



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: St John's Primary School

School Address: Station Road, St Johns, Isle of Man.

Head/Principal: Tracy Willoughby

IQM Lead: Emma Titley

Assessment Date: 21st June 2022

Assessor: Sarah Linari

Sources of Evidence:

- IQM Self Evaluation Report Document
- The Isle of Man Department of Education, Sport and Culture External Validation of the School Self-Review and Evaluation Report 2019
- School Website
- School Policies
- School inclusion data
- School Development overview
- Pupils' work books
- Learning Walks
- Observation of unstructured times
- Learning Environment audit
- Portfolio of evidence to support the 8 IQM Elements

Meetings Held with:

- Headteacher
- IQM Lead
- Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo)
- Specialist Provision Centre Manager
- Teachers
- Senior Education Support Officers (SESO)
- Education Support Officers (ESO)
- Parents and carers
- Governors
- Pupils



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Overall Evaluation

St John's Primary School is part of the Department of Education, Sport, and Culture (DESC) on the Isle of Man. There are currently 102 pupils on roll. The percentage of children who are entitled to free school meals is currently 26%. 38% of children are identified as having additional education needs (AEN). There is a Specialist Provision Centre (SPC) onsite which provides bespoke education and support for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). St John's Primary School is situated in a semi-rural area. It serves a catchment which is "geographically large but sparsely populated, with a mixture of privately owned and local authority homes, farms and large houses in private grounds" (Validation Report 2019). Therefore, there is a diverse demographic in terms of socio-economic background.

The inclusive provision at St John's Primary School is excellent. The school provides a nurturing environment which develops pupils holistically. Children and families are well-supported, with a bespoke approach to suit individual needs. The Headteacher has created a positive culture amongst the staff, who all support her vision. They describe the Headteacher as a "great boss." There is a collective dedication to the inclusion agenda, encouraged by the Headteacher. The Headteacher explains how "the school's vision encompasses the idea that outstanding opportunities should be on offer for all children in our care. The school recognises itself as an extremely caring place, which takes account of the diverse needs of every child." Having assessed the provision at St John's Primary School against the criteria of the IQM Assessment framework, I endorse the Headteacher's evaluation.

In lessons across the age ranges, there are adaptations and reasonable adjustments made to support all learners, whatever their needs may be. The staff get to know each individual child, what their interests are and how they learn best. Teachers and support staff work effectively together to meet the needs of the learners. They are flexible with their approaches to ensure all children can access the provision.

Parents, carers, and guardians speak positively about the support their children receive. They highlight the "excellent communication" between home and school as a strength. This regular communication encourages a close working partnership between the key stakeholders to effectively support the children. There is very much a close-knit, family feel to the school and how it supports the wider community.

To respond to the ever-growing need to provide support for pupils' mental health and wellbeing (MHWB), the school has recently developed the Willow Room nurture provision and intervention. This purposefully designed space allows children to receive targeted support for their MHWB, which means that they are better regulated to access their learning on a daily basis. The impact of the Nurture Intervention thus far has been significant in terms of the progress made towards pupils' individual targets and overall reduction in the need for pupils to leave lessons to regulate their emotions.



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Leaders understand the relevance of emotional regulation and how it corresponds to behaviour. The Behaviour For Learning approach is based on the development of the six dispositions of learning outlined in the Isle of Man's Curriculum for Learning and Achievement, the six 'Rs.' The six characteristics are: readiness, resilience, relationships (which are positive), remembering skills, resourcefulness, and reflectiveness. These characteristics underpin the curriculum but also the school's values and development of the children as a whole.

The learning environment at St John's is highly inclusive. Built in 2003, the modern building is designed around a central courtyard area. Classrooms are open-plan, light and airy with large, central adjoining corridor spaces. These communal areas are used for small group intervention, targeted teaching, science lessons, music, and art lessons. Walls and ceilings are decorated with pupils' art work and creations. The classrooms themselves have defined areas to provide a varied learning experience. Against one wall in most classrooms, there is tiered block seating which provides a mini performance area or space for the class to sit more informally together to read or for discussion. The Reception classroom boasts a real-life boat. The Teacher and Site Manager have ingeniously adapted a wooden rowing boat to provide a creative seating area where the children can read or role play.

A genuine highlight from the IQM Assessment process was meeting the pupils at St John's Primary School. They are confident, friendly, and welcoming. They clearly enjoy attending school and talk positively about how the teachers "make the learning fun" and the "great relationships" they have with all adults in school. They feel safe, secure, and well cared for.

