeseen circumstances prevent the SendCo from remaining as an 'out of class' senior practitioner, but nevertheless the impact of her work is far reaching.

The SendCo understands the benefits of her own school team working closely with staff from their 'sister' school within the Academy Trust. During the school year the SendCos from both schools have worked closely to enable cross-school planning and the sharing of experiences and ideas. Periods of 'lock-down' and statutory school holidays have impacted on the provision for vulnerable children, necessitating 'returning to school' plans at every stage. Careful review of plans has enabled the inclusion team to identify patterns and to monitor outcomes and support for vulnerable children and families. The impact can be monitored by the increase in attendance figures, reduced parent anxiety and the increase in Covid19 testing.

Trauma informed sessions have been adapted to meet the needs of pupils and parents across both schools in the Trust. Feelings of loss, sadness and bereavement caused not only by Covid19 but by experiences including the death of a member of staff have been addressed. Pupils have been able to explore their feelings at their own level and considered issues such as loss of loved ones, toys, pets and friendships.

The school values the opportunity to collaborate with other members of the Trust and working parties have been established. It is clear to those involved that collaboration has been most worthwhile and has sown seeds for future development.

The school is modest about its achievements through its tremendous work within the local community. To support this statement, it is helpful to directly quote from the SendCo's evaluation of last year's targets in which she states, "*Community support is key to helping our children. By helping the whole family, we are able to provide them with the best start in the morning and to remain safe, fed and clothed during school holidays. Our families have relied on much of our support throughout the pandemic.*"

School and Trust staff work closely with Poplar HARCA (Housing and Regeneration Community Association) to initiate the 'Connecting Communities Project.' With a key focus on internet resources the project has enabled families to gain access and skills for both educational and practical purposes such as on-line banking. Devices were provided and Bygrove was used as a training centre. Low-income families with primary aged children often experience digital exclusion and the school team has been pivotal in helping to tackle the problem locally. The pilot programme was evaluated by the University College London and the education data gathered demonstrates how children participating have made accelerated learning in reading, maths, and writing.

In response to the growing need of families to be supported with food donations the school became a designated Food Bank distributing twice weekly to those in need. Many working parents are on zero hours contracts and therefore did not qualify for support from the Furlough Scheme. The school also subscribes to Magic Breakfast, a 'Charity aiming to end hunger as a barrier to education in UK schools, through the provision of healthy breakfasts to children living with food insecurity,' a service which extends to school holidays, as necessary. The school distributed fun activity packs enjoyed by families and provided hygiene products – the cost of which could be prohibitive for families. It is likely that both the Food Bank and the Connecting Communities project will remain essential services offered by the school for some time into the future.



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The culture of generosity and social awareness extends to the Governing Body. One governor became concerned about the temperature in classrooms when, because of Covid19, greater ventilation was required during the winter months. Through his place of employment, he accessed funding to purchase school logo embossed fleeces to keep pupils warm during the colder weather.

Governors and School leaders work hard to promote inclusive practice, enabling all children to achieve. Discussion of inclusive practice is an important part of Governing Body meetings and the SendCo presents a detailed report annually. Twice termly Pupil Progress meetings highlight the needs of vulnerable children with a focus on those receiving Pupil Premium funding and/or those with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND). More recently staff are encouraged to draw attention to any pupil about whom there are concerns, so that they can be carefully monitored as the term progresses. The SendCo participates in a range of community SEND projects including local SEND forums, local EAL forums, Wellbeing Service meetings and Phoenix Special School Outreach training.

There has been a strong emphasis on technology and IT skills so that children can access learning during episodes of lock-down. A significant amount of the school's budget has been directed to the purchase of devices to allow as many pupils as possible to access learning remotely.

To develop interventions within the Covid risk assessment restrictions, the SendCo created half termly intervention timetables linked to allocated spaces. Staff feedback has been very positive especially as 'cleaning time' had to be considered. The Sensory Room was completed and now occupies the space previously used as an ICT suite. There has been further development of the SCERTS programme to support pupils with significant sensory needs. 'SCERTS is a comprehensive intervention model for children and older individuals with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). It provides specific guidelines for helping an individual become a competent and confident social communicator and an active learner.'

Facilities for children with disabilities have been greatly improved with an area for personal care updated. Hearing and Sight Impairment specialists have assisted the school as it has improved its support for pupils with these specific challenges. To complete this review of achievements during the last year it must be noted that the school has successfully achieved four more Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) for vulnerable pupils with identified additional needs. Under 'normal' circumstances this would be a remarkable achievement but during such a troubled year it is a huge commendation of the work of such a dedicated team, determined to access the rights of every child.

The Flagship Project Evaluation of Progress documentation responds closely to the areas identified for future exploration at the last review. In addition, the school has recorded its own learning, considered developments to be retained and reflected on possible changes. It presents as a cohesive, detailed, and thoughtfully produced report.



