



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



**School Name:** South Bank Primary School  
Poplar Grove, Middlesbrough  
TS6 6SY

**Head/Principal:** Ms T Cooper

**IQM Lead:** Ms C Burgess

**Date of Review:** 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022

**Assessor:** Amy Marshall

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

**Cluster Group:** Trailblazers

**Ambassador:** Sarah Linari

**Date of Next Meeting:** July 2022

**Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus:** TBC

### **Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:**

The school submitted comprehensive and accurate documentation of their own evaluation progress and, during the visit to the school. Targets and an action plan for 2022-2023 were discussed and agreed. A timetable of the day enabled me to review evidence linked to the areas of development. The ethos of the school was evident in all aspects of the visit and the whole school community are committed to the inclusion of all.

### **Meetings with:**

- The Headteacher
- IQM Lead/SENCo
- Phase Leaders
- Support staff
- Pupils
- Parents



### Summary of Targets from 2021-2022

The school's targets from the previous year were based on the school developments focus of behaviour attitudes and personal development

**Target 1: *To develop an outdoor sensory area and outdoor SEMH 'safe haven' to promote good mental health and wellbeing as well as addressing sensory needs.***

Social Emotional and Mental Health is a huge focus within the school. The SENCo and the SEMH Lead work closely together to meet the needs of pupils, who may be struggling to regulate. Within the school the SEMH Team, which includes a variety of staff including a Mental Health Nurse, utilise spaces within school such as a sensory room and a safe haven room to support pupils that may need extra time and space in order to access learning. The Headteacher and Senior Leaders recognise that the pupils in the school embrace outdoor learning and its benefits and therefore wanted to create a sensory area and a safe haven outside, so pupils could access a calming space if they needed it. It will be an area that could be used particularly if a child was in crisis – meaning that they could use the outdoor space, rather than feeling the need to run somewhere unsafe. Staff have been upskilled in how to support pupils with sensory needs and the impact of this is a feeling of being more equipped to support pupils, who may need sensory breaks. Each class has been provided with a sensory box and have spent time in the support base, an enhanced provision funded by the Local Authority, seeing how this can be utilised to support children.

The rationale behind the outdoor area is well thought out and the Senior Leaders feel that it will also be a good space for staff to use. Emotional wellbeing and mental health are high on the agenda for the whole school community and one staff member commented, "You can't have a focus on this for children and not for staff." The impact of ensuring staff feel valued and part of a supportive team, mean that staff talk openly about how much they love coming to work and how lucky they feel to be a part of South Bank Primary School.

Covid has held up the project by approximately six months, however the groundwork in terms of training and staff development is in place, meaning that once the outdoor sensory area is built, it will be utilised effectively.

**Target 2: *To develop all staff skills in managing children with SEN and meeting their needs effectively.***

South Bank has earned a reputation for their ability to successfully support and meet the needs of children with SEND, as well as those with English as an Additional Language. The 25-place support base, which is funded by the Local Authority is utilised well with pupils attending from outside of the catchment area. There is a flexible approach to support with pupils accessing the base and mainstream classes when appropriate. The SENCo aims to encourage pupils to access as much of the mainstream class as possible and is adaptable in her approaches in creating the very best provision for pupils, with the child at the centre of all the decision making.



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The expertise within the base has begun to support and upskill mainstream staff, although this has been delayed due to Covid restrictions. Mainstream staff have also spent time in the base, to observe sensory interventions and personalised approaches being modelled.

Staff interviewed report that the ethos of the school, of supporting one another, ensures that no-one is ever isolated. Expertise is drawn from one another to provide the best outcomes for children within the school. For example, the Senior Leadership Team hold an Intervention and Planning Panel (IAP) once per half term to identify any pupils who may be showing signs of needing additional support. The conversations held at the meetings ensure that discussion and decisions are made swiftly and at the earliest opportunity.

**Target 3: *To develop links between school and parents further in order to ensure that children are supported in a holistic manner.***

Parents and carers cannot speak more highly of the school and a parent survey evidenced that parents feel that school is approachable and that there is an open-door policy. Parents interviewed talked positively about communication and how the SENCo responds really swiftly to any questions or concerns. This demonstrates very strong links with parents. One parent commented that they did not think their child would still be here if it had not been for the support of the SENCo, which is a huge testament to the school.

School has recently begun delivering phonics training to parents so that they can better support their children in learning to read. There has been a focus on engaging dads, uncles and grandads in this, and the school has seen some success with this. Parents and carers report feeling more confident in supporting their children with early reading.

The school invites and encourages involvement from parents and carers and has a strong relationship with families. Consequently, the parent group is led by parents and engagement has been extremely high. The playgroup provided by the school ensures that the links with families start from the very beginning.

Despite huge successes in this area, the school feel there is still more to do, particularly with engaging parents of children accessing the base, who may not be part of the local school community.

### **Agreed Targets for 2022-2023**

**Target 1: *To develop an outdoor sensory area and outdoor SEMH 'safe haven' to promote good mental health and wellbeing as well as addressing sensory needs.***

**Intended Outcome:** The school development plan references that locally 25.5% of 5–16-year-olds have a clinically diagnosed difficulty or disorder which is more than double the percentage nationally. The intended outcome supports a number of the school development targets related to personal development and behaviour and attitudes.



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Actions include further meetings to ensure time scales are met and the mental health nurse involving children in developing ideas for the area.

