



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School Name: Five Acre Wood School
Broughton Lane
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 9QF

Head/Principal: Peggy Murphy

IQM Lead: Karen Robinson-Jones

Date of Review: 25th November 2020

Assessor: Ralph Silverman

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group - Four Seasons

Ambassador - Pauline Roberts

Date of Next Meeting - TBA

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: TBA

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

Discussions with:

- Principal
- AHT Lead - Parents and Engagement Project
- AHT Lead - Inclusion
- Parent and staff Governors
- 3 AHTs
- Nursery Manager
- The SENCo from Palace Wood Primary School
- Deputy Headteacher - Grow 19
- 2 young adults
- 2 parents



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- Deputy Head - Leaf Teaching School Lead
- ITT & NQT Lead Teacher
- 3 Teachers from TEAM
- Curriculum Lead Teacher
- 2 Senior Teaching Assistants
- 7 Learning Approach Leads

Additional Activities

- An examination of the Self-Evaluation Report
- 'Going the Extra Mile for Families' Document
- Tour of the school
- Nathan Grisdale YouTube clip – Don't Give Up.

Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

'Increasing inclusion through fostering learner's active engagement at school.'

- **LPPA successfully renewed in November 2019.**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this is postponed to December 2020.

- **Review and refresh the current newsletter strategy.**

Newsletters have been reviewed to include more input from individual classes and these are uploaded to the school's website. The Principal puts out a newsletter termly. Learning Approach and Therapy newsletters are produced 3 times a year. Five Acre Wood and Palace Wood have put together a weekly newsletter to ensure that information specific to the classes at the satellite has its own outlet. Five Acre Wood and Grow 19 also produce their own newsletter and have regular updates via their twitter feed. Five Acre Wood's Facebook page is a regular source of information and further information is sent out via Parentmail. In addition to this each class has its own Microsoft Teams page which was invaluable over lockdown to ensure parents were receiving regular information.

- **To have raised the profiles of existing opportunities and increased the range of opportunities by presenting them within one 'framework' and creating 8 clear roles for parents to take up.**

Role 1 - Class Representatives



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Role 2 - Parent Mentors

Role 3 - Parents Fundraisers

Role 4 - Mystery Visitors

Role 5 - Research Parents

Role 6 - Rights Respecting Parents

Role 7 - Parents as Leaders and Influencers

Role 8 - The Expert Parent

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the way that parents have been supported to be part of the learning community at Five Acre Wood School. It became clear at the beginning of the lockdown that online communication and learning was going to have to be developed as the key method of communication between school and home. The school responded quickly by adapting its engagement strategy from being face to face to online. Support was built around 4 key themes (outlined below).

Keep Safe:

The family support workers called Team have been supporting families in a variety of ways including:

- Running meetings with other professionals including, looked after children.
- Supporting with benefit applications.
- Referrals to early help etc.
- Support for challenging behaviour at home.
- Emotional support.
- Mental health - lots of signposts to services and practical support for families.
- Supporting house moves. Charities for a vulnerable family provided clothing for 5 boys who needed to make an emergency house move. Liaised with Lions to get money to buy new clothes.
- Distributing free school meals vouchers.
- Example of a family isolated through language and SEN. A high level of liaison with the class teacher to locate and access services. The family were unable to leave their home to get hold of regular medication. They were referred to Kent Together for deliveries (shopping, nappies, and medication). The team worked together to put them in touch with local mosques.



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- Financial reasons. Hardship grants were applied for totalling over £7000.
- Pamper Days – children from Snodlands who are trained in Health and Beauty.

Keep Healthy:

- Mental health advice and ideas.
- Virtual Annual Reviews of EHC plans.
- Virtual therapy sessions.
- Five Acre Wood accessed food support for families in need from Morrison's in conjunction with the primary school that two satellite classes are based in. There were about 65 bags a week going out to Five Acre Wood families.

Keep Busy:

- Post work for home learning.
- Ideas for online learning opportunities.
- Ideas for play.

Keep Connected:

Weekly communication with all parents was originally undertaken via phone for most parents and email for a few. A few classes in the Formal and Early Years Learning Approaches then started to investigate the use of Microsoft Teams for individual classes. This was soon rolled out to all classes and the majority of parents were able to access the sites. Parents who found this difficult continued to be supported via phone calls and emails and work was also posted home if required.

- Parents sharing what they were doing with their children.
- Social tool for parents to chat with each other both on the main page and via the Microsoft Teams chat facility.
- Pre-recorded videos of staff.
- Class challenges, for example, the toilet roll challenge.
- Live virtual lessons including P.E and French.
- Live virtual online social events, for example, class chats and discos.
- Microsoft Teams chat used to keep in contact with parents and offer bespoke support and learning ideas.



