



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name: Mulberry Academy Shoreditch
Gosset Street
London
E2 6NW

Head/Principal: Ruth Holden

IQM Lead: Jennie Montgomerie

Date of Review: 20th September 2021

Assessor: Kenny Frederick

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: Quality First Network

Ambassador: Rekha Bhakoo

Date of Next Meeting: 3rd December 2021

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: TBC

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

Meetings with:

The Inclusion Coordinator/Deputy Head
The Principal
Safeguarding Officers (DSL)
Deputy Head/Safeguarding
A group of 5 Middle Leaders/Associate Assistant Heads
The PHSE/Equalities Leader/Assistant Head
Head of Sixth Form/Assistant Head
Two groups of students
Local Authority Representative



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Summary of Targets from 2020-2021

The School's targets from the previous year were based on key actions in the school development plan and so are integral to every part of the school.

Target 1

Outcome: To disseminate, share and influence good inclusive practice between five schools and or other organisations. (Promote and develop our partnerships with other organisations – SIP 2020)

This target is ongoing and has been happening. The academy has taken deliberate action to share its good practice amongst the Trust schools and within the Local Authority. The ethos and culture are one of collaboration and there is an open-door policy for schools to come and see what they are doing. The leadership and staff at all levels are very enthusiastic and very proud to share their practice. Furthermore, they are all willing to learn from each other and from other schools.

Target achieved but ongoing.

Target 2

Outcome: All students are supported in their return to school and are safe and well and are able to catch up with any work/learning that they have missed.

This target is ongoing and both students and staff were able to tell me what had happened during lockdown and on their return to school last year and indeed what is happening to help them achieve their very best now the new academic year has begun. A whole range of activities were planned and delivered to offer additional support to students at all levels and these are constantly being reviewed to see if there are any gaps in provision. The students are very aware that all they have to do is talk to the staff and raise any concerns and ask for further support and they will get it.

This target has been achieved and is ongoing.

Target 3

Intended Outcome: No External Fixed Term Exclusions:

This has been achieved and the target remains in place next year. The school has put many measures in place to establish humane behaviour policies and the culture is one of support and mediation. Relationships between staff and students are warm and friendly and every effort at every level is made to include students who don't fit into the mainstream curriculum. The school aims to fit the student rather than insisting the student must fit the school. The work is on-going but the determination of the principal and her team will ensure that exclusions both fixed term and permanent will remain as low as possible in the near future. The principal is realistic and knows that there may be some occasions when it might be necessary, but she will not take this decision lightly. This target has been achieved.



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Target 4

Intended Outcome: To Introduce the Mulberry School Charter.

This target is linked to the introduction of the House system which was launched two years ago but has been slowed in its progress due to Covid 19. However, the Charter has been introduced and is in student planners and they are working on the many challenges they need to do to gain the different awards. One of the aims of the Charter is to enable and encourage students to participate in a wider range of activities and experiences to add to their overall education and to help them contribute to all aspects of school life. This target is underway now having been delayed by the Covid pandemic.

Agreed Targets for 2021-2022

The academy has produced a detailed action plan for this academic year. The targets are the same ones that they set last year but are equally relevant and are ongoing. They include:

Target 1

Intended Outcome: To disseminate, share and influence good inclusive practice between five schools and or other organisations and to continue to identify and share best practice within the school and externally. Continue building on current partnerships and lead on CPD within the trust and collaborate with the East London Teaching School Hub.

Target 2

Intended Outcome: No External Fixed Term Exclusion. The school will continue this work and document the strategies so they can be shared with others. Currently they are looking to apply to become a Behaviour Hub (2022).

Target 3

Two new targets already in action is

- To expand our provision for Students at risk of exclusion particularly girls.
- To develop Key Stage 5 Provision (Level 1 SEND) to start in September 2022.

We discussed this in some detail during my visit to the school.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The school has participated in all the remote Cluster meetings this year and the SENCO told me she has learned a great deal from attending these meetings. This has been particularly important when planning transition activities. The academy has also presented their school to the cluster during the last year.



