



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



**School Name** Exning Primary School  
Oxford Street  
Exning  
Suffolk  
CB8 7EW

**Head/Principal** Mr James Clark

**IQM Lead** Ms Ruth Clifford-Turner

**Date of Review** 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023

**Assessor** Ms Sarah Embleton

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

**Cluster Group** MADIE

**Ambassador** Mr Roger Leeke

**Next Meeting** **Date in diary**

### **Meeting Focus**

### **Cluster Attendance**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Autumn 2022</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	Yes
<b>Spring 2023</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	No
<b>Summer 2023</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	Yes

### **Evidence**

- Tour of school and grounds (including Meet and Greet on the playground).
- Learning Walk and Learning Drop Ins (all classrooms, The Hive area, photographs, displays, leavers' assembly rehearsal).
- Parent feedback.
- Samples of writing "The Collected Works of..." from every year group.
- Discussions with Senior Leadership Team.
- Discussion with The Hive Lead Teacher.
- Discussion with Year 3 Class Teacher (Peer Mediation Lead).
- Discussion with pupils (Peer Mediators) and an ex-pupil (now at Secondary School).
- Discussion with Vice-Chair of Governors.



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### Summary of Targets from 2021-2022

**Target 1** To implement peer mediation and restorative strategies for children across the school.

The Year 3 teacher (who was a fully trained peer mediator herself in 6th Form) is coordinating this target across the school. She clearly has a passion for developing a professional and embedded approach at Exning Primary and has spoken at conferences about her experience of the positive outcomes of peer mediation.

In the last year the school has concentrated specifically on extensive planning, preparation and training of pupils and staff in order that all stakeholders are on board. This has included an overhaul of the PSHE curriculum in order that links to that subject area are explicit and the process has involved a range of pupil voice activities. The initiative will then be fully and robustly implemented in school from September 2023.

Thus far, peer mediation has incorporated training for the Lead Teacher and 3 full days of training, delivered by external specialists, for 10 pupils in Year 5 with a view to taking their skills into Year 6. Children told me that they had to show their interest in becoming a peer mediator by completing an application form and were able to articulate how this will support them in their future educational and working life.

The peer mediators I met are a good mix of personalities with a range of different abilities and include pupils who are on the SEND register, in receipt of Pupil Premium funding and pupils who are newer to the school. They told me about the Mediation Hut and how they plan to decorate it and about the Google Classroom forum where they can communicate, share ideas and make suggestions. They are excited for the September launch and will be doing a slide presentation to the whole school in assembly. Comments from my discussions with them included "I want to help people and build good relationships", "I want to help resolve things and make the world a better place" and "I want everyone to feel seen and heard".

Everyone I spoke to in school regarding this target was very enthusiastic about the programme and excited about seeing it move from strength to strength in the coming year.

**Next Step:** Continue with peer mediation and monitor the efficacy of the programme over the course of the next year.

### Target 2

To find opportunities to partner with schools within the locality, within Suffolk and within the wider world through direct collaboration, teamwork and through curriculum-based links.

Exning Primary have really driven this target in the last year and I heard many examples of support and collaboration including Supporting SENDCos at local schools, mentoring by the Headteacher for two other local Headteachers, helping several local



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primary schools to develop their SEND provision and Deputy Head roles and the DSL working with another school to support their safeguarding procedures.

There has been a joint staff meeting, collaboration and planning with Rougham Primary school on the English curriculum and The Write Stuff. In addition, children and staff from St Matthews Primary School in Ipswich came to work with the whole school for a samba day. Three hearing impaired children at Exning were taken to a local school to meet with other children with hearing impairments and riding sessions have been organised for a small group of SEND children and children from Pupil Premium families.

The Hive children and staff have been on a joint school trip with another Special Education Unit and Exning staff have joined in Professional Development Days with other Units in Suffolk. Teaching Assistants from a local school have been to Exning to learn how to deliver Attention Autism sessions and have had several return visits to The Hive to observe good practice in action. A school that is opening a Special Education Unit in September has joined Exning staff for training and observations for support in their opening, with their Senior Leadership Team receiving support from the Exning Senior Leaders.

Parent feedback also provides evidence of how their children enjoy visits to other schools for example, going to Newmarket Academy for different subjects.

Academisation talks are ongoing and Governors have decided unanimously to move to the next stage. The Governor I met with reiterated how everyone wants '*what's best for children*'. This provides a very exciting period in the school's journey and an opportunity to expand the Exning Brand. I heard from Senior Leaders that inclusion is at the heart of what they believe is central to their ongoing success.

**Next Step:** continue to build relationships, new outcome to be set regarding academisation and working across schools' partnerships.

