



Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

19th July 2017

Mr Ben Baxter
Executive Head teacher
The Cooper School
Churchill Road
Bicester
Oxfordshire
OX26 4RS

COE Review Date: 27th June 2017

Summary

The Cooper School is a larger than average secondary school with approximately 1300 students on roll from year 7 through to year 13. The Post- Sixteen Centre, which opened to students in September 2011, continues to attract students, with 205 students attending. The move to a Multi Academy Trust from September 2014, in partnership with the campus primary school Glory Farm, forms the current Bicester Learning Academy Trust. There are plans to expand the MAT in the future. There is also a closer working partnership with the nearby Special School. The school remains a part of the Bicester Learning in Partnership (BILP) group which facilitates more widespread secondary and primary partnership collaboration. The Head-teacher and other members of staff evidence their work with schools across Oxfordshire and beyond by the dissemination of excellent practice, by leading on aspects of learning and teaching, using new technologies and flexible learning spaces and by professional development reciprocal visits.

The partnership with Glory Farm Primary School is having a positive impact on pupils progress overall, with staff across both schools often sharing their expertise and these strategies ensure that pupils make the transition from school to school with much greater confidence, as evidenced in the recent Ofsted Inspection of The Cooper School in June 2017 where they maintained their status as a Good school, where the close ties between the two schools was favourably commented on and with which I concur from a visit to Glory Farm and conversations with the Head teacher and staff during the review. Ofsted commented, ***“There is a caring, nurturing and inclusive ethos that permeates the school”*** and ***“a staff body who genuinely care about the pupils and wants the best for them. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and make good progress from their starting points. Pupils have great confidence in their teachers and very much value what staff do for them”***. A fantastic accolade for the school and its staff and one with which I agree from the evidence seen during the review.

Thank you for inviting me back to your school to carry out your third Centre of Excellence Review. I enjoyed my visit immensely. It was a pleasure to talk to staff and students some of whom I had met last year who were all extremely supportive of the school and spoke about the progress made since the last review, I was again impressed by the welcoming nature of the school and the dedication of all staff to ensure that the needs of the students are continually met. Over the course of the review it was clear to see evidence that inclusion is at the heart of everything that happens in the school and is highlighted by the school's mission statement "***Dream Big, work hard, be kind***", and "***Where Learning Matters***".

A school where all students are valued as individuals. This is clearly encapsulated in everything that happens here as a school and as a part of the local community. This is a school that is clearly at the heart of its community where inclusion is ingrained in the very fabric of the school and care, nurture and support is at the very heart of everything that occurs here, for staff and students alike. It is an extremely impressive, inclusive learning environment where students are encouraged to achieve their full potential, where everyone involved is committed to the inclusion of all students.

I was again, impressed by the confident and happy students and by the shared vision of the staff in the school, who are committed to inclusion in its broadest and best sense. Staff are inspired to develop as individual learners and to contribute to the inclusive ethos of the school. There is a happy, stimulating, learning environment throughout the school with a focus on helping students to develop the skills, which they need to be effective and are encouraged to become independent learners. Students I observed in lessons during a tour of the school, at break and lunchtime are friendly, polite and able to talk honestly and confidently about their learning and their experiences at The Cooper School. During the review, I met a wide variety of staff and students to discuss and thoroughly explore both the review of last year's actions and the Action Plan for the year ahead which also enabled me to build up a picture of the superb inclusive practice at the school. Everyone I met was helpful and spoke very positively about their experiences at the school, often at length.

During the review, I saw the school at work and experienced the truly inclusive ethos and culture that is embedded in everything the school does, it is ingrained and is very tangible to all who visit the school. Students are valued for who they are and who they will become in the future. The Staff are exceedingly positive about the school and go the extra mile and beyond to ensure that the student's needs are met. There is a superb quality of support, care and nurture that is continually evolving to enhance provision at the school. All staff I spoke to in meetings or around the school were very positive and they are clearly very enthusiastic, highly motivated, professional and work exceptionally hard to ensure that the needs of all students in the school are met. There is an excellent rapport between the staff, and between the staff and the students in the school. They are committed to ensuring every success for their students and themselves, for example, ensuring that students can access life changing experiences such as on the Tall Ships Programme for PP students, and the 'Great Get Together' initiative that the school are looking to make an annual event. Whilst ensuring every student is known and stretched to achieve their full potential.

