



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name: Bishopton Centre Pupil Referral Unit
Marsh House Avenue
Billingham
Stockton-on-Tees
TS23 3HB

Head/Principal: Mrs Emily Carr

IQM Lead: Mrs Emily Carr

Date of Review: 13th October

Assessor: Max Kelly

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group – Trail Blazers

Ambassador – Max Kelly

Date of Next Meeting – TBC

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: TBC

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

- Discussion with the Headteachers (IQM Coordinators) via Teams
- Meeting with a group of parents via telephone calls
- Meetings with school Governors via telephone call
- Meeting with a group of staff via Teams
- Conversation with a student at the PRU via Teams
- Interrogation of key documentation supplied electronically by the school
- Interrogation and analysis of Annual Review and Action Plan supplied electronically by the school



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Summary of Targets from 2019-2020

Target 1 - Continue to develop a strong mental health focus and free mental health trained staff up to work on early intervention on an outreach basis and provide therapeutic interventions to pupils identified as in need to further promote inclusion.

School Evaluation

Currently underway with the Mental Health Award by Leeds Beckett University (Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools). This is due for completion January 2021. Action plan established in January 2020 currently on track for gold standard.

Mental Health Lead has delivered CPD to local primary and secondary across the authority.

There was a successful training event delivered to Northumbria University on supporting children and young people with mental health challenges delivered by our Mental Health Lead.

We hosted a national conference to colleagues in primary, secondary, AP and specialist. Workshops included Excellence in SMSC, Childhood Trauma, Literacy & Reading, Exclusion Appeal Panels, SEND & EHCP and Engaging Curriculum. Feedback from this conference was overwhelmingly positive.

Well established Outreach Worker has successfully engaged with local primary and secondary schools developing strategies for early intervention.

Billingham has been successful in securing funding from the DfE to trial Early Mental Health Practitioners across the Billingham cluster of schools of which Bishopton is a part of. This is to establish a culture of early intervention for mild to moderate mental health needs.

New staff have, as part of their induction, received Emotion Coaching as an approach to supporting children and young people who have experienced adverse childhood experiences.

Operation CASTLE has been trailed since September 2019, where staff have joined the police to engage with the community. This has offered a unique insight into the challenges our children, young people and their families face on a daily basis and the impact that has on relationships and strategies employed in school and discussions around behaviour and safety in the community.

Assessor Evaluation

It is clear that the PRU has done lots of developmental work in the area of mental health and well-being: Staff trained in emotion coaching; Be More Archie; Wide range of



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programmes available such as Psychotherapist, Sand play, Lego therapy and dogs in school. A school Governor confirmed to the assessor that the school focuses on wellbeing citing its collaborative work and a "virtual BBQ" as concrete examples of this.

Staff are placed carefully with students; a relationships matrix is used to assist this process. This careful consideration assists well-being and ensures personal interactions are planned for in a healthy and supportive way.

Outreach work was focused on the primary phase to prevent pupils from reaching a point where they need to enter a PRU. The work is now focused on getting students in KS3 back into mainstream provision and then following that child into the mainstream setting with a wraparound support package. KS3 at Bishopton is a nurture model with a thematic approach. The aim initially is to assess the students and their needs, and indeed, an Educational Psychologist may make an early observation at this point. The plan at all times is to enable children to move back to mainstream provision.

This target has been fully met by the school.

Target 2 - Further develop an Early Intervention Service targeting primary and Early Years settings as a way to promote inclusive practices in schools and prevent exclusion.

School Evaluation

Outreach Worker has been highly effective in establishing a good dialogue with local primary and Early Years settings and has delivered therapeutic interventions. The National Conference we hosted was well attended by primary and Early Years settings.

Bishopton has hosted SCITT students in July 2019 and we will be working with a different cohort again in March 2020. Trainee primary and secondary teachers shadow our staff and gain insight into effective behaviour management strategies, teaching disengaged pupils and inclusive practices.

A SCITT student worked in our primary setting for her final placement (April – June 2019), she left Bishopton with a clear vision of inclusive practices.

Hosted an SMSC Twilight as part of becoming a Beacon School for SMSC. This was well attended by primary and Early Years settings, inclusive practices was the main focus.

Menu of Services has been rolled out to colleagues in all settings.

