



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name	St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School
School Address	New Hey Road Upton Merseyside CH49 5LE
Head/Principal	Mrs Susan Ralph
IQM Lead	Mrs Anna Bennison
Assessment Date	13 th February 2023
Assessor	Mrs Sarah Linari
Sources of Evidence:	<p>IQM Self Evaluation Report (SER) National data and performance tables School Website and Policies School Development Plan Ofsted Parent View questionnaires 2020/21 Pupils' exercise books Learning Walks Observation of break time Learning Environment audit Ofsted Report 2021 Oracy Overview Chester University Audit</p>
Meetings Held with:	<p>Headteacher Deputy Headteacher/Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)/IQM Lead Assistant Headteacher Key Stage 1 Lead Maths Lead Physical Education (PE) Lead Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Lead Teachers Teaching Assistants Parents/carers/guardians Pupils Governors Nurture Base Lead</p>



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Overall Evaluation

St Michael and All Angels is a voluntary aided Catholic Primary School in Wirral. It is a one-form entry school, with 237 pupils aged 2-11 years currently on roll. Located on the Woodchurch estate, the School serves an area with high levels of socio-economic deprivation. The number of pupils in receipt of free school meals (FSM) is 45%, well above the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is 29%, also above the national average. 12% of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), a number which has seen a significant increase over the past couple of years. The School has a Local Authority Resourced Base, the Nurture Base, which supports eight pupils from Early Years and Key Stage 1 with significant social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, who have previously been identified as being at risk of exclusion from their previous schools.

In 2021, Ofsted judged provision at the School to be 'good', with the report highlighting the School's excellent inclusive approach:

"Adults treat all pupils with care and affection. Pupils reward this positive approach with their unyielding trust, good behaviour and respect for all. This makes St Michael's a calm, purposeful and safe place to be for everyone. Pupils live and breathe the school's Christian values. They do their utmost to treat others as they wish to be treated themselves".

Throughout the IQM assessment visit to St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School, a consistent inclusive ethos was evident across the School. Pupils and families are warmly greeted in the morning; any visitors are immediately welcomed into the School community by all. The School provides a safe haven where children feel protected and cared for, with a stable connection with trusted adults.

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher described the inclusive culture at the School as "welcoming". This word was consistently chosen by all stakeholders throughout the day to express the essence of the inclusivity, demonstrating a united vision and experience for all. Having been warmly welcomed into the School community by all, I can endorse this sentiment.

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School pupils are delightful. They demonstrate genuine acceptance and tolerance of others. They welcome children who join from other schools or countries with open hearts and minds. They are caring towards each other and their behaviour is excellent during lessons and unstructured times.

Teamwork is key to the success of the staff, who work together effectively, with the children at the centre of their shared vision. Staff feel supported by the Leaders and feel that their voice is listened to. Staff are developed and nurtured throughout their careers at St Michael and All Angels, growing both professionally and personally due to the opportunities and support afforded them.

As an outward-facing school, there are numerous collaborative partnerships in place with other schools locally and further afield. The close relationship with the local



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secondary school allows mutual best practice sharing as well as the establishment of a comprehensive transition programme which prepares pupils for life beyond St Michael and All Angels.

Parent and carers feel well-supported by the staff. The work undertaken to support families is a clear strength of the School. Staff go above and beyond typical expectations to ensure that families are given as much support as possible. An open-door culture means that parents and carers can speak to staff whenever they need to, resulting in prompt responses to any issues brought to their attention. Communication between school and home is highly effective in ensuring the children have their individual needs met.

Provision at the Nurture Base is excellent. The Nurture Base Team work with some of the most vulnerable, often marginalised children, to turn their lives around and give them another chance, thus improving their future prospects and life chances. Many of the children successfully reintegrate back into mainstream settings following the intensive programme of support they receive whilst attending the Nurture Base.

Teachers' expectations of the children are high. This raises aspirations for all. Pupils respond positively to the staff and their genuine caring approach. Pupils feel that the teachers believe in them, which galvanises them to achieve to the best of their ability. The result of the positive relationships between the staff and pupils is that the children enjoy going to school.

Through the broad curriculum, which is underpinned by the School's values, pupils are developed holistically. To support the many disadvantaged children who attend the School, the curriculum embraces varied learning activities which pupils may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. All pupils are supported to successfully access the curriculum, with any barriers to learning effectively identified to enable all to succeed.