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- Microsoft Teams class sites were used in a variety of ways such as transitions. In July sites were set up for pupils and parents new to school and those who had children moving to a new site. The sites included virtual tours of the sites, introductions to key staff members and Parent Ambassadors who discussed their experience and were available to interact with parents. New class sites were set up and 'Meet the Teacher' events were held online for parents and children where appropriate to get to know their child's new class.
- In September 2020, Class Team Pages were created to interact with other parents who use the chat facility. Initially this was in lieu of Home-School contact books.

Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

'Increasing inclusion through fostering learner's active engagement at school.'

Outline of the Project - This is a knowledge exchange partnership between Five Acre Wood School and the Centre for Inclusive Education at the University of London.

Project Aims:

1. To build a network of schools who are interested in using evidence-based approaches to increase learner's engagement in their schools.
 2. For the network of schools to develop a research informed, school development framework and toolkit in collaboration with the Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE). CIE are based at the Institute of Education at University College London.
 3. For the network of schools to work in collaboration with each other, CIE and Five Acre Wood School between January 2021 and July 2021 to implement their first action research project designed to increase learner engagement.
 4. For the network of schools to work in collaboration with each other and Five Acre Wood School between September 2021 and July 2022 to implement a second action research project designed to increase learner engagement.
- Project Set Up - Agree the costings, sign the contract and plan the first meeting.
 - Literature Review - Agree key areas for review. Conduct Literature review and quality assure it. Send the draft to Five Acre Wood School for comment and finalise literature review.
 - Identify Domains - Meeting to discuss core CIE domains. Support staff to set up focus groups with stakeholders. Run focus groups and identify agreed subject specific domains.
 - Developing the audit - Meeting to discuss core domains audit tool. Focus groups to co-produce audit outputs. Draft Knowledge Exchange audit. Questions and



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Answers from UCL Team and amendments to be sent back and audit finalised for pilot.

- Writing the handbook - Section on Knowledge Exchange and change management theory. Section on active engagement and tools. Draft collated. Quality Assurance from UCL Team and amendments sent back and handbook finalised for pilot.
- Consultancy - Set up a meeting with trainers for the first week of December. Session on change management theory (online). Session on action plans (online). Session on Knowledge Exchange facilitation (online).
- Session on action plans (online) based on 15 school action plans - Support for schools to implement action plans.
- UCL support for facilitator 2 days for first cohort (November and May).

Each school has a team of three who attend the whole project. Trained to interpret the research; how can school use the development materials? How can change be facilitated? How to measure the impact? Mentors work online with school teams to carry out a review and reflection, co-design an action research plan and share the evaluation of the school's project.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

As Five Acre Wood is a unique special school it may not receive as much as it shares at cluster meetings, but it is pleased to share its good practice with other colleagues.

On the 12th March 2020, the staff were not able to go to the Aerodrome Primary School but were able to share the language development overview with the Therapy Team with a view to sharing something similar at Five Acre Wood School.

On the 20th October 2020, an online meeting took place to share experiences with lockdown and how others were supporting children and staff with their mental wellbeing.



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Overview

Five Acre Wood is a special school in Maidstone, Kent. It has 618 children and young people with profound, severe and complex learning difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorder aged between the ages of 2 and 19 all with an EHCP. There are 350 staff. There are two satellite sites; one at Palace Wood Primary School where there are two classes; the other at Snodland where there are six classes for secondary aged children. Grow 19 is a college for young adults aged between 19 and 25 based at the East Malling Community Centre. Ofsted rated Five Acre Wood as 'Outstanding' in March 2019. It is a very well-resourced school that is able to serve the needs of all of its pupils.

The Principal said, "We ensure every child receives what they need. It's not about equality but equity." Ofsted said that the "Inspirational leadership has created a strong community of continuing excellence." The Principal is passionate about the school, she said that her most important role is, "Being there". She has time to listen to everybody and trusts her staff who feel empowered. She is a humble person who is a fierce advocate for all of her pupils.

There are high aspirations for the pupils who thrive and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Once the children have been assessed they are taught using the school's learning approaches system; structured, sensory, practical, formal, functional and early years. The curriculum is grounded on their needs.

This school invests a lot in its staff, as they do not offer 24-hour care they work very hard to form strong relationships with the parents. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic has meant that meetings are now virtual and the parent partnership has become easier and stronger. Many parents use Microsoft Teams to communicate with the school. They have established a 'TEAM' initiative which focuses on building upon the learning achievements made at school and extending them into the home environment. TEAM consists of four members of staff whose aim is to foster and maintain good relationships between home and school. It enables and empowers parents and carers to support their child's learning. It also ensures consistency of approach between home and school where both parties can speak freely within a non-judgemental, secure environment.

