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## **Inclusion Quality Mark Accreditation Report**

### **St. Joseph's RC Primary School, Ramsbottom**

**1<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary is a one form entry school situated in Ramsbottom. Overall absence rates for the school are broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals is below the national average, as is the percentage of pupils whose first language is not English. In 2019, the proportion of pupils with EHC plans was above the national average, while the percentage of pupils at SEN support was less than half the national average.

St Joseph's invited local authority officers to carry out an Inclusion Health Check on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Areas of focus agreed for the Inclusion Health Check were, 'School takes active steps to develop resilient and independent learners' and 'learners make progress in relation to their individual strengths and needs.' St. Joseph's were provided with feedback and a written report that described strengths and suggested possible areas for development. The school incorporated recommendations from the report into their development plan.

St Joseph's have now requested that their practice be assessed against the Bury Inclusion Quality Mark standards. These standards are organised into four areas: Whole School Approaches; Inclusive Learning; Supporting Emotional Health and Wellbeing; Participation and Involvement. School's performance against the standards was assessed during a full day inclusion health check visit on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and a follow-up half day accreditation visit on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The visits were conducted by Gareth Rennie (Primary Inclusion Lead), Lesley Harris (Additional Needs Team Manager), Ian Sutcliffe (Primary SEMH Team Manager) and Suzanne Pendleton (Primary Inclusion Lead).

Activities for the accreditation included:

- Extensive learning walks through school; including break and lunch times
- Interviews with pupils
- Interviews with parents
- Interviews with the senior leadership team
- Interviews with teachers and teaching assistants
- Examination and discussion of school's plans
- Review of school policies and procedures
- Scrutiny of pupil work
- Discussion of pupil records

## **Whole School Approaches**

### ***Ethos***

- Responses from parents and carers provided strong evidence of the school's ethos and their commitment to meeting need. All parents interviewed had experience of receiving telephone calls from their child's class teacher, both to highlight achievements and to outline the next steps in learning. Parents said that they felt listened to, and valued, and gave examples of how the school made adjustments to their child's provision following parent-initiated contact. Parents were able to talk about the progression of their children. One parent explained how the school had worked in partnership with them to ensure their child was able to access most of their learning in the classroom. Another parent explained how their child had been very unhappy and permanently excluded from a previous school. Their child was now 'thriving' at St. Joseph's, and the parent talked about staff commitment to understanding need and putting provision in place to ensure success. Another parent spoke about their child's previous reluctance to write, until their class teacher began to write letters from Lord Voldemort in their child's Harry Potter journal. The parents and carers were unanimous in their view that school staff are tireless in their commitment to meeting pupil needs.

### ***Leadership and Governance***

- St. Joseph's Governors are committed and dedicated. The governors visit school regularly, and are eager to observe, and get involved in classroom learning. These first-hand experiences of teaching and learning delivery enable governors to speak knowledgeably about St. Joseph's curriculum offer. Local authority officers were presented with in-depth Governor reports articulating the school's agreed vision for inclusion.
- Leadership at St. Joseph's values everyone's emotional wellbeing and has comprehensive and strong provision in place for staff and children alike. Listening to key stakeholders and co-producing with parents of children with vulnerable characteristics has ensured that parents feel a part of the school community. The staff at St. Joseph's are adept at identifying the early signs of distress and anxiety and respond quickly with appropriate support.

### ***CPD***

- Staff talk about how emotional wellbeing CPD has helped to improve staff mental health and has put them in a strong position to respond to pupil SEMH need. Over the last couple of years, staff have accessed mindfulness CPD, and a development day led by a life coach.
- Following on from the Inclusion Health Check in June 2021, the school leadership has led a systematic programme of CPD to address the development areas identified. Included in this approach, is the school's move away from traditional teacher observations, towards 'development sessions,' utilising the principles of 'trust-based observations.' As part of this process, stakeholders are involved in agreeing areas of focus, and the observers consider the effectiveness of the classroom team and learning environment as a whole. Teachers and teaching assistants are both involved in the feedback and target setting process. This change in monitoring practice, recognises the importance of teaching assistant contributions, and is supporting more consistent teaching assistant deployment.
- The school leadership has sought to improve differentiation so that all learners are able to make meaningful progress in lessons e.g., in Maths, teachers have participated in staff meetings focused on using ideas from NCETM to develop universal accessibility. Teachers' planning is demonstrating understanding of the

different starting points of pupils and also recognises that a scheme of work's 'mastery activity' is not always sufficient to stimulus to progress the learning of the most able.