For the IQM Inclusive School Award assessment, the IQM Coordinator and Senior Leadership Team provided wide-ranging evidence to validate the process. I was welcomed into the School with warmth. Staff welcomed the process and demonstrated an open culture of self-evaluation. This reflective culture ensures that the School is continuing to improve and move forward. Leaders know the areas of strength and have clear plans to improve any areas which need further development. I feel confident that the priorities outlined in this year's School Development Plan will further enhance the inclusive practices.

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

I also recommend that the school should consider applying for Centre of Excellence status for their excellent inclusive provision. Leaders are already involved in many collaborative partnerships and networks with other schools. All stakeholders are fully aligned to IQM's values. This enhanced status would, of course, be subject to the



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inclusion within its plans of the appropriate areas for development and the completion of the Centre of Excellence documentation. If the school chooses to pursue this status and it were to be awarded the school would be subject to annual review from this point forwards.

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School will be a fantastic addition to their IQM Cluster Group and I know the staff will be active contributors with best practice sharing at meetings.

Assessor: Sarah Linari

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. McCann".

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



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Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School is a welcoming environment where all pupils and staff live and breathe the School's values which, as a Catholic school, are founded on the values from the Gospel. The Headteacher describes how "the gospel values are everything – that is how we live out what we do here".

The School focuses on 22 specific values, "respect, responsibility, tolerance, friendship, love, courage, appreciation, honesty, understanding, empathy, co-operation, positivity, unity, peace, happiness, hope, patience, care, humility, determination, trust and freedom" to develop each child as a whole. These values support the School's aim to "equip our children with the necessary information and skills to enable them to make the right choices to keep safe and be healthy in the community of Woodchurch, Merseyside and beyond".

The values are explicitly taught through the monthly focus e.g. in September, the focus was on 'cooperation'. Each class takes it in turns to produce a whole-school display based on the value of the month. Cooperation has been illustrated through a display which incorporates varied jigsaw pieces placed together with hands held together around it. On the School website, the display representations for each value are shared.

There is a commitment led by the Headteacher that cascades down to all staff and pupils to never turn anybody away from the School, whether that be a parent or carer, a perspective pupil or external visitor. Leaders talk about how they "meet everyone where they are at and work with their starting points as everyone's journey is different". Everyone is truly welcomed and accepted into the St Michael and All Angels' community.

Recent trauma and attachment training has supported staff's inclusive approach. The training served as a reminder of the importance to meet pupils' basic needs before anything else. Staff are attuned to the pupils, which enables them to identify when they require additional emotional support. With two Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) trained staff, pupils are offered one-to-one and small group intervention sessions to help them regulate their emotions and improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Staff wellbeing is also an integral part of the School's ethos. The Headteacher believes that wellbeing "should be intrinsic" in the "way you treat staff and the way they feel". Staff feel valued by the Senior Team and that they are listened to. Each Friday, the Headteacher emails all staff to thank them for their work that week. During the assessment day, staff spoke about how the flexibility of the Headteacher supports their work-life balance, particularly those who are parents with young families. Staff are also flexible with their time in response and the supportive approach goes both ways.

Next Steps:

- Pupil leadership - There are already various leadership opportunities in place for pupils. However, during the assessment day, the IQM Lead talked about the development of Mental Health Ambassadors to offer peer support for this ever-growing area of need.



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Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

Governors fully endorse the School's inclusive ethos. Within the Governing body, there is a wide range of skills and expertise including Governors who have previously been Headteachers. Through their experience, they are able to support the Senior Leaders and challenge, where appropriate. When speaking about the staff at St Michael and All Angels, Governors described them as "so welcoming and willing to go the extra mile". They talked about how the staff are "caring about every child and family, wanting the best for them".

The School is seen as a safe haven for children and parents alike. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff know the families well and are thorough in their work to ensure the children are kept safe. Any children who are persistently absent from school are monitored closely in terms of safeguarding. Due to the high number of safeguarding issues the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs are dealing with day-to-day, the Leaders made the decision to buy in an external safeguarding trainer to support staff once per term. They receive regular supervision to help their own mental health and wellbeing.