Having completed a rigorous and thorough review and having discussed and agreed the targets cited in the report and their involvement in and capacity to support and attend

Cluster Group meetings and understanding that their involvement will form a significant part of their next annual review, reflecting their capacity to maintain their Flagship Status. I recommend that the school moves from Centre of Excellence status to hold Flagship status and continues to be reviewed annually for the next three years.

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



Sources of data

Prior to the day, a variety of information about the school and its inclusive processes was reviewed using the school website that included numerous strategic policies and documents. As part of the review, discussions were held with the Head-teacher, Senior leaders, key members of staff and students, an evaluation of the progress and impact of IQM Action Plans for 2016-17, a tour of the [SEP] school and documentary scrutiny and the opportunity to discuss the schools Action Plan for 2017 -2018.

The review giving a comprehensive picture of the schools superb inclusive practice and a great insight into the future school's plans and the reasons underpinning them. The review of documentation during the day included evidence presented by staff in meetings related to their roles and expertise and the schools IQM action plan. The evidence presented reflected the outstanding inclusive practice of the school in its broadest sense. The discussions with staff provided helpful opportunities to reflect on the sustained superb practice seen and heard, as well as to agree the areas for development over the next review period.

Assessment Commentary on Flagship Action Plan for 2017 – 2018

Element 1 – The Inclusion values of the school

- New SENCO to explore ways to further disseminate best practice for vulnerable groups.

The school after a great deal of consultation is embarking on an innovative and comprehensive programme of Continuing Professional Learning (CPL) during 2107–18 and the newly appointed SENCO will use the new CPL groups in place from September 2017 in the areas of B4L, C Ram, T &L best practice as a vehicle to disseminate and continue to improve upon the best practice in regard, to all relevant groups of students across the school. It will be interesting to see how this has developed at the next review point and an analysis of the success of the process.

- Review the significant restructure of the Inclusion Team.

The current and new SENCO will begin a Review of the structure of the Inclusion Team starting in June 2017, that should be concluded in time for implementation for the start of the new academic year. The review will look at all areas of inclusion and support evaluating current practice and looking at ways to use support innovatively and to further increase the already excellent support offered, looking at how HLTAs and TAs are deployed and the most effective method of interventions. While also looking at how support staff can have increased opportunities to be involved in planning and improved access to SDP. It will be of interest to see how the changes implemented have been embedded and to see an analysis of success criteria.



Element 3 - Learning Attitudes, Values and Personal Development

- Further development of PSHE programme.

The school have developed their provision for Year 7 and 8 students, with one lesson per fortnight delivered by dedicated staff rather than Form Tutors and not in Form Time which has raised the profile and ensured that students get more effective opportunities and are participating in valuable and appropriate curriculum opportunities. Now that the PSHE programme has been embedded in Years 7 & 8 and proved its effectiveness, where it has focused on key aspects such as well-being, healthy relationships and how to stay safe online; it will be rolled out to Year 9 from September.

Part of the ongoing evaluation of PSHE will focus on the evaluation of performances for KS4 and the school's current system to see whether it is the most appropriate method of delivery at KS4 and to look at whether there is a more effective way to deliver PSHE opportunities for the older students.

Another area of focus has been to further develop inclusion practice to ensure that diversity and difference is celebrated and to encourage students to be, not only tolerant but also, celebratory of difference. Equality has been at the centre of our plans to ensure students are confident to be themselves; to wear hijabs in school, to be able to come out as transgender or to be able to discuss their sexual orientation in a safe environment, this key aspect of the school's work will continue to be developed throughout the next review period. They may find it useful to link with schools who have a more diverse culture to further this work.

- Review progress with the Anti-Bullying strategies.

The school has appointed a member of staff as their Anti-Bullying Ambassador to monitor and review the work so far and to lead their Anti Bullying Strategies, as part of this a student survey was undertaken earlier in the year and the results of the survey has influenced the work of the ambassador and the school this year. It will be of interest to see how the Ambassadors role has progressed and what further strategies have been put in place at the next review point, and whether the role of student Ambassador/Peer Mentors has developed.