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Overview

It was a great pleasure to visit the school almost exactly a year since I my original assessment visit. It is fair to say that the school has not only survived but has thrived despite the very difficult year. I found the school to be. Happy place where there was great enthusiasm for all that was going on. Both students and staff were delighted to be back in school and doing all the 'normal' things they had done previously including a whole range of extra-curricular activities and visits. There is still great awareness of the issues around Corona Virus and have made sure they are following all the official guidance whilst also trying to get on with running a successful school.

The Deputy Head had put a very detailed programme for me so that I could review their progress with the CoE Action Plan. I was able to meet a number of staff members and students and also had a good tour of the academy. I was also able to meet with the Executive Principal and some of her team and we talked about the last year and the challenges it had presented. She was very pleased that the academy had been able to provide a good programme of on-line learning for all students and they had prepared well for that eventuality by introducing TEAMS and training staff and students to use the technology. They secured enough devices so that all students could access the learning and provided paper packs for those who continued to have difficulty accessing the lessons. Staff were not only trained to use the technology and TEAMS platform but also share good practice around pedagogy. A lot of thought and energy was put into ensuring that students with SEND were properly supported. It was clear that the school team had worked closely together to support each other so they could support the students. The Executive Principal told me she was very proud of the way the school had come together to find solutions to the many problems presented by the lockdowns, the bubbles, the covid testing and staff and student absence due to having to self-isolate. However, many lessons were learned during the year and there were some positives. As a result, some of the things introduced last year such as on-line parent/carer meetings will continue this year. Also, they senior team have reviewed the meeting schedules and timings and have rationalised these. Furthermore, the starting times of the Sixth Form has been moved to later in the morning due to lessons learned during the last year.

My meeting with the SENCO and Deputy Head gave me an outline of the work that had gone on to promote and support wellbeing and mental health. There have been many developments and good practice in this area and the work is still ongoing. Nine students suffered bereavements during the last year and the academy has put counselling in place to support them through this trauma. They have employed an additional Counsellor to provide more students with individual support where they need it. I was told that some SEND students found it difficult to cope with on-line learning but the school made sure that they worked closely with their parents (as well as with the students) to develop strategies to better support them.

Student Voice is key to many of the developments that go on in the school particularly in response to issues that are happening locally or globally. For instance, much of the work on Black Lives Matter came about because of student concern and interest. Staff voice is also important and there are many examples of ways their voice has been heard and has



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resulted in action. Staff told me that if they have an idea, they are encouraged to share it and are listened to and are taken seriously for the leadership.

A very exciting development is the plan to further open the Sixth Form to students with a wider range of need and particularly those with SEND. The principal told me that they wanted their expanding Sixth Form (now nearly 400 students) to be as inclusive as the whole school. They want to make sure they are able to offer appropriate courses at every level. I was able to discuss this development further with the Head of Sixth Form (Assistant Head) and the SENCO and Deputy Head. They told me the entry requirements are similar to those of other Sixth Forms (mostly 6s for different subjects) but there is flexibility and they are able to look at each case individually. Some who don't meet the criteria are considered because they bring other qualities that make them eligible. A vocational pathway has been very successful and a new Health and Social Care course has been introduced and is proving to be very popular. This means the Level 2 pathway is well established alongside the level 3 pathway. The next step is to introduce a Level 1 pathway so that more students can participate in courses of their choice and can remain at their school for an additional year or more.

The Sixth Form Tutors and teachers are very enthusiastic and very skilled in their roles and they provide excellent support for students. The UCAS preparation is very thorough and 100+ went to university this year. A lot of effort is put into ensuring there are no NEETS (not in education, employment or training) and they make sure that every student is followed up and not left without an appropriate placement. I was told that pastoral care in the Sixth Form is also exceptionally good. Results and outcome have been very pleasing and disadvantaged students did slightly better than those who are not disadvantaged. The BTEC outcomes are positive and A level outcomes are improving. There is a big emphasis on further developing student's academic literacy and academic writing skills. I was able to meet with three A level students who were applying to Oxbridge and were being supported through this process by ten academy staff.

