Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award

School Name	Oakwood Junior School Holbrook Road Alvaston Derby DE24 0DD
Head/Principal	Mrs Atwal
IQM Lead	Mrs Fray
Date of Review	7th May 2026
Assessor	Mr Richard Kitching

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group	Inclusion Fusion
Ambassador	Ms Alison Merrills
Next Meeting	18th June 2026

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Spring 2025	13th February 2025	No – Apologies sent
Summer 2025	18th June 2025	No
Autumn 2025	6th November 2025	Yes
Spring 2026	25th February 2026	Yes

Evidence

This was Oakwood Junior School's third annual Centre of Excellence Review. A wide range of evidence was analysed as part of the review process. This included the following:

- Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) Centre of Excellence Review documentation
- School website
- Odyssey Collaborative Trust website
- Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) Report: February 2024
- A Learning Walk throughout the school carried out jointly with the IQM Lead/ Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)
- Observation of pupils playing at lunch time
- Portfolio of pupils' work from across the school
- Intervention Records and Assessment Tracking information
- School Improvement Plan
- School Self Evaluation Form

Meetings were held with:

- Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher/SENCo
- Governor Representative
- Teachers
- Teaching Assistants
- Pupils
- Parents and Carers

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Evaluation of Targets for last 12 Months

Target 1: To increase the engagement of the school community through targeted support for inclusion, SEND, Well-being and health

Since the last review, leaders at Oakwood Junior School have successfully implemented a wide range of initiatives that have further enhanced the inclusive provision and support for stakeholders throughout the school community. During the review day it was clear that these initiatives have had a particularly positive impact on parents and carers within the community as well as pupils. These initiatives include the regular 'reading mornings' that are now in place for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and their parents and carers. These sessions take place every Monday morning and have proven to be extremely popular from the outset. It is so highly attended that additional space outside of the classrooms is required to accommodate the number of parents and carers that attend. This initiative has helped to promote a love of reading as well as engaging parents and carers with school life.

Another popular initiative has been the introduction of 'tea and toast' morning; an informal opportunity for parents and carers in Year 3 to visit school and enjoy breakfast with the children whilst also speaking to staff. Initiatives such as this are a vital part of the school's successful work in building and sustaining positive and trusting relationships with the families they serve. The parents and carers I spoke to during the review all greatly appreciated these opportunities to be part of their child's school day.

School leaders play an important role in providing support and direction to families for wider support services. Recently, a Community Fayre was held that provided parents and carers with the chance to find out what support what support is available for them within the local community to support with family life. This event was meticulously organised, and a wide range of agency representatives attended including the NHS Mental Health team, Community Police, Family Hubs and SEND charities for workshops and co-support. The school utilises the wide network of partnerships it has built up over the years to excellent effect to enable families the opportunity to access the support they need.

It was very clear from the visit that the school communicates exceptionally well with parents and carers. The parents and carers that I spoke to all commended the school for the how well they shared information with them. They remarked on the visibility of school staff and school leaders and their approachability and determination to help wherever needed. One parent stated, 'school have been very accommodating. Nothing is ever too big a deal.' Another said, 'they've bent over backwards.'

As well as being a readily available physical presence, school leaders have also taken steps to ensure that online information is easily accessible for parents and carers. They make excellent use of the Class Dojo web platform to share necessary information and this includes a dedicated page for parents and carers of pupils with SEND. Teachers are extremely responsive to any queries they receive from parents through the web messaging service and promptly respond to any issues raised.

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The school has further enhanced its transition arrangement over the last year including a bespoke open meeting that is held for prospective parents of pupils set to join Year 3 in the next academic year. The school works in close partnership with parents to ensure their views are taken on board when implementing provision plans in the school environment.

Next Steps:

- To embed the refined approach to provision mapping that considers the identified learning barriers in each cohort to provide further targeted support where needed.

- To build on the success of the Community Fayre by organising and holding another event in the next academic year to make more families aware of the wide range of support services available to them in the community.

Target 2: Oracy – For children to be able to extend their questioning and discussion skills so that they are able to improve their oral skills through their learning.