The SPC staff are highly trained in specialist areas which are specific to the needs of the individual children who access the provision. Training is carefully planned by the SPC Manager to ensure the Education Support Officers (ESOs) are skilled in areas to support the children in their learning or personal development such as the use of Eyegaze technology. St John's Primary School is currently the only schools on the island which has this specialist technology. The SPC is well resourced, with assistive equipment and learning materials. Displays are colourful and engaging to offer a sensory-rich environment.

This is St John's Primary School's third IQM Assessment. It is clear from the process that the school continues to grow from strength to strength in terms of its inclusive provision. All adults within the school are committed to and passionate about the inclusion agenda. Every member of staff who was spoken to during the assessment day talked about their collaborative, team approach which, in turn, positively influences the pupils. Communication amongst staff is strong and children are at the heart of all decisions made. It is clear from the warm welcome given by all staff, pupils, parents, carers, guardians, and governors that St John's Primary School is a happy place to be.

I am of the opinion that St John's Primary School not only fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark but should be recognised as a Centre of



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Excellence for the outstanding commitment to inclusive practice. They are already involved in supporting inclusion across other schools in their Western Cluster on the Isle of Man and are fully aligned to IQM's values. I recommend that the school be awarded Centre of Excellence status and be reviewed again in one year's time with a focus on the progress made towards the Centre of Excellence targets and how they engage with the IQM Cluster Group.

Assessor: Sarah Linari

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. McCann".

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



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Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

The Headteacher and IQM Lead describe the school as “accepting” in that they are “accepting of everybody” regardless of “what barriers to learning they may have, where they are from or what their background is.” The School’s ethos is “open, collaborative and nurturing.” In the IQM Self Evaluation Report (SER) documentation, the Headteacher summarises the inclusion values as “creating a secure, accepting, collaborative and stimulating environment in which everyone is equally valued.”

The 2019 Validation Report highlights that “Leaders have a clear understanding of educational inclusion and are committed to running an inclusive school. Inclusion – seen, for example, in the nurture provision and attempts to involve children from the Unit in the wider activities of the school – can be regarded as a particular strength.”

This academic year, there has been a focus on developing “respect” across all areas of school life. Pupils are encouraged to show “respect” through “respect for each other, respect for the environment (including belongings and property) and respect for [them]selves.” The Headteacher felt that a focus on this value was pertinent on the return to school after closures due to Covid-19 as staff noted that the children were less tolerant of each other following the Covid closures. It is mutual respect which forms the foundation of the positive relationships between staff and pupils. To embed respect, the Rewards System has been linked to this value. Through praise, such as the credit cards and celebration assemblies, all staff (include lunchtime staff) reward pupils for demonstrating respect.

Support for pupils’ mental health and wellbeing is prioritised at St John’s Primary School. The school works with the ‘Isle Listen’ mental health charity who come into school once a half term to work with pupils in Key Stage Two as part of a pilot project. Any individuals who require additional help are supported through the Willow Nurture Provision. The Willow Room has been renovated using money funded by a local charity. Calm colours and mindful designs provide a calming space for those pupils who require additional support throughout the day to regulate or those who attend the intervention sessions. The intervention sessions directly benefit the pupils in terms of helping them to be emotionally ready to learn. Identified pupils from Year One to Year Six access the intervention for one afternoon each week. The Boxall Profile tool is employed to identified pupils’ mental health needs. These profiles inform the pupils’ individual targets, which are monitored and reassessed throughout the intervention programme. There is a station set up for individual pupils to access if they need to self-regulate during lesson time with a breathing triangle diagram and box of sensory toys.

Effective communication between staff ensures that plans are in place to support all children, where needed. At the weekly staff meetings, any cause for concern cases are discussed. There is regular information sharing about individual pupils’ needs to keep all staff updated. Over time, with the regular flow of information



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between staff, they build up a sound knowledge and profile of the children and their backgrounds. The staff know all of the children well.

It is clear that the staff at St John's Primary School work effectively as a team. School improvement is a collective responsibility and staff are encouraged to feed their opinions into school development planning. For example, to complete the documentation relating to the Inclusive School Award framework, staff collaborated at full staff meetings, inviting all to feed in to the process.

Next Steps:

- There are no significant areas to develop within this element.