Element 4 - Learner Progress and the Impact on Learning

- Close monitoring and review of progress of groups of students – especially FSM and More Able.

The monitoring and review of the progress of cohorts and groups of students is very effective across the school, with interventions identified, monitored and analysed by key members of SLT. The More Able provision will continue to be a focus for review to ensure there is stretch and challenge for the top 10% in each year group. This sits alongside the rigorous monitoring of all groups to ensure they are stretched and challenged and is prioritised through Quality First Teaching across the school and



effective differentiation for all students in lesson, where students choose their starting level using Bronze, Silver and Gold tasks and can then naturally progress to the next level when they have mastered that level or if they find the task too difficult can go back to consolidate their learning and then move forwards. Those students who start on Gold are also able to progress with extension tasks provided as a matter of course by the teacher. This is supported by and through the well embedded School Teacher and Learner expectations, that have been validated by Ofsted.

- Further collaborative work with KS2 teachers to ensure there is a smooth transition, especially for the more able so there is stretch and challenge from the beginning and for the less able who need to be supported.

The school has effective links with local primary schools and a very successful transition programme that ensure Year 6 into Year 7 is as smooth as possible. Their links with Glory Farm Primary school which is part of the Mat and on the same site is very effective with staff working closely together and visiting each site to deliver lessons and collaborate closely together. Each Year 6 pupil through the transition programme and transition visits to their primary school has been asked to arrive at The Cooper School on their first day in September with three pieces of work (English, Maths and Science) so that as well as information from the transition process their new teachers will have a benchmark to ensure standards and attainment does not drop. The school's HLTA support for Year 6 students will continue to be developed to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students, with more supported work being developed and evolving in their feeder primary schools.

Element 5 – Learning and Teaching

- The impact of this year's CPL and plans for next year.

The Cooper School are keen to enhance and improve their existing CPL programme and the way it is run, to place the most value on the dialogue between teachers about their teaching and about student's learning making it an even more integral part of the professional learning of all teaching staff. Throughout 2015 -16 the school worked to make CPL more personalised and engaged in a variety of consultations focusing on the criteria for teaching and learning, alongside looking at research into a variety of models used in other schools. The evidence from this research suggested that CPL activities need to be ongoing and embedded in everyday practice to bring about meaningful impact. The DHT with SLT invested a lot of time into this research and through consultation has come up with 8 areas for CPL groups during the next academic year:-

- B4L
- post 16T &L
- Student Well-Being
- Staff Well- Being
- Marking and Assessment



- Tutor Time Development
- Literacy
- Developing Best Practice

All staff will be asked to join a group of their choice, each group will have a leader (not SLT) to coordinate their work/research project and this will be the whole school CPL over the next year. Each group will be self-determining but with key points in the year to give some feedback on their Action research style projects and with a mandate to report their findings at a point later in the year so that the findings from each group can be evaluated and hopefully put into practice in the school during the next academic year. This is an excellent and very innovative project that it will be interesting to discuss with participants at the next review point and to see the outcomes and reports. The school should be commended for this approach.

Element 7 – Governing Body and Management, External Accountability/Support:

- To further explore the Governor Quality Mark.

This is an ongoing action from last year. The GB looked at the GQM last year but it was felt that it wasn't the right time for a variety of reasons. So, the New clerk to the governors has been tasked to explore the GQM and to put a plan in place for 2017/18 to allow for the successful application and completion of the mark.

Element 8 – The School in the Community

- Involvement in the Healthy Bicester initiative.

During 2016 -17 the school were invited to participate and be a key stakeholder in the Healthy Bicester initiative as a flagship school for health and wellbeing. A key event last year was their participation in an arts programme aimed at students who were vulnerable to having low self-esteem impacting on their mental health. During 2017-18 the school will continue to be involved in the 3 Year project looking at diet, fitness and social aspects of health and fitness. They will continue to Coordinate and run programmes alongside the Healthy Bicester team, such as their recent Art project for vulnerable students where the students work was showcased in an Art Studio in the town centre. The school are also looking to map out a 1-kilometre area in the school grounds so that students from all key stages can walk a Km at lunch, while promoting the Walk to School, Walk to Work initiative. They are also looking to find funding to improve the bike sheds so that more students can bike to school and their bikes can be locked away safely and securely. It will be interesting to see how this project has developed over the next year and The Cooper School can support other schools and institutions to be actively involved.



