



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name Rainham Mark Grammar School
Pump Lane
Gillingham
Kent
ME8 7AJ

Head/Principal Mrs Agnes Hart

IQM Lead Mrs Emma Horstrup

Date of Review 22nd November 2023

Assessor Ms Louise Simpson

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group 24 Carat

Ambassador Dr Kenny Frederick

Next Meeting 12 March 2024

Meeting Focus TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2022	10 th October 2022	No
Spring 2023	13 th January 2023	Yes
Summer 2023	16 th May 2023	No
Autumn 2023	15 th November 2023	No
Spring 2024	12 th March 2024	
Summer 2024		

Evidence

Tour of the school with Head Students

Meetings with:

- Assistant Headteacher and SENCO.
- Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and Reading and Literacy Lead.
- Parent.
- Deputy Headteacher and IQM Lead.
- School Prefects and Team Leads.
- Inclusion Manager and SENCO



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Summary of Targets from 2022-2023

Target 1:

Improved attendance at extra curricula activities, particularly from vulnerable groups, SEND and PPG students.

A weekly student bulletin and parent newsletter bulletin have been introduced which promotes all extra curricula clubs. These can be booked by young people and carers using a system called Evolve. Attendance has been collated and monitored using this facility and can be cross referenced to assess the use by targeted groups. Support with study clubs already exists.

During open evening, students manned stalls highlighting particular clubs sharing their personal experienced and encouraging participation. The success of this is to be replicated at the sixth form open event.

Next Steps:

This will become standard practice along with identifying other events where this could take place. The use of social media to enhance participation is also being considered. The school will continue to explore the barriers to participation and address these.

Target 2:

Raise the profile of the student council and student leadership.

Although already a strong feature of the school, student leadership has been revised with a new structure in place. The strong group of Prefects is led by two Head Students who are active, forward thinking excellent leaders. There are also House Captains and Officers who have reinvigorated the sense of belonging in the school and describe their roles with passion. They have great insight into the purpose of this collective and collaborative experience. Their roles are well understood, visible, appreciated and consistently delivered. There is clearly a sense of pride in the roles undertaken. Sixth Formers model expectations well and participation begins in a supportive way as soon as transition starts.

There is an Eco Team, a Student Diversity Team, a Creative Arts Council and Ambassadors who have each delivered exciting and meaningful inspiring projects. Successful innovations are the Year 9 Buddies and the Year 7-13 Reading Champions who are very much part of the whole school drive on reading.

The school Parliaments continue to improve with 2 representatives from each of the 8 forms in every year and 2 Prefects. These feed into the School Cabinet which includes the Headteacher and a Deputy Headteacher. Pupils are able to see how ideas inform decisions which are fulfilled and understand how they are able to positively influence.



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Next Step:

This new structure will be embedded and I have no doubt developed even further with this clarity, aspiring future leaders in the school from early on in their time at Rainham Mark.

Target 3:

Continue to meet the mental health needs of all students.

This area of work is strongly led by a Deputy Headteacher who is a qualified Senior Mental Health Lead. New issues and opportunities are continually being identified and supported. The school website clearly sets out the offer, and within the school there are ELSA and Drawing and Talking qualified Learning Support Assistants and Pupil Support Assistants who are able to deliver bespoke interventions. A new system of anonymous reporting of incidents which could impact mental health is currently being trialled.

Pupil Support Assistants have been extended to each year group and Trauma Informed Practice continues to develop with Art Therapy in place and a pilot with 'Tranquillity' for mental health provision underway.

Safeguarding practices continue to develop with a bespoke officer appointed. The school are part of a Safeguarding Hub where ideas are pooled, training takes place along with supervision. The Deputy Safeguarding Lead training has been updated and here is online safety mapping across the school with key questions for every department to clarify their collective responsibility.

The new Trust Attendance Strategy also highlights the opportunity to identify and support mental health issues for students as well as signpost support for families where parental needs have been identified.

Next Step:

Continue to maintain the offer and look for further training opportunities to support students and identify issues that can impact on mental health issues such as bullying.

