



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name Hirst Wood Nursery School
Clarence Road
Saltaire
Shipley, Bradford
BD18 4NJ

Head/Principal Ms Susan Jayne Taylor

IQM Lead Ms Susan Jayne Taylor

Date of Review 30th April 2025

Assessor Ms Nichola Russell

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group IP NW

Ambassador Ms Sylvia Cramp

Next Meeting

Meeting Focus

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2023	26 th Sept 2023	Yes
Spring 2024	26 th Feb 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	6 th June 2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	14 th Oct 2024	Yes
Spring 2025	5 th Feb 2025	
Summer 2025		

The Impact of the Cluster Group (with details of the impact of last three meetings)

Staff from Hirst Wood Nursery School prioritise participation in their Cluster Group; IP NW and have attended regularly, reflecting on aspects of the training shared to support and inform their daily routines whilst also utilising content to provide CPD opportunities for staff. The impact of each session attended has had a positive influence on developing staff knowledge, understanding and ultimately supporting all staff in meeting the needs of their remarkable school community. Staff I had the privilege to



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speak with during the visit spoke with enthusiasm and articulated clearly the positive impact of each of the sessions attended both on a personal and school-based level.

- Attendance at the Summer term 2024 Cluster group focussed upon the observing of host school staff modelling sessions and sharing their schools practice in relation to Reading and Phonics: Little Wandle and Total Communication. On reflection, the staff at Hirst Wood has created their own Total Communication Approach aligned and bespoke to the needs of their own school community.
- Attendance at the Autumn term 2024 Cluster group provoked discussions around the impact of joined up working and collaboration alongside the importance and effects of the use of robust processes and procedures around safeguarding and vulnerability. This was a valuable opportunity to liaise with Cluster group colleagues to identify potential ways to connect with wider professionals. Staff are currently in the process of writing their own tool to assess children within the context of their whole family and provide tiered waves of support.
- Impact of attendance at the Spring term 2025 Cluster group focussed on numerous aspects of interest: transition, curriculum development and sports opportunities. Staff in attendance has disseminated the content to Leaders with the outcome being to investigate the various funding streams and grants available in order to further enhance their already exemplary curriculum offer.

Evidence

Meetings with:

- School Leaders regarding IQM Review and Action Plan
- Parents/Carers
- Governor for SEND and Attachment
- Governor for Well-being
- Staff team to discuss the impact of the IQM priorities
- Key members of staff regarding the impact of participating in IQM Cluster Groups, additional partnerships, and the continued evidence towards the eight IQM elements
- School Leaders regarding future IQM and COE action plan in relation to the School Development Plan.

Additional Activities:

- Learning Walk
- Woodlands Wednesday – Support group for parents



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- Time in classrooms
- Reflection and review of a wide range documentation to support the IQM COE review; vision and values, pupil premium strategy, school improvement plan, governor annual report to parents, curriculum long term planning, SEND information report
- Policies
- Website
- Social media



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Evaluation of Targets for last 12 Months

It remains clear that the deeply rooted vision of Hirst Wood Nursery School continues to underpin and permeate every aspect of school life. The powerful sense of community; acceptance and belonging and the sharing of unified values and principles so skilfully lead and nurtured by the exceptional Headteacher remains as strongly evident as was experienced on my initial visit to this wonderful setting.

"The sense of community in the school is palpable."
Ofsted, 2024.

Stakeholders are keen to ensure that children are supported effectively and continue to prioritise the care and well-being of the whole child first and foremost. In championing this holistic approach to teaching and learning, the wellbeing of all is recognised and prioritised; embedding a bespoke and personalised approach to learning for every child in order to ensure needs are met. In doing so, children fortunate to attend Hirst Wood Nursery demonstrate high confidence and raised self - esteem and as a result, achieve exceptionally well and make progress in the widest sense across the curriculum and in the outside world.

As stated during my previous visit, everyone in this school is important and included unconditionally, and due to the ethos of care and trust, every member of the school community truly feels that they belong and are valued.

Target 1: Achieve Communication Friendly setting status

This was successfully achieved during the 2023-24 academic year.

