



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School

School Address: Upper Hill Street
Liverpool
Merseyside
L8 5UX

Head/Principal Ms Joanne Lewis

IQM Lead Mrs Sarah Lally

Assessment Date 5th December 2023

Assessor Ms Sarah Linari

Sources of Evidence:

For this IQM Assessment, the Assessor evaluated the school's commitment to inclusion through the following documents and activities:

- IQM Self-Evaluation Report (SER).
- Ofsted report.
- School website.
- Displays.
- Learning walk.
- Observation of playtime.
- Curriculum overview.
- Medium-term lesson planning.

Meetings Held with:

- Headteacher.
- Deputy Headteacher.
- IQM Lead/Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) Key Stage 2 (KS2).
- SENDCo Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Teachers, including Early Career Teacher (ECT).
- Teaching Assistants.
- Parents, carers and guardians.
- Pupils from across KS1 and KS2.
- Governors.
- Therapist.
- Pastoral Support Worker.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Overall Evaluation

St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided, inner city primary school with a nursery provision, for children aged 3-11 years old. The school is currently welcoming pupil numbers above the Published Admission Number (PAN), with around 237 pupils on roll. Located in Toxteth, an area of high deprivation in Liverpool, there are around 47% of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), a number significantly above the national average. Around 70% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds with 45% of children speaking English as an Additional Language (EAL). 26% of pupils have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), a figure well above the national average.

The school is well thought of in the local area and is consistently oversubscribed. Despite the additional challenges faced by the school's demographic, the children make excellent progress throughout their time at St. Patrick's. The school motto, "be the best that you can be," encourages children to aim high in all aspects of their lives. The diverse range of backgrounds, abilities and needs are celebrated, contributing to an ethos where all children are supported to thrive. The whole school community is accepting of each other's differences, with acceptance being "the norm".

The Senior Leaders began the assessment day by describing St. Patrick's as a "family". This sentiment was echoed by all stakeholders throughout the day. The family ethos is founded on strong, positive relationships that exist between the staff, pupils, parents and carers. The Headteacher explains how the school would not function effectively without these strong relationships. There is also a tremendous sense of belonging nurtured in the school community. Once a child or adult belongs at the school, they will be part of the St. Patrick's family forever.

On the day of the IQM Assessment, the School was operating differently as half of the building had been condemned due to an issue with the roof the week before. Despite this huge disruption, the school maintained a calm atmosphere. As a visitor, it was impossible to notice that half of the building was out of action as the strong culture and routines meant that the pupils adapted quickly to the new set-up. Staff's flexibility has ensured that the school continues to operate fully despite half of the resources being cordoned off in the part of the building which is currently out of bounds. This adaptable mindset demonstrates the staff's commitment to providing a consistently high-quality educational experience for the children of St. Patrick's.

Throughout the assessment process, the school's exceptional inclusive provision was evident from the comprehensive paperwork and effective communication to the welcoming atmosphere which is embraced by all stakeholders. The school community embodies a family environment, a theme consistently referenced by everyone across the assessment day, including the children themselves.

Parents and carers express high levels of positivity towards the school, feeling well-supported within an open culture that prioritises strong relationships with families. Parents and carers are grateful for the unwavering dedication to inclusive practices, commenting on how members of staff focus on understanding the unique needs of each child and forging deep connections with each child and their family.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



The children exhibit excellent behaviour and attitudes throughout the school day, actively engaging in learning and safely participating in playtime activities. Interactions among pupils and staff are consistently positive, contributing to the overall inclusive ethos.

An excellent culture of safeguarding ensures that children are kept safe and well looked after by the adults in school. Safeguarding procedures are characterised by responsive and timely support. The school adopts a holistic approach, collaborating with Pastoral Support and the in-house Therapist who works closely with families. The support for disadvantaged children is outstanding, benefiting from an enriching curriculum and an outdoor environment that offers unique experiences not easily accessible elsewhere. The staff's wellbeing is also prioritised by Leaders, evident in their sense of being valued and their enjoyment of working as a closely-knit team. They feel trusted as professionals, empowered to make decisions and demonstrate adaptability and flexibility in supporting each other, the children and their families.

Despite being situated in a city, the school cultivates a distinct sense of community and togetherness, creating an environment that surpasses the typical urban school setting. This community-focused school provides a refuge for all amidst the numerous challenges that exist around it.

For the IQM Assessment, the IQM Co-ordinator and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) provided wide-ranging evidence to validate the process. The inclusive approaches evidenced in the robust documentation were reflected in the daily practice observed on the assessment day.

