



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



**School Name:** Forest Academy  
Bridle Road  
Croydon  
Surrey  
CR0 8HQ

**Head/Principal:** Abigail Oldfield

**IQM Lead:** Kate Samuels

**Date of Review:** 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**Assessor:** Kenny Frederick

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

Cluster Group - 24 Carat Cluster

Ambassador - Kenny Frederick

Date of Next Meeting - 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: Catching up following lockdown

### **Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:**

- Self-evaluation document
- Review of website to examine key policies
- Museum of Hope display (PowerPoint)
- Forest Academy Feedback Policy
- Forest Academy Peer Coaching Prompts

### **Discussions held with:**

- SENCO
- Principal and Associate Head
- Discussion with KS1 pupils
- Discussion with KS 2 pupils
- Teaching Assistants



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



- Class Teachers
- Pupil and Family Support Worker & Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Attendance Manager
- Safeguarding Lead
- SENCo and Deputy Safeguarding Lead

### Summary of Targets from 2019-2020

The SEN Coordinator and I went through last year's action plan and discussed each target and actions taken in some detail.

#### **Target 1- To continue to develop a challenging curriculum especially for the gifted and talented pupils.**

Since the Forest Academy joined a new trust (The Inspire Partnership) in April the school's entire curriculum has been reviewed and a new curriculum is being implemented. The new challenge curriculum is based on the Trust's values of 'excellence in everything' and 'continuous growth'. This curriculum has been designed to meet the needs of all pupils, including the needs of gifted and talented pupils. The school have worked closely with the Greenwich schools in the partnership to develop their curriculum. Although there is an agreed curriculum.

Staff have received many CPD sessions looking at the learning journey of gifted and talented pupils in subjects such as reading, writing, maths and the global curriculum (in particular history). These CPD sessions have looked at task design and how to challenge the most able pupils. Staff have worked with schools across the Trust to design Medium Term Plans for Autumn 2. They are also in the process of gathering pupil voice and staff voice on the post-lockdown Recovery Curriculum for Autumn 1, this feedback will be used to further improve our teaching and learning at Forest Academy.

When carrying out lesson observations and book looks, the Senior Leadership Team assess how the needs of gifted and talented pupils are being met. Clear differentiation has been observed in lessons and books and where more could be done targets have been set for specific teachers and followed up on to ensure that progress is achieved. The school also facilitated success for gifted and talented pupils in P.E. Through work with various Sports Coaches and as a result two Year 6 pupils have taken part in the Croydon Football Trials, with one of pupils making it all the way through and has been selected to play for the Croydon District Team.

The most recent outcomes for Year 6 pupils show that these measures have been effective so the target has been achieved.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



### **Target 2 - To give pupils more opportunities to assess their peer's work so that they themselves become more reflective learners.**

Progress in this target has been restricted due to COVID-19 and the school closure for many months but the SEN Coordinator tells me that pupils are always encouraged to be reflective learners in a variety of ways:

- Through the school values: Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, Kindness, Collaboration and Curiosity.
- Through the recently identified Character Skills: Integrity, Leadership, Relationships, Wonder and Mindset.
- Through Learning Behaviours – Support and actively listen to others; Discuss and explain their ideas.
- Take responsibility for our own and our groups' learning.

She spoke about Kagan Strategies introduced by the Inspire Partnership. Kagan Strategies are used in lessons to provide speaking and listening opportunities for pupils. Pupils can give feedback through activities such as 'Rally Robin' and 'Round Robin'. These strategies have been limited due to the current COVID-19 restrictions.

The school's marking policy has been reviewed after discussions with staff. Elements of the previous marking policy have remained and the views of staff have been taken on board in order to make improvements. Verbal and written peer and self-assessment remain a key part of the marking policy.

Growth Mindset – All pupils have reflected on their own mind-set and every classroom has a growth mind-set display so that it is at the forefront of the pupils' and staffs' minds. This has been particularly important as children return to the classroom. In order to embed all of the above children have been with provided pupils speaking frames, sentence stems and praise points to structure their verbal and written feedback. Teachers and Teaching Assistant also model how to give constructive feedback.