Assessor Evaluation

The school's evaluation of this target speaks for itself. As one school Governor remarked in a conversation with the assessor, Bishopton deserves praise for *"...not losing sight of this when the landscape shifted somewhat [due to COVID-19] – the school considers this very important."*



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I was also struck with the language used by the Co-Headteachers on the day of the assessment which emphasised the importance of the substance underpinning this target, they stated “We strongly believe these children deserve the best” and “Let’s flip the narrative – you come to a PRU to get a really bright future.”

This target has been fully met by the school.

Target 3 - Develop Parenting Support Programmes to strengthen the work carried out in school to promote pupils’ mental health, attendance, academic outcomes and behaviour.

School Evaluation

We now have an Attendance and Parenting Support Officer who has developed a clear action plan for parental engagement and is currently in the process of building relationships with parents and carers. She has had to prioritise attendance and ensuring the whole school is rigorous in attendance reporting and proactive in early identification and attendance improvement.

Assessor Evaluation

The school Governors confirmed with the assessor that this was part of the vision document and Governors had had an input into producing the document.

Furthermore, the value of parental relationships was plain to see throughout the assessment and parents were keen to emphasise this in their conversations with the assessor:

- “The Headteacher is visible and hands on.”
- “Bishopton listens to worries and concerns.”
- “There were daily phone-calls in lockdown – the communication was constant.”
- “The school has a positive and consistent relationship with my son – consistent in terms of their expectations and in terms of the language they use with him.”
- “This is a great school.”
- “I would recommend the school to others even though it is a PRU.”

This target has been fully met by the school.



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Target 4 - To work tirelessly to break the link between school exclusion and social exclusion and improve the trajectories for excluded children on leaving the PRU and going into Post 16 Provision.

School Evaluation

Since September 2019 a Senior Leader has been working towards a qualification in Careers and Employability Leadership with TeachFirst. This is in line with current statutory guidance which outlines all schools should have a dedicated and suitably qualified Careers Leader. As a result of undertaking the course a school-wide vision and approach has been developed, a strong and stable Careers Programme is established, external partners are identified, careers is becoming embedded into the curriculum and a sustainable CEIAG strategy has been planned and mapped to the Gatsby Benchmarks and the CDI Framework.

A middle leader has been identified and is working towards developing whole school and particularly teaching staff, to engage with pupils around careers, to provide school drop down days and careers events that are part of the school SMSC/Careers Calendar (CASTLE). Embedding careers into the curriculum is also part of their remit and has been written into their Performance Management targets.

A Teaching Assistant who has demonstrated an aptitude and passion for careers guidance has identified some targets in her Performance Management. She will be undertaking a Level 4 qualification in careers information and advice and has begun to support students in establishing aspirations and develop opportunities for pupils to engage with employers, providers and Further Education institutions.

Presented to Children and Young People Select Committee who were undertaking a regional scrutiny of the careers provision. We were identified as a school of best practice and as such have been used an example of how a school is meeting the statutory guidance and Gatsby Benchmarks.

We have further strengthened our offer of Impartial Advice and Guidance on careers by employing an advisor to work with Year 7 to 10 pupils. Our Year 11 pupils receive an IAG service as part of a targeted strategy.

Assessor Evaluation

The school explained exciting developments currently underway in terms of the physical building that houses Bishopton PRU and the educative and pastoral offers that were growing alongside the construction works.

The new building and extensive refurbishment are required to make the facilities more modern and help the PRU exist in a building fit for the purpose of specialist education and pastoral support. Part of this will manifest in new facilities for construction and beauty, Bishopton are really keen to demonstrate relevancy and currency with real labour gaps in the market.



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Alongside this vocational work a strong academic offer remains and the Leadership Team are looking at evolving their pathways for education where each strand has a mix of academic and vocational aspects, for example, Enterprise Pathway, Digital Pathway; Sports Pathway, Business Pathway and so on. The aim in this space is to open up career pathways and an extended set of work experience opportunities. The school encourages its students to ask, "Post 16, where are you going?"

The school's evaluation of this target speaks for itself and dovetails into the second part of the action plan for the third year of Centre of Excellence status.

This target has been fully met by the school.

Possible Areas for Further Development

In addition to the detailed self-evaluation of its own progress towards its targets, the school has produced a thorough action plan showing the developments planned for the 2020-21 academic year. It would be useful to explicitly link these targets to the IQM elements.

