



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name Forest Academy
Bury Road
Brandon
Suffolk
IP27 0FP

Head/Principal Ms April Grimes

IQM Lead Ms Claire Edmeades

Date of Review 30th September 2024

Assessor Dr Andrea Hall

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group MADIE B

Ambassador Mr Roger Leeke

Next Meeting 13th November 2024

Meeting Focus A celebration of the school's inclusive practices

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Summer 2023	14th June 2023	Yes
Autumn 2023	18th October 2023	No
Spring 2024	14th February 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	12th June 2024	No

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The school is a member of the MADIE 2 cluster group. Unfortunately, the school was unable to attend a meeting at The Bridge School, Ipswich, on Wednesday, 18th October 2023, and at Clements Primary School, Haverhill, on 12th June 2024, due to illness. However, they did attend the meeting at Thomas Gainsborough School, Sudbury, on 14th February 2024. The school is a member of the MADIE B cluster group.

The impact of the visit to Thomas Gainsborough was extremely positive, and the school was able to see inclusion in a high school setting. It was reported that the highlight of the visit was how the school had 'created a culture that fostered high aspirations for all'. The school was able to see the access arrangements for exams and the support that was available for children with additional needs. The visit generated discussions at the SLT level within the school and steps that could be taken to support children in Y6 in the future.



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The Assessor advised the school to consider sending other members of the school team to the cluster meetings where possible.

Evidence

Evidence was gathered from a variety of sources within the school. The range of evidence provided was extremely useful in presenting what life is like for a child at Forest Academy.

Evidence

- A tour of the school with the IQM Lead (SENDCo)
- Self-Evaluation Report

Discussions/ Meetings held with:

- The Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- LSAs
- Operations Manager
- Parents
- Children

The Assessor also spent some time looking at the school site during the lunch break and the variety of activities that are available to the children

The self-evaluation report reflects the school's progress with the current targets and the exciting plans for the future as seen by the assessor.

Summary of Targets from 2023-2024

Target 1: To host a series of parent forums to increase engagement and understanding of Forest Academy's offers and what they can offer at home.

- Half-termly parent forums were completed on a broad area of need or a specific difficulty as corroborated by the parents during discussions. Leaders changed the name of the forums to 'family support mornings' to ensure they reached more parents and engagement was high.
- Guest speakers delivered advice/help during the family support mornings. These included sensory integration, dyslexia, autism support, Makaton, and MIND.
- The SENCO applied and secured £2500 of funding from the Town Council to support a SEND and PP project in the school. This has also led to further charitable funds secured from other attendees at the meetings.
- Due to the excellent communication between the SENDCo and safeguarding team, parents with low engagement, who would receive the most benefit, are steered towards additional support. Positive relationships with vulnerable families ensure this is effective.

Comments

It was evident that the families fully appreciated the opportunity to take part in the 'family support mornings'. In total, 60 families engaged across the events. The families met reported that the 'adults get support too at Forest Academy' and that 'nothing is too big'. The families seen were able to talk freely about some of the challenges their children have faced, demonstrating how included they feel in their child's learning journey and school life. They described that there are 'friendly faces' on the playground and 'people who will listen'. The families met were able to share their knowledge of SEND and were supportive of each other. When talking to the children, they talked about dyslexia and how the reading pens support their learning (sourced through external funding), and they proudly showed me how to use them.

Next Steps:

- To continue organising the family support mornings, ensuring the locality budget is spent on additional speakers to further meet the needs of the families.

Target 2: To develop a whole school culture of 'Universal Offer' and what we do at Forest Academy.

- The school has worked with inclusion practitioners to evaluate the current offer available for children with SEND, to enhance it further. The staff team has worked effectively together to identify strengths and areas for development, recognising that what is good for a child with needs is good for everyone. This was evident with the consistency of social stories and the use of widgets within vocabulary development across the curriculum.
- The whole school's universal offer document shared was completed as a team at Forest Academy (all stakeholders were invited to contribute). The planned CPD enabled the offer to be successfully disseminated. The sharing of good practices was evident between LSAs.
- Resource development has ensured that the 'Universal Offer' can be met. This has been evidenced through book looks and feedback forms, which specifically outline where adaptations have been made. The use of technology has increased across the school during this period, with children regularly using talk pads, clickers, Vockeroos, and reader pens as part of their daily routine. In particular, the school is proud of their dyslexia screening across the whole of Y3 and how the technology (Lexplore Analytics reading assessment tool) identifies children using specific eye tracking technology. This year, through the screening, nine children have received additional reading support.