### ***Person Centred Planning***

- Pupil meetings are structured around person centred approaches, for example, annual reviews.
- The staff at St. Joseph's are practiced and skilled at following the interests of pupils to ensure that they are able to engage with national curriculum and EYFS learning outcomes.

### ***Understanding and valuing difference***

- The school provides an excellent PSHE curriculum and pupils throughout the school are supportive and sensitive to the needs of other learners. The Inclusion Health Check visit to St. Joseph's took place in Diabetes Week, and local authority officers observed an assembly led by a pupil with diabetes. The pupil talked to their peers about the condition and confidently answered questions that were scaffolded safely by the headteacher.
- Staff understand that 'equality' does not equate to 'treating everyone the same,' and talk about their commitment to getting to know their children, so they are able to put in place provision that enables them to succeed.

### ***Policies and plans***

- Leaders and Governors recognise that teaching is a relationship-based profession, and are mindful of research that shows that children learn more when their teacher is happy and performing well. This top-down approach can be seen in the school's 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy,' which states an aim to, 'Ensure that the good health, wellbeing and mental health of all who work in this school is promoted effectively.' A caring approach to all stakeholders is outlined in policy and delivered in practice. This is evidenced well in the school's comprehensive response to pupils and families that have experienced adverse events and circumstances.

## **Inclusive Learning**

### ***Curriculum and teaching***

- Teacher-pupil interactions observed were friendly and supportive, and there is a strong atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Assessment of pupil phonics progress is accurate and up to date. Teachers and teaching assistants lead small Read Write Inc. groups to ensure that all children access teaching and learning appropriate for their phonics development.
- In one class, the maths activity gave children the option of completing a foundation, intermediate, or challenge task. Children were able to talk about their choice. One child said, 'I am pretty good at this, and I want to be challenged, so I am doing the challenge task.' While another child said, 'I am not sure about this yet, so I am doing the foundation task first of all.'
- There is consistent use of working walls, so pupils are able to refer to prior learning.
- Early Years staff are able to talk about their skills-focussed curriculum and how it responds to the 'next-steps' in learning of individual children.

- School staff demonstrate a strong awareness of sensory integration issues and understand how unmet sensory need influences behaviour for learning. Strategies and resources which support children to self-regulate are evident throughout school and children were able to explain how they benefitted from access to them.

### ***Learning and progress of all groups***

- St. Joseph's has prepared case studies which demonstrate how their inclusive practice has facilitated positive outcomes for children and their families. In these case studies, the school describes the transition process, and how they work in partnership with parents and pupils to ensure success. The school has successfully transitioned pupils who have experienced placement breakdown/permanent exclusion at a previous setting. These pupils are now happy and thriving at St. Joseph's and are making strong academic progress.

### ***Transition***

- All transitions are well supported at St. Joseph's because staff are in tune with the needs of their learners. Staff are adept at managing transitions between year groups, key stages and schools. In-year transitions, especially for pupils with SEND, are carefully planned.

## **Supporting Emotional Health and Well-being**

### ***Resilience***

- Pupils are able to articulately talk about the principles of Carol Dweck's, 'Growth Mindset.' With one pupil explaining that 'mistakes are just an opportunity to grow' and 'by keep practising my maths, I am getting better.'
- At no point is any pupil excluded from any activity or from the daily life of St. Joseph's Primary School.

