



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



**School** Calthorpe Academy  
Darwin Street  
Birmingham, B12 0TP

**Head/Principal** Mr Mounir Meghalasi

**IQM Lead** Mrs Laura Williams

**Date of Review** 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023

**Assessor** Mr Cathal Lynch

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

Cluster Group Midlands Inclusion Network

Ambassador Ms Jane Flynn

Next Meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023

Meeting Focus Outdoor Learning Provision

### **Cluster Attendance**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Spring 2022</b>		N/A
<b>Summer 2022</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	Yes
<b>Autumn 2022</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	No
<b>Spring 2023</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> March 2023	Yes
<b>Summer 2023</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2023	

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

The cluster group meetings are highly valued for the alternative perspectives they are able to provide. For example, a mainstream primary shared the work they have undertaken on rewards and attendance. This was of interest to Calthorpe staff due to the increased impact of the pandemic on attendance due to anxiety related school refusal. Not all meetings have been attended due to a change in personnel but the upcoming meeting in July will be attended.

### **Evidence**

Website, SEF, Evaluation of Progress, meetings with staff, governors, pupils, school documents, learning walks.

### **Additional Activities**

Presentation from pupils and staff.



### Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

#### **Develop a model of paid work and volunteering opportunities from Year 9 onwards.**

The intention is for all learners to have access to paid work and volunteering opportunities however it is usually pupils on the learning for life pathway that are able to access the opportunity. This is supported by skill development in school such as the beauty box which teaches young people self-care skills and the car wash facility that are precursors to accessing work. The car wash feeds into learning tasks such as understanding booking and taking cash payments as well as looking at the impact of weather on booking rates and cash flow. Other onsite opportunities include the onsite café and site maintenance skills where pupils learn a range of skills such as cleaning windows using long poles and leaf collection.

Interpersonal skills have been developed by the PSHE curriculum to cover the skill set that they may not have to include specific topics such as managing pressure, relationship behaviours accidents, risks and emergencies.

Works experience opportunities exist with a range of employers including Tesco and Birmingham women's and children's hospital. One pupil has achieved a 2 day paid job on a band 2 contract in the NHS.

Some employers such as HS2 haven't started supported internships but we have corporate sign off for it and are keen to engage with the school to explore how they can make it happen. Instead, they work on making projects for pupils to engage with for example pupils visited New Street then the Head Offices before returning to school to survey pupils to understand what they wanted to see at the new stations. They then wrote persuasive texts in Literacy to get HS2 to include their ideas in the station design. They particularly wanted more shops, free train tickets, and if that wasn't possible at least free toilets and a play area.

One of the employers commented "it is changing the perception of employers and employees. We have seen a reluctance on part of staff to participate initially as they didn't know what to expect though everyone who did really enjoyed it and would do it again. Employers get great feedback on what they do which helps them as well as the EDI agenda. Also, we have huge staff shortages so we need to not exclude a big part of the population plus lots of our staff have hidden disabilities and this means we can start to have conversations around wider needs. Employers want to be inclusive and diverse to represent the society we live in so that we can employ staff with disabilities. People with disabilities have a different skill set but it's often a better skill set."

Other pupils undertook works experience with Tesco checking stock and selecting products in the digital store. Pupils have a job card to help support them with their tasks with one saying "it's going well and I enjoy it, I'm very important. The employer commented that pick rate has gone up by 12% in relation to mainstream colleagues and that they trusted their placement student "far more than other staff the things he does for me on the computer is amazing. I can trust him 100%".



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Pupils talk enthusiastically about the friends they have made at work and all agreed they preferred work to school.

These initiatives have helped raise aspirations for parents as well as other pupils in the school when they see what others can achieve.

### **Provide a structured programme of engagement of learners between mainstream and specialist settings.**

Some young learners attend a local mainstream nursery weekly to give them stretch and challenge to develop their communications and social emotional skills. The learners enjoy playing with toys, watering the plants and making new friends. Children learn to play with mainstream pupils and how to engage in imaginary play.