### **Target 3 - To gather and share further knowledge expertise with wider schools who are not part of the Trust in order to improve pupil outcomes.**

The SEN Coordinator was very keen to tell me about the many positive changes made since the school joined the Inspire Partnership and since the last IQM Review. The partnership firmly believes that 'collaboration matters' and knowledge and expertise has been shared endlessly across the nine schools. These are principles are fully compatible with the IQM criteria and values.

The following collaboration has taken place:

1. Joint half termly and weekly planning sessions via Zoom. This provides staff with the opportunity to work with other members of staff in the same year group as them in other schools to share lesson ideas and to talk through any issues.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



2. Weekly CPD which is provided in house but also using experts across the Trust.
3. Hub Meetings provide opportunities for leaders to meet in relation to their area, for example, the SENCO Hub Meetings take place half termly and provide SENCOs across the Trust with opportunities to work together and share best practice. This collaboration has resulted in a WhatsApp group being set up so that further collaboration and support can be shared.
4. School visits have provided staff across the school with the opportunity to observe good practice across the Trust and to improve the teaching and learning at Forest Academy. Staff have also used their visit to develop a Nurture Room at Forest Academy (The Den).

The school have also liaised with other a specialist school in the area (Red Gates) to improve provision for a pupil with ASD and SLD.

### Agreed Targets for 2020-2021

**Target 1 - To develop the nurture provision at Forest Academy to support social, emotional and mental health needs so that all pupils are able to access their learning.**

The school previously has what they called a 'Discovery Room' for children who were unable to access the mainstream classroom but after visiting other schools in the Inspire Partnership they decided to rebrand and reorganise and set up a 'Den' along the same lines as the ones they had visited. The new Den is based on the needs of the children referred for the provision. Referrals come through the Inclusion Team or can come straight to the SENCO from a Teacher Concern Form. The timetable for the new Den is being set up now and includes a lunchtime club for those who find it hard at lunchtime (unstructured time). It will not be opened in the mornings when children will be in their classrooms and will be run by the Family Support Worker and other members of the Inclusion Team.

**Target 2 - Embed a global curriculum at Forest Academy. The global curriculum originates from the Oxfam Global Citizenship Curriculum, which is based on the following six themes: Peace and Conflict; Human Rights; Sustainable Development; Identity and Diversity; Social Justice and Equity; and Power and Governance.**

This is an exciting development and comes from Oxfam and is based on a set of clear values and principles. This will give pupils the opportunity to take on various leadership roles and to develop the Junior Leadership Team, which is an important way to give children a voice in the school and in their community. Circle time is regularly used to encourage discussion and listening and there is a big emphasis on 'untold stories' in History, for instance Black Tudors. Active citizenship will be promoted which will help achieve community and outcomes



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



### **Target 3 - To ensure that the statutory requirements for Health and RSE are delivered.**

The SENCO told me that there had been a big discussion last term about what to deliver, they worked with the Croydon syllabus rather than the one from Inspire and have been working with someone leading this in Croydon to get it right. There are lots of issues that have arisen in the local area especially since lockdown that need to be addressed in this programme. The school will of course be consulting with parents about the plans.

### **Target 4 - To gather and share further knowledge/expertise with wider schools who are not part of the Trust in order to improve pupil outcomes.**

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

The school has attended two Cluster Group meetings during the year and have taken a lot from working alongside colleagues in similar situation.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



### Overview

The review was carried out virtually due to the COVID-19 situation but the SEN Coordinator had organised a very detailed schedule for me to find out about the work of the school. She has been at the school for six years and started as a Schools Direct Trainee, she is now the SENCO and Deputy DSL as well as a Year 6 teacher (which she shares with the Deputy Head). She also is the PHSE Lead across the school.

