



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



**School Name:** Holy Cross Catholic Primary School  
Gautby Road  
Bidston  
Merseyside  
CH41 7DU

**Head/Principal:** Clare Higgins

**IQM Lead:** Paula Brás

**Date of Review:** 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020

**Assessor:** Steve Gill

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

Cluster Group: TEAM NW

Ambassador: Steve Gill

Date of Next Meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: Engagement and Online Learning

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

This review was conducted remotely using TEAMS. Prior to the day, documentary evidence related to inclusion and the schools Flagship status was reviewed, along with electronic documents prior to and during the review.

The school submitted accurate documentation of their evaluation of progress and during the online review the rationale for, steps in and expected outcomes for their Flagship Project for 2020-21 were discussed and agreed.

### **Discussions during the review with members of the school community included the following:**

- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher, SENDCO & IQM Lead
- Assistant Headteacher & Year 6 Teacher
- Teachers
- Teaching Assistant



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- Parent & Parent Governor
- Pupils

### Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The School's project focus in 2019-20 was *'Using Augmented Reality to engage pupils in Literacy, particularly pupils with ADHD'*. The schools Inclusion Lead at the time attended an IQM Cluster Meeting where Edge Hill University had been invited to present and a discussion took place about a research project, being undertaken by the University.

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School were asked to participate in the research project to look at how innovative technology can enable children with ADHD to make greater outcomes, as outlined in the title above. As the school have a number of pupils with ADHD and could see the wider benefits across the school they agreed to participate. Unfortunately, only the initial exploratory meeting was held before the current pandemic forced schools to close and the IQM Lead left to take up a new post soon after. The school has been subsequently informed that the project would not be going ahead, as it requires face to face meetings with staff and children identified to participate. The school was invited to participate in an exciting project, 'Cradle to Career' that will bring together the community, families, education sector and local organisations and services in a place-based, collective impact approach to improving outcomes for children and young people in North Birkenhead. Delivered through an action research project involving education providers serving North Birkenhead's children and young people from Early Years to Secondary School, building capacity within schools and Early Years Centres. To use robust measures to understand child development and well-being, before working to design solutions using the evidence base of effective interventions and then delivering effective interventions that will benefit all pupils at Holy Cross, but in particular their most disadvantaged and the community in which they belong.

### Agreed Actions for the Next Flagship Project

*'To participate in a new initiative - Cradle to Career transforming opportunities for young people in North Birkenhead'*.

The vision of *'Cradle to Career'* is that every child in North Birkenhead thrives from Cradle to Career. The overall aim is to become a community that works together to give every child and young person the abilities and well-being that will enable them to succeed. The Cradle to Career Education Working Group aims to bring together five primary schools, two secondary schools and two Early Years facilities serving the North Birkenhead community in a collective impact approach. This working group will identify local priorities to address and adopt a collective impact approach to identifying and meeting these needs, enabling education providers to improve outcomes for their most vulnerable learners.

Holy Cross will work with the group to identify local barriers to pupils' engagement and attainment in education and engage senior school project leads in research and evidence-based practice, following a research cycle of Identify, Design, Deliver.



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The group will reflect on and support the individual school leads to implement effective interventions and cascade learning around effective identification/intervention in their education settings to improve outcomes, enable them to feedback learning and impact into local and national forums and contribute to improving the local system of support for children and young people. This is a three-year project with data being collated and analysed regularly in order to measure the effectiveness and make any adaptations that need to be made.

### **The following steps will be actioned over the next twelve months:**

Complete the letter of commitment and the online forms, along with a short analysis of the school which will identify the key areas to be their focus. This should lead to improved outcomes in EYFS in Communication and Language, as well as improved outcomes in Reading across the school.

Agree the outline and specific outcomes of the project through virtual meetings to discuss what the school focus is going to be. The initial meeting where the data was analysed decided that the focus would be on Communication and Language and Reading. As a result, in-depth GL assessments will be carried out in reading and CLL. This will give the school a baseline from which they can measure progress and impact. Carry out the relevant assessments, train the relevant staff on the assessment tool which they will be using in order to assess the children before carrying the assessments out.

Shares the key measures and data with other project schools as part of a shared measurement framework through virtual meetings. The data will then be used to inform the next steps in the project for each school and collectively which will give them clear next steps.

### **Expected Outcomes:**

By the end of the year children in the Early Years will have improved communication and language skills due to the school's participation in the project. There should also have been a positive impact on their reading and writing skills.