Some year 3,4 and 5 pupils go to another local school resource base to participate in reading activities where they buddy up with a partner from the school. This helps them build on their social skills as they spend time with their buddies after the reading session talking about what they have done during the week. This work is important because it helps staff in mainstream settings to develop their understanding of reasonable adjustments and how to use communication aides to support, language, emotions and transition. It also allows mainstream staff to ask for specific support with individuals or strategies which builds capacity in their settings. The children enjoy going because they get to read with their friends and they believe they have got better at reading. Staff testify that pupils were anxious about going to start with but now enjoy it and have made big strides forward in their attainment. These educational visits allow pupils to develop skills that they can transfer them to different settings.

A mainstream VI form college have sent pupils who may want to work in education on works experience in the school to support with sports day and national sports week.

There are links with a local mainstream school where learners were in a satellite base unit but this year they have been integrated into classes with in the resource base to access an adaptive mainstream curriculum but are withdrawn for some sessions when they need to. This is done by Calthorpe staff who are based there, some of whom work with the host school to build capacity to meet more complex needs. This involves work on the curriculum, teaching and learning and CPD. Sometime this is on a departmental basis depending on need. This year some of the Calthorpe learners have also accessed small group intervention work to add further challenge and one of the learners has accessed GCSE's. Pupil feedback is hugely favourable and often revolves around the opportunities for social interactions with peers from the mainstream.

### **Raise profile of additional needs and staff skill sets in order to accommodate learners that have ASC, PMLD, SLD.**

The Trust has recently added Associate Leads for PMLD, ASD, Work and Transition, EYFS and a Lead for therapy is expected to be appointed soon. The intention is to support within the Trust and externally to build capacity in a range of settings across the City and other Local Authorities. This has enhanced staff ability to understand



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enabling environments and getting children to be ready to learn. This has improved teaching and learning but also supported destinations for young people into internship, voluntary and paid positions. There has been significant school to school support for ECT's which has helped them to develop their skill sets. There are now partnerships with Birmingham Women's and Children's hospital, Tesco's, HS2, foodbanks and the active wellbeing society. The intention is to increase employer awareness around Disability and widening participation. This starts with encounters in schools where employers visit to undertake certain projects, skills for work using the skills builder programme. For example, year 9s and 10s were consulted on designs for a new train station and were able to feedback how its design could support young people with disabilities.

The PMLD Lead has been supporting another school in the trust with their curriculum and assessment development for PMLD learners. Calthorpe's Engagement for Life Curriculum has been piloted. A new curriculum is now being piloted and feedback from teachers has been hugely positive as they value the structure and the fact that learning is more purposeful. Learners are also now more engaged as the work is personalised and next steps are clearer. There is still work to do upskilling TAs and this will continue going forward. Support has been provided to help teaching and learning staff to develop their understanding of creating a capable environment for learning and environment expectation policy. It has been written and rolled out which has had an accelerating impact on outcomes.

All work is now research informed drawing on Rosenshine's Principles in action, capable environments, Teacher walk throughs and EEF with the foundations based on the Teaching Standards. Individual lessons look at the fundamentals of independence, behaviours for learning, communication, assessment for learning and personalisation. This means the approach is codified and can be scaled up through being replicated elsewhere.

5 questions underpin curriculum thinking so that staff are conditioned to ask what do you want them to learn? How are you getting them to learn it? Why are they learning it? What is next for this learner? And how do you know they have achieved this? As a result, staff are very clear on the intent, implementation and impact of all that they do.

### **Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project**

1. Continue working with employers to make reasonable adjustments especially in relation to the recruitment process such as videos of doing the job, video interviews etc and policy templates to ensure learners can access safely and increase employment opportunities.

Associate Lead for Work & Transitions to review and best practice across Trust. Become pathfinder to advocate for change create training video for institutions to understand the benefits of EDI in employment.

2. To create further opportunities with local mainstream provisions where links have been created such as Percy Shurmer for themes related to sports, arts, enrichment, charity days, rights respecting.



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Assistant head to continue to attend IQM cluster meetings and National IQM Inclusion Conference Nov 2023.

Continue to explore supporting other providers possibly through traded services through a lift and shift model by codifying practice such as curriculum thinking, readiness to learn, PSHE thinking, enabling environments, walkthroughs etc. This already exists but could be organized in a more streamlined handbook that is more practical. Include information on website to showcase to external agencies include stakeholder quotes

3. Curriculum Pathway Strategy- Continue to further develop provision using research informed practice to inform our offer and CPD of staff at Calthorpe.