### **Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project:**

Strong inclusive practice is a hallmark of the school and is captured by the Flagship strapline 'No One is Left Behind.' Agreed actions for the next twelve months build carefully on the previous focus areas strengthening progress already established. The SendCo has wisely ensured that there are opportunities for ongoing evaluation as the year progresses so that the journey of inclusion is embedded in every aspect of school life.

**Continue to develop a Trust wide working party focusing solely on developing a plan for the provision for the most vulnerable children. Evaluation of success will be an integral part of the plan.**

Senior Leaders recognise the importance of collaboration between the Trust schools and plan to explore and develop an even stronger working relationship. Expertise and skill will be identified and individuals across both schools will be encouraged to join the working party. Meetings will be timetabled and areas for action and development will be agreed. Key priorities are likely to be focused on the provision of 'trauma informed' sessions, explorers, and priorities in the Development Plan such as meta-cognition.

#### **Next Steps:**

As discussed during the Flagship Review. Further development of collaboration between the Trust schools to improve provision for the most vulnerable children.

**Continue to work alongside other organisations to provide resources such as food and technology for disadvantaged families.**

Review the strong relationships which already exists between the school and the various organisations to which it has a commitment. Ensure that the capacity within the school can support this outreach work and put into place plans to sustain the excellent work that is already well established. Distribute responsibilities and regularly report to the Governing Board and Trust on the impact of this work.

#### **Next Steps:**

As discussed during the Flagship Review. Work with Senior Leaders to ensure that there is a cohesive plan for community involvement to ensure continuity and development.

**Further develop our provision for supporting the wellbeing of our children.**

There is a clear understanding among staff about the importance of mental wellbeing and the negative impact Covid19 has presented for many pupils and adults within the school. Current provision will be reviewed, and new initiatives introduced. Transforming children and developing young people's mental health programmes will be explored and the work of the mental health support team in school will have increased involvement. There will also be increased involvement of the play therapist.



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### **Next Steps:**

As discussed during the review process. Review current provision and consider new resources that are available.

### **Continue to develop leaders and governors so that their commitment and understanding of inclusive practice impacts on the achievements of pupils.**

Discussions about inclusive practice within the school will continue to have a high-profile during meetings of the governing body and with the nominated SEND governor. Subject Leaders will include the evaluation of inclusive practice within their areas of responsibility and discussion about inclusion will be prominent within Pupil Progress and SEND Highlighting meetings. External specialists will continue to be highly valued so that they can contribute to the inclusion of all pupils.

### **Next Steps:**

As discussed during the review process. Develop opportunities for governors to be involved in subject health checks as part of the on-going review of inclusive practice.

### **Continue to develop interventions within the school.**

Through collaboration with other schools and external professionals, interventions for pupils with additional needs will be further developed. Impact will be measured, and changes and adaptations introduced, as necessary. For example, SCERTS an intervention model, may be used with children on the autistic spectrum or those who are developing social communication and emotional regulation skills.

**Next Steps:** As discussed during the review process. Further consider the introduction of SCERTS.

## **The Impact of the Cluster Group**

Progress with the IQM Cluster Group meetings was disrupted by Covid-19 and the impact of 'lockdown.' However, two meetings have now taken place via an on-line platform.

The first involved schools that were forming a new Cluster Group. The SendCo attended and recalled the mutual support given and received through conversations with other professionals.

The second focussed on the challenges for pupils and staff of returning to school during the various phases of the pandemic.

The third and final Cluster Group will focus on transition, addressing gaps in learning caused by interruptions to attendance.



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### Overview

After such an unprecedented year of national disruption, uncertainty, and suffering by so many, it was heartening to revisit Bygrove for a second Flagship review. Both the Head of school and the current SendCo started their positions in the January of 2020 and could never have imagined the challenges that lay before them. Strong leadership, a noticeably clear understanding of the local community and the support of dedicated staff team have contributed to the success of a memorable year. The Head of School has ensured that this is a 'value driven' school and places great emphasis on the needs of every individual as well as those of the families that are such an important part of the community. Consequently, she has empowered every team member to place inclusion at the heart of their work, with a high degree of professional trust, care and determination to overcome barriers. She is well supported by a highly effective, dedicated SendCo who as a member of a proactive senior leadership team has led the school in its Flagship project, 'No One is Left Behind.' The clarity of her thinking and her ability to identify and make links between current achievements and next steps have helped the whole school community move forward in a cohesive and powerful way. She is highly respected by other staff not only for her professional integrity but for her compassionate, caring, persona which is so evident when she talks about the school and its pupils.

