



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School	Polegate School Oakleaf Drive Polegate East Sussex BN26 6PT
Head/Principal	Debbie Jones
IQM Leads	Una Holbrook/Amie Ashdown
Date of Review	26 th June 2023
Assessor	Pat Wood

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group	Cosmos Learning
Ambassador	Fiona Robinson
Next Meeting	TBC
Meeting Focus	TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Spring 2022	11 th March 2022	Yes
Summer 2022	10 th June 2022	Yes
Autumn 2022	11 th November 2022	Yes
Spring 2023	17 th March 2023	Yes
Summer 2023	16 th June 2023	

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The Assistant Headteacher/Senco and school actively participate in the Cosmos Learning group and value the opportunity to visit other settings and to share expertise. Following a visit to a specialist provision an autism toolkit was shared with staff and is being used in school. Resources and practices were shared, with some implemented, subsequent to a cluster meeting focussing on trauma informed and therapeutic practices. A recent cluster group focussed on zones of regulation. As a consequence, the Senco talked with the ELSA about tweaking the toolkit for individual children. The school is committed to attending all future cluster group meetings.



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Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

- IQM Flagship review documentation.
- Ofsted Report.
- School website.
- Learning walk.
- Discussion with Head Boy and Head Girl.
- Behaviour Hub information, including The Behaviour Audit Tool and examples of completed open day evaluation forms.
- Wide range of Polegate documentation shared by the IQM Co-ordinator, including 'Everything Polegate' and 'An Irresistible Curriculum'.
- Primary Science Quality Mark (PSQM) documentation and evidence.
- Pupil's writing and Magpie books.
- My Happy Mind journal and materials.

Meetings held with:

- Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher/Senco; Intervention Teacher and Deputy Headteacher.
- Year 2 teacher/Phonics Lead and Year 6 Teacher/English Lead.
- AHT/Leader of Learning Years 3 and 4/Science Lead.
- Pupils.
- Intervention staff, including Reading Recovery teachers and Speech and Language Teaching Assistant.
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) team.
- Governors, including staff governor and Chair of Governors/parent governor.

Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The school's progress from the previous year is based on the project focus of:

Being a Behaviour Hub Lead School; embedding Talk for Writing across the school and embedding the My Happy Mind programme across the school.

The project is linked closely to the SDP key priorities of being an outward facing school, offering support to other providers to improve outcomes for all children through the Behaviour Hub status and Primary Learning Collaborative Partner School status within county; continued accelerate progress and closing the attainment gap between boys and girls in KS2; together with a whole school focus on supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

Review of targets

Target 1 – Behaviour Hub

Polegate has been a DFE National Behaviour Hub Lead School since April 2021, supporting other schools in developing systems, policies and approaches to behaviour to raise standards. The DFE pairs schools with exemplary behaviour practices, such as



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Polegate, with partner schools who want and need to improve pupil behaviour. The DFE chooses the schools they support and under the scheme there are 2 levels of support offered by the lead school:

1. Extended schools – designed for schools who would benefit from one-to-one support, ongoing coaching and mentoring from a lead school. Support is more intensive and includes completing a behaviour audit and staff training.
2. Core schools – designed for schools who want to work more independently to improve the behaviour culture within their school. Support around their action planning is offered.

Support offered is flexible, with a tailored offer of support, depending on the partner school's circumstances. The programme is based on Tom Bennett's independent review of behaviour in schools, and his report 'Creating a Culture: How school leaders can optimise behaviour', so that school leaders can use the suggested strategies to manage behaviour; work with staff and develop their rules and policies.