The Assessor was warmly welcomed into the school. Staff received the process with an open culture of self-evaluation. This reflective culture ensures that the school continually moves forward in terms of its inclusive practice. Senior Leaders know the areas of strength well and have clear plans to improve any areas that need further development. It was a genuine pleasure to meet all the children, staff, Governors and families on the day. Thank you to all for your valuable contributions.

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 Mark and be reassessed in three years.

Assessor: Ms Sarah Linari

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

Near the main entrance is a prominent display with photographs of every child in the school, accompanied by the statement, “we belong,” and the school’s motto. The sense of belonging is so strong that many of St. Patrick’s ex-pupils visit the school regularly, some weekly. Some ex-pupils also return to work there, including the current Apprentice Teaching Assistant. The Leaders explain that they feel a great sense of responsibility for all children who have been part of the St. Patrick’s family. They continue to support children and their families even when they have left the school. At the core of the approach at the school lies a deep-rooted mindfulness toward staff’s wellbeing, recognising that when they are feeling okay, they can best support the pupils. With a training legacy dating back 16 years around Andrew Curran’s ‘The Little Book of Big Stuff About The Brain’, the ethos revolves around psychological responsiveness, erasing stigma and ensuring inclusivity for all.

During the review day, the Senior Leaders spoke about the school’s belief in fostering a growth mindset, where mistakes are embraced as part of the learning journey and a restorative approach guides all interactions. Staff and pupils are encouraged to detach from taking things personally, redirecting the focus to love in all challenges.

An effective safeguarding culture is deeply embedded in the school’s ethos. As the Safeguarding Lead aptly describes, it is unequivocally “everyone’s responsibility”. With a team of four Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) trained staff, including the Pastoral Support Worker and Therapist, there is capacity to respond to safeguarding issues promptly. The school identifies early signs, using the online platform, Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) in real-time to tackle emerging issues. The responsibilities of the Pastoral Support Worker extend far beyond attendance monitoring, encompassing safeguarding, mental health, and overall wellbeing support. They understand that attendance can be a symptom of underlying issues, prompting them to delve into family backgrounds and provide crucial support. Building relationships stands as a fundamental aspect of the approach, recognising that trust-building is pivotal in identifying and addressing latent issues. The Pastoral Support Worker also works closely with the children. Interventions offered range from small group initiatives like Discovering Exceptional Strengths and Talents in You (DESTY) and the ‘Relax Kids’ programme to support individuals and small groups.

The school also benefits from its own Play and Life Story Therapist. The Therapist works at St. Patrick’s two and a half days per week. Their service is commissioned out to support other schools for the rest of the week, bringing additional funding back into the school whilst benefitting children in other settings. The Therapist specialises in working through children’s lived experiences in sessions, aiding them in processing their emotions. As well as the one-to-one therapeutic intervention with the children, support is also offered to the whole family in supporting the child.

Next Step:

- Leaders have identified that they would like to hold half-termly coffee mornings for parents and carers focusing on specific areas of needs with the SEND Code of Practice. I would recommend that the IQM Lead contacts IQM Flagship School, Holy Cross, Birkenhead, as they run successful weekly coffee mornings for parents and carers of SEND.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

All Teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs) involved in discussions during the assessment day talked about their love for working at St. Patrick's. They talked about it being, "such a lovely place to work" that nobody ever wants to leave. The low staff turnover rate reflects this sentiment. They all referred to the family feel, with colleagues being more like family members and pupils treated like their own children. The recent Ofsted inspection's staff survey was returned with 100% positive responses, resonating with the inclusive workplace culture.

The Governors are an integral part of the tightly-knit family ethos. They talk about the care that emanates from every corner: from the devoted teachers, engaged parents/carers, and the children themselves. Situated at the heart of the community, the school boasts a good connection with the local church, creating a welcoming environment that prides itself on its familial feel. This commitment goes beyond the core responsibilities, with staff greeting pupils at the gate, familiar with each child by name and acquainted with most parents/carers. Their open-door policy reflects a genuine interest in developing relationships, going above and beyond to involve families.

Governors attend regular meetings and termly sessions to review children's work. They believe the school excels in providing an enriched educational environment, complemented by an impressive array of extra-curricular activities. Moreover, the Governors praise how the Leaders prioritise the wellbeing of staff, offering support systems, wellbeing days and investing in tailored packages for their welfare. Governor training, covering a range of essential areas, including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), stands as a testament to the school's commitment to continuous improvement. The Leadership ethos centres around a diligent yet compassionate approach. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) values hard work but emphasises that it must align with what is best for the children. Appraisal and performance management are not simple checkboxes; instead, targets are linked to the school's development plan but are very much involvement between the appraiser and appraisee. All training and introduction of new initiatives are carefully planned. The focus on Teaching and Learning (T&L) training, is integrated seamlessly into the school culture rather than being an afterthought. Safeguarding training is a weekly priority to ensure it remains at the forefront of everyone's focus.