Comments

The school has a wealth of support for children and families, which is documented in the Universal Offer at Forest Academy (evidence available on the website). The universal document has been simplified so it is accessible to all parents (one page) should they need to refer to this. It is clear that the school regularly refers to the SEND code of practice, ensuring that 'every teacher is a teacher of SEND'. This is enhanced by the CPD offer available to all staff who have access to regular training and advice. LSAs shared that they support each other well, communication is good, and they know who they need to go to for advice. LSAs are confident in using Tapestry to update parents on the progress the children with SEND have made within their classes and within the intervention groups. It is clear that LSAs know the children well and that they work well with the teachers to ensure the children can access the learning they need (shared paperwork seen with each class having a yellow box of ISPs, EHCPs, and intervention files).

Next Step:

- To sustain a strong understanding of the 'Universal Offer' at Forest Academy and to continue to advocate the use of assistive software and technology to ensure accessibility and adaptation of every lesson for all pupils.



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Target 3: To introduce the use of 'Solution Circles', run by SLT to increase the earliest possible intervention and encourage staff to maximise their own skill set to support children at risk of limited to no progress.

- Solution circles have been effectively implemented across the school for children needing additional support to regulate their behaviour and to access learning following a successful trial period. Staff, who are in regular contact with the identified children, join the meeting and have a voice in the development of a behaviour plan. Reasonable adjustments are agreed upon, actioned, and shared with the parents.
- SLT has modelled the expectations for the meetings with a consistent format being followed. The meetings are solution-focused, putting the child at the heart of all decision-making.
- Behaviour support plans following the 5 As approach are in place for seven children. Exclusions are low.

Comments

Solution circles have been very successful for the school as they involve key personnel in a child's development. By undertaking these meetings, staff feel consulted and are able to contribute ideas to support in the classroom. Everyone's views are taken into consideration, including parents. Staff understand the need for reasonable adjustments and adapt well to meet needs. Due to the excellent CPD opportunities available, staff can make valuable contributions during meetings, and best practices are regularly shared.

Next Step:

- Move to the 'sustain' phase of this new way of approaching putting in place provisions for children who have complex to severe SEMH.



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Target 4: To increase staff knowledge and confidence when working with children with attachment/trauma and SEMH difficulties.

- The confidence levels of staff have been audited, enabling the school to effectively target appropriate CPD for attachment, trauma, and SEMH difficulties.
- The CPD programme has been followed (that is, research-based). This has included Trauma and adverse childhood experiences and the underlying causes of behaviour.
- Five licensed Thrive Practitioners have supported children across the school through individual action plans.
- The SEND register is updated monthly to take account of the needs of the children.
- The school regularly signposts parents to additional support, including domestic violence charities. When children and families suddenly join the school, they ensure they are welcomed and included in the life of the school.
- The 'Universal Offer' now refers to SEMH support available at Forest Academy (evidence seen).

Comments

The pastoral support available to parents and children is extensive. The school goes above and beyond to ensure all children are welcomed at Forest. The staff are highly trained in Thrive, Pace, and Trauma-informed practice. If they are unsure how to meet the needs of children in their care, they find someone who does know and can offer high-quality advice. Parents named individual staff members who have made a difference to their children, and it was clear that they are appreciative of the high level of support available. They have full confidence in the SENDCo and know she will not only listen but act. LSAs feel well-trained and recognise the school is continually improving. All adults met valued their colleagues and, in testing times, knew they would be listened to.

Next Step:

- To continue to identify specialist external agencies that can be signposted or directly engaged by the school.

Agreed Targets for 2024-2025

Target 1: To explore and implement ways of increasing engagement in physical education and wider play for children with physical disabilities.