### ***Belonging***

- All pupils start the day with a wellbeing check-in. Staff monitor pupil responses and have systems in place to respond to this information straight away, as well as over longer periods of time. Staff are also sensitive to the early signs of escalation and respond quickly to support pupils when needed. One teaching assistant explained how they would take a pupil out of class for a drink, a biscuit, and a chat when they showed signs of distress. This had the effect of averting potential crisis situations providing the pupil with some time to regulate before returning to class ready to learn.
- The senior leadership team leads collective worship and pupils are able to talk about the school's Gospel values of, 'Faith, Hope and Love,' as well as the school's simplified rules 'Ready, Respectful, Safe.' Pupils engage well in collective worship and were observed to be singing and signing the aspirational school song, 'Believe'.
- Parents described how school staff 'went the extra mile' during the lockdown period 'to keep everyone's spirits up.' The school kept in contact with all pupils in creative and innovative ways e.g., all pupils were provided with a 'lockdown buddy' (cuddly toy), which parents described as being of great comfort to their children. Parents also spoke about how the school had provided targeted packages of support for children that had experienced bereavement and other trauma, and of the positive effect this had. All were in agreement that the school is 'happy and welcoming', and that behaviour is excellent. At unstructured times pupils were observed to treat each other with respect and adult intervention was not required.

## **Participation and Involvement**

### ***Whole school approach***

- St. Joseph's is a school that listens to parents, and they have a well-established Parent SEND Group and a Parent Pupil Premium Group. The school's leadership work alongside these groups in a spirit of genuine co-production e.g., the parent representatives of these groups have suggested and agreed to allocate funding to innovative educational and extracurricular programmes to support individuals and groups of learners.

### ***Participation of stakeholders***

- St. Joseph's parents and carers have their own SEND parents' forum, affiliated with the main Bury Parent Forum, Bury2gether. Leaders have supported the setup of this forum and understand how this could ultimately enable parents and carers to make a contribution to the development of the school.

### ***Wider community links***

- The headteacher is a key member of the Ramsbottom Inclusion Partnership and provides colleagues with advice and support through this framework. The SEMH provision at St. Joseph's is excellent, and the headteacher continues to seek out opportunities to share St. Joseph's strong practice with other schools. The headteacher is ensuring that the school has a wider impact, supporting colleagues through her positions on Bury's in-Year Fair Access Panel, Bury's SEMH Strategic Board, Bury Schools' SEND funding forum and the Ramsbottom Pupil Panel.

## **What is working exceptionally well?**

- One of the key strengths demonstrated during this accreditation process has been the ethos, culture and attitudes underpinning inclusion across the whole school. This has been purposefully developed over time and is consistently applied throughout every aspect of school life and lies deep within every member of the school community. All school staff demonstrated a commitment to supporting the development of the whole-child, and as a result, pupil PSHE development is excellent, as is behaviour. School leaders have taken a top-down approach in order to achieve this, and staff have had access to a range of CPD opportunities, that have included mindfulness and INSET delivered by a life coach.

## **What might school consider in moving forward?**

### **Resilience**

- Observers noted significant improvements to in-class differentiation and teaching assistant deployment following on from June 2021's Inclusion Health Check. Pupils are still able to talk about the key theories of Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset and believe that high aspirations and hard work bring rewards. However, the majority of pupils were still unclear on strategies that they could use when they 'get stuck.' Most pupils explained that they would first of all 'ask the teacher' if they encountered something that seemed tricky. A practical, whole school stepped approach utilising 'the three before me' rule has been presented to pupils at assemblies. However, to embed this approach so it is effective in classrooms, it will be up to the classroom teachers to reinforce this framework so that pupils can actively develop their independence in learning; this will complement the school's strong Growth Mindset teachings.

## **Final outcome**

As a result of this accreditation visit, Bury Council is delighted to be able to award the status of our Inclusion Quality Mark to St. Joseph's RC Primary School.

Bury Council professionals conducting the accreditation:



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**Gareth Rennie**  
**Primary Inclusion Lead – Bury Council**



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**Lesley Harris**  
**(Acting) Manager/Specialist Teacher (Communication Difficulties)**



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**Ian Sutcliffe**  
**(Acting) Manager/SEMH Team**

**– Bury Council**



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**Suzanne Pendleton**  
**Primary Inclusion Lead – Bury Council**

Date: **1<sup>st</sup> March 2022**