



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



**School Name** St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School  
New Hey Road  
Upton  
Merseyside  
CH49 5LE

**Head/Principal** Mrs Susan Ralph

**IQM Lead** Mrs Anna Bennison

**Date of Review** 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Assessor** Ms Sarah Linari

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

**Cluster Group** All Inclusive

**Ambassador** Sarah Linari

**Next Meeting** 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Meeting Focus** Wellbeing, speech and language, and parental engagement

### **Cluster Attendance**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Summer 2023</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	Yes
<b>Autumn 2023</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	Yes
<b>Spring 2024</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	
<b>Summer 2024</b>		

### **Evidence**

- IQM CoE review documentation.
- Ofsted Report.
- School website.
- Performance Tables.
- School priorities.
- SEND support plans.
- SEND Folder.
- Attachment and Trauma profiles.
- Lesson observations.
- Displays.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



### Meetings/discussions with:

- Headteacher.
- IQM Coordinator/SENDCo.
- Teachers (including ECT).
- Teaching Assistants.
- PE Lead.
- Pupils.
- Carers.
- Counsellor from Brighter Horizons.



### Summary of Targets from 2023-2024

#### Target 1:

**To embed whole school approach to positive mental health, emotional wellbeing and resilience amongst children and staff, leading to children and staff feeling mentally healthy with a good sense of wellbeing.**

The school has placed mental health and wellbeing at the forefront of school development to ensure an all-encompassing approach.

In the meeting with Senior Leaders to discuss the development of provision to embed positive wellbeing across the school, several key points emerged. A significant impact has been the introduction of the external Counsellor, who provides weekly sessions to address mental health concerns. There was a consensus among Leaders regarding the importance of supervision for staff who are supporting the children with highest levels of social and emotional needs, such as the Base Lead, who can access supervision to support their own mental health and wellbeing.

The Counsellor brings a wealth of expertise, encompassing therapeutic interventions and diagnoses. In the discussion with the Counsellor, a previous senior leader within a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) secondary school, it became evident that their journey into counselling stemmed from a specific interest in supporting vulnerable children. Having embarked on retraining, they completed a level 4 counselling qualification, specialising in working with neuro-divergent children.

What sets the approach in place at St Michael's and All Angels apart is the emphasis on tailoring sessions to individual interests and needs, adopting a person-centric therapeutic approach. The Counsellor has cultivated safe relationships and advocates for the children, supporting them to voice their concerns. The Counsellor commended the school's collaborative ethos, allowing the flexibility to work in alignment with specific goals while prioritising the children's wellbeing. With a current caseload of seven children, each session is dedicated to creating consistency and trust, ensuring children always see the same, supportive figure. This dedication to putting the child at the heart of the practice demonstrates the Counsellor's invaluable contribution to the school community.

Whole-school trauma-informed approaches support an ethos which promotes positive wellbeing for pupils across the school. Examples of Attachment and Trauma profiles were shown as part of the evidence for the IQM review. Due to the sensitive information held within the profiles, they are only shared on a need-to-know basis. These one-page profiles for high priority children ensure that their Class Teachers and TAs are aware of their adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) so as to best support them in class. All information about children is shared in pupil progress meeting and through the Special Needs information folder which moves up with the class as they progress through the school.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



The implementation of the My Happy Mind programme has been a resounding success, providing invaluable tools for emotional regulation and wellbeing across the school. Staff have fully embraced the implementation of the programme, which has led to a positive impact and enhancement of the consistent approaches across the classes. From Senior Leaders to the Teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs) who deliver the sessions, all staff are on board with the vision for wellbeing.

During the observation of a Year 4 My Happy Mind lesson on the review day, the focus was on gratitude and its link to neuroplasticity. Pupils engaged in reflections on gratitude, recalling experiences since the last session and linking back to the gratitude wheel. A noteworthy aspect was the utilisation of My Happy Mind journals, where pupils shared reflections on how they incorporate the strategies in life outside of school, such as "once I had a fight with my mum so I used my amygdala to know I should just listen." These personal reflections foster a sense of self-awareness and emotional intelligence among the pupils, equipping them with skills to support them in school and at home.

A particularly commendable aspect of the session was the calm atmosphere, with children listening attentively to both the Teaching Assistant and each other. The concept of Team HAP (Hippocampus, Amygdala, and Pre-Frontal Cortex) was effectively conveyed, with children able to name the parts of the brain under this acronym and repeat its meaning chorally. Furthermore, the discussion on dopamine and how gratitude releases it provided a scientific understanding of the benefits of positive thinking. The session concluded with a focus on character strengths, encouraging pupils to reflect on their top strength. The TA sensitively addressed the challenge of thinking positively about oneself, emphasising its importance in self-development.