The action planned is pragmatic and reflects the reality of the recent lockdown period and the gradual reintroduction of "normal" school life together with all of the post-lockdown restrictions that are necessary. A crucial part of the next steps for Bishopton is the development of high-quality resources linking careers and FE/HE opportunities. Previously the school has hosted National Conferences and twilights for other schools to attend. Sharing good practice and encouraging networking is a key facet of the inclusive setting and I hope that Bishopton can find new and innovative ways to continue to do this, perhaps through conferencing software like MS Teams in these uncertain times.

The assessor agrees with the action plan that has been produced and wishes the school sustained success on its continuing inclusion journey.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Bishopton PRU should continue to participate in the IQM Cluster Programme and should continue to show evidence of IQM processes within their recorded impact log. Bishopton PRU has much to offer schools in the IQM family, especially with regards to supporting mental health and wellbeing. It is particularly noteworthy that many meetings have led to, or contributed to, developments within the school. The school should seek to record these outcomes on the IQM paperwork (Impact of Cluster Meetings) to help inform future Centre of Excellence reviews.

Of the many developments undertaken at the school with regards to inclusive practice, several can trace their legacy back to an IQM cluster meeting or connection:

- Receiving detailed strategies on best practices to improve the emotional well-being of the whole school community following a meeting at The Link School in Sunderland.



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- Effective procedures and technologies for improving communication with parents following a meeting at Easington Colliery Primary School.
- Outdoor programmes of education following a meeting at St. Mary's RC School.



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Overview

The second annual Centre of Excellence review for Bishopton PRU took place against the backdrop of the COVID-19 crisis at a point where young people had been allowed to return to school following the first national lockdown period, but also where new local restrictions had been instigated alongside an expectation that schools would remain open. The review was conducted online through MSTeams meetings.

Bishopton PRU had managed to make so much progress towards its 12-month action plan is highly commendable, and no easy task when one considers the unprecedented disruption to the school year caused by the global pandemic. Bishopton is a PRU providing specialist support and is funded for 65 pupils, they already hold the IQM Centre of Excellence status.

During the original national lockdown imposed as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic, Bishopton rose to the challenges that this presented, epitomising what it means to be a PRU with inclusion at its heart. The response of Bishopton, tailored exclusively to the community it clearly knows so well, was nothing short of inspirational. Work packs were quickly, but carefully and expertly, prepared for every child and these were individual and personalised. There was no space for generic offers as every child at Bishopton requires a specialised and bespoke approach, something that the caring and committed staff team recognised and delivered on. This included novels, resources, worksheets and activities which were physically dropped off to each household by the PRU.

Throughout the national lockdown Bishopton placed daily phone calls to their families and students, delivered food hampers to households and undertook weekly, socially distanced, doorstep visits to maintain a physical and visible interaction with their community of learners. This highly personalised approach allowed Bishopton to generate an intimate picture of what lockdown looked like for their families, thus enabling them to respond accordingly. The workload and emotional impact of this level of work on the staff team at Bishopton cannot be overlooked and the PRU quite rightly deserves huge recognition for the “above and beyond” way in which it supported families, students and indeed the wider community during this most unprecedented of times.

Other initiatives worthy of mention include the continual interaction with local services such as social care, linking up with other schools to collaborate on positive behaviour strategies and accessing specialist facilities such as organisations with animals on site and responding to parent and student feedback throughout in order to tweak and refine the offer made available.

Post-lockdown the work to evolve the remote learning response has remained and the package continues to be developed further. I pads have been purchased through capital funding, the PRU continues to invest in IT and an online package is being worked up.

As the headteacher remarked during the IQM assessment “The pandemic has helped us to become more reflective leaders.” Whilst we can see those sentiments clearly within the evolving home-learning offer, it was evident that the leadership of Bishopton always



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places a high value on pupil, parent and staff voice. It was certainly something that the PRU did prior to lockdown, so everyone was used to having a say and this continued into the lockdown. Surveys were run, including staff surveys, these were anonymous and proved very helpful in terms of being able to check that staff were happy with the leadership response during the original COVID-19 crisis.

Above all, Bishopton's response during the lockdown allowed the PRU to showcase its ability to cater for its own community. That focus was never lost and the community benefitted enormously from such a considerate and committed PRU and associated staff and Leadership Team.

Communication with students and parents has a strong emphasis at Bishopton; a conscious decision to utilise Facebook as a communication tool during lockdown was made in light of the fact that this was a platform known to be frequently accessed by the community. Check-ins with families and students, so obviously linked to the PRU's target around developing mental health and well-being were started during lockdown but continued thereafter, including during the summer holiday when staff would still come into Bishopton to undertake such telephone calls. This drive and commitment on behalf of students and families is front and centre to the Bishopton way of being.