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

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School has been a member of TEAM NW since its inception in March 2018, due to circumstances they have not been able to attend all meetings. However, they have recently attended two out of the last three meetings including the virtual meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and will present to the rest of the cluster on how they are developing Online Learning at the next online meeting in February 2021 .



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### Overview

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average primary school with 151 pupils on roll, situated in Bidston, North of Birkenhead on the Wirral Peninsula. The School is situated in an area of high social disadvantage with many of the pupils and their families facing a range of issues and needing a great deal of support. It is a small, friendly and vibrant primary school, where their mission is to, *'create opportunities which enable each person to recognise a sense of their own worth and that of others'*. A superbly inclusive statement that underpins everything that happens in the school and is enacted through their Catholic ethos and exemplified in the following statement, *'Loving and learning together in faith.'* What stands out very clearly from this online review and the evidence of previous in-school reviews is the pride all staff feel in the way that they engage and work with their peers and the children and their families to meet their needs, often going above and beyond what is expected of them. They achieve this in partnership with families and carers, providing excellent levels of advice and support, evidenced by the staff and parent governor I spoke to and is seen as an absolute imperative to ensure that all children make rapid progress and are successful in school and beyond. There is very much a family feel within the school, where everyone understands their particular role but where everyone is approachable and work in collaboration to achieve successful outcomes. Support of each other and collaboration are key to everything that happens at the school as is liaising with external partners and agencies to ensure all aspects of well-being for their pupil's lives are met. The school prides itself on superb pastoral care, actively promoting equality and diversity and is therefore an extremely welcoming, inclusive and caring school. Everyone at the school is fully committed to maximising the achievement of every child no matter their starting point. The school and their community should be justifiably proud of their success in this respect, where no-one is left out or behind.

In terms of inclusion, Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is an outstanding school in every sense of the word. A setting where the commitment to superb care, nurture and support are at the very core of its inclusive approach. It is a school that is in a constant state of review evolving its educational and inclusive practices for the benefit of everyone in the school community at an increasingly rapid pace. Children enjoy participating in school as it takes place in a happy, friendly, stimulating and vibrant learning environment that focusses on helping everyone to develop their potential, whatever that might be and helping to ensure they will become positive members of their community and modern society. The school's actions to care for its pupils continues to be superb, supported by the evidence provided by the school, from discussions during this online review and from the evidence of previous reviews. Everyone involved buys into their superb inclusive ethos and works extremely hard to ensure no one is left out or behind. Inclusion occurs naturally and is ingrained in every aspect of the school due entirely to the efforts of the staff. This is a fact I can attest to from the evidence of this review, where everyone involved is committed to the inclusion of all whatever it takes and no matter the difficulty.

Discussions with key members of staff and a parent Governor during the review was extremely useful in confirming that the school continues to successfully address all elements of the IQM Award, supported by documentary evidence both prior to and during the review to enhance and underpin discussions including evidence from their



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website and documents provided by the school. Staff and pupils actively engaged in meetings to discuss inclusion within the school and to talk about successes and future developments. There were also a number of discussions about the Flagship Project for 2020-23. The meetings with staff and the parent governor demonstrated their professionalism, enthusiasm, inclusivity and passion for teaching and education shown by the way that they educate, care about and nurture *their* pupils. It is clear from these conversations that everyone involved with the school is highly invested in providing the best possible experience for their pupils and this has an enormously positive effect on their peers and their pupils and is something, they should be proud of.

The initial discussion with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher set the scene for the review and looked at changes in the school's structure and the addition of a new Assistant Headteacher, who is leading the development of online and home learning and the roll out across the school of Google Classroom. We discussed how the school has moved forward since the last review in terms of inclusion, how they had successfully operating during lockdown ensuring every pupil/family had access to technology to engage in online learning supported by laptops supplied by a local secondary school and had delivered home learning packs to families on a fortnightly basis prior to this. Office staff had conducted an audit of families to see who had access to technology to ensure they could target support to the right place. While also supporting not only their pupils but their families and the community. It was very clear, that pupils and their families have been and continue to be a priority for the staff, having worked hard to ensure everything that could be done both during lockdown and on the wider re-opening was in place to ensure the safety of all pupils and staff. It is clear that everyone is working hard to eradicate any gaps in learning that are apparent and are working hard to ensure that pupils are making rapid and accelerated progress. In fact, there is a very apparent determination to ensure pupils are supported, whatever it takes and they continue to be very proud of the lengths they have gone to and will go to ensure the pupils in their care are making up for lost time in a safe and appropriate manner supporting the health and wellbeing of all. A fantastic achievement that says a lot about the calibre of staff at the school and their naturally inclusive nature. The staff should be congratulated for their efforts in this regard.