In the Year 1 My Happy Mind lesson observed, pupils were meditating on the floor with eyes closed and in silence. Guided meditation, including colour meditation, was employed to cultivate a sense of calmness and mindfulness. Pupils reported feeling "good and calm" after the session, demonstrating the effectiveness of these practices even at a young age. The use of journals in Year 1 is tailored to suit their developmental stage, with drawings to represent their feelings and reflections, and teacher comments to further enhance their understanding and engagement of the sessions. Character strength stickers provide tangible reinforcements, with examples provided by the children themselves on how to embody these strengths in daily life. Finger breathing techniques were discussed and demonstrated by the children. The incorporation of sensory elements such as jasmine scents and low lighting in the classroom contributed to the overall atmosphere, promoting relaxation and focus.

Teaching Assistants speak with great enthusiasm about the My Happy Mind programme, highlighting various aspects they appreciate. They note that children struggling behaviourally have responded positively, with parents and carers also adopting the programme's techniques at home. Through the sessions, pupils have started to develop empathy and appreciation for others, realising the importance of their brain's cooperation. The programme offers practical strategies like "happy breathing" for managing overwhelming feelings, resulting in a noticeable release of tension. The integrating of My Happy Mind into the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum enhances its relevance, fostering connections



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



between the two. TAs commend the comprehensive resources provided, including the App with demo lessons and certificates for module completion.

The programme's implementation has yielded tangible benefits such as reduced need for staff support during lunchtime. Teachers and TAs express a real passion for delivering the sessions, recognising the positive impact on pupils' readiness to learn and the overall classroom environment. They appreciate the programme's calming effect which promotes a sense of peace and wellbeing for both pupils and staff alike.

The effective implementation of the My Happy Mind programme has had a profound impact. Through engaging lessons, tailored resources, and a supportive environment, pupils are equipped with essential skills for emotional resilience and wellbeing. The programme's inclusive approach ensures that every child, regardless of their needs, can benefit from its principles. As evidenced by the observations, My Happy Mind is making a positive difference in the lives of the pupils, laying the foundation for a happier and healthier future.

### *Next Steps:*

Continue to embed the My Happy Mind programme. Look at creating displays in each classroom and consider having the same team of TAs delivering the sessions across all classes.

### **Target 2:**

**To ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect. We recognise that people have different needs, and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all exactly the same.**

- *Create a curriculum that appeals to all pupils and enables all to attain highly through careful data analysis and related actions.*
- *Staff to be aware of disadvantaged children (Pupil Premium, LAC, EAL, SEND), plan appropriate support and discuss their progress at termly meetings.*
- *As vacancies arise in school, we will always give due regard to our Equalities Policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.*
- *Provide training opportunities for staff and governors.*
- *Good attendance for all is promoted through various initiatives and analysed to identify and address concerns for all groups of pupils.*

Over the past year, the school has taken significant steps to enhance diversity and inclusion. This involved reviewing and refining policies, such as the Equality Policy, and integrating equality objectives into the school's framework. Additionally, the school has prioritised individualised support through tailored curriculums and enhanced provision for pupils with diverse needs, including those with SEND and English as an additional (EAL). These efforts have been supported by regular meetings between staff and the Leadership Team to ensure ongoing evaluation and adaptation of strategies to meet the needs of all learners.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



Feedback from a recent monitoring visit from the Local Authority identified the inclusive practice for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as a strength of the school and stated in the report "pupils with SEND are fully included in the lessons and enjoy their learning. Adaptations are made where needed, including staff and resources."

The creation of a sensory room which is currently accessible to children with complex needs, exemplifies the adaptive approach of the school in response to the cohort's needs. This resource provides vital support for pupils requiring additional assistance in managing their emotions, ensuring that all children have access to tools for wellbeing and self-regulation.

### **Next Step:**

Plan for a wider range of pupils to access the sensory room as part of their daily or weekly support.