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Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

Staff feel well-supported by the Senior Leaders. They describe an “open door policy” and feel they can talk to the Headteacher about anything. The Headteacher is described by the staff as being “incredibly approachable and supportive.” One member of staff said that they “cannot fault the Headteacher” and added that she is “the best boss they have ever had” as she is “very flexible” and will “do everything she can to facilitate” requests. The staff feel that they are appreciated and valued. It appears that there has been a shift in culture amongst the staff in recent years under the current Headteacher’s leadership to create a genuine culture of teamwork, with all staff now feeling included.

The Headteacher ensures there are opportunities for staff to develop their careers whilst working at St John’s. She is passionate about “building and developing people, then letting them move on” to impact and improve the lives of children in a wider sense. She is also enthusiastic about providing the best educational experience for her pupils. During the assessment day, she explained that “we want the best for the children, and we will vocalise our opinions,” providing “feedback to the Department” to achieve “better outcomes and support for the children.” The Headteacher ensures staff engage fully in professional development. Staff feel that their professional development is supported through funding and time allocated to allow them to complete qualifications.

A member of the Support Staff Team who joined the school recently commented that “from the moment I came in to St. John's School I felt at home. The staff and students were so welcoming and really made me feel comfortable and part of the school.” Through a previous role, they have visited numerous other schools but feel that St John’s “feels different” as “there is such a positive vibe and energy here from the classrooms to the corridors.” They added “I have never met a Headteacher quite like Mrs Willoughby, she is really welcoming and approachable and is willing to take any class at the drop of a hat” when there have been staff absences. The Headteacher leads by example and role models an inclusive approach. When covering colleague’s lessons “she always adapts her teaching style to fit the needs of the children, she is very engaging and a fantastic Leader.”

School development planning follows the DESC’s centralised pro forma with a focus on curriculum, reading and phonics, behaviour, and other activities. The progress data is analysed by the Department which the Leaders and staff then use to inform priorities and future planning.

Safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff are regularly trained to spot the less obvious signs in children and are attuned to their typical dispositions. This allows them to detect when a child is acting out of character or appears withdrawn. Support, and external agency referrals, if necessary, are implemented swiftly and effectively.

Next Steps:



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- Vision – Refine the school’s development vision and priorities for next academic year (whilst awaiting further direction from the DESC) so that you can share them with staff at the start of the year to provide clarity of direction and align all to the vision.



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Element 3 - Curriculum –Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

In Summer Term 2021, all staff attended an online training day led by Chris Quigley, a Primary Education Specialist. The focus was curriculum design in small schools. From this whole-staff training session, the new curriculum was developed. The skills-based curriculum is “cyclical so children will repeat skills over each milestone through different themes of study,” allowing “skills to be applied in different contexts, embedded and applied in practical situations.”

The teaching of Isle of Man cultural identity is strong. The school’s curriculum includes Manx lessons in which pupils learn about the history and culture of the Isle of Man. There are regular visits to local places of interest to enrich the curriculum such as Tynwald Hill as well as the Manx heritage workshops and the Manx Wildlife sessions.

Next Steps:

- Forest School – look at establishing an inhouse Forest School provision to further enrich the curriculum and provide an additional intervention for developing pupils’ social and emotional skills for those who require it.
- Writing – Develop pupils’ stamina in writing through regular opportunities integrated into the curriculum with engaging stimuli which could be linked to the curriculum theme or class book.
- Phonics – continue to research phonics programmes which would best suit your learners and lead to accelerated progress for all.



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

Having observed the children in all classes across the school during the assessment day, I endorse the Headteacher's evaluation that "the majority of learners are engaged in their lessons and contribute positively across a range of curriculum areas." The children are enthused by the learning and enjoy being at school.

Teachers and support staff work together effectively to support pupils' specific needs. The ESOs are deployed to support in a range of ways including small group and one to one intervention within lessons. There are additional support sessions to aid learners' progress in phonics, reading and speech development. The support provision is regularly reviewed, and adapted, according to need.

The learning environment is purposeful and highly inclusive. Classrooms are open-plan, light and airy with large, central communal areas which are used for small group intervention, targeted teaching, science lessons, music, and art lessons. Spaces within the school are well utilised. There are spare classrooms which have been repurposed to provide areas for targeted interventions to take place. Staff maintain the learning environment well. High quality displays throughout not only inspire the pupils and visitors but support the learning.

Next Steps:

- SPC outdoor area – Redesign the outdoor space in the SPC to provide more sensory stimuli.