I met with the senior leader who has responsibility for Safeguarding across the academy. We had met last year, and I was assured that his knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues was second to none. Indeed, he had added to his portfolio of expertise during the Covid Pandemic as he has had responsibility for all risk assessments and following the DFE guidelines and all aspects of managing the school through the Covid crisis. I was told that besides the usual Local Authority Safeguarding Audit the academy had commissioned an external safeguarding audit where they received very detailed feedback and were reassured that they were covering all their responsibilities and managing all the different aspects very well. There were no gaps identified during either audit and the academy was congratulated on its good practice in this area. The school is using CPOMS as a tool to record and manage safeguarding and child protection issues and despite a difficult start with the software it is now up and running again. However, the DSL does not believe they have been able to make best use of the software yet due to these problems. However, they put other measure in place whilst the problems were sorted.

The academy has looked very carefully at the most recent Peer on Peer Abuse Report and it is included in the safeguarding Policy and there has been training for staff at all



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levels and a PHSE programme for students that looks at consent, sex, the law and so on. The students I met spoke to me about what they were doing in school to combat such issues. The subject is regularly highlighting with all staff to ensure they take the subject seriously and act quickly and appropriately when they come across it. More work on this is planned in the next few weeks. They are starting with the girls first and have organised frank discussions so staff can get a real understanding of what is happening. The school population is boy heavy so it's even more important that the school gathers their views. The girls I met during my visit to the school were very clear about what is acceptable and what is not and were very clear about what they would do if a situation arose where they felt they were being sexually harassed. The academy recognises the need to do more work with boys and this is planned as a follow on from what was done last year. The PHSE Lead (assistant head) talks me through the way the PHSE programme is decided and delivered and how the school makes sure it responds to issues that arise throughout the year such as Black Lives Matter and the peer-on-peer abuse report.

All staff had the usual safeguarding refresher course at beginning of the year and had additional information about Peer Abuse. There were other workshops on crime and criminal exploitations and gangs and there was a Prevent update for all. Some of the issues in terms of crime and gangs do not come into school but can happen on the way to and way home from school. Twenty-seven members of staff have now completed the Level 3 safeguarding training and there is a Safeguarding Team that meet every two weeks to make sure nobody has slipped through the net. The SENDCO also attends this meeting. There are currently forty students with EHCPs and the Inclusion Team meet regularly to keep track of each individual student and to make sure their needs are met.

We talked about the need for formal Supervision for members of the Safeguarding Team and I recommend this to the principal as an area that needs to be addressed. Although the team support each other and no one person is solely responsible it is important to recognise the heavy emotional and mental load people working in this area are dealing with.

The Central Record System is audited regularly as part of the Trust, and this is also checked by the Local Authority and the Safeguarding Consultant who carried out the most recent audit.

The Assistant Head (PHSE and Mental Health lead) told me how the Academy was tackling the issue of on-line safety and student and staff wellbeing. Although these issues were considered prior to the Covid pandemic they certainly were highlighted and became more acute in recent months. The PHSE programme was revised quickly to make sure they were addressing all that was happening. On-line safety was something that had to be revisited and re-emphasised during the lockdowns and throughout the pandemic as students were on-line every day. In addition, as mental health and wellbeing issues and concerns were coming to the fore the Academy ensured both children and staff had all the information, contacts and support they needed to maintain their physical and mental health.

The Academy is aware of the needs to nurture and promote staff wellbeing and 'Wellbeing Wednesdays' were introduced during the most recent lockdown. Tips and



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hints and fun activities were designed and shared amongst staff to help them get through the feeling of isolation. Furthermore, a lot of additional work on peer relationships was mapped out and delivered and issues around peer and pressures was discussed with students. LBGT plus was promoted and celebrated and frank discussions were held throughout the school. These were well received by the students. The PHSE lead meets regularly with Heads of Year/House and other pastoral leads and they plan work on anti-bullying, Black History and LBGT issues to name but a few.