As part of the project Polegate has supported 10 schools. 3 of the schools have fallen under the category of extended schools. Staff from Polegate have visited these schools to carry out behaviour audits and supported them with developing action plans, with the aim of showing improvements in behaviour within their settings. Polegate has also supported 7 core schools. This has involved supporting them with their action planning and helping them implement any actions. Part of the support involves the lead school running open days, which give the partner schools the opportunity to observe good behaviour approaches and practices in action in the lead school, together with giving them the opportunity to reflect on any common themes and/or challenges. Polegate has run such open days this year, with over 30 attendees being able to see Polegate showcasing their behaviour policy; journey and practices. Feedback evaluations from these open days have been very positive. In addition, part of the programme involves hub networking events, where lead and partner schools come together to share experiences and good practice. Polegate welcomed 23 delegates from both primary and secondary schools in June to a network day. The school presented on how they support positive wellbeing through their 'My Happy Mind' programme. Polegate is also part of a cluster group of lead schools who meet 3 times a year, working on the theme of mental health and supporting parents.

In future, the school has planned a further open day, which they anticipate will be attended by 8 schools. The programme will run through their school journey, rules and practices, and also provide opportunities for the attendees to have tours and drop-in sessions, together with meeting members of the school community.

Target 2 – Talk for Writing

As part of the Eastbourne Improvement Partnership (EIP) the school embarked on a 2-year Talk for Writing (TfW) project. Initially the school wanted to focus on increasing the motivation and enjoyment for boys in KS1, in writing. Jamie Thomas Talk for Writing Training and Consultancy provided 2 INSET days. The school is now 3 years into their TfW journey and has continued to embed TfW across the school, as part of



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their 'Irresistible Curriculum'. Staff receive regular training in TFW and are working hard developing consistency in practice across the school. This consistent approach can be seen as you walk around the school. Classrooms have washing lines displaying TFW work, including story maps, story foci and grammar skills. I was shown examples of the children's magpie books, which start in Year 2, in which the children gather vocabulary and plan and sequence ideas. I was also shown examples of S maps that children use to sequence their stories and pupils shared how the S map really helps them to plan what they want to write. Work is shared with parents at home through the Seesaw platform. Children can upload work onto their electronic learning journey, Seesaw and teachers can provide feedback so that children can edit and improve their work. The TFW process generally begins with a cold task, with the aim to see what the children can do independently at the start of a unit. Orally based, children internalise the model text and practise key grammar skills, leading to a hot task at the end. The key stages of TFW are imitation; innovation and independent application. I was told that: 'the verbal recall helps their transcription'.

In terms of marking, there is a balance of in depth marking and verbal feedback, with a lot of on-the-spot direction. The school has produced guidance sheets for training next year and the TFW approach is now extending into other subjects. Polegate have shared their good practice with a number of schools and delivered a presentation on TFW, receiving very positive feedback from TFWs founder, Pie Corbett. The impact of this approach is evident through the school's data, with KS2 writing results being above local and national results and more of an even match now between boys and girls writing. The children enjoy TFW. One teacher told me: 'Every child was engaged and wanted to write. They were all engrossed'.

In future, the school plans to continue to support their ECT and new ECT for 23/24 in developing their expertise in delivering TFW. They are also applying to become a TFW showcase school and will carry out an audit in November. TFW showcase schools offer open mornings where teachers from other schools can see TFW in action in the classroom.

Target 3 – My Happy Mind

This year Polegate has introduced the My Happy Mind (mHm) programme across the school, to help with supporting the school's therapeutic ethos. This is a mental and emotional wellbeing programme for teachers, parents and children which aims to help give children the skills in order to thrive in the future by building resilient, balanced and happy minds at home, nursery and school. The programme gives children the preventative strategies, skills and tools to be able to do this. A science-based programme, supported by the NHS, it teaches children to understand about their brains and supports them to manage their wellbeing. It is taught across five modules; Meet your Brain; Celebrate; Appreciate; Relate and Engage; which each introduces a new set of content and habits to help children build resilience, self-esteem and confidence. Children from nursery to year 6 now have a weekly lesson. An online programme, it has lots of resources and children have a mHm journal or workbook. Reception and nursery children also have story books and puppets. There is additional CPD for teachers and an app that parents can access. The school has recruited 2 'Happiness Heroes' in each class. These are children who have really taken an interest in the programme and they meet



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together every 2 weeks. The school has also run coffee mornings to promote the programme with parents and sent out questionnaires to parents, staff and children. In future, the school will continue to embed the My Happy Mind programme into their wellbeing programme within the school and also plans to look at accreditation. Schools can become mHm accredited schools. The accreditation recognises schools that are embedding the mHm curriculum into school life and taking real action to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the school community. Polegate would also like to raise the percentage of parents engaging with the programme.

Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

As Polegate has so successfully led as a Behaviour Hub Lead school and implemented both TfW and mHm, the school now plans to work on a new Flagship project, with the following focus:

To develop Inclusive and Adaptive teaching throughout the school

They are looking to compile a comprehensive systematic approach to their inclusive approaches within the classroom and the adaptive teaching required for certain pupils and specific to subjects. This will be included in their Everything Polegate staff handbook so current staff and new staff will be fully inducted. It blends into the consistent approach to all projects that they deliver at Polegate School and complements the work that they are currently doing with upskilling subject leads and developing pupil independency.

Next steps as discussed during the Flagship Review are:

To promote inclusive and positive teaching.

- Learning walks with Senco and SLT to identify existing inclusive and adaptive teaching and what needs to be improved.

Training session for senior leadership team on inclusive and adaptive teaching.

- Training session for senior leadership team to attend on inclusive and adaptive teaching.

Ongoing CPD on inclusive and adaptive teaching.

- Twilight CPD for teachers with a focus on inclusive and adaptive teaching .

Ongoing CPD on inclusive and adaptive teaching for subject leads.

- Staff meeting CPD sessions for curriculum leaders with a focus on subject-specific inclusive and adaptive strategies.

SEND Learning Walks - coaching of curriculum leaders in narrating and showcasing inclusive and adaptive practice in their subject.



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- Working alongside a local academy to quality assure the judgements and to validate impact.

Inspection interview rehearsals for both the primary SENCos.

- Set up meeting with Senco and subject leads.

Overview

Polegate Primary School is a popular, highly inclusive, 3 form entry, primary school in Polegate, East Sussex. The school has approximately 696 pupils on roll, from nursery to year 6. Whilst the percentage of pupils with SEND is above the national average, the number of pupils eligible for pupil premium is broadly average and only a few pupils speak English as an additional language. Attendance and punctuality are good and is overseen by the school's attendance officer. The school experiences low mobility amongst its pupils. Children make very good progress throughout their time at Polegate, within an ethos of care and positivity.

Polegate School is a Flagship School for the Inclusion Quality Mark and this was the school's sixth IQM Flagship review. At its last Ofsted inspection in January 2020, it was graded outstanding in all areas. The report praised the school for being - 'deeply inclusive and nurturing' and said, 'The vision for what pupils can achieve at Polegate is limitless.'

The Headteacher (HT) told me how at Polegate they are 'striving to be exceptional'. The school has achieved a number of awards, which externally validate the high-quality work which is going on at Polegate, including Artsmark Gold; International School Award; School Games Gold Award and Eco and Healthy Schools Awards. Polegate achieved Dyslexia friendly status in 2017. Whilst the Dyslexia Active Framework has subsequently replaced this in East Sussex, Polegate continues to develop excellent practice in this area. The school is also a gilt school for the Primary Science Quality Mark (PQSM) and is currently undertaking reassessment.

The school vision is 'Learning without limits', with what pupils can achieve being limitless. I was told, 'We see potential in everyone. We don't put a ceiling on things'. The Chair of Governors said that 'It all comes down to learning without limits for every child and every member of staff'. The vision is underpinned by the 3Rs which are the school's Golden Rules of Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be Ready to learn.

Polegate is a happy, welcoming and vibrant community, where staff and governors work as a team and share a commitment to continuous school improvement and meeting the needs of every child. The school has a very strong and dynamic senior leadership team (SLT), led by the Headteacher. A very experienced Assistant Headteacher/Senco leads the inclusion team at the school. The SLT is very approachable. They meet and greet each child every morning and know their families.