Recommendation

It was a pleasure to revisit and review such a fantastic, vibrant and extremely welcoming and friendly school where inclusion lies at the heart of and underpins everything that happens both inside and outside the building. The Cooper School continues to grow as a superb, inclusive, extremely positive and very purposeful school community focused on the highest quality teaching, learning and provision for all those involved, students and staff alike. It is a testament to the staff, governors and students that they continue to focus on inclusion and to ensure everyone is catered for and grows as individuals and that they are able to cater for the needs of groups and individuals at crucial times, such as through the use of the CHERISH programme run by a volunteer from the local church who offers six sessions at the school to support students with issues, helping them to be self-reflective and develop their confidence. Mindfulness sessions are offered to students who need the support. The school provides an outstanding enabling and supportive environment for all to grow and have their contributions valued and have an opportunity to demonstrate what they can do. The staff all have a very clear vision for where they want the school to go. Continuous improvement in all areas is key to what is done here and everyone works hard to ensure this happens and continue improvements in their outstanding inclusive practices, set alongside rigorous yet supportive accountability processes, tracking and monitoring of students. The school is not content to sit on its laurels but is continuously looking for the next improvement or innovation that will move things on and make things even better for the students and the staff, ensuring that everyone shares and contributes to maximising the success for all who either work in this, outstandingly inclusive school or are educated here.

The Cooper School continues to use a diverse range of professional partners and agencies to ensure that the school's superb inclusive ethos and atmosphere meets the needs of its students and its staff, they should be commended for their provision in this respect. All staff spoken to during the review were extremely enthusiastic, highly motivated and proactive in their efforts to improve what is offered to the students, **putting their students at the heart of the school**, working hard to create a safe and inspiring place to learn, where students are respected, their talents are nurtured and they can thrive, seamlessly supporting the schools aims and ethos.

There is a superb culture of critical reflection that permeates the school meaning that existing strategies, programmes and schemes are robustly evaluated and refined where appropriate. Additionally, the school continues to seek new solutions to the challenges that are faced in achieving the goal of enabling all students to succeed to the best of their abilities and is continually developing its exceptional practice on inclusion and is sharing its excellent practice with other schools, locally and will continue to build links with other schools further afield.



Further Developments agreed after discussion:

Element 1:

- Continue to develop and expand links with other schools both locally, and nationally in the arena of Inclusion and attend IQM Cluster sessions during the next review period.
- Consider adding an international dimension to the work of the school. The school might investigate the possibilities provided through the Comenius Project through the British Council, Connecting Classrooms and the International Schools' Award.

Element 3:

- To investigate and consider involvement in the Adventure Service Challenge. The ASC scheme is a flexible, organised, progressive scheme of activity for young people between the ages of 8 and 14+. It is made up of 4 Stages. ASC Group Leaders are free to adapt the scheme to meet local situations and the requirements of young people with special needs, if necessary extending the age limit. There are no tests to pass, the young people taking part are assessed on the measure of their experience in each activity. It may be used as a direct preparation for entry into the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- Consider using the 3m cloud Library App for electronic devices or similar App linked to the schools local Libraries to enhance reading opportunities for students.

The 3M™ Cloud Library allows the borrowing and reading of eBooks and eAudio-books from the local public library for free. The library needs to subscribe to the service and a library card and PIN will be needed to access the content. Navigation and personalisation on the App makes it easier than ever to find eBooks or Audiobooks from local public library's. The app includes a fully functional reader allowing the user to read their eBook directly in the app, as well as bookmark and save the position of their book across devices. It also includes an Audiobook player, allowing the user to download, play and listen to their books off-line, this would be a useful addition to the school and support students reading both in school and at home. I would thoroughly recommend the use of the App.

Assessor: Steve Gill

Date of Review: 27th June 2017