The SLT maintains an approachable demeanour, valuing work-life balance for the staff as much as for the pupils. A wellbeing day is observed annually, complemented by regular supervision and support through the Smart Clinic app. Early Career Teachers (ECTs) are nurtured through ample professional development opportunities, including exposure to internal staff observations and external training. The Leaders are accommodating, nurturing a positive staff environment and encouraging proactive decision-making. Empowerment to make decisions resonates throughout, creating a cohesive and supportive culture that prioritises both the staff and pupils' welfare.

Next Step:

- To enhance the early identification and diagnosis of need, the KS2 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) is planning to begin the Dyslexia Assessment qualification.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 3 - Curriculum – Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

The curriculum's rationale is outlined on the website where it describes the intent to, “strive to ensure our children are motivated and inspired to want to learn by ensuring a broad and balanced delivery of the National Curriculum with exciting, stimulating, cross-curricular links, based on common values, decided upon as a community”. Aligned to the school's motto, “be the best that you can be” there is a strong emphasis on “challenge for all our children to enable them to learn and develop their skills to the best of their ability.”

The school embodies an inclusive ethos that looks wider than traditional boundaries to provide the pupils with experiences they otherwise may not have the opportunity to do. Leveraging the proximity to local resources such as the Liverpool Philharmonic and local museums, the curriculum is enriched, providing pupils with diverse and immersive learning experiences.

The school's commitment to offering a comprehensive educational experience is also evident through the music and sports curriculum. Music and sports clubs, along with inter-school competitions, foster a sense of belonging and encourage diverse interests among the children. The integration of SEND-suitable sports like ‘Kin-Ball’ into the curriculum focuses on teamwork, enhancing social skills and promoting inclusivity. Allowing children to take their instruments home extends the school's inclusive approach, ensuring accessibility for all.

The Forest School provision is a highlight of the curriculum for many of the children. All pupils participate in these sessions throughout the year, engaging in structured activities that promote teamwork, social skills, safety awareness and an appreciation for the outdoors. The buzz surrounding these sessions highlights the positive impact of Forest School on pupils' holistic development.

The curriculum is designed to accommodate diverse learning styles and needs, making adaptations such as pre-teaching and resource adjustments. The content has been looked at through an inclusive lens to ensure diverse representation of the school demographic within the teaching materials. This approach enables every pupil to engage with the curriculum and see themselves reflected within it.

The school's curriculum planning process involves input from the entire staff, ensuring a well-thought-through, ambitious programme with ample opportunities for all pupils. Following a recent evaluation of the curriculum, which involved feedback from the staff, Leaders are currently refining it to streamline content to prevent cognitive overload.

Next Step:

- As part of the work currently being undertaken to streamline the curriculum content, look at introducing knowledge organisers to support the pre-teaching at the start of each new topic and to serve as a reference to support the children in their progress throughout the topic.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



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

St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School provides a diverse range of learning experiences for its pupils from the Nursery class through to Year 6. During the IQM Assessment, there were observations of the learning environment, lesson activities and extra-curricular engagements.

Throughout the school on the assessment day, each year group was engaged in various activities catering to their developmental needs and interests. All learners were engaged and demonstrated positive attitudes towards learning. There is a focus on hands-on learning experiences, interactive spaces and a blend of enriching activities to enhance the pupils' educational journey.

The learning environment in the Nursery is conducive to exploration and creativity. The provision of a low-level cooking area allows children to engage in food preparation and cooking activities, developing their practical skills and love of cooking from an early age. In a sensory-rich setting, Nursery children engaged in activities like creating handprints and exploring winter animals, such as the penguin in the tuff tray with artificial snow.

As well as the structured delivery of the Read Write Inc phonics programme sessions, the Assessor observed a wide range of learning activities. A group of Reception children were carefully looking after the class pet guinea pigs. The incorporation of these therapeutic pets into the learning environment creates a link to the Zones of Regulation, supporting emotional wellbeing. The Year 3 class treated the Assessor to a sneak preview of their singing and recorder performance in their music lesson, showcasing their talents and creativity. Year 5 pupils were enhancing their reading skills through the computer-based literacy programme, Reading Plus. Year 6 pupils were enjoying their weekly Debate Lesson which promoted oracy skills in addition to developing confidence in public speaking, teamwork and communication skills. Each class also has a longer-term project they are currently working on to make something they will sell at the Christmas Fair, providing them with real-life entrepreneurial skills. All learning activities observed showcased the well-rounded educational experience provided at St. Patrick's.