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Relationships are key at Polegate: 'knowing and understanding the individual needs of all our pupils and all of the adaptations. We look at all parts of the school day for all children'.

Staff at the school work hard to know all the children and families. They look at individual children's barriers to learning and work to overcome these challenges, so that the pupils can achieve success. Pupil progress meetings are held on a termly basis and the school successfully runs a wide range of impact driven, targeted interventions for pupils. Teaching Assistants run interventions each afternoon. There is a whole school ethos 'that we can, every child can.'

The school has noted an increase in children entering the EYFS with poor speech and language skills, together with an increased need for mental health, wellbeing and emotional support for pupils and families. A level 3 ELKLAN trained TA took up the post of speech and language teaching assistant in September. Currently she is working closely with the reception team on storytelling; role playing; early listening and communication skills. She is supported by an independent SALT who works in the school each Friday and reports 'wonderful results'. She uses the language link programme and talking partners' scheme and has trained some TAs in talking partners. She plans to start bucket time interventions in September. The school has 3 recently qualified ELSAs who have commenced working with individual pupils. From September, teachers will be able to refer pupils for this support. Currently they are also supporting transition work for pupils. The school also has a Thrive practitioner/counsellor/family support adviser who works 2 days per week in an area of the school called The Sanctuary.

Polegate invests heavily in reading recovery and skilled reading recovery teachers work with children who have been highlighted through data or observations, providing daily 30-minute sessions for up to 20 weeks. Lessons are tailored to meet the needs of individual children and clear impact on progress was evidenced through books shared during the review.

Polegate has a large, stable and happy staff, who feel very well supported by the HT, senior leaders and whole school team. Support staff told me that Polegate was 'a lovely place to work', with 'everyone working together as a team'. Staff wellbeing is high on the agenda. The school has recently adapted their reports to make them easier for teachers to complete and they ensure that teachers in the same year group can have their PPA time together. The school also arranges social events for the staff and encourages staff to take risks and develop themselves professionally through a range of CPD opportunities. CPD is a strength of the school, with a weekly CPD staff meeting. Staff meeting notes are sent out on a Thursday and include 'shout-outs' to celebrate success in school. CPD beyond the school is actively encouraged, including nationally accredited qualifications. The school has a number of SLEs who offer support beyond the school. The Everything Polegate handbook is a very comprehensive and useful document outlining all the systems and expectations of the school, ensuring consistency of practice at Polegate.



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I was told that the SLT door is always open if they need support for a child or themselves. Comments from staff included: 'I love the atmosphere. It's a really friendly school' and 'SLT make sure we're looked after. You can go to anyone if you have a problem'.

A teacher said: 'I love the creativity. Such an engaging learning environment; sharing as a whole school collaborative effort. It is a really inclusive environment'.

The school works very effectively with a wide range of external agencies, including their Educational Psychologist, who the Senco reported is used very effectively by the school. With external professionals only being able to offer limited time to the school, the Senco reported that 'very few children are actively supported and you have to be creative. We upskill our staff'.

The school site is beautifully cared for and outdoor space is maximised to encourage purposeful learning and play. Outside areas include a forest school area and quiet area for mindful activities, together with bigger multi-use games areas. The school has a swimming pool; library; ICT suite and learning lab which is used for interventions. The studio houses the school's breakfast and after school club. In addition, the school provides a bagel breakfast for all pupils each day, prepared in The Hub; the school's food and nutrition area. EYFS indoor and outdoor learning environments have been creatively developed to reflect real life and the different areas of learning. Rising 5s access an additional play area adjacent to the reception classes as part of their transition. Polegate has recently opened The Lodge which houses the daily reading recovery and 1-1 focussed reading sessions; ELSA room; maths intervention room and large hall/teaching room. The entrance to the school building is welcoming and internal displays reflect the school's vision of learning without limits. Pupils can place their concerns in a worry box, knowing that an adult will provide them with support.