**Target 3** To investigate the possibility of opening a further SEND unit on site to support children in KS2:

Senior Leaders at Exning Primary have been in regular communication with the Local Authority regarding this target, but at this particular time, the funding has been directed towards KS3 and 4 SEMH units, and therefore the target is ongoing. School staff are very keen to persevere with this and are always thinking creatively about how adults in school can best support the high numbers of children in the County with complex SEND. It has been agreed that one of the children in the Hive can be kept in the Unit into KS2 as no suitable placement has been available to him. The school have worked relentlessly and appealed to the Local Authority to keep this pupil in order that he can continue to thrive and flourish as he has done during his time in the school's KS1 unit.

I spoke to the Hive Lead Teacher (an Early Years Specialist with additional expertise and training in SEND) who is passionate about educating all staff and children about SEND. She told me how she sits in on Specialist Speech and Language sessions and Music Communication sessions to continue build her expertise. School staff are successfully using Solution Circles to share ideas between professionals around what



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works. The SENDCo and Lead Teacher have worked with a range of specialist settings this year and I heard how they are looking for every opportunity to continue to grow the school's offer. A second SENDCo is currently being trained in order to support future growth and succession planning.

**Next Step:** Continue to look for opportunities to expand in this area.

**Target 4** To fully implement and embed The Write Stuff across the whole school.

This target encompasses a new whole-school approach to writing and is research informed. The school have worked collaboratively with Rougham Primary School who are in their third year of using this approach. I was told by the Curriculum Lead that implementing this system has sharpened the teaching and learning of writing throughout Exning Primary. It has transformed the teaching of writing and improved standards in school, meeting and achieving National Curriculum standards. I heard how The Write Stuff has provided a step-by-step framework with its specific learning chunked approach (and Writing Rainbow) to support all children to become successful writers and I was able to see powerful evidence of this in the many book samples I looked at from every year group across the school. I heard how high-quality modelling has enabled children to succeed when they come to do their own independent writing and children are rightly proud of their "The Collected Works of..." books. Writing standards are exceptional and skills learnt in writing lessons are also being transferred into other curriculum areas. Using The Write Stuff is also building children's confidence as they have a clear idea of what high quality writing looks like and know how they can improve (the programme has a personalised marking system).

Implementing The Write Stuff has been fully achieved and training is set up for the new members of staff starting in September so that they can also hit the ground running.

**Next Step:** continue to monitor this in learning walks, data, book looks and assessments.

### Agreed Targets for 2022-2023

**Target 1** To continue to investigate and instigate the academisation process.

#### Comments

The Headteacher and Governing body have reached the decision to go ahead and fully investigate joining a local Trust.  
Regular staff meetings and parent consultation will be held to ensure that staff are kept up to date throughout the process.

**Target 2** To develop a more wide-spread and strategic plan for working closely with a larger group of schools in a newly developed trust.

#### Comments

Meetings to be held between SLT and CEO of the Trust as required.  
Plan strategically for the development of a structure of the Trust - SLT, Trust Board and Governing Body as required.



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Discussions with the Local Authority, and SLT of local schools regarding their transition into the new Trust as required.

**Target 3** To develop the role of second SENDCo to have a wider impact on both our own and other local schools.

### Comments

Senior Leader/SENDCo to complete the training of identified member of staff on return from maternity leave and on completion of her SENDCo qualification.

**Target 4** To strategically plan a wellbeing support package for staff, parents, governors and children, following the trial experience with OM Consulting.

### Comments

OM Consulting to work with the Deputy Heads to develop a bespoke package of support that ensures that all members of staff and governors have access to high quality group and individual well-being support.

OM Consulting to work with SLT to ensure that any parent who needs support over and above what is available locally, and in conjunction with the Family Support Practitioner, is given real-life strategies and support for their own and their children's wellbeing.

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

The two Deputy Headteachers at Exning (one of whom is the IQM Coordinator and SENDCo) have been active members of the Cluster group, attending all but one session this year. The meetings have been interesting, helpful and informative and have given food for thought as well as networking opportunities for Exning representatives. The school would be happy to host a meeting and would find it very beneficial to plan and deliver a day showcasing school projects. The IQM Coordinator is very much looking forward to opportunities to attend future meetings of the group and the planned Cluster Group meeting dates are already in the school diary for the coming year.

The other Deputy Headteacher I spoke to said '*We have had an insight into what highly effective provision for SEMH looks like from my visit to a Specialist Provision in Southwold. This has given us aspirations for our own future provision to support children in our local area in an all-through SEMH setting*'.