**Target 2: *To develop all staff skills in managing children with SEN and meeting their needs effectively.***

**Intended Outcome:** The school development plan ensures teaching and learning is focussed on the inclusion of all learners. The targets around teaching and learning include the school's drive to create an ambitious curriculum that gives the tools to all pupils for future learning and employment. Within the leadership and management strand of the plan, there is an intention of continuing a "culture of continuous improvement through sharing of best practice."

Actions include continued access to specialist SEN teaching for all staff and targeted teaching for SEN pupils and on-going training for different areas of SEN such as ASD, speech and language, from providers within school and externally.

**Target 3: *To develop links between school and parents further in order to ensure that children are supported in a holistic manner.***

**Intended Outcome:** Within the school development plan, engaging parents at the earliest opportunity is evident. Family engagement is intended to enhance and support the first steps of a child's learning journey.

Actions include extending training offers for base parents and offer training and support through the school web page, as well as continued engagement opportunities for all parents.

### **The Impact of the Cluster Group**

Covid and the huge impact it has had on staffing within the school have affected the school's ability to attend IQM cluster meetings. During the visit, we discussed that any member of the team could attend, and the school is very keen to take part in all future meetings.



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### Overview

During my visit to South Bank Primary School, it was evident that inclusion sits at the heart of everything they do. The Headteacher and the SENCo talked about their passion for including “everyone” and they described a number of instances in which pupils had been admitted into the school, regardless of the challenges it might pose. They saw any child entering the school community as wanted, embraced and that working together they could always find a way of getting the very best outcomes. The school work as a team to overcome any barriers and change to fit the needs of the child, rather than the child needing to fit the school. Appropriate adaptations are made, whether that is working with families where English is an Additional Language and translation is needed or supporting an anxious new starter by allowing a parent to be within the school building to aid transition. It is this ethos that has resulted in a surge in numbers with the school roll has increasing by 50 children in the last 3 years and attendance improving.

Staff described the school as “warm” and “encompassing.” One new member of staff described how different it felt from other schools and even when they had been a supply member of staff that immediately they felt included and involved. There is a sense that everyone cares about each other and at South Bank Primary School, “You aren’t alone.” Staff work together to support one another, and this was evident during lockdown and the school closures. Phase Leaders made sure that their teams met virtually to check in with one another regularly, in order to prevent the feelings of isolation that closed staff rooms and a lack of social connection could bring.

All stake holders described the school as a unique and special place in which staff go “above and beyond.” A place in which children are accepted as they are and can be themselves. The sense of belonging and a drive to place the child at the centre of every decision, has resulted in no children receiving exclusions of any kind for some time. As a visitor walking around the school, it was clear how much all staff and pupils cared about the school and each other. A parent described the SENCo as someone who was “encouraging but not enforcing” and how this had fostered a sense of belonging and acceptance that she had not felt in other schools. This was a common thread throughout all aspects of the school; the idea that everyone is welcome and accepted as they are.

The Headteacher views the leading of the school as the role of the whole Leadership Team. The team is structured so that Phase Leaders each have a clear responsibility within an area, in addition there are regular meetings in which all are present to discuss and decide next steps. There is a sense of sharing the responsibilities and as result, all the staff are invested in any decisions being made. The school is rightly proud of the many staff they have that are from within the community, and regard them as an asset. They see this as part of their focus on readiness for adulthood, as the pupils see positive role models from within their community. The Headteacher spoke about how, “the children and community will always be here” and part of the South Bank vision is to create something sustainable; giving tools to the community to shape their own future. The leaders in school share their skills beyond their own school, for example the SENCo is mentoring those new to leading SEND from within the Local Authority.



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The school curriculum has been developed with the children at the centre. This means that South Bank provide learning experiences that are practical, with a focus on the outdoors. For example, during the visit, children were consolidating maths' learning outside on the playground. The school thread personal development throughout the curriculum and aim to expand the experiences of the children in their care. There are a high proportion of pupils with SEND and, as a result, learning is designed to meet the needs of all. There is a flexible approach, particularly for pupils who access the base. Pupils spoke about lessons positively and particularly enjoyed lesson such as geography and history. They described teachers as, "kind, helpful and fair." The staff ensure that children are well prepared for their next stage of education and the Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Team work extensively around transition to make sure pupils are as prepared as they can be. Extra curricula activities enrich the curriculum and are designed to particularly develop play and social skills.

Wellbeing is front and centre at South Bank. It is a theme that runs through every aspect of the school community. The SEMH Team provide exceptional support and provision for pupils and their families which is readily available. Parents and carers were vocal in their praise of the school's rapid response to queries, worries and concerns and felt that nothing was ever a problem. Parents and carers trust the school and feel a valued part of the school community. Wellbeing is seen as just as important for staff, and this was evident during interviews and discussions. Supervision is provided for staff, and it has created an ethos in which comments and feedback are valued and acted upon and as a result the school, "is a real family where you can talk to people about anything." There is not a sense of hierarchy due to how staffing is structured, but also because the inclusive value they hold of everyone being important, valued and having a voice. It is therefore not surprising that the staff feel they would not want to work anywhere else, and parents and carers feel the school, "makes such a difference" to the lives of their children. So many parents, carers and staff described the journey particular children had made and the incredible impact South Bank had made on them and their families, that it will be important for the school to think about how they capture some of the steps children make towards the fantastic outcomes.

I would recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence status and is reviewed in 12 months' time. The next review will continue to focus on the actions identified by the school. It will also be important to evaluate the impact of the Inclusion Cluster Meetings, which the school are eager to be involved in.

**Assessor: Amy Marshall**

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

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