We started off the day by talking about what had happened during lockdown and she told me that staff worked on a rota system providing care for vulnerable and key worker children. The country and the school went into lockdown in March and the school joined the Inspire Partnership on 1<sup>st</sup> April – so there was a lot of change during this time. I spoke to the Interim Head about this later in the day.

The SENCO was clear that becoming one of the Inspire schools was a very positive and supportive move. They had been in a different Trust previously but it became unviable and was dissolved so the school were able to choose from a number of Trusts to join. She mentioned the SENCO Hub and all the training and development for staff at all levels as being some of the key benefits for the Inclusion Team.

The Inclusion Team is made up of the DSL Lead, the Family support worker, the SENCO, the Attendance Officer and Family and Pupil Support worker as well as the Place to Be Counsellor. They meet every week and talk through all the identified children on the list and decide what if any action is to be taken and by who. The meetings are recorded (on paper) and minutes are checked to ensure agreed actions have been taken. Currently there are two children with EHC Plans but the school is applying for two others. There are thirty (16%) children on the SEN register most with communication, speech and language needs as well as social and emotional vulnerabilities. There are fifteen Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistant as each class has a dedicated TA and LSAs provide individual support for named children. Mobility is high in the school with a number of pupils moving in and out of the area for various reasons. However, the school is very experienced at managing and achieving good outcomes for these pupils

The SEN Coordinator is part of the Senior Leadership Team and the Head. The Associate Head, the Deputy Head and Assistant meet once a week after school (currently via Zoom) and the Family and Pupil Support Worker also attends for part of those meetings. The arrangements for governance are complicated by the fact that there is a Trust Board but the school is still served by a local Governing Board who carry out many of the expected governor functions. There is a very experienced SEN Governor who has inside knowledge of the way the SEN system works at Borough level and she has been very helpful and supportive of the SENCO and the school. Annual reviews and meetings involving different professionals and agencies happened (and are still happening) via Zoom and those children who were receiving one-to-one support were able access this through Zoom during lockdown. The school also works with a local special school in order to seek specialist advice and support when necessary.

My next meeting was with the Interim Headteacher and Associate Head. The Interim Head has been working with the school during the transition from one Trust to another.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



She was originally a Headteacher and then became a Consultant Head with the Inspire Partnership. She is now based solely in The Forest Academy and feels very connected to its pupils and staff and community. She now works alongside the Associate Head who has been working at the school for six years. The two make a good Co-Headship Team and until very recently shared an office. They told me that they have been very lucky so far that they have not had to close any bubbles. They have the usual COVID-19 measures in place and take great care to avoid infection. However, they are aware that this may happen at any time. The Trust took over on 1<sup>st</sup> April and lockdown had started on 23<sup>rd</sup> March but together they led the school through these major changes very effectively.

The Interim Head told me that the Inspire Trust is made up of nine schools in Croydon, Medway and Greenwich. The principles and values that the Trust promotes put a huge emphasis on collaboration and Headteachers and Subject Leaders meet regularly and there are various working groups involving staff at every level. One group is about wellness and another one being set up is on diversity to take on board the Black Lives Agenda. The working groups are time limited and have clear purpose and aims. She told me there is always someone at the end of a phone, from the Trust who could advise and step in if needed. During lockdown the Trust stepped in and supported the school and this support was gratefully received. Resources and information is shared on Google Drive. The nine schools work in different Hubs and the school is in part of a Hub with similar schools so they have developed their curriculum together.

The Interim Head and Associate Head agreed that April was a strange time to join a Trust but in their opinion there was a never better time. There was always someone at the end of the phone and things were being done centrally and they did not have to do things on their own. There are so many opportunities to be collaborative with others and they see this as a huge benefit. They reminded me that the school had chosen to join Inspire, they said "our principles were already aligned".

The Designated Safeguarding Lead told me what had happened during lockdown. Small numbers of vulnerable and key workers children attended the provision and more and more arrived as parents felt more confident to send their children to school. Staff came to school on a rota basis to supervise and manage the children, others were working a lot from home. Much of the work set for pupils was planned centrally and put online for parents to access from home and mindful of the fact that many families had no access to appropriate devices or internet, hard copies were collected by parents from school. The vulnerable children were contacted more often than others and they used CPOMS to make a record of the conversations staff were having with children and families. If they were unable to make contact then a home visit was done.