Staff are consistent in their approaches. Effective continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities not only develop staff on an individual basis but create a culture of consistency. Comprehensive research is undertaken by Leaders before embarking on any new projects. Training is constantly refreshed, which enthuses the staff. They are trusted by the Leaders and given ownership of their roles, supporting their wellbeing and a creating a teamwork approach. Coaching triads are currently in place to enable staff to support and learn from each other. Staff talk about "seamless collaborative work which supports the children".

Teaching Assistants (TAs) receive high quality training in specific areas to strengthen the provision to support children individually and in small groups. In addition to the targeted training, TAs are invited to attend the weekly staff meetings which focus on different whole school priority areas. Leaders include TAs in decision making processes and they feel that "your voice matters, regardless of who you are".

Staff retention levels are good. Low numbers of staff turnover and low staff absence rates evidence the positive staff morale. All staff spoken to as part of the assessment process demonstrated a sense of pride in their work. They feel fully supported by the Leaders, stating, "if you need anything you can go to speak to them; they are so accommodating". There is a positive working environment. When asked what the best thing about working at St Michael and All Angels is, one staff member said, "I love how much everyone cares. I feel cared about and every staff member cares about the children. We are all welcoming to everyone".

Monitoring and evaluation systems are rigorous yet supportive. The focus is on the children and their learning. Any issues identified are addressed in a supportive manner. The Headteacher promotes a reflective culture and constantly revisits the School's mission to align staff towards the shared goal.

Next Steps:

- There are no significant areas for development within this element.



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Element 3 - Curriculum –Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

To improve pupils' oracy, the Leaders have recently introduced an oracy project which has been carefully planned to develop pupils' literacy and articulacy throughout the curriculum. A focus on oracy skills is pertinent to provide the children with better future prospects through the gift of articulacy.

The Voice 21 Oracy project has been implemented to help the children to verbalise their thoughts articulately in more formal situations. As part of the project, a Talk Tactics initiative has been introduced into the curriculum. Talk Tactics develops oracy skills through group work. Each child is given a role within the group to enable them to focus on developing a specific skill such as instigate, probe, challenge, clarify, summarise and build. The roles encourage pupils to think strategically about their contributions to group discussions. Oracy progression is mapped out sequentially from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to year 6, applying the Oracy Framework Strands. The English Lead spoke about the importance of the pupils having a range of "language and feeling confident to talk and express themselves".

All staff are passionate about reading. The Little Wandle Letters and Sounds phonics programme was introduced in September to improve progress in phonics. Reading at home is encouraged through class competitions, with books as prizes. If children are not regularly reading to someone at home, the TAs will make sure they are heard at school. Governors support the reading focus and visit school once a week to hear the children read.

During the assessment day, all children were engaged in the learning in classrooms. They respond positively to the teachers and are actively involved in the learning activities. Positive learning environments throughout the School reassure pupils to feel confident to participate fully in lessons.

The Curriculum for the pupils in the Nurture Base is tailored to their individual needs. There is larger emphasis placed on personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education to develop their social skills which will allow them to be more successful when they return to mainstream settings.

Provision in Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) is tailored to individual needs. There is a high level of SEN need in the two-year old and Foundation 1 classes. To support the increase in the number of pupils with diagnosed autism or identified autistic traits, staff have undertaken Attention Autism training. The SENCo works closely with the EYFS Lead to identify any additional needs from as early as possible to ensure the appropriate support is in place. Flexible resourcing across the EYFS classes means that pupils can access provision which is suited to their developmental stage or specific needs.

Next Steps:

- Nurture Base – Establish links with other IQM schools who have Local Authority Resourced Bases for children with SEMH needs to share best practice ideas.
- Phonics – continue to raise progress and attainment in phonics with consistent application of the recently-introduced phonics scheme.



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Element 4 - Teaching and Learning – Learning Environment, Planning Resources, Pedagogy

Staff have high aspirations for all learners and get to know the children’s abilities well to allow them to differentiate the learning accurately. There is an ethos of involving all children in the learning. Pupils’ work is marked regularly with the consistent implementation of the marking and feedback policy. There was some evidence during the book scrutiny I carried out of the purple pen feedback strategy starting to be used to encourage pupils to respond to feedback and improve their work.

On the assessment day, Key Stage 2 children were enjoying a ‘Spanish’ theme day. They were engaged in the enrichment sessions where they were learning about the history of carnivals, making carnival headdresses, tasting traditional carnival food and learning how to salsa dance. For the day, children were working in mixed ability groups from across Years 3 to 6 which added a social development element to the day. In all classrooms, pupils were having fun, working well together.