Since my previous visit to Hirst Wood Nursery School, Leaders and staff have continued to prioritise the development of high-quality inclusive practices in relation to speech, language, and communication. Elklan's Communication Friendly Settings (CFS) Programme is a nationally accredited training pathway designed specifically to empower settings to support the speech, language, and communication of children. Leaders and staff have undertaken a rigorous approach to accessing each critical aspect of CPD in order to meet the diverse needs of the children within their care; Speech and Language Support, Communication Counts. This initiative supports settings in building a deeper understanding of speech, language, and communication development, ensuring that school staff are equipped to support all children, particularly those with speech, language, and communication needs.

Communication Friendly Settings (CFS) accreditation is awarded to settings that support their staff in acquiring knowledge and skills around communication and language development. Leaders at Hirst Wood Nursery are determined to ensure that their staff access relevant and pertinent CPD in order to meet the needs of every child. This was reiterated during meetings with staff who value both the CPD opportunities on offer and also the regular Performance Management meetings where open, honest dialogue is welcomed in relation to staff articulating both current needs and their potential future plans.



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Achieving CFS status not only enhances the learning experience for the children of Hirst Wood but also promotes staff collaboration, skill development, and the creation of an inclusive, supportive environment. This prestigious status demonstrates a strong commitment to creating a communication rich environment that supports the learning and development of all children. I am delighted that Hirst Wood Nursery School has achieved this fantastic accolade.

Next Steps:

Renew accreditation in 2027

Target 2a: To increase opportunities for greater integration between Woodlands and mainstream children.

Leaders and staff remain proactive in ensuring equity of provision, practice, teaching and learning for all children. The learning walk undertaken during the visit day evidenced clearly the positive impact of the new adaptations to both the daily structures and staffing adjustments allowing for greater integration between Woodlands and Mainstream classes. It was an absolute delight to observe all children embracing the wonderfully creative free flow environment; pure joy on their faces as they engaged in a wide range of water play experiences (on the hottest day of the year so far). The squirting of water via pipettes and syringes onto my toes was very much welcomed! Staff were adept at facilitating play; children demonstrating a natural desire to experiment by pouring and filling containers, discovering all the ways in which water moves and how it reacts with other objects (small world resources). Progress evidenced in Individual Education Plans (IEP's) and personalised assessment records also demonstrates the positive impact of the adaptations and the increased integration.

Target 2b: Increase opportunities for wraparound care.

This was successfully achieved in the 2023-24 academic year.

Leaders were able to demonstrate the increased opportunities for wrap around care via the Sunshine Club register with an increased number of children accessing this provision both before and after school. There has also been an increase in paid for sessions.

Next Step:

Continue to review with new intake of children to ensure that provision is personal and developmentally appropriate.

Target 3: To further embed emotional literacy

It was a real privilege to speak with the Deputy Headteacher regarding the recent submission to achieve the Attachment and Trauma Sensitive Settings Award 0-5 (ATSSA). Hirst Wood Nursery School recently submitted a portfolio of evidence to meet the criteria of each section; 1. The Setting Community, 2. Developmental Vulnerability – Central Executive Function; Regulation; Development Delay. In Section 1, the Deputy Headteacher provided extensive evidence to meet the required criteria; Attachment



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Aware, for 20 set questions. The questions related to the School Development Plan, planning, CPD, Governance, relationships, key staff, physiological needs, transition, the daily welcome, time in, curriculum development, care, and emotional support. The level of evidence provided per question was in-depth and detailed – exemplary. Evidence for Section 2, 16 questions was equally as fulsome, thorough, and rigorous to the point where the assessment team felt strongly that Hirst Wood Nursery School should achieve Silver status rather than Bronze. A fantastic achievement.

Leaders are keen to further develop the skills of staff to ensure consistency of approach when developing oracy skills. Emotion Coaching will be prioritised and become more firmly embedded in whole school practice in order to support children in being able to express themselves through language linked to feelings.

In addition, an application for the Bradford Healthy Minds Chartermark has been submitted. This award focusses upon giving schools the opportunity to showcase the development of their whole school approach to emotional health and wellbeing based on 8 key principles. After speaking with the Deputy Headteacher with regard to the submission, speaking with Governors and staff and observing practice during the day, I am confident that Hirst Wood will successfully achieve the Healthy Minds Chartermark.