The school's outdoor areas are well-utilised for learning and play. The provision of a mud kitchen for Reception and Year 1 pupils promotes hands-on learning and exploration. 'Paddy's Park' is a purposefully designed play area for gross motor skill development, further accentuating the diverse learning opportunities offered by the school. The expansive outdoor area comprising fields, an AstroTurf pitch, a playground, a sensory garden and plans to build an outdoor sensory classroom, fosters a holistic learning experience. The Forest School area allows children to access their learning outdoors during curriculum time regularly. The pond area enhances science education and provides pupils with opportunities for the practical application of their learning.

Next Step:

- The school already has two therapeutic classrooms, but Leaders would like to extend this further, budget and building-dependent, to provide a consistent therapeutic classroom environment across the school.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 5 - Assessment

The school's approach to assessment encompasses a holistic perspective that goes beyond solely academic tracking and evaluation, with a clear emphasis on assessing pupils' mental health and overall wellbeing needs. Staff employ various strategies to ensure a comprehensive understanding of each pupil's needs and abilities.

The school's commitment to mental health is evident through its graduated approach. The mental health and wellbeing strategy includes a triage system, ensuring timely support. Weekly safeguarding meetings assess the wellbeing priorities, with a proactive response to addressing any concerns.

Academic assessment involves a structured summative assessment programme, using the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) tests three times a year to provide a benchmark for tracking progress. However, the school places great emphasis on ongoing formative assessment. Teachers get to know their pupils well, understanding their individual needs, abilities and learning styles. This knowledge is foundational, allowing teachers to tailor their methods effectively. Daily conversations play a significant role in assessing immediate needs, ensuring a dynamic and responsive approach to teaching.

In English and Mathematics, regular Red Amber Green (RAG) evaluations from lesson to lesson allow for real-time tracking of progress. These RAG reflections feed into teachers' medium-term plans, enabling them to adapt their teaching strategies promptly.

Teachers empower the Teaching Assistants to further challenge pupils who are on task and provide additional assistance to smaller groups, as needed. Employing manipulatives in their teaching approach provides a more concrete understanding of concepts, accommodating diverse learning styles. Additionally, teachers adjust the level of questioning to suit individual pupil's needs, ensuring that all learners are appropriately challenged and supported.

The school's assessment approach reflects a balanced focus on both academic progress and holistic wellbeing. By prioritising continuous formative assessment, understanding individual needs, and employing varied teaching methodologies, they strive to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for every child.

Next Step:

- Look into the use of whole school online assessment tools, such as Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS), to help the identification of children who may require additional support for their mental health and wellbeing where the signs may be less obvious.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

The school has implemented an attachment and trauma-informed approach, fostering a more mindful environment that emphasises the dividends of building genuine, positive relationships. As one staff member remarked, "we are focused on empowering the children to be vocal and aware of their emotions, able to resolve issues between themselves". The introduction of the Zones of Regulation has helped children identify their feelings without pressure on vocabulary. The impact of how the Zones of Regulation encourage empathy for others was also noted as beneficial.

Pupils' conduct and attitudes displayed in lessons and during unstructured times are excellent. During lunch time, pupils actively engage in play and the involvement of Teaching Assistants (TAs) and the Sports Coach in these activities ensures a positive, fun atmosphere. The recent addition of new playground markings has further enhanced the play experience for the children.

A diverse range of pupils representing different age groups kindly met with the Assessor on the assessment day to share their various opinions about their school experience. Trust emerged as a central theme, with many remarking, "we can always speak to teachers because we trust them". The school's nurturing atmosphere was also consistently highlighted, with comments such as, "everyone is kind; they always treat us like family". Making friends and having fun, especially in Physical Education (PE) classes and during break times, were highlighted as the most enjoyable aspects of school life. Regarding future aspirations, the pupils talked about diverse interests ranging from wanting to become a footballer, hairdresser or vet to a research scientist, the latter inspired by the research activities enjoyed through the science curriculum.

Overall, the pupils appreciate the bond with their teachers and friends. They perceive the school as a family-oriented environment, where staff are supportive and approachable. Regarding lesson times, the pupils feel encouraged when teachers provide visual aids and model tasks on the whiteboard to support them.