Oracy has been a key driver for the curriculum in recent years, and, since the last IQM review, purposeful steps have been taken to ensure that it is embedded across the curriculum. Originally, delivered as a bespoke learning session, school leaders have now refined their approach to ensure that that principles and structures of their oracy teaching are prevalent in pupils learning in all areas of the curriculum. This includes purposefully planned curriculum events including Oracy October, Black History Month, Anti-Bullying Week, Children's Mental Health Week, World Book Day and Number Day.

Building on the expertise and resources from the Voice 21 project, school leaders have delivered further staff training to ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge and expertise to enhance the levels of pupils' oracy skills. A key step that was outlined during the review day was the promotion of ensuring staff take purposeful actions to 'step back and listen' in order to identify gaps in pupils' verbal sentence cohesion and conversation skills. Throughout the school environment visual oracy prompts are in place to enable pupils to have a structure to refer to when engaging in conversations with others. Underpinning this is a mantra held by leaders that as a staff 'we need to stop making assumptions about what pupils can do and put in place necessary interventions to address gaps in social and emotional development as well as academic knowledge. Oracy and conversation skills are a prime example of this.

During the review day, pupils spoke with great enthusiasm and passion about oracy. They modelled these skills clearly during the conversation I had with a large group of them, and they were able to articulate the principles of the Oracy prompts that they had been taught.

Next Step:

- To implement Oracy throughout the Interoception curriculum which will be introduced across school from September 2026.

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Target 3: Sustainability – For the school community to understand and engage in local sustainability projects and understand the impact this will have individually as well as at community level and wider.

Sustainability is clearly an embedded concept at Oakwood Juniors. Quite often this area can appear to be 'tokenistic' or hardly delivered at all in some schools. However, this was not the case at Oakwood Junior School and this was abundantly clear on my review visit. Led with determination and passion by the school Sustainability Lead Teacher a wide range of sustainability projects have been delivered with great success since the last review. This concept has really captured the pupils' imagination, and they spoke to me with enthusiasm and pride about the different initiatives they have in place to help to contribute to a sustainable and environmentally aware community. This included the introduction of Recycling Bins in each classroom with accompanying posters from the appointed 'Eco Warrior' pupil team to ensure they are used appropriately by their peers. Building on this theme, there are food waste collection bins in the dining hall (in compostable bin liners and composting bins outside on the playground which are monitored closely by the pupils.

There is a designated team of Year 6 litter pickers that robustly carry out their duties during lunch and play times to ensure the school environment is litter free. Initiatives like this contribute to the sense of pride that the pupils take in their school; they are doing a great job in their role as during my observations at lunch time I saw a highly cared for and spotless environment.

The school promotes the well being and mental health of its pupils in all aspects of its work and specific links are made between the positive effect that nature and the outdoors can have on mental health and wellbeing. The school has recently taken part in a National Education Nature Park Wellbeing Research project in which pupils have completed initial surveys and engaged in a series of structured outdoor sessions. Nature is prominent throughout the school; during the visit I observed pupils using the Forest School area during the lunchtime period. This provision is highly valued by the pupils of Oakwood. One pupil stated, "We all do Forest School and it helps us to get better team building and problem-solving skills."

Other successful sustainability initiatives this year have included engagement in the Energy Sparks programme. Initial steps in this project have included working with the caretaker to monitor the energy usage throughout the school. Pupil light monitors have been appointed for each class and the 'Eco Warrior' pupil team carry out additional checks.

Next Steps:

- Work with Rolls Royce to develop the sensory garden.
- To consider how best practice in promoting Sustainability can be shared with other schools.

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Agreed Targets for next 12 Months

Moving forward, school leaders are ambitious to ensure that inclusion is further enhanced at Oakwood Junior School and this is reflected in their strategic plans for the future. Discussions at the end of the review day centred around suitable areas that might form the outline of a Flagship School Project. The following three targets form a broad outline as to what the target areas will focus on. Target 1 is the proposed main driver for the overall project focus whilst target areas 2 and 3 are supplementary areas that will fall within the overarching remit of target area 1. Details of the target areas are described below:

Target 1 & Proposed Flagship Project Title - Moving the school from a SEND provision to an Inclusive sensory provision.

