



Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

18th March 2015

Mrs Anne Spencer
Head teacher
Batchwood School
Townsend Drive
St Albans
Herts
AL3 5RP

Assessment Date: 11th March 2015

Summary

This IQM report is a reassessment of the school following their initial IQM award in 2011. The school was also inspected by Ofsted in March 2014 and was judged to be “Outstanding” in all areas.

The IQM Self Evaluation Report is most comprehensive and accurate. I was able to verify the information during my visit to the school using the documentation provided and through discussions with teaching staff, senior leaders, governors, mentors, parents and students. The meticulous attention given to accurate assessment of students and the relentless tracking, reporting and monitoring systems ensures that all staff know the students very well and are able to provide individualised learning opportunities which engage, motivate and ensure pupils achieve their potential.

The school is very welcoming and staff and students are well used to visitors in the building. Students’ interactions with me and their general behaviour during my visit was excellent. There is a very strong sense of belonging within the school environment. Members of both teaching and support staff, who incidentally, are difficult to tell apart, relate well to all students beginning with a highly structured meet and greet first thing in the morning, through to both formal and informal conversations around the building throughout the day.

The structured beginning to the day allows staff to meet and assess students upon arrival and also ensures they are organised, equipped for the day ahead and, for some who have travelled a distance by taxi, are in a good frame of mind for school.

“The initial focus when students join the school is to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem and the staff are extremely skilled in finding the best ways for students to learn by building on their strengths and interests. Staff have high expectations that progress will be rapid because students quickly become engaged and effective learners.” Ofsted 2014.

All teaching and learning environments in the school are vibrant and motivating. Displays are up to date, informative and celebrate achievement and success. The senior leadership team has a clear focus on providing an educational experience which brings out the very best

in all the students, many of whom have had very unsuccessful times in mainstream schools. Constantly aiming to set the “attainment bar” higher means the school is outstanding at self-assessment, identifying problems and quickly developing and embedding solutions.

There are clearly defined career pathways for members of staff, all of whom are encouraged to access identified professional development opportunities. SLT look to delegate responsibility where appropriate, thus growing and developing the whole staff group.

Governors are experienced and proactive. They are supportive and take an active involvement in the life of the school and play an important role in how the school evaluates its practice.

The school is highly regarded by parents and carers, who speak warmly of how the school has developed their children. One parent, on the day of my visit, told me that he was despairing of what the future held for his son, until he came to Batchwood. He says that the school has “taken away my anxieties and has also given my son a future.”

All the staff I met during my visit have a clear understanding of the inclusion agenda and have been included throughout the IQM process. The staff work tirelessly to provide an exciting and engaging environment for all students, with many and varied opportunities to pursue specialist academic and vocational studies, both on and off site.

Context of the School and Sources of Data

There are currently 69 students on roll, many of whom have already attended more than 3 other schools. The school provides educational opportunities for secondary aged students with social, behavioural and emotional difficulties. Most students have additional needs including autism, speech and language difficulties and moderate learning difficulties.

Further context descriptions are accurately noted in the IQM Self Evaluation Report.

The school works very hard to provide an engaging curriculum for all students and has developed, as well as excellent classroom facilities, The Forest School area, Specialist music studio live instrument and voice recording facilities. Outstanding specialist teaching areas include Design Technology, Art, Ceramics, gymnasium and an outside ball park.

The IQM Coordinator for the school produced a very comprehensive programme for my assessment visit which included meetings with:-

- Head Teacher.
- Deputy Head.
- Teaching and Teaching Assistant support staff.
- Pupils.
- Parents and Mentors.
- Members of the School Council.
- Governors including governor with responsibility for SEND and inclusion.

I also had lunch with students in the dining room.

I had access to all areas of the school and was able to observe several lessons and talk to staff and students. I was also provided with documentary evidence relating to all elements of the IQM Self Evaluation Report. This included general school information, parent questionnaires and school policy documents.

I am of the opinion that the Batchwood School fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark and has set clearly defined achievement targets for the next school year.

I also recommend that the school be awarded Centre of Excellence status subject to the inclusion within its plans of the appropriate areas for development and the completion of the Centre of Excellence documentation. If the school chooses to pursue this status and it were to be awarded the school would be subject to annual review from this point forwards.

Assessor: Dave Stott

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:



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