Recruitment is taken very seriously at Five Acre Wood School, some of the staff have come through the LEAF Teaching School (Leading Education and Achievement for All). NQTs are carefully selected at Five Acre Wood School. The school looks for people who are resilient, robust, and embrace the school's values. They want to know how the candidate deals with stress as working here can be challenging. All staff are offered 7 free sessions of counselling and have access to the mental wellbeing 'Unmind' app. The Principal of Five Acre Wood is a National Leader of Education and works closely with mainstream schools to develop SEN provision for local pupils. LEAF offers bespoke training to schools and staff, how to engage children with their learning. It is having an impact as teachers want more and usually return. It is recognised throughout Kent as offering first class training. It will run a national conference in the summer 2021 with speakers from across the UK.

The school uses the SCERTS model (Social-Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support) to address the core challenges faced by children with ASD and



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related disabilities and their families. Five Acre Wood School will be organising a conference in March 2021 with delegates from across the UK.

Grow 19 gives young adults the opportunity to work in various fields from construction to horticulture, they learn life skills which will help them navigate their way in society. Although it is separately funded, parents see that there is a route through the education system and their children may have an opportunity to lead an independent life. When some children leave Five Acre Wood School at the age of 19, they may go into assisted or supported places, whilst some may live alone. Many parents feel very reassured seeing this as when their children entered Five Acre Wood School, they may have seen no future.

Parents are often overwhelmed when they first see Five Acre Wood School, their search for a school to provide for their child's needs has ended. As the school looks at the whole child and family, the parents quickly learn that this school will meet the needs of their child. Parents were so pleased to receive the calls, texts and emails through the lockdown, stating that "TEAMS was always there for us." Parents know that the staff are non-judgemental, offer support and listen to them, stating "The school gets it." Through parent workshops and courses, they know that they are not alone which is something that is so important for parents of children with complex needs. One parent said that their child cried at the beginning of the lockdown as they could not go to school. Five Acre Wood School sent out 'Social Stories' during this time to explain what was happening. The parents miss not having the opportunity to come into school. They miss the sports days, Woodstock, music and dancing, X Factor, pamper days, cake sales, the Easter and Christmas fayres. They are so proud of the fact that their child attends this school. Those parents who deliver their child in the morning see how happy the children are being welcomed by the smiling staff.

There is a breadth of experience on the Governing Body, most either have an education or other professional background. They are well trained and value their staff. Everybody has a responsibility for one or more areas of school life. Besides being supportive of the inclusive ethos they take their responsibilities seriously; their decisions are based on what is best for the child. They hold the school to account and ensure there are sensible checks and balances.

The school has close links with many local agencies; visual impaired specialist teachers; multi-sensory impaired teachers; hearing impaired teachers; the educational psychology service; NHS occupational health practitioners; speech and language staff; counsellors; art and music therapists; CAMHS; Early Help and several others. The Specialist Teaching and Language Service refer young children to the Nursery. Multi-agency meetings work with parents to support transition from PVI's and home into Five Acre Wood School. The liaison with parents is bespoke and thoughtfully planned. The SENCO at Palace Wood, together with the Local Authority are consulted when children attend this satellite provision. Children who attend here wear the Palace Wood uniform but are still Five Acre Wood pupils. Despite the fact that they mostly have an ASD diagnosis they are able to handle their dual identity well. 'If Palace Wood was not so inclusive, it would not work.' The two schools work closely together to ensure all children get the best of both worlds.



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Five Acre Wood School works closely with its local community and is highly respected. Young adults from Grow 19 work, undertaking various projects. Construction and Horticulture learners have started working to develop a training garden on the site of four former community allotments. The Catering and Hospitality learners' practical work takes place in a community café, offering a lunch service, twice a week, for their peers, staff and visitors. They do work experience across the area; in the cleansing and parks departments of the local council; the Royal British Legion Village, working with their maintenance team, their factory and their café and the YMCA café.

The principal of Five Acre Wood School has created a team of leaders who all share her vision 'to nurture and maximise the potential of each and every individual and celebrate their achievements.' Everybody who contributed to this review agree that Five Acre Wood School is a very special place. All of them are proud to be part of this community.

Although this has been a difficult year for Five Acre Wood School, I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award with Flagship School status. The school has submitted an Agreement to Participate in the Flagship programme committing it to annual reviews for the next 3 years and attendance at termly IQM Cluster meetings with other IQM Centres of Excellence and Flagship Schools. The school will be reviewed again in 12 months' time.

Assessor: Ralph Silverman

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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