Lockdown during the Summer Term 2020 presented many challenges which informed planning for the approaching new school year. Working parties with the sister school in the Trust were established so that ideas could be shared. These focused on the return to school in September, catch up lessons for pupils, the coordination of safe movement around the buildings and the overarching concern for the wellbeing of all pupils. In the words of the Headteacher, 'we were in a good place when the Summer term ended.' However, the social needs of a disadvantaged and vulnerable community were increasing which placed greater than ever pressure on the school to respond to local needs. Unemployment rose significantly, family income for many decreased because of zero hours contracts and the pressures on intergenerational households became immense. Furlough was not an option for many parents, so with little or no income families turned to the school for help. The food bank that was already established became a lifeline for many and the school became a recognised distribution centre, took control of by staff from the school.

Termly Headteacher Reports presented at governing body meetings ensure that school governors are kept well informed. The detailed reports present valuable information in a strikingly accessible style, giving governors clear insight into life within the school. Governors are made aware of the challenges faced by staff and pupils and as described earlier; one governor provided warm fleeces for pupils feeling the cold whilst learning in well ventilated classrooms. Both pupil and staff wellbeing are regular items discussed within meetings so that governors can offer advice and support.

During December 2020, several staff and pupils tested positive to Covid19, forcing class group bubbles to close and many staff having to self-isolate - a grim picture that continued into the Spring Term. Tragically, a member of the support team died on Christmas Day from the virus and the sense of loss for the school was far reaching. She was a long serving and greatly loved teaching assistant and her contribution to the success of the school is highly valued. The importance of trauma informed teaching and



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learning became even more important, and the school has subsequently devised its own approach to bereavement, using ideas generated by the charity Winston's Wishes.

The Assistant Headteacher and other members of the staff team have played a pivotal role in the support for local families through their work with a project known as Connecting Communities, funded by the HARCA Housing Trust. Families who commit to an adult attendance at five two-hour training sessions are provided by the Housing Trust with connectivity and a device. Teachers from the school participate in planning and delivering the training, covering basic procedures such as logging on and keyboard skills, as well as more complex issues of setting up an email service, internet banking, direct debit, and parental controls. Approximately forty families in the school community have accessed the training so far and many more in the wider Borough community.

The teacher responsible for the development of computing skills within the school explained that pupils start school with low levels of competency because of the lack of devices within the home. However, every child now has a school Chrome Book which has greatly extended opportunities and experience. Parents who have attended the Connecting Communities training are now able to support their children at home which proved a great asset during the most recent lockdown when on-line learning for pupils was so important. The computing projects both within the school and the wider community are excellent examples of a creative and inclusive approach to improving communication for all.

'Quality First' teaching and support are high priorities when the youngest children join the school. Children with additional needs are identified early and parents are given support so that external agencies can become involved. Building trust is vital as many parents have been fearful of the effectiveness of safety measures during the pandemic. The SendCo ensures that she gets to know the children well so that she can work with the Nursery leader to ensure the best provision. Two 'case studies' of children with profound needs were shared and demonstrated how sensitively the school works with parents, building trust and strong relationships.

A discussion with a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (employed by the Borough) who has only recently become involved with the school confirmed the inclusive ethos, skill, and dedication of the Nursery team. She commended the SendCo for challenging an administrative error regarding the admission of a child with multiple additional needs, holding the school place open until problems were resolved. The SendCo demonstrated her tenacity, and ability to appropriately question decisions when necessary. Subsequently, this visiting specialist has been overwhelmed by the cooperation and support given to the child in school. Partnership is very strong and the SendCo keeps in regular contact, seeking and acting on advice about teaching strategies. The visiting specialist highly commended the school and stated "visiting Bygrove is a joyous thing." The school employs a full time Home School Liaison - Parent Support Worker who possesses the enormous energy necessary to cope with an ever-increasing workload. She holds detailed information about support needed by many families and works closely with external agencies to ensure needs are met. She helps run the twice weekly food bank at the school and because of her local knowledge can identify families in need, encouraging them to make use of the resource. The Support Worker endeavours to





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ensure that every family accesses the resources they require and described situations where her intervention has helped resolve problems, including where domestic violence is prevalent or where child protection plans are in place. She described the deprivation experienced by many children who attend Bygrove, which for a significant number is a haven of kindness and security.

A strong team of teaching assistants supports teachers and pupils. Their enthusiasm for the work they do and the knowledge and experience they bring to their role is impressive. Senior leaders purposefully identify the specific areas of interest held by members of this support team so that they can be directed to appropriate training and given roles that respond to their expertise. In this way the school has developed its own team of specialists who can collaborate effectively with teachers and contribute to learning.

Summarising the achievements of a school that serves its pupils, and their families so well is a challenge. The Academy Trust is to be commended for the way it has allowed its schools to retain their autonomy, maintaining their individual identities. There is no doubt that the influence of leadership within the trust is a compelling force. Visiting Bygrove Primary, albeit virtually for the second time, has been such an encouraging experience at a time of national anxiety. In the words of the Qualified Teacher for the Deaf, “visiting the school is a joyous thing.”

I commend the school for its Flagship status.

**Assessor: Mary Hewitson**

**Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:**

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