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Element 5 - Assessment

As recognised in the 2019 Validation Report, pupils' achievement against prior attainment at Key Stage Two is identified as 'very effective.' Attainment is rated as 'effective' overall. Pupil progress in reading, writing, speaking, and listening is assessed using the DESC's standardised assessments. The school tracks progress at three data points across the year. There is a baseline assessment in Autumn Term, a mid-point check in Spring and end of year evaluations in Summer Term. The Headteacher colour-codes the data to identify key children for targeted intervention sessions. There is flexibility within the timetabling of Support Staff to allow interventions to be implemented in a timely manner.

In lessons, pupil progress is checked through effective questioning and the use of strategies such as talk partners. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning are integrated into lesson planning. A growth mindset is promoted throughout the school with displays in classrooms as well as through assemblies and the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum.

Next Steps:

- Marking and feedback - devise a consistent approach to marking and feedback which can be effectively implemented by all teachers, to the same standard.



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Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

The pupils at St John's Primary School are respectful and caring towards each other. All interactions observed during the assessment day were positive, as was all behaviour in lessons and during unstructured times. I found the children be very welcoming of external visitors, inquisitive and friendly. They were keen to talk to me and tell me all about their lovely school.

During the Pupil Voice meeting, the children talked about their future aspirations which include artist, trapeze artist, famous horse rider, lawyer, car dealership salesperson and a career in performing arts. When asked what they enjoy most at school they talked about "learning new things" and whole-school events such as the "St John's Got Talent" show. When asked what the best aspect of school is, they said the "teachers" as "they are really nice and quite funny." They added that the teachers are "not boring teachers who make us just sit inside" and gave the example that "yesterday we went outside and drew everything around us, it was very fun." Another child stated that the school day "goes really quickly because we are having so much fun."

Next Steps:

- The 6 Rs – explicitly embed the Six Rs across the School.
- Trauma-informed approaches – research trauma-informed approaches as part of the work you are doing to redefine the school's values and Behaviour for Learning Policy. The approaches align to the nurturing ethos and understanding of emotional literacy which are already in place.



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Element 7 - Parents, Carers, Guardians

Parents, carers, and guardians chose the words “friendly,” “family” and “community feel” to best describe the inclusive ethos. They feel that the staff are adaptive and proactive in terms of how they support the children. Communication between home and school is excellent. There is a personal approach, with an investment between all stakeholders to build strong partnerships to support the children. Parents, carers, and guardians like that the school develops the children “in a variety of ways.” The staff identify different approaches to improve pupils’ progress and overall wellbeing.

The Headteacher is visible and accessible to parents, carers, and guardians. During school closures due to Covid-19, the Headteacher phoned the families personally to offer support. Parents, carers, and guardians described the school’s general response to school closures during periods of lockdown as “quick,” with online teaching, links to develop learning, quizzes and daily wellbeing meetings offered.

In addition to the continuous dialogue between home and school about individual children, which occurs organically throughout the day via contact with staff at the start and end of day, phone calls and face-to face appointments, the half termly Newsletters share whole-school news stories as well as informing families of any upcoming events. For the children who access the SPC provision, there are daily home-school dairies completed as well as phone calls home if there is important information to share.

Overall, parents, carers, and guardians are “very happy” with the quality of provision on offer at St John’s Primary School and feel that the school prepares the children well for high school.

Next Steps:

- Workshops – now that schools can invite parents, carers, and guardians into the building again, offer parental workshops with a focus on the approaches taught to support pupils’ mental health and wellbeing as well as emotional regulation to equip parents, carers and guardians with strategies to use at home.



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Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

The IQM Lead recognises the school's links with the local community as a strength. She affirms that "the school is valued as being at the heart of the local village community and a recognised place for community events for children who attend the School, their families and also for children & families who do not attend the School."

The Headteacher is a proactive member of the Western Cluster Group and supports colleagues with inclusion across the different settings. The Headteachers within the network support each other and work collaboratively to improve provision for all children on the island, not just those in their schools.

The school's Youth Room is used by the community during out of school hours. Many of the school's pupils and families access the clubs and activities offered. The school promotes the community activities such as the sports clubs and Manx Symphonia rehearsals, which take place on the school site, through Newsletters and on the Community Notice Board.

St John's Primary School has supported the Hospice Isle of Man charity through designing a dolphin for the Big Splash Wild in Art Trail 2022, which is currently being celebrated across the island. Pupils collaborated on the project to support this local charity.

Next Steps:

- There are no significant areas to develop within this element.