The learning environment is purposeful and reflects the School’s identity and values. Displays are well-maintained and link to the learning in each classroom. The Library is vibrantly decorated with hand-painted murals of the protagonist from famous children’s books to inspire a love of reading and promote the enjoyment of being in a library environment.

Next Steps:

- Library – maximise the use of the library space by holding coffee mornings with parents and carers there to promote a love of reading and break down any barriers which families may experience with regard to accessing resources from libraries.



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Element 5 - Assessment

Assessment is clearly defined on the School's website where it outlines the purpose of assessment as, "assessment is used to identify children's progress and find out areas where they are less confident. It is then used to inform teachers planning".

There is a clear methodology for tracking learners' ongoing progress. Pupil progress is analysed by Leaders and Class Teachers once per term. Within Pupil Progress meetings, staff use prior data to identify any gaps in learning or individual barriers the pupils may be facing. During the meeting, actions to address any identified issues are agreed upon. The progress of specific groups of learners is monitored closely to ensure no vulnerable groups of children are left behind.

Senior Leaders recently made the decision to change the standardised assessments. The School now uses National Test Style Standardised Assessments to evaluate pupil progress each term. The Assistant Headteacher feels that this has allowed staff to "specify targeted areas for intervention" due to the more comprehensive analysis tool. In addition to the formative NTS assessments, assessment of the learning is carried out across the curriculum in everyday lessons. Assessment takes the format of questioning, quizzes and summative assessments. During the IQM assessment day, Year 6 pupils said that they feel well-prepared for life at Secondary School due to the effective strategies for revision and exam preparation which they have been taught. Tests are not feared yet seen as an accomplishment to aim towards. Pupils enjoy being successful in their learning. Teachers encourage a growth mindset through celebrating little steps of progress.

There are effective information sharing systems in place to ensure that all aspects of the child are reflected upon and taking into consideration to enable all pupils to make good progress.

Next Steps:

- Assessments – continue to embed the use of the NTS assessments and develop the enhanced data used to inform curriculum planning and interventions.



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Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

Every single child's happiness and progress is valued by the staff at St Michael and All Angels. There is a shared understanding amongst staff that learning can only take place once children feel safe, secure, loved, nurtured and valued. Pupils enjoy attending school and their behaviour is excellent. They respond positively to the consistent inclusive approaches of the staff.

Recently, the Behaviour Policy has been reinvigorated, with a renewed focus on positivity. There are now three rules in place:

1. *Be Kind.*
2. *Be Safe.*
3. *Be a Great Learner.*

Staff are focussing on the language they use with the children with an aim to reward and celebrate positive behaviours as much as possible. 'Rainbows of Recognition' are displayed in each classroom to celebrate when pupils are kind, safe learners throughout the day.

Leaders recently engaged the support of an external consultant to deliver bespoke behaviour management training to all staff. Staff feel that this training helped refocus them, creating a positive mindset. Within the new behaviour system, children are treated differently, according to their individual needs, to provide a culture of equity. A philosophy of praise is contributing to a successful learning environment. The Rewards System recognises pupils with good attendance, who live the School's values, follow the rules or go over and above expectations. As well as certificates and assemblies, pupils are rewarded through initiatives such as afternoon tea with the Headteacher, which pupils inform me is the most popular prize.

Pupils are friendly and polite. I met with a delightful group of children who told me all about their School and what it is like to be a pupil at St Michael and All Angels. When asked what the best thing about the School is, the unanimous response was about how friendly and caring everyone is. One pupil commented, "we tolerate other people from different countries; if they are new, we become friends with them". Another added, "everyone is all friends and kind, we won't be racist or horrible". Pupils are proud to be a School of Sanctuary "where anyone can come".

It is clear from discussions with the pupils that they have strong connections with the staff. Children spoke about "if you are in a bad situation, you always have someone who can help you". The staff are understanding. For example, "if you are going through something, they understand and listen to what you're saying". The connections between pupils are also strong. There is palpable kindness shown towards each other. When one child is talking, the others nod along in encouragement. Throughout the assessment day, all interactions observed between pupils, either in class or out on the playground, were positive and supportive.