Another shining example of this level of commitment and adaptability can be found in Bishopton's decision to retain their Year 11s on roll beyond July 2020 as a contingency in case colleges could not open due to COVID-19 which would have potentially left students "out of the system." Dedication exemplified and gave further evidence, should it be needed, that Bishopton fully promotes the notion that "learning never stops" – such an important message for young people which helps advocate for high aspirations.

High aspirations are further promoted through the PRU's "success wall" which celebrates the achievements of pupils and staff. This builds the staff as appropriate role models to the young people in the PRU and encourages the celebration of success. Bishopton is also to be congratulated for insisting that its students are afforded the opportunity of school arranged university visits, raising expectations and heightening aspirations is a message lived as much as it is said.

The focus on achievement, expectations and aspirations has given rise to many success stories at Bishopton which are living proof of the positive impact of this inclusive ethos.

One parent told the assessor that she was "heartbroken" when she first realised her child would be best served by a PRU, "Now I wish he could have started at Bishopton sooner. Bishopton treated the placement as a work-in-progress, I was kept fully updated and things were tweaked and plans evolved as we went along. He has now sat his exams and is training with the Marines – all after having been told previous to Bishopton how disengaged he was with education." This example is endemic of the way in which Bishopton responds to its pupils' needs.

Modified timetables, tutor visits to the home, a bespoke set of interventions - all these strategies and more are frequently employed by the PRU to ensure that students are treated as individuals. All of this requires brave leadership and Bishopton has this in



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spades, indeed the high regard in which the leadership of Bishopton is held was a recurring theme in conversations between the assessor and parents.

Another success story which presented during the assessment centred on one of the young people spoken to. Beyond “data” and “facts and figures” which populate so many spreadsheets and tell you many things without ever telling you anything about the human story underpinning the numbers, anecdotal evidence can be so much more powerful. Evidence such as a student wanting to speak to the assessor; a student who presented as well behaved, calm, polite and articulate through that conversation; who cared that his father has been involved in the assessment and had spoken to the assessor too; who was personally and emotionally invested in the school to the extent that they wanted to talk about the skills they had developed through the Castle Outdoor Programme of Education, through life skills such as first aid; who wanted to describe their aspirations for becoming a welder upon leaving Bishopton. The student described a real success story for Bishopton, moving from red to blue on the BRAG rating and epitomising everything that can be achieved through the PRU's steadfast and inclusive approach to education.

The proposed action plan for the forthcoming 12 months links to inspiration and development arising out of the cluster schools programme with further plans to develop parenting support programmes and aspirational work experience opportunities for students as part of its careers in the curriculum offer. The PRU deserves rich praise for its active involvement in the cluster programme as the most inclusive schools are naturally the most collaborative and outward facing. Bishopton is a shining example of this approach.

This was a very enjoyable assessment in a highly inclusive school. One should never judge a book by its cover and the same is true of Bishopton PRU. Whatever preconceptions one has about PRUs should be left at the door, Bishopton is a place of aspiration, success, and individualism. Everyone is special, everyone is valued, everyone is unique and everyone matters.

Bishopton is a school which is always moving forward and is doing so with pace, urgency, purpose and understanding. This can be seen in the new build, the new staffing structure, the myriad of approaches such as C.A.S.T.L.E in the Community, interventions like Lego therapy, dog therapy, and pedagogical aspects like their pathways for education.

Bishopton's work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been phenomenal and placed the focus on the community. The links here are obvious to C.A.S.T.L.E in the Community which enables students to feel proud about their own achievements and social and moral education where the C.A.S.T.L.E values are reinforced through initiatives like the “drop down days.”

In summary, the review has been undertaken successfully. The school clearly demonstrates its ability to respond to initiatives and to build the capacity essential to moving further on the Inclusion journey. The Co-Headteachers are a big presence in the school and though the vision emanates from them, the entire staff team should feel



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proud that their commitment and dedication is so evident and clearly impactful in a positive way on the Bishopton community.

Having discussed the progress made since the last IQM review and the school's plans for the future, I am of the opinion that the school should continue to hold Centre of Excellence status and be reviewed again in 12 months' time. There is an additional expectation that the school will provide an updated action plan of progress against targets to be sent to IQM three weeks before the next review, continue to commit to the IQM Cluster Programme and to show evidence of IQM processes with a recorded impact log and consider application for IQM Flagship Status.

Assessor: Max Kelly

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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