Next Step:

- Prioritise Emotion Coaching (EEF) training in 2026-27
- Undertake the Plan, do, review project with EEF

Agreed Targets for next 12 Months

With regard to future targets, in depth discussions with Leaders demonstrated their collective drive, ambition and rigour in ensuring that the children and families of Hirst Wood Nursery School continue to receive a tailored and bespoke extended curriculum offer aligned to the needs of individuals and of the locality. The Headteacher articulated the ambitious and exciting plans for future improvement planning evidencing the research, impact of monitoring, evaluation and review and internal intelligence employed to ensure that future targets meet need.

Target 1: To support and improve the mental health of our school community (children, parents, staff)

Comments

Leaders and named Governor for Wellbeing are proactive in approach and are keen to prioritise participation in further CPD and embed a range of strategies and initiatives to support and improve the mental health and well-being of both the School and wider community. Feedback from recent participation in Children's Mental Health week has been extremely positive, therefore Leaders are eager to apply this further with the aim of introducing a weekly 'Wellbeing Wednesday' as part of the outdoor teaching and learning opportunities on offer. Planning will also be adapted to include a 'Happy thought of the Week.' As identified by the Governor for Wellbeing, an opportunity for parents to engage in a 'Parent's Clinic' will also be introduced with the aim of supporting parents with a range of well-being strategies alongside providing support in their chosen areas of discussion. Additional CPD for staff will take place with Emotion Coaching (EEF) being prioritised and disseminated to the whole staff team, governors, and parents. Due to the forthcoming new appointment of Deputy Headteacher, further CPD will be allocated to ensure they have the appropriate skills and qualifications to undertake the role of Mental Health Lead. Appraisal and Supervision meetings (both highly valued by staff) will continue to take place on a termly basis. Leaders will also continue to utilise School Development Planning (SDP) meetings to share information and agree implementation strategies providing additional time and classroom cover for the preparation of resources and attendance at any additional training required to ensure success of new strategies and initiatives.

Target 2: To devise and implement an internal resilience tracker to improve outcomes for children & families

Comments

The Early Years Teacher during the review day provided a comprehensive overview of the Schools chosen evidence informed Resilience Tracker (EEF). During the next twelve months, Leaders, the named Governor for Attachment and Trauma and staff will fully implement the Resilience Tracker which will provide a holistic overview of children and their families. Leaders will then create a tool that captures the essence of what they want and need to know about children and their families using a spreadsheet to code entries to the agreed questions. They will then implement a personalised response based on the findings; bespoke to need. School development meetings will be used to



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share the tracker, the information gathering process, implementation and the rationale for its use with a whole School training day allocated to model the use of the tracker and explain how it will support all staff in identifying personal and pertinent support for children and families.

Target 3 Continue to build on the range of opportunities to further strengthen links with the local and wider community.

Comments

A wide range of evidence strongly demonstrates the commitment, dedication and determination of leaders and all staff in ensuring that children, families, and community have opportunities to engage with partnerships and agencies to support the whole child and whole family. The school works tirelessly in this area with parents verbalising strongly their gratitude for all the school does. Leaders are proactive in their approach to further developing, extending and embedding community and agency links for children and families and will continue to include opportunities for the community to visit School into the academic calendar; open days, stay and plays, transition visits, themed weeks, grandparents stay and play sessions, bedtime stories. In addition, Hirst Wood will participate in the Local Authority Intergenerational Play project. This will extend the current, highly valued work of the School with local care homes (Shipley Manor) to provide a wider range of opportunities for intergenerational socialisation. Ipsative data collection will be undertaken to measure the impact. Furthermore, Hirst Wood will host and resource a celebration event and community-based events linked to the Bradford City of Culture (garden party). An exciting twelve months ahead.



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Overview

Hirst Wood Nursery School is one of seven Nursery Schools in the Bradford Authority. The school has a specially resourced provision for ten children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) with placements within the provision allocated by the Local Authority.

Relentless in their commitment to providing aspirational opportunities for every child, with inclusion embedded at its core, Hirst Wood Nursery School provides a curriculum where learning is fun, meaningful, purposeful, and bespoke to needs with the aim being to foster skills for life-long learning and living. Stakeholders speak with clarity and with conviction of the experiences they wish their children to engage with, each underpinned by the core beliefs of the school which are depicted prominently in the school entrance.

"Hirst Wood Nursery School and Children's Centre value creativity, individuality, responsibility, challenge, and sense of community. We aim to inspire a love of learning in a happy, safe, and secure environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and involved."