A significant proportion of the Pupil Premium (PP) top-up funding budget is allocated to provide additional experiences, ensuring every child has access to diverse opportunities. From Year 3, music becomes an integral part of the curriculum, with free instrument tuition available for all. Trips are subsidised so they are offered free of charge, and residential outings are partly funded to guarantee inclusivity. By the end of KS2, pupils in receipt of PP funding consistently outperform their non-PP peers when compared to national data. The school offers a taste of everything to each child, nurturing their strengths while fostering self-belief and self-worth. Their success lies not just in academic achievement but in teaching children to believe in themselves. Extra-curricular clubs are linked to the curriculum, exemplifying a holistic approach to education. For example, the Debate Club offers pupils opportunities for personal development and the acquisition of life skills through engaging discussions on diverse topics. This initiative particularly prepares pupils for the future of work, encouraging critical thinking and honing communication abilities.

Next Step:

- Think about introducing a school radio station or podcast to share the Debate Club's talents on the school website and social media channels.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

Relationships with parents, carers and guardians are highly valued by the staff at St. Patrick's. They welcome the families as warmly as they do the pupils into the St. Patrick's school family. A genuine sense of belonging pervades parents' and carers' attitudes towards the school.

According to the very recent Ofsted parent survey results, there was unanimous agreement among respondents that their children are happy, feel safe and are well-supported in the school environment. Remarkably, 100% of parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) expressed satisfaction with the support provided by the school to ensure their child's success. Furthermore, every parent surveyed indicated that they would readily recommend the school to other parents.

A recurring theme highlighted by staff during discussions on the assessment day was the emphasis placed on building strong relationships and developing trust between the school and families. The Pastoral Support Worker mentioned, "everything is about relationships; a lot of trust with families so that safeguarding conversations can happen to support and challenge". They then reiterated the importance of these relationships in dealing with safeguarding issues, adding, "once you have the relationship, it is easier to understand that it comes from a place of love".

In the meeting with parent and carer representatives, they consistently expressed feeling part of a loving and nurturing community within the school. They appreciate the school's efforts to support families and prevent situations that might lead to child protection concerns. The sentiment of non-judgmental support was evident, with parents and carers stressing that at the heart of every action and decision are the children. One parent remarked, "teachers treat the children and us like an extended family; nothing is too much".

Multiple accounts were shared by parents and carers regarding the positive impact of the school on their children's development and confidence. They spoke of noticeable improvements in their children's communication skills, self-awareness and overall confidence, praising initiatives such as the attachment and trauma approach, highlighting that understanding that, "all behaviour is a communication".

The school's commitment to involving parents in their children's education is commendable. The open lines of communication between teachers and parents and carers, through the daily morning greetings for every child, the handover at home time as well as the detailed communication books for the families of children with SEND, are exemplary practices. All parents and carers are openly invited to the school assembly twice per week, allowing all families to join in the celebrations at times that are convenient to them.

Next Step:

- Continue to develop events such as coffee mornings to support parents and carers within specific areas, such as the Zones of Regulation.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School demonstrates a robust commitment to fostering both local community engagement and global connections, providing pupils with a comprehensive understanding of the world around them. The school's initiatives and partnerships reflect a deep dedication to social responsibility, cultural enrichment, and preparing pupils for a globally interconnected future.

The school has established strong ties with various local charities such as Saint Vincent De Paul, reflecting their commitment to supporting communities who are less fortunate. The provision of a free Breakfast Club and an array of extra-curricular clubs for all pupils is further evidence of the school's dedication to inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring all pupils have equal access to opportunities for enrichment.

The school actively seeks connections beyond its walls, for example through the choir's performances at Fazakerley Hospital, in the city centre and at local nursing homes. These initiatives not only uplift the spirits of the local community but also instil in pupils the importance of empathy and giving back to society.

The school's global outlook is commendable. Established partnerships with schools in Spain and Mexico allow pupils to expand their global learning opportunities. These connections allow for the exchange of information, cultural experiences and educational materials. The partnership with a Madrid-based school spans nearly a decade, enabling pupils to engage in meaningful exchanges, share videos, quizzes and discuss global events. These interactions contribute significantly to pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and international affairs. Furthermore, the school's partnership with the Mexican school, exemplified through a Design and Technology (DT) topic on Mexican food, is particularly noteworthy. This collaboration resulted in the exchange of authentic recipes, providing pupils with an immersive and tangible experience of another culture.

The school's commitment to local outreach and global connections is a testament to its dedication to promoting the development of well-rounded, socially conscious and globally aware individuals.

Next Step:

- HEARTS project - as part of the development of the attachment and trauma pilot project, the school is planning to become a Hub for an extended network to disseminate the approach across other Liverpool schools. This will involve the facilitation of training sessions and mentoring support for future cohorts.