My tour around the school coincided with an open morning for perspective parents who wanted to see the school at work before they made any decisions about choosing it. The atmosphere was calm and purposeful as the students and teachers got on with their work. Students move around the building calmly and there are always many members of staff around to ensure there is always an adult presence. It is clear students feel safe and are relaxed as they move from lesson to lesson. In lessons they were attentive and on task and the relationship between staff and students is warm and friendly and respectful.

Two of the deputies accompanied me on my tour and this allowed us the opportunity to talk about curriculum developments, about teaching and learning and about the work that has been done with the middle leaders. All are agreed that the middle leaders are the backbone of the school and there is recognition that their development and training is key to the success of the school. We talked about the training they received and the way that the line management system also supports them. I found that both colleagues were very reflective and thoughtful and were constantly looking for ways to further improve on the work they were doing supporting this team.

I was able to meet with a group of five middle leaders who had recently been appointed as Associated Middle Leaders in the school and they were all very excited about what they would be doing in this role. It was early in the term so not much had happened as yet, but they all had identified whole school projects that they had taken on in addition to their middle leaders' role. They were highly motivated and were clearly ambitious but were also realistic about what they could achieve on top of their normal responsibilities. Some of them were going to collaborate on joint projects which they felt was helpful and they said that they were well supported by their line managers. They told me that there was a lot of trust placed with middle leaders and lots of opportunities in the school and across the Trust for individuals to apply for TLRs and leadership positions. We discussed the need for them to be training up aspiring leaders in their teams to potentially take over their role when the time came for them to move on. We talked about staff voice and they said this was strong and that staff at all levels felt it was not only safe but was welcomed to air their views and to be part of finding solutions to different issues that arise in the school.

The Middle Leaders I met were keen to tell me that the school was awarded outstanding (Leading) in its Challenge Partners Review (July 2021). In addition to this, the school was awarded – an Area of Excellence for Middle Leadership (as Agents of Change) and each member of the Middle Leadership Team produced a Case Study to support this. They were very proud of this as so they should be.



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I was able to meet with two groups of students - one. Group of Year 11 girls and another mixed group of Year 11 and 13 (STEM) students. They all told me they were very happy at school and were well supported by staff. They had all found lockdown difficult and were very happy to be back in school. The Year 13 boys were all Physics students and were applying for Oxbridge and were being supported by the school in their application. Students had clear career paths mapped out. They said that they have regular careers input, and all have a Careers interview to help them decide what they want to do. They all told me they want to go to university.

When I asked students what they liked best about the school they listed a number of things including the good teaching and support they received. They particularly liked the extra-curricular activities provided and the House system and competitions in sport and elsewhere. They also spoke about the reward system which they said motivate them - a few girls produced certificates they had received at assembly that day. Their pride in their achievement was clear for all to see.

The students also said they liked the House System and the competitions and leadership opportunities offered through this system. They also spoke about the new Mulberry School Charter that was launched this September. They felt this would be something they would like to participate in as it would give them opportunities to try new things, learn new skills and have lots of different experiences. I was able to see the format of the Charter (in Student Planners) and was impressed by the range of activities on offer. I also spoke to the administrator who will track student's progression and will record when they complete different activities and when they reach a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award.

Finally, we had a discussion about Covid and they told me they are no longer worried about Covid and just want to get back to normal. They also gave me their views on the vaccine and whether (or not) they would have it.

A major commitment and priority for the academy is to have zero external exclusions. This has been achieved this year and they have set this as a new target for the coming year. There are lots of measures in place to help meet the individual needs of students who are unable to manage and regulate their behaviour and are the most difficult to include. New courses have been on offer and different working environments are provided so that students don't have to be excluded. The ongoing collaboration between pastoral, Safeguarding and Inclusion staff and joined-up approach to supporting vulnerable students is clearly working. The inclusion, safeguarding and pastoral leads have a fortnightly meeting with the principal to discuss all vulnerable



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students in the school and agree on individualised plans to support them using internal and external resources. I met with a Local Authority representative who regards the school as a model of good practice in the Borough.

I am of the opinion that the school continues to meet the Centre of Excellence criteria and should be reviewed in a year's time. They have produced an appropriate and ambitious action plan with a number of targets, which I am in no doubt that they will achieve.

Assessor: Kenny Frederick

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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