Comments

This target is central to the school's approach as it moves forward in enhancing its inclusive provision. Leaders are making plans to ensure an even more integrated approach to inclusion is developed at Oakwood. This includes enhancing the physical environment by committing funds to building a purpose-built provision room for pupils with complex needs to access as well as developing more holistic approaches to provision for all where adaptive teaching strategies are enhanced to ensure all pupils are accessing and thriving alongside their peers in the classroom environment. As part of this target, leaders will be reviewing their approach to provision mapping and refining their tracking systems to identify and address learning barriers that effect individual pupils within each cohort.

Leaders have worked hard to address attendance challenges for pupils in the school and recent data analysis indicates that persistent absence rates have reduced in the Year 3 and Year 4 groups to a level closer to the national average. However, poor attendance remains a significant learning barrier for some pupils in the school and leaders are considering other options to provide a more targeted intervention in this area. As part of discussions on the review day, I asked leaders to consider whether there was the option of a bespoke attendance officer being appointed by the Trust to help provide some specialist support to leaders to address attendance issues and provide increased leadership capacity in this vital area. At present, the Deputy Headteacher (who is also the SENCo) leads on attendance at Oakwood.

Target 2 – To develop the Interoception Curriculum

Comments

This target area will fall within the broader remit identified in the first target. To develop understanding of interoception, the Deputy Headteacher will be leading on staff training and also training for the pupils. A 'toolbox' will be set up for pupils to enable independent self-regulation. Plans are in place to implement this approach across the school. It will be monitored closely and, as part of this, feedback will be taken from staff, pupils and parents.

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Target 3 – To develop the Sensory Garden

Comments

This target area will be led by the sustainability lead and will build on the community partnership already established with Rolls Royce. Funds raised from participation in the National Education Wellbeing research project will go towards the development of the sensory garden. The Eco Warriors pupil team will be central to the planning of the garden. The aims of the sensory garden will align closely with the planned interoception curriculum.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Since the last review, staff at Oakwood Junior School have attended two IQM Cluster Meetings and they are scheduled to attend the next one in June 2026. Staff described how these are always valuable opportunities to share best practice with other colleagues and observed how other settings adapt their provision to meet the needs of the pupils they serve. The IQM Lead attended a recent cluster meeting at a Special School and she described how this was a really informative and enlightening experience. She talked passionately about how heartwarming it was to see pupils thrive when they are in the right educational setting to meet their needs. During this meeting 'Zones of Regulation' were discussed and this gave the IQM Lead ideas in how to develop this provision further so pupils have a greater understanding of how wellbeing impacts on their own selves. This meeting also provided the opportunity to learn more about Interoception and how this can be developed at Oakwood.

In the previous IQM Cluster meeting, which took place at Overseal Primary School, the Oakwood staff member learnt about how the school uses 'Shine Passports' as part of their inclusive provision. This prompted a reflection opportunity with the Headteacher and Senior Leaders as to how this approach could work at Oakwood.

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Overview

Oakwood Junior School is a setting where inclusive provision flourishes as a result of a genuinely caring ethos and an incredibly dedicated staff team. Leaders are unwavering in their determination to offer the very best for all pupils, regardless of need and background. High expectations for every member of the school community combined with an empathetic and personable approach enables pupil to thrive in a broad range areas.

Situated in an area of comparatively high deprivation, leaders have shown a remarkable resilience and dedication in recent years to embed a culture of acceptance, belonging and respect for all. The families that the school serves have come from predominantly White British backgrounds and social mobility within the community has historically been quite low with several generations of the same family having attended Oakwood over the years. Recently, the local demographic has become more diverse and now a higher number of pupils from different ethnic minority backgrounds attend the school and a greater proportion of pupils with English as an Additional Language. The Headteacher and her dedicated staff team have worked with great resilience and determination to foster a respectful school community and have courageously challenged any discriminatory viewpoints where necessary.