### **Agreed Targets for 2024-2025**

**Target: Maintain and further improve parent engagement through a number of new initiatives.**

### **Comments**

When discussing the school's future plans to enhance parental engagement during the review day, we talked about involving a strategic approach, focusing on specific groups such as parents and carers of children in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). By targeting this demographic, the school could aim to tailor its efforts to the unique needs and concerns of parents and carers with young children, thereby fostering more meaningful engagement from the start of their educational journey at St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School. Implementing start and end point questionnaires will enable the school to assess progress and better understand the effectiveness of their support initiatives. Additionally, the school could look at conducting regular reviews involving a small focus group of around eight parents and carers to gather diverse viewpoints and feedback, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of parental perspectives.

The IQM Lead is planning to attend the Spring Term cluster meeting at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School. The Assessor has advised that they collaborate and share best practice for parental engagement as this is an area of exemplary practice for the host school.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



**Target 2: To become a pioneer school in Wirral and beyond for excellent wellbeing provision across the school, for all stakeholders.**

### Comments

During the review day, we discussed the potential for implementing a wellbeing programme through forest school activities to replace the previous emotional literacy support assistance (ELSA) intervention.

In terms of the future plans for the My Happy Mind Programme, the Assessor suggested looking at a model whereby two TAs deliver the whole-school offer, becoming the 'experts' in delivery, as they demonstrated commendable skills during the observations and in discussions on the review day.

Pupil Leaders conducted a My Happy Mind pupil reflection survey with each class but it would be useful to have a more comprehensive survey conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme.

There is an impactful My Happy Mind display in the Year 1 classroom. During the review day we talked about creating a display for each class to serve as a constant reminder of the main strategies and learning points to support pupils throughout the day.

**Target 3: To further enhance the school's Forest School provision and explore, cost and plan an allotment and sensory garden.**

### Comments

The school's future plans to enhance the existing Forest School provision are taking shape. With the EYFS Teaching Assistant already Forest School trained, the plan is to deliver Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to all staff to extend forest school-style activities to other year groups, on a more regular basis.

Furthermore, discussions on review day revolved around the creation of a sensory garden, a nurturing space intended to cater specifically to children with SEND as part of the proposed plan to develop an enclosed outdoor area accessible to the Base children.

All outdoor learning plans aim to enhance the inclusive environment outdoors, where all pupils can thrive amidst nature.

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

Since joining the cluster programme, the school has attended all meetings. Leaders engage fully with the programme and enjoy being part of the IQM network. The staff particularly enjoyed the visit to Whitefield Primary School in the Autumn Term. The IQM Lead explained that they currently are in the process of developing their own school version of the 'Zones of Regulation', with a toolbox to support the children. Leaders have purchased the books so that they can research the theory behind the 'Zones of Regulation'. The IQM Assessor suggested that the IQM Lead forges a link with





## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



Faith Primary Academy who have successfully embedded and enhanced the Zones of Regulation, as a centre of excellent practice in this area. They are also looking at developing playtimes, inspired by the Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) approach seen at Whitefield. Leaders are looking into applying for the SHINE project funding, which was a focus at the last meeting. The school has been an excellent addition to the All-Inclusive Cluster Group.

### Overview

The current demographic at St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School reflects a dynamic blend of diversity and inclusivity. With 242 pupils currently enrolled, 20% of pupils are identified as English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners, a notable increase from the previous year's 12%. This increase highlights the school's commitment to accommodating and embracing multiculturalism. Furthermore, 43% of pupils are eligible for pupil premium (PP), significantly above the national average, indicative of the school's proactive efforts to support socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils. Additionally, with 29% of pupils on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) register, the school surpasses the national average, emphasising its dedication to providing tailored support and fostering an inclusive learning environment for all learners. The absence of suspensions or exclusions demonstrates the school's inclusive ethos and commitment to resolving issues through dialogue and support rather than punitive measures, showcasing its dedication to nurturing a safe and supportive educational community for all.

During the parent/carer meeting on review day, several points were discussed regarding the progress and wellbeing of the children. One carer shared their delight in their child's thriving academic performance, having met or exceeded all targets set for the year. A Foster Carer, new to the school, expressed gratitude for the positive changes observed in their child, who had previously exhibited closed and challenging behaviours but now shows significant improvement and openness, with particular praise attributed to the counselling sessions. The communication logs, facilitating daily updates between home and school for those children in the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) Base, were praised, with one carer remarking that it feels like having a parent-teacher meeting every day. The school's efficient handling of specific diagnoses for children with SEND, thanks to a strong professional relationship between the SENDCO and hospital paediatrician, was also highlighted. Carers praised the exceptional communication between home and school, ensuring a holistic understanding of each child's wellbeing. Furthermore, the school's proactive approach to supporting parents and carers, for example, through coffee mornings focused on areas such as autism and speech therapy, was celebrated. The carers particularly appreciate the school's inclusive environment, where staff accommodate various needs to support all children. Overall, the meeting showcased the school's dedication to supporting both pupils and their families, earning high praise from representatives who feel supported, understood, and valued by the staff.