Target 4:

Increase the capacity for careers education and guidance across the school.

With the developments that have taken place DA students and SEND students are prioritised first. There is a rolling programme of Year 11 careers interviews with the facility for students to self-refer through the school website. Year 9 students attended a careers meeting with the Careers Advisor. Years 9-13 have Unifrog accounts. Students I met felt well prepared for making their future choices.

Careers lessons take place at least once per term within the PSHE schedule and a bespoke careers talk aimed at Years 11 and 12 took place in Term1.

Developments and the commitment to careers education is evident in the school policy.



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Next Step:

The systems in place are well embedded and standard practice for the school now. The work experience week will commence 13/05/24.

Agreed Targets for 2023-2024

Target 1

Create a school uniform bank in order to provide low-cost solution to families in need of support.

Comments

This has been kick started by the student led Eco Team. They are combining an economic need but with a commitment to sustainability and environmental issues to address both needs and provide a context which considers how families using this will feel.

Target 2

Increase inclusivity of homework by switching to Class Charts for recording of homework.

Comments

This will build on the successful use of Class Charts in the classroom context to incorporate home learning.

Target 3

Further increase the capacity for Mental Health and Wellbeing support within the school.

Comments

This will be an exciting development, utilising the already strong student leadership resource of Prefects to train them as Wellbeing Ambassadors using a programme designed and endorsed by Loughborough University.

The Impact of the Cluster Group (with details of the impact of last three meetings)

The school has found that some of the areas of focus for cluster meetings have been primary school dominated. However, they have benefitted from learning how the Triple R model has changed and how this can support learners at the school. It has been used for two students this academic year.

The school commented that the virtual networks held during the pandemic were accessible by more staff which was useful and would like to see whether some of these could be reinstated with specific areas of focus. They would be happy to share practice in key areas.



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Overview

Rainham Mark Grammar School is by designation a selective school, albeit unusual in the area being a mixed sex provision. Its practice, however, is anything but selective, I am once again incredibly impressed with its inclusive philosophy and delivery. What really sets this school apart for me, is that it completely embodies the ethos of inclusion, whether that be through curriculum, pastoral support, parental engagement, pupil wellbeing or systems and structures. This has been achieved because in this school, although having strong Senior Leaders who are unified in their solid commitment to inclusion, everyone is equally viewed and respected as a 'leader of inclusion' with students being valued in the same way.

The recent appointment of a new Headteacher has not resulted in a pause in commitment to inclusion at all and I can see how this already good practice has been further developed, not just strategically by her appointment but through modelling inclusion in action. She has jointly with students led on projects such as celebrating Black History Month whilst ensuring this focus becomes embedded and not an annual event by reviewing curriculum resources to reflect both the diverse school population and society in general. This approach has been applied to different aspects of equality. This builds on work which has been developed over the years. The 3-year commitment to FLAIR is one such example where the school wanted to address their belief that unconscious bias will be impacting on experiences and outcomes within the school. Through the last survey, the feedback was that there was a concern from pupils about the use of racist jokes. The Cabinet took on this issue and addressed the lack of consistency in responding to this issue by reviewing the 'Ladder of Consequences' and racial literacy. One Senior Leader commented: "these are bright, articulate, intelligent young individuals, we would be foolish not to utilise this."

I started the day hearing from the Headteacher how 'belonging' is the core that runs through this school and it is something that I heard throughout the day regardless of who I met with.

The student voice here is not just heard, it is listened to with sincerity, nurtured and supported through to action which is well thought out, valued and sustained. This is also a school whose staff are prepared to be challenged by its students and committed to respond to their observations and views regarding diversity and inclusion. In fact, they openly encourage debate around all aspects of equality and see it as their responsibility to do so. A current difficult and brave development is a well thought out and sensitive response to pupils directly requesting to be more informed about the Israel and Palestine situation so that they can process the news they are facing each day.

Students are an amazing asset to this school with one describing their impact as being a "big force of change" whilst recognising that they had a special relationship with staff who are willing to share their expertise with them saying "there's never a no, just a let's tweak, we're never shut down."