During my review visit, I was led on a school tour by the Deputy Headteacher (who is also the SENCo and IQM Lead). It was an absolute joy to see the pupils of Oakwood engaging in their learning across a wide variety of curriculum areas. A sense of calm and purpose permeated the learning environment as pupils listened attentively to one another and spoke with clarity and enthusiasm. Each classroom was adorned with wonderful and varied displays which really demonstrated a sense of pride in the environment as well as the pupils' learning. There were many bespoke and thoughtful adjustments evident. For example, a number of pupils were engaging in Physical Literacy sessions in the school hall with the PE as part of their provision. Visual prompts and widgets were readily available for those that needed them and teachers and support staff provided guidance where required to scaffold learning and create an inclusive curriculum for all. The behaviour and attitudes of the pupils that I saw throughout the review day was absolutely impeccable.

Mental health and wellbeing for pupils and staff is rightly held in high regard at Oakwood and various aspects of provision are in place to support this area. I met the school's therapy dog, 'Ron', who happily and calmly mingles with the pupils throughout break and lunchtime periods. He is clearly loved by the pupils. The school champions the role that nature and the outdoors can play in supporting positive mental health and staff encourage pupils to access the Forest School at break times as well as in curricular sessions.

The school is at the heart of the local community and organises and promotes a wide range of events that help to contribute to a sense of togetherness and belonging. Pupils participate in a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that enhance their holistic learning experience. This includes joyfully singing together, holding cake sales to raise funds for local charities, going on exciting field trips to places such as Cresswell Crags and London and whole heartedly celebrating World Book Day. For example, on the day

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of the review, the Headteacher was going to watch the girls' football team compete in an after-school competition.

Staff are rightly proud of their school. They work together as a united team that goes above and beyond to meet the needs of the pupils and the families they serve. One staff recognised this by stating, "We all have our own skill set to share and that helps to make us a good team." They spoke passionately about the wealth of inclusive provision that is in place at Oakwood Junior School and the positive impact they have seen for a wide range of their pupils. Crucially, they know their pupils and families extremely well. When presented with challenging behaviours from pupils they maintain an open mind as to the possibilities behind this. The SENCo stated "we believe that behaviour is a result of another feeling". Staff value the wealth of training opportunities that the school and Trust provides. They know that their wellbeing is genuinely valued and they feel cared for by school leaders and their colleagues. One staff member encapsulated this by saying "The door is always open, we're a caring staff." The Governors and Trust work closely with the school. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) makes regular visits and interacts with pupils and staff. The Governor that I spoke to during the review day acknowledged the tremendous work the Headteacher and her team have done over the last few years to create an inclusive culture of respect where every member of the school community is valued. Inclusion forms a key part of the Governing Body agendas and is at the forefront of strategic plans moving forward.

The parents I spoke to on the review day were incredibly positive about the school and the positive difference it has made to their lives. They commended the excellent communication shown by staff and leaders, including the helpful responsiveness to any queries raised. Some of the comments they made when I met the include "the teacher is like a modern-day Miss Honey" (referencing the caring and devoted Roald Dahl fictional teacher) and "they have been really supportive and they always give you the time". They also valued the school's approach to promoting an ethos that celebrates all cultures and one parent stated that she appreciated that her views were taken on board when the school planned events to celebrate Black History Month. Praise was also given to the SENCo for the support she has provided for them over the years with one parent stating "Mrs Fray is unbelievable. She looks after us".

Overall, it was a privilege to visit Oakwood and see the fantastic inclusive provision that is in place here. It is a calm, joyful and caring school community served by an incredibly dedicated Headteacher and a committed and talented staff team.

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Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. Following three years as a Centre of Excellence the team at Oakwood Junior School has established a commitment to the Inclusion Quality Mark and to continually self-reflect to improve as one school. From discussion with leaders it was evident that the school is ready to become an IQM Flagship School. I would recommend that Oakwood Junior School moves to being an IQM Flagship School and is reviewed again in 12 months' time.

Assessor: Mr Richard Kitching

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:



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

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