Pupils speak consistently positively about their school. In the most recent whole-school pupil voice survey, 100% children responded positively to say they are proud to be a pupil at the school, with 100% stating that they feel safe at school. All pupils feel encouraged to do their best and say that the school has rules that are used fairly. 100%





## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



children agree that school encourages them to talk about their feelings and emotions. The pupils' perspectives on school are rich with appreciation for the supportive environment cultivated by the staff. As one pupil affirmed, "the teachers encourage us to behave well," highlighting the positive influence of the staff on their conduct. In general, pupils speak with a prevailing sentiment of fondness for the school, with comments about the kindness exhibited by both peers and teachers: "my friends and teachers are kind." Additionally, the significance of personalised support is evident, with one pupil sharing, "my teacher gives me yellow paper as I have a visual distress problem and it helps," indicating a thoughtful approach to addressing individual needs. Furthermore, the accessibility of adults for emotional support is acknowledged by the children, as noted by a pupil who stated, "when I am upset, there are adults I can talk to."

The pupil leadership 'Happiness Heroes', comprising representatives from each year group (Year 1 to 6), embody the spirit of kindness and empathy within the school community. Their mission is clear: "to spread joy, laughter, and comfort to those in need". They understand the importance of making everyone feel happier, promoting calm amidst sadness or anger, and above all, being kind. As one pupil eloquently put it, "it is our job to make sure people are okay." Through their endeavours, they not only uplift spirits but also extend a helping hand to those feeling upset. Pupils value the recent introduction of the My Happy Mind programme to support their mental health and wellbeing. They particularly relish the lessons about the brain, which are both informative and enjoyable. The Happiness Heroes spoke with enthusiasm about their plans to further develop their roles, including a plan to create posters showcasing the My Happy Mind Programme, spreading awareness and positivity throughout the school.

Discussions with the pupil Eco Committee on the review day were inspiring. Working closely with the staff Eco Lead, the Eco Committee is the driving force behind sustainability initiatives, entrusted with responsibilities that nurture their leadership skills and bolster their confidence. Pupils have successfully secured a £10,000 grant to transform outdoor spaces. They plan to introduce planters and develop the Forest School to enrich the school's outdoor learning. Additionally, their commitment extends to wildlife conservation, as they champion the school's designation as a 'hedgehog-friendly' environment. Embracing their role as protectors of the environment, they spoke with pride about the school's "big school clean", integrated into the science curriculum, where every class partakes in litter picking activities both within the school and outside in the local community. Their dedication demonstrates a school-wide ethos of environmental consciousness and active participation in promoting a cleaner, greener future.

During the discussion with teaching staff, they shared their perspectives on various aspects of the school. One resounding sentiment was the overwhelming support felt from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). One teacher explained, "we unanimously feel supported by SLT; they listen to us and take anything on board without judgment." This support extends beyond acknowledgment, as the Leaders actively engage in collaborative decision-making processes to ensure they align with the evolving needs of the staff and pupils. Moreover, the SLT prioritises staff wellbeing, offering accessible avenues for discussing workload concerns and providing personalised assistance. As



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



one teacher expressed, "they ask what they can do to help and offer strategies and ways to support us, even giving us time if needed."

Another significant point of discussion centred around the implementation and impact of the My Happy Mind programme. Teachers praised its comprehensive approach, which delves into neuroscience to equip children with strategies for self-regulation and emotional understanding. Staff enthusiastically described its emphasis on the holistic development of children, valuing personal growth over mere academic achievements. The programme's tangible results are evident, with fewer incidents reported on the playground and notable improvements in children's emotional literacy. Moreover, the inclusive nature of the programme, with sessions conducted across all year groups and integrated into various areas of the curriculum, fosters a consistent and progressive approach to emotional wellbeing throughout the school. With plans to continue and expand its implementation, staff are optimistic about its continued positive impact on both pupils and the wider school community.

It is clear from the review process that the staff at St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School continue to be fully committed to inclusive education, as a source of excellent practice. I therefore recommend that the school continues to hold Centre of Excellence Status and is reviewed again in 12 months' time. 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 Centre of Excellence status. Thank you to all for such a welcoming, enjoyable and informative day.

**Assessor: Ms Sarah Linari**

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

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