They have a key role to play in the school with Prefects assigned to forms, leading on team building and supporting induction. One commented; "we love our school so just want to assist where we can."



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House Captains are engaging and have reignited the notion of house points through house challenges which they lead on. They describe “networking between year groups.” They are sensitive and thoughtful. As an example, quizzes they organise are created to be fun, but a good deal of planning goes into them with one student saying they choose questions as “a means to highlight other students’ abilities who may not be experts in traditional areas.”

Student led projects are having a significant and lasting impact. One initiative led by a Head Student who also leads the Eco Group is one such example. There was a focus of green sustainability and a desire to reuse school uniform leading to the notion of a preloved clothing store. This has been further developed with a sophisticated understanding of the feelings of individuals using this facility. The model has therefore been adapted to offer online ordering so as not to stigmatise students and their families with the “take what you need, give what you can” slogan being used.

Pupils recognise they are fortunate in this environment, and when asked, described how they realised things might be more difficult to influence beyond school. However, they were confident they would continue with their passions and gave examples of how the school had taught them to be; confident in their own beliefs, good at problem solving, how to work with partners, good organisers, project managers, good at time management and prioritising and adapting.

A parent I met with discussed her trust in the SEND Team who she described as fantastically flexible and supportive enabling her child to achieve aspirations previously thought impossible due to her needs through to the belief, commitment and creativity to facilitate access and inclusion. She described how “they are always trying to improve.” She commented on a new reporting process in particular as key to addressing reluctance to report incidents of bullying or social exclusion. Communication was also highlighted as a strength.

The SEND provision continues to develop. At Transition Day, pupils meet their Prefect who will be allocated to their Year 7 form so that there will be a familiar face and they are present at parents’ meetings too. Parents are provided with an allocated mentor and given a bespoke email address to begin that communication prior to starting.

Class Charts have been introduced with seating plans, so all staff are aware of SEND support required with strategies to support along with reading age profiles to be able to pitch reading content appropriately. This oversight can be drilled down to inform teaching.

The focus on reading has further developed since the last visit with Lucid in place providing additional context to reading age such as processing issues and reading speed so teachers are able to adapt and make necessary adjustments.

The role of the Librarian has also enhanced reading development with changes in organisation encouraging the selection of challenging texts whilst the ethos of ‘belonging’ has informed resourcing in the library to reflect diversity.

The key development is moving beyond purely reading for pleasure to developing habitual readers. Reading Champions continue to be important and parents have been



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encouraged to support reading. Within school, a book vending machine is going to be linked to rewards. Reading is also part of the transition programme with the Shakespeare in Schools’ project and 6th formers going in to share how important reading has been to their success at Rainham Mark to motivate pupils further.

There is a rigorous focus on monitoring the progress of those from vulnerable groups. There is a lot of evidence-based research informing Continuous Professional Development to address these inequalities and there is a culture of additional voluntary peer sharing of research and articles from individuals who are proactive in their personal development. There has been a lot of research into improving those pupils in receipt of pupil premium which is being monitored closely.

Pupils have been involved in the review of the Behaviour Ladder and confidently discuss the notion of being an ‘active bystander’ and being ‘trained to call things out.’ Exclusions have reduced and there is a culture of staff wanting to “catch students being good.”

This was an extremely encouraging visit. Rainham Mark Grammar School continues to push the boundaries in terms of developing their commitment to inclusion. This necessitates having difficult discussions which they actively respond to and positively promote. I am heartened particularly by my interaction with the sixth formers who have so clearly been nurtured to become equality thinkers, deliverers and inspirers who will, I have no doubt, continue these traits well beyond their school years.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in 3 years’ time.

As this is Year 3 of the Centre of Excellence programme, the school may choose to continue to hold IQM Centre of Excellence status for another 3 years or may choose to move to Flagship School status. If they should choose to do either of these, the next annual review will look closely at how they are working collaboratively with their neighbouring schools and how they have promoted continuing outreach and/or in-school research. The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Centre of Excellence status.

Assessor: Louise Simpson

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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