There is a consistent approach to classroom organisation and classroom environments and teaching strategies help to both support and scaffold pupils' learning and encourage independence. All classrooms have visual timetables; enable tables to support learning; reading areas and displays of children's work. The school uses communicate in print for visuals. Clear consistency across year groups was evident. The school operates a no hands-up policy, ensuring that all children are given the opportunity to speak. Behaviour for learning observed throughout the review was outstanding and the school operates an empowerment approach to behaviour. Ofsted highlighted that 'by being curious not furious, adults help pupils understand their behaviour and develop self-control'.

Polegate offers a rich, inspiring, theme based, creative curriculum; 'An Irresistible Curriculum', with a focus on reading and diversity. Reading is at the heart of learning. The curriculum is very orally based, including opportunities for debate and philosophy for children. Half-termly topics commence with stunning starts and have marvellous middles. Currently subject leaders are together reviewing individual subjects to ensure clear progression of skills and coverage. Subject leaders are given time out of class to carry out blink tests, which provide a flavour of the teaching and standards in their individual subject areas.



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The school provides a wealth of opportunities beyond the curriculum. All teachers run clubs and the children interviewed said that they enjoyed the clubs, activities and events offered at school, such as rock band, money week, swimming and forest school, sharing that they'd recently made nettle tea and a hedgehog house in the forest school. They said that everyone keeps to the 3Rs and achievements are celebrated even those out of school. Opportunities to take responsibility within school are also offered, for example through the school council; head boy and girl positions; digital leaders and year 6 reception buddies. Pupils in year 5 have been invited to be science superstars, and have run science activities at lunchtimes and will be going into science lessons with the science lead to observe. The pupils interviewed were great ambassadors for the school, making comments like: 'All the pupils are kind and caring' and 'the teachers help you in your learning'.

They told me that every lesson is fun. Home learning is encouraged through daily reading; times tables rockstars; doodle maths and writing journals. I was told that the school provides: 'Lots of opportunities to be successful at things' for the children and that they want the children to leave Polegate as 'well-rounded, positive confident happy individuals.' As the AHT/Senco told me: 'We really focus on the celebrations'.

Positive reinforcement is through a whole range of means, such as housepoints for good behaviour; wristbands; praise postcards; learning ladder bookmarks for good learning; star of the week to reward those children who are consistently good and well behaved and spotlight certificates which recognises a wow moment for an individual child. The school holds a celebratory assembly each Monday and a class assembly each Friday, to which parents are invited. At the end of the year star of the year and sports star of the year awards are given.

The school provides a wealth of information for parents to help them feel included in the life of the school and help them to support their child's learning. As part of the hard-to-reach project, the school introduced positive phone calls home. The SEN/Inclusion department runs a termly coffee morning, most recently on anxiety and mHm. Polegate has a Parent Friends Association (PFA) which organises events and raises funds for the school. The parent governor interviewed told me how her children are absolutely thriving at school. The Polegate newsletters celebrate and share the excellent work of the school.

Polegate school has a 'strong and supportive' governing body who inform themselves about the workings of the school through full governing body and subcommittee meetings, together with being linked to year groups and individual subject areas in the school. They visit the school through these links and produce follow up reports for the governing body. The LA offers a comprehensive Governor training package which helps them to fulfil their roles effectively. The LA have also offered to carry out an in-depth external review of the governing body next year, which the governors welcome. The HT told me that Polegate is: 'always moving forward and looking out'.

They place great emphasis on educational research and are keen to do a lot of outreach work, sharing good practice. Polegate belongs to a number of partnerships beyond the school, including being closely linked with Willingdon Primary School and the feeder secondary school, Willingdon Community School. Polegate hosts EIP network groups for



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science 3 times a year and is part of the Eastbourne Hub for Early Excellence. The Senco actively participates in the IQM Cosmos Learning cluster group meetings.

In conclusion, it was a pleasure to visit such an excellent example of an IQM Flagship School. Polegate school continues to fully meet the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award 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. In addition, I suggest that the school considers applying for IQM National Inclusion Champion status in the future, so that it can share its inclusive practice even more widely.

Assessor: Pat Wood

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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