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Next Steps:

- Attendance – Whole-school attendance has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The School has identified the higher number of children who are now persistently absent (PA) from school as a priority area. A whole-school drive will have a quick impact on improving the data. It may be useful for Leaders to liaise with some of the IQM schools in the local Cluster who have positive attendance data to share best practice for quick gains. However, it is important that Leaders remain unwavering in the drive to raise aspirations to change the culture around education within the local area to break the inter-generational cycles.



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Element 7 - Parents, Carers, Guardians

Relationships are key to the success of the inclusive provision at St Michael and All Angels. Especially the strong relationships between staff, parents and carers. Staff recognise the need to understand and empathise with parents and carers. Leaders talk about how they aim to “meet the parents and families where they are at”. They listen to parents and carers and work in partnership with them to provide the best possible support for the children.

Staff invest a significant amount of time listening to and supporting parents and carers. During the morning of the IQM assessment, there were families in the Main Reception area who wanted to talk to the Headteacher about issues which had arisen over the weekend. With an open-door policy, the Headteacher welcomed the parents and carers in to speak with her so that any issues could be resolved promptly. One carer described the staff as “really supportive; if I have any problems, I can pick up the phone and it is never too much trouble for them”.

Parents and carers who very kindly met with me during the assessment day could not speak more highly about the School. They talked about how happy their children are and how the staff “are professional and always go above and beyond, doing everything in their power” to help families. A carer of a child who currently attends the Nurture base talked about how their child is now “thriving”. The “difference is incredible” in their child’s behaviour as well as speech and language development. Communication is excellent and “nothing is ever too much”. Parents and carers would highly recommend the School to other families due to the caring approach.

With higher-than-average levels of poverty prevalent in the community the School serves, alongside the more recent cost of living crisis, the School has become a hub of support for families. A Pop-up Pantry provides food and household essentials to any families in need. There is an open invitation sent out in addition to individual invitations with specified time slots to allow families to access the support subtly.

Next Steps:

- Workshops – recover pre-Covid opportunities for parents and carers to engage with activities in school. Look at offering workshops on trauma and emotional regulation to support children at home with a consistent approach to what you are doing in school.



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Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

Staff are outward facing and seek opportunities to work with other schools locally and nationally. Thanks to the School's inclusive reputation within the Local Authority, the Headteacher was invited to work on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transformation Board to support the improvement of provision for SEND across Wirral Authority.

The School has many links with other establishments within the local community. One of the close partnerships in place is with the local Secondary School, Woodchurch High School, with whom they work to support transition from Key Stage 2 to 3, socially and academically. Teachers from Woodchurch regularly visit St Michael and All Angels to deliver lessons in specific curriculum areas, such as the recent visit for National Science Week.

St Michael and All Angels support Woodchurch High School through offering their students work experience placements. During the assessment day, the School welcomed a large number of year 10 students from Woodchurch to carry out a week's work placement. Staff met the work experience students at the Main Reception and greeted them warmly to put them at ease. During the learning walk, it was evident that the students felt welcomed into the School as they were all fully involved in the lessons.

With a strong reputation in the area for developing staff, the School works with a large number of Associate Teachers and Higher Education establishments. Associate Teachers are nurtured through a supportive yet challenging environment.

As a voluntary aided Catholic Primary School, St Michael and All Angels has close links with the church and parish. Two of the church Deacons are Governors for the School. Members of the parish are regularly invited into school to attend whole-school events. There are also many opportunities for the pupils to take part in external visits within the parish. Regular visits to the church are planned for the children to help them understand their part in the Catholic community.

Sport is seen as integral part of the wider curriculum at St Michael and All Angels. The Physical Education Lead spoke about how the School is "leading the way in the local area" regarding its inclusive sports offer. The curriculum is varied and offers sporting activities which every child can enjoy taking part in. Each child is guaranteed to represent the School at some point throughout their time there. It is not just about developing healthy lifestyles and positive wellbeing, but about aspiration to be able to compete at the same level as their non-disadvantaged peers.

To enlighten pupils to global issues, Fairtrade is a whole-school focus for one fortnight each academic year. The Fairtrade focus is led by the School Council pupils who produce posters and deliver assemblies to raise awareness and promote Fairtrade. Throughout the fortnight, there are numerous events including workshops and exhibitions. In lessons, the learning is linked to the theme. For example, in computing the pupils produced informative booklets about the 10 Fairtrade Principles. For the exhibition, families were invited into school to attend and pupils ran a shop selling Fairtrade items.

Next Steps:

- There are no significant areas for development identified within this element.