### **Overview**

This visit was a truly amazing experience! I was in awe of everything the school has achieved. At Exning Primary there is without doubt, a culture of fully engaging with inclusion and relentlessly promoting the highest standards in every aspect of school life. In the local area, Exning are held up as a beacon school and support several other settings to learn from the excellent practice here. As during my last visit, the school motto - *persevere, shine, be happy, value ourselves and others, be proud of our achievements and never, never, never give up* - is palpable, alongside a distinct sense of integrity and community ethos. There is a real, felt commitment to inclusive education



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in school which provides consistent evidence of the ceaseless pursuit of excellence both in relation to staff expertise as well as children's learning and wider experience. Staff are rightly proud of their inclusive culture and parents greatly appreciate the fact that everyone in school consistently goes above and beyond to make them and their children feel valued and included - *"You try to give every child a chance and push every child"*.

I could see how staff have used the last year to further innovate, adapt and develop flexibility in order to continue to meet the needs of all children and their families. Examples of passion, courage, expertise, tenacity, smart working and a truly collegiate approach abounded in my discussions with stakeholders. I heard how the school starts each September Personal Development Day with an activity focusing on 'what did you do last year that didn't impact on outstanding teaching and learning?' At Exning there is no fear factor which enables everyone to identify gaps and be responsive, as well as working creatively to find solutions. Once again, I got a strong sense of the importance that Exning Primary places on the development and sharing of best practice at every stage of their journey. The school is working with a range of partners to make sure that their offer is the very best that it can be and also maintains very strong inclusive links with families and the local community. I heard how the possible academisation will only serve to strengthen this commitment.

The Senior Leadership Team is very strong, committed professionals who encourage all staff to utilise their personal interests and previous experience to shape the school's offer. I observed a Teaching Assistant from Year 4 leading the rehearsals for the Year 6 Leavers' Assembly as she has a background in performance. I also spoke to a member of staff who leads an after-school club, 'Round the World' where children have a passport to join in with cultural activities from different countries; they are encouraged to try new foods and cuisine, to share histories and fact-file information as well as to watch videos and have a go at different languages. In addition, there is a real commitment to succession planning and distribution of leadership for example, developing the role of second SENCo to have a wider impact on both Exning Primary and other local schools. The SEND unit (The Hive) for EYFS and KS1 children with complex needs has gone from strength to strength in the last year and is very highly regarded in the local area. It was lovely to see how children in the Unit are fully integrated into school life and are totally accepted as valued members of the school community. The school is fully committed to ensuring that all children at Exning Primary School are exposed to the same cultural capital and all children are enabled and funded to enjoy a well-rounded and enjoyable school experience through residential trips, visits, exhibitions, clubs and even rock concerts!

The school has recently held its annual 'Valuing Ourselves and Others' week' to draw specific attention to that part of the school motto. During the week numerous activities took place including a rock music day led by external partners focusing on building self-esteem, a NHS Careers day challenging gender stereotypes, a visit from the Dwarf Sports Association as well as a visit by the owner of a hearing dog (who has since volunteered to listen to children read in school). The school highlighted all the very strong inclusive links that it has fostered this year with the local community and external providers. The school is also an active member of the local SEND community and has found the IQM Cluster Group meetings very helpful thus far.



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Pupils have access to lots of outdoor learning opportunities with a range of bespoke outdoor play areas as well as quiet areas. The school has further developed its grounds by using funding from a Community Grant Scheme to develop sensory places around the school site. In conjunction with Exning Cubs, bulbs and fragrant bushes have been planted in strategic areas. The main sensory space adjacent to The Hive now has a sensory totem pole, a water feature, spinners, mirrors, a metal ladybird, bees, butterflies and a peacock. A parent of a child in school gave his time and materials to build a raised planter for grasses and reflective spheres. A local business has also donated a honey extractor in order that the school can further develop its bee-keeping project and take the process of the extraction of honey in-house.

The pupils I was able to speak to could clearly articulate their roles in school and from their feedback, show that they like the opportunities they are given, respect the way they are treated responsibly and see how things link to real life situations and their future. I was also able to talk to an ex-pupil at the morning meet and greet, who told me how his positive experience and personal development at Exning Primary has supported him through secondary school (and disrupted learning in Years 7 and 8 due to the pandemic). He is about to embark on Key Stage 4 and really demonstrated a growth mindset, resilience and maturity and said that he is confident these qualities and skills will serve him well in the next stage of his academic career.

It was a very powerful and emotional experience to see and hear how much is being achieved in school due to the drive, passion and caring of the Senior Leadership Team and the relentless commitment of school staff. There are exciting times ahead as a result of the possible academisation. The ability to adapt and think flexibly, as well as reflect on, and learn from, experience really was amazing. As things move forward opportunities at the school seem to be limitless. The school has many exciting plans for the near future and it will be very interesting to watch the journey continue. During my visit it was clear that the staff never stand still, there is always a new initiative or development that will enhance the lives of the pupils and their families. Leaders and governors are striving to ensure that the Exning experience is further expanded and built upon, so that as many children and young people as possible can benefit from an 'all-through' offer and flourish as a result.

I continue to be 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: Ms Sarah Embleton**

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

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