Developing Local provision- Head teacher to continue to support the 2nd year of this project focussing on the attendance and persistent absence affecting learners with SEND both at Calthorpe and to support mainstream settings with these issues and exclusions for SEND learners in the city.

Associate Leads for PMLD & ASD & Work & Transitions- to continue to support schools within the trust to up skill staff trust wide with CPD, coaching and mentoring.

Increasing SEND for Employment opportunities-continue to share best practice and Associate Lead to recruit employers for schools across the Trust.



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### Overview

Thrive Educational Partnership Multi-Academy Trust is made up of 3 schools, one of which is Calthorpe Academy. It is the largest special school in Birmingham with 428 learners aged between 2 and 19 years old. The school delivers quality education to the most complex learners in the city, with 33% of the total Local Authority ESN (Exceptional Special Needs) funding allocated to the Academy. The school has a diverse group of learners with different needs and socio-economic backgrounds. Many of the learners live in some of the most deprived wards in Europe.

The primary needs of the learners are: 43% on the Autism Spectrum, 39% with Severe Learning Difficulties and 18% with Profound and Multiple Difficulties. The school has designed its curriculum to meet the vast range in needs with three distinct pathways (Engagement for Life, Foundation for Life, and Learning for Life). 25% of learners are girls and 75% are boys.

59% of the learners receive Pupil Premium funding; 54% receive Free School meals which is significantly above the national average (20.8% FSM - 23% PP in Primary and 27% in Secondary). The school has 15 Looked After Children which is 3.5% of its school population, more than three times the national average. The families speak 18 different languages and 57% of them have English as Additional Language much higher than the 19.3% nationally.

The school has been on a significant journey since it was in special measures approximately 7 years ago which has centred on the curriculum.

Calthorpe Academy's curriculum ambition is to enable its learners to have 'the skills to live the life they want'. The curriculum is well sequenced and involves input from a range of therapists to cater for learners who have a range of complex cognitive difficulties alongside sensory, physical and/or behavioural barriers to learning. The academy aims to provide equal opportunities through a curriculum that is broad, balanced, relevant and reflects cultural diversity. PSHE and RSE is well supported, having been the focus of significant development in the recent past to meet the specific needs of the current cohort by drawing on expert support.

Behaviours have seen a marked improvement despite the growing number of pupils on roll and the increasing complexity of need. This is as a result of an emphasis on positive behaviour support which has led to a 93% reduction in physical interventions.

Pupil voice is overwhelmingly positive about the school and academic progress is good. Assessment is moderated with 4 other special schools to ensure accuracy of judgements.

There are 3 curriculum pathways, engagement for life which is predominantly for PMLD learners, foundations for life which is predominantly complex autism (often non-verbal) and learning for life which is for more cognitively able pupils who will aspire to level 2 qualifications and other accredited awards. These pathways are not however fixed and learners can move between pathways if they better meet needs. All pathways lead to



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the post-16 pathway preparation for adulthood: life beyond Calthorpe Academy linked to transition into social care or further education/employment.

Parents have been consulted on the curriculum so that they have been able to influence what is taught such as body awareness. School and home targets get set at the start of the year and tracked throughout the year based on areas of the EHCP or skills that they are struggling with at home such as personal care and functional movement to enable future independence. This has led to 2 pupils learning to walk independently and other learners beginning to sit on a chair rather than in their wheelchair.

Much work is undertaken with parents including workshops to help them to support their needs and the website is intended to offer useful resources and signpost further support. Governors work with staff to monitor GATSBY benchmark and the school has achieved the quality in careers standards. Governors have a range of skillsets that enhances the provision. Even when things are going well, they always try to improve further.

The school continues to move from strength to strength in terms of its superb inclusive practice and I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Flagship School. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Flagship Status and is reviewed again in 12 months. 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.

The school is undertaking life changing work and continues to be a Flagship School due to its reliance on high aspirations, research-based evidence, appropriate curriculum development, multidisciplinary working and ongoing professional development. I have very much enjoyed my visit to Calthorpe Academy.

**Assessor: Mr Cathal Lynch**

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

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