This was followed by a number of meetings and discussions with staff and a parent Governor who was also employed by the school with a key focus on their roles, inclusion and support within the school. Along with plans for the future ensuring that all pupils, families and staff are nurtured and cared for in the current pandemic and also the way that they have supported each other and worked with external partners. Such as the following: The school has engaged with The Thumbs Up Education Programme for a number of years. The charity has worked with different years and groups during this time supporting the pupils in developing healthy mental and emotional wellbeing by using CBT and confidence building techniques including positive thinking, confidence building, issues of self-esteem etc. However, as a result of the pandemic they have not been able to work in the school but have continued to offer support through online sessions as part of the school's recovery curriculum. The school identified two cohorts of children in Year 5 and 6 who would benefit from working with Thumbs Up virtually and they participate in a weekly session online supporting their emotional health and wellbeing. A fantastic programme that has adapted to meet need and it



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would be enlightening to see it in action and to discuss its success at the next review point.

The school has responded to demand since the school re-opened by expanding their nursery provision to include an afternoon nursery, supporting local families returning to work or education. To ensure pupils attended school and on time, a number of children were identified on the re-opening who might have difficulty in attending or being punctual, so two walking buses routes were created with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher in high vis jackets collecting 12 children each and walking with them to school for two weeks. Thereby ensuring they arrived in a timely manner and were able to access learning with their peers and rebuilt the routine of attending school that they might otherwise not have.

The school has begun to develop a relationship with Engage & Change an Alternative Provision, who offer both educational and community-based courses and sessions aimed at developing self-esteem, confidence, raising attendance, as well as helping break down barriers. Having identified that Years 3, 4 and 5 had not been in school since March and not had contact with friends, staff or peers and potentially wouldn't be able to do so until September. The school are therefore determined to do what they could to remedy this and ensure that they would have access to school and peers prior returning full time, with Summer Club starting in July when school had just closed. Engage & Change were able to provide a Series of Summer Clubs for each group where they supported by school staff were able to access enjoyable and educational activities. With skilled staff pupils in each year group attended for a week and participated in a series of activities each day learning to cook their own lunches with a chef, participating in sporting and other activities each day on site. The pupils spoken to during the review who had been involved in the Summer Club really enjoyed the experience and felt it had helped them to re-engage with school ready for September. Summer Club was so successful that the school is exploring ways to fundraise for next summer, so they can offer it for all and expand it so that if possible offsite visits can be arranged to explore the what the local community has to offer. It will be interesting to see how Summer Club evolves and how the school's relationship with Engage & Change develops.

It was a privilege to participate in conversations with such passionate, dedicated and enthusiastic staff, who are fully supported to achieve success, delivering outstanding teaching in an inclusive school for which they should be rightly commended. They are rightly proud of what they have achieved since March in identifying need and providing appropriate support given the challenges that they, children and families have faced. They were clear that from this difficult and chaotic time that better parental relationships and engagement has evolved and they are very proud to work in such an inclusive and supportive school. This was borne out by the conversation with a number of pupils who actively engaged in the conversations about their school and were keen to point out how inclusive the school are and how they were included so successfully in the life of the school. They were a credit to themselves, their families and the school.

The conversation with the Parent Governor was extremely useful in confirming that the Holy Cross continues to address all elements of the IQM Award and she was very knowledgeable about the school and felt it is an extremely inclusive place all.



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It was a pleasure to revisit Holy Cross Catholic Primary School again to conduct their Flagship review, albeit this time through the vehicle of an online review. The review underlined their superb inclusive ethos, care, nurture and support that are at the heart of their approach to teaching, learning and supporting the pupils and families in their care and was talked about and discussed openly and implicitly with everyone during the day. This is a school that is constantly and consistently looking at ways to develop for the benefit of its learning community with a mutual respect and care that is evident across the staff body and a fantastic rapport between the staff, and between the staff and the pupils. Everyone involved with the school should be extremely proud of what they achieve with their pupils and the emphasis placed on ensuring everyone is nurtured and included.

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 Flagship School status and be reviewed again in 12 months' time. The school continues to move from strength to strength in terms of its superb inclusive practice.

The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Flagship status.

**Assessor: Steve Gill**

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

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