From arrival and stepping into the Hirst Wood family, I was warmly welcomed by two wonderful members of the administration team; such a friendly, courteous, and highly efficient reception that created the atmosphere and established the positive aura for the whole day.

It was an absolute pleasure and privilege to meet again with the highly skilled, determined, and dedicated leadership team who demonstrate a deep commitment to support, encourage and nurture lifelong learners. What is clearly evident is the detailed knowledge and understanding leaders have of every child, to ensure that learning opportunities are maximised, which in turn enables children to be engaged fully in their learning, achieve and succeed. It is clear that all leaders, staff, parents, and children 'buy in' to the inclusive culture.

At the start of the school day, I had the pleasure of meeting with a number of parents – what a joyful experience this was! A wonderful opportunity to celebrate the commitment and determined approach of leaders in ensuring adaptations and adjustments are made to fully support and welcome children and parents into the school family. Each parent was keen to articulate their views on the positive impact the school is having on their children and on themselves as parents. They were fulsome in their feedback highlighting relationships and the open, trusting, honest communication as key. Each parent gave a passionate overview of the supportive environment their children access and how leaders have prioritised the CPD and effective recruitment of staff who hold the values, qualities and strengths required to support their children to succeed. Parents readily explained the range of needs requiring support and of their trust in school staff to meet need. They spoke of the warmth of all staff and of the empathy displayed daily when speaking about their children; "safe, reassurance, trust, secure, comfortable, flexibility" were key words shared. The fact that transition, which can, at times, cause increased anxiety, is seen by parents as being seamless due to the constant dialogue had, the depth of detail shared during IEP/EHCP review meetings and parent communication evenings and events culminating in all key personnel having optimum information to inform next steps, is a real achievement.



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Children are described as being "happy, excited, and thriving" whilst enjoying learning at Hirst Wood with parents speaking of the "feeling and the vibe" of the school as being "something really special." The Early Years log was also highly celebrated with every parent looking forward to hearing the "ping" of their phone meaning an update of a photograph or video of their child engaging in learning has been uploaded, whilst also appreciating the opportunity to comment and engage in dialogue with staff members. Every parent celebrated the fact that; "all staff know and understand our children," "staff have their best interests at heart" whilst recognising the wider impact of support for the family; "I wouldn't have got through the last 2 years without these guys". One parent summed up their feelings of Hirst Wood Nursery perfectly; "They are the best!"

During the day I also had the opportunity to see Woodlands Wednesday, the monthly parent group taking place. This week, the session was facilitated by the Specialist Teacher and Governor for SEND, Attachment and Trauma and proved to be another valuable opportunity to observe the home/school partnership in action. The focus of the session was 'creating opportunities for communication.' The Specialist Teacher had prepared a number of resources to share with parents with additional information offered as handouts for parents to take home, which also included suggested prompts for getting children's attention. Parents appreciated the resources and the opportunity to discuss the suggestions for creating opportunities and encouraging interaction via people games and how these may be adapted for their own child/ren. Additional resources were also provided focussing on intensive interaction and how everyday items readily available in the family home could be used to enhance interactions, fabric, mirror, ball, bubbles. Finally, the importance of visuals; objects, signs, photos, pictures, symbols was discussed highlighting the importance of each in providing context, making ideas more concrete whilst also reinforcing that the use of visuals can help children to "reduce anxiety, make sense of the world, aid independence, enable anticipation of events and cope with transition." A highly informative session, facilitated with care and sensitivity by the Specialist Teacher and wonderfully knowledgeable Governor for SEND, Attachment and Trauma who demonstrates a true connection with each of the parents in attendance due to their shared experiences. Parents trust, respect and value the personal expertise of this Governor and feel accepted, safe, and secure.

When speaking with the Governor for SEND, Attachment and Trauma and Governor for Wellbeing there was an overwhelming enthusiasm, determination, and dedication to ensuring that the children, families, and staff of Hirst Wood are fully supported. Both Governing Body members demonstrated a deep commitment to ensuring that all stakeholders are able to participate and engage, and that personal strengths and talents are realised within a caring, supportive environment where wellbeing of all is prioritised and central to the values and vision of the school; "Everyone in our school is important and included".