Comments

The school follows the Get Set 4 PE scheme, which meets the needs of the children well, as there are suggestions available to the teachers regarding adaptations. The school is very passionate about ensuring all children can access the PE provision within the school, as well as the lunchtime provision and after-school clubs. Registers are being kept of club attendance, and we discussed the need for monitoring this carefully to check that all children have the opportunity to take part, where possible. The school currently includes extracurricular opportunities on the SEND one-page profile, which was great to see. The children met and enjoyed having the chance to represent the school at Panathlons, football, and athletics. Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure the play spaces are accessible; however, the school wants to develop the resources further for children who have physical disabilities and are seeking support with this. The next MADIE B meeting will have a focus on adaptive teaching in PE that the school may find useful.

Target 2: Identify pupils at risk of emotional-based school avoidance (EBSA) and make provision for them will ensure minimal disruption to learning opportunities.

Comments

To complement the work completed last year, it is important to the school that they find out why some children find attending school difficult. Therefore, they are developing their attendance support offer further in line with the Universal Offer. Members of SLT are working closely with specific groups of children or families as the named person so that they have a greater understanding of the barriers that impact their daily lives. The school recognises that it is important to listen to the pupil to understand their views. This is an exciting project that will enhance the pastoral support available in school and fit in with the new attendance framework, which highlights the importance of building relationships to improve attendance. Attendance is currently at 93.71%, and it is hoped this focus will see this figure move towards national expectations. Case studies of the groups of children receiving support may enhance this work further to demonstrate the impact of the changes.



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Target 3: To develop oracy in children so that they may speak clearly, confidently, and appropriately in a range of situations (in line with the SDP).

Comments

The Deputy Headteacher shared the great plans for Oracy's development across the school. The school is delighted to be part of a research project called 'Little Link' to support speech development in the Nursery. Early identification is key. In addition, curriculum adaptations are planned to ensure that the children can speak in a range of situations to a variety of audiences clearly and confidently. This could be within lessons, assemblies, or presenting to Governors. The school intends to enhance the CPD offer to staff so clear speech is used within the classroom and that awareness is further developed through selective mutism. The school uses technology well to support learning but is keen to find ways to enhance this further.

Overview

Forest Academy continues to be a place where everyone is welcomed, individuality is valued, strengths are nurtured and where the potential of every child is a priority. The Leadership Team has high expectations for the children and the community they serve and is fully committed to working in partnership with families and external agencies to ensure the provision available is the best it can be, seeking advice when needed. The parents I met at the school had nothing but praise for the Headteacher, SENDCo, pastoral team, teachers and support staff stating that they 'couldn't fault the school' and 'teachers explain things well'. It was sad to learn about some of the parent's difficult experiences in other settings and how they felt let down by some external services, indicating that the time taken to receive support was unsatisfactory. However, they unanimously agreed that the support offered at Forest Academy was exceptional stating that 'nothing is too big' for the school. Relationships are strong. All the parents openly shared their children's journeys, and I felt honoured that they were able to share these with me and other parents in the room. There were tears but the parents explained 'it is ok to cry', 'you are never judged' at this school. The family support mornings introduced last year are having an impact in ensuring that parents have a voice in their children's education and that they are listened to. As well as emotional support and effective SEND advice, parents reported that the school considers all aspects of a child's experience in school. The school works with parents to ensure that all children can attend trips and visits, that uniform is available at a pre-loved uniform stall, that medical support is in place and that dietary requirements are carefully considered so children don't miss out. All parents reported that their children felt 'comfortable at school' because they were listened to and that the school had an awareness of what they need to thrive. The parents trust the SENDCo unquestionably.

Inclusion is evident in all aspects of the school's work. The Headteacher works effectively with her leadership team, the Trustees, parents, and staff to ensure that everyone has high aspirations for all children at the school and that all children can access the learning they deserve. Through external funding and working in partnership with the Local Authority, the school has adopted the school site to ensure that it is wheelchair-accessible (Victorian building). In addition, where some children find learning difficult, the school seeks out solutions to meet needs from within the school (solution circles) and through external agencies. The school does not limit advice to one source but chooses a range of partners to work with, valuing their expertise and guidance. There is a plethora of highly skilled practitioners at Forest Academy who support all children well. They know how to target support effectively. The school is reflective and has adapted and enhanced the 'Universal Offer' available to meet the needs of the community they serve. Links with the local high school SEND team are a strength due to the regular communication and shared thinking.