The Governor for Wellbeing is ideally placed, having a professional background in nursing to support the introduction of plans and implementation of strategies and resources at a strategic level. It was wonderful to hear their plans for supporting wellbeing of all staff utilising outcomes from staff wellbeing questionnaires as a starting point for action. The introduction of a central display in the staff room depicting uplifting, positive quotes, recognition of staff (shout outs), parental input – what parents



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are thankful to Hirst Wood Nursery for, opportunity for staff gatherings/activities for example; mindfulness, yoga, walks, reading and coffee mornings in addition to the possibility of incorporating a team building and relaxation day into the staff calendar prioritises a number of ways to support the wellbeing of staff. The wellbeing of the Headteacher was also recognised as being of huge importance. Governors recognise that the Headteacher is highly attuned and receptive to the needs of the school family, personally providing a significant level of care, thanks, and appreciation to ensure the health and happiness of others. Staff shared during discussions during the review day the “genuine care” of the Headteacher towards staff and the fact they are so emotionally aware of all individuals within the school family; “Their door is always open.” Governors are keen to ensure that the Headteacher receives the level of thanks and appreciation deserved and feel strongly that this is an area they aim to continue to give additional priority.

Both Governing Body members spoke of the CPD undertaken to ensure that they can fulfil their roles and responsibilities and of their strategic roles in relation to school improvement; reports to the full Governing Board provided at every meeting ensuring all stakeholders are fully briefed on current matters, visit records. During this discussion there was also an opportunity to view the Early Years log. This was a valuable opportunity to see the 2-way dialogue, photographs and videos previously celebrated by parents in action. In addition, due to the success of the Woodlands Wednesday parent group, the Governor for Wellbeing is keen to replicate a similar type of session for all parents linked to Wellbeing. This is an exciting proposal and one where the two Governing Body members are eager to work together to ensure maximum outreach to the school community by use of pertinent advertising; social media, newsletters, drop- ins.

Speaking with the Early Years Teacher and Early Years Practitioner was an absolute pleasure. This was a valuable opportunity to hear staff speak with such enthusiasm and honesty about their roles and responsibilities with children and families and how valued they feel within the school environment; a fulsome, enthusiastic and detailed overview of their deep rooted commitment and determination to support all children to succeed. They value the opportunities for professional development; Safeguarding, First Aid, Resilience in Children, Launchpad for Literacy, Speech and Language and the opportunities for collaborative working; visits to other schools and attendance at IQM Cluster group meetings in addition to the valued termly supervision and the impact this all has on teaching, learning and outcomes. The introduction and impact of the evidenced informed ‘Resilience Tracker’ (Education Endowment Foundation) was discussed with staff able to articulate the holistic approach adopted to build resilience in young children; I have (external support), I am (inner strengths), I can (skills and abilities).

From speaking with staff, it is clear that there is a collective responsibility to give children the most worthwhile and valuable experiences possible. All adults who are fortunate to be employed at Hirst Wood Nursery are kind, caring, nurturing, motivated and highly proactive. Staff work tirelessly to support their children and are happy to do so due to the respect shown and feeling of being valued and appreciated by Leaders and parents.



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The learning walk which followed was an example of how each area and space has been utilised to drive the children's engagement and immersion in language and oracy. What was also apparent and should be celebrated is that learning environments were unique and defined by a strategic thought process based upon need, with adjustments made to ensure each child can engage with *their* learning. It was an absolute joy to visit each area and absorb the happiness and delight of children engaging in high quality play experiences supported and scaffolded by an experienced and expert staff team. Magical!

The final feedback meeting with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher demonstrated their detailed knowledge of school improvement and their commitment to high expectations and excellence for all. As was clearly observed throughout the visit, all staff remain proactive, keen to share ideas and undertake high quality CPD with the aim of ensuring that they have the skills to lead, teach and impact positively on the development of the whole child. It was an absolute privilege to have the opportunity to meet with such an influential staff team and members of the Governing Body who continually strive to offer children and their families a rich tapestry of experiences which reach far beyond the academic curriculum. Having discussed the progress since the last IQM review and the school's plans for the future, I am of the opinion that the school should continue to hold Centre of Excellence status. Thank you to everyone, including the wonderful children, who made my day so special.

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 Centre of Excellence. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence 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 Centre of Excellence status.

Assessor: Ms Nichola Russell

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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