Support staff, who were interviewed, recognise the excellent support networks that exist within this inclusive setting. In addition, office staff are often the first line of communication, and parents reflected that their reaction can be 'the key to calm' anxious children and offer advice and reassurance to parents. This highlights the whole school approach to inclusion that permeates throughout the school. Support staff feel that Forest Academy is a lovely environment to work in. They explained the wide-ranging interventions that are in place and how they support the children to reach their

goals in phonics, thrive, and explore. For children on the SEND register, LSAs confidently use Tapestry to upload photos and videos demonstrating the progress the children have made. LSAs have a good understanding of the Individual Support Plans for the children in their classes and regularly contribute to the reviews, highlighting the excellent teamwork observed across the school. They appreciate the excellent CPD they receive and note how this has positively impacted the children. They feel their wellbeing is given a high priority, and they appreciate the supervision that is available to them; everyone feels valued. They are proud of the positive journey the school has been on and are excited by the next steps.

The SENDCo is relentless in her commitment to the children at Forest Academy. Her enthusiasm, dedication, and pledge to the children are unwavering. For example, to secure additional support and resources for the children at Forest Academy (and beyond), she approached the Town Council to see if they were able to provide £2500 of funding for SEND guest speakers to strengthen provision and to offer advice. This funding was agreed upon and has had a significant impact on Forest Academy and schools in the locality. As well as this, she has formed excellent links with a charity that funded 'reader pens.' The children, who regularly use the pens, confirmed that they 'help me with my dyslexia'. One child stated, 'They help me search out words I haven't used before.' It was evident that the children treasured the reader pens as they enabled them to access the class texts alongside their peers. The plan is to try and source some more.

The children appreciate the many opportunities the staff at Forest Academy provide. Children with SEND regularly take part in fixtures against other schools. I heard all about the Panathlons and how the school finished in second place the children were beaming with pride when they talked about their medals. They described the different activities that form the Panathalon and particularly enjoyed the curling aspect during the tournament. Football was popular with the group; one child was proud to have saved so many goals! We discussed Forest schools and how this helps them with their learning. The Headteacher is rightly proud of this provision and enjoys spending time with the children reading stories in the woods. Some of the children find busy discos overwhelming, so staff carefully consider how to ensure everyone has the opportunity to attend, so there is now an option of a silent disco, which the children love. The children appreciate that they have the chance to take part in lots of exciting visits, such as 'Young Voices' at the O2 and a residential trip to Eaton Vale.

I had the opportunity to talk to the curriculum lead about how the curriculum has evolved and the plans for this year. She shared the School Development Plan and explained how inclusion is woven throughout. It was great to see the vibrant reading display in the main corridor, which showcased the school's reading spine. It was clear that the reading spine was well thought out, as it encourages children to access a wider range of titles, authors, and genres that they might not otherwise meet or choose independently. The texts chosen are multilayered and promote discussion and reflection. In addition, there are lots of stories in which the children learn about others and can also see themselves. The school also has a virtual library, which is fabulous. The school's website provides parents with a plethora of support. The curriculum lead revealed how the school is continuing to strengthen vocabulary across the school. At the beginning of every lesson, the staff go through five keywords that the children need to



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know; each word has a visual to support their understanding and to improve long-term memory (dual coding). Dual coding is used as a tool to support all learners, and widget software is used consistently across the school, including in excellent social stories.

Forest Academy is an example of a school committed to meeting the needs of its children and is resolute in its commitment to and implementation of inclusive practice. The whole school has a clear commitment to inclusion and supports staff well. Adults within the school support the direction of the school, and staff are kept well-informed about the IQM process. There is a good understanding of the targets set for the coming year. They are closely linked to the School Development Plan and how they will continue to move the school forward.

I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Centre of Excellence. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence status and is reviewed again in 12 months. The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Centre of Excellence status.

Assessor: Dr Andrea Hall

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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