There has been a noticeable growth in parental mental health and older siblings involved in gangs and crime since lockdown started and the Pupils and Family Worker is running workshop for Year 6 children. The support from the Local Authority is very dependent on the individual worker the school is in contact with. However, there is a Safeguard Lead in the Inspire Partnership who can be called upon for advice and guidance if required. The Safeguarding Policy is on the school website and has been adapted and added to include the current crisis. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is supported by two other DSL on the Senior Team. However, she said that there is such a



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



stable staff team that know the children and families so well they spot children who need extra support and they put in interventions as required.

In terms of helping children to deal with their anxieties there are worry boxes in classroom and 'Talk Through Times' run by the Place to Be. Part of the Recovery Curriculum is around exploring what might have happened during lockdown and they use a variety of approaches to get children talking. A new development is additional time for PE, there are now two sessions a week in order to get children outside and to help to get them fitter. They have just employed a gymnastics coach and already had sports coaches to increase activity levels. The school is very lucky to have extensive outdoor spaces for children to play and for sports.

The school lunchtime have changed since they returned in September and the school is now split into three bubbles so they have three separate lunch slots for each bubble. It seems lunchtimes are much calmer as a result so they may keep things as are when COVID-19 is done and dusted. It is true that the Senior Team and others are doing far more lunch and break time duties and the Headteacher says it is quite enjoyable as the children give her lots of feedback during these times.

The Associate Head told me that parents are so grateful to have children back in school and are very supportive. The weekly phone call home (in lockdown) helped to build positive relationships and the team are on gate every day so any problems or concerns are picked up quickly and are sorted. Although they hope it will not happen the school, are getting ready to deliver online learning to children in bubbles who need to be sent home to isolate or indeed if they need to close the school at any point. I was told that the staff meeting that evening is on using Google Classroom and teachers have started by uploading homework and children can then practice putting their login at home. There are videos to help show them how to use this platform as a planning tool and the school is currently being prepared for parents supporting their children at home. During lockdown teachers recorded parts of lessons in phonics and Maths and they recorded stories and posted these on the school website.

The Safeguarding Lead and the Headteacher told me at the end of the summer term teachers did the 'handover' from class teacher to class teacher over Zoom and teachers and Teaching Assistant made videos for their new classes to introduce themselves to their new pupils. The school made great efforts to get the new Reception class off to a good start and they enabled parents and children to come in in small groups for an hour or two a day, so the children were settled quickly and start full time the following week. To complicate the situation further the Early Years Team moved to a new smaller space during lockdown, this was a positive move as although the space is smaller it is easier to manage.

The Inspire Partnership provides lots of CPD opportunities for all staff and they now have the opportunity to work with staff in other schools in the Trust. Although the school budget is top sliced for a contribution to central trust funds the Head says they get value for money. The Human Resources facility is particularly useful and are always available to answer queries. The CEO of the Trust is very approachable and a Trust Executive Head is soon to support the school further by having a fortnightly meeting





## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



with the Head and by helping to guide the school as it moves forward. The partnership have a system of internal reviews and the feedback from these have been very useful for the Senior Team working with their staff on improving the quality of teaching across the school. However, the recent review did not find anything they did not already know but nonetheless it is a helpful experience.

Since returning to school in September the school worked together to produce a Museum of Hope display and all classes contributed to this really impressive project. The project was designed to bring the school together to talk about what had been happening during lockdown and since they came back to school and looking forward into the coming months. This is a very powerful hopeful piece of work that will be shared with parents and other school across the Trust. The children are very proud of it and spoke about it when I met them.

I had two opportunities to meet the pupils during my virtual visit and I met with two groups of four pupils, one group of KS1 pupils and one group of Year 2 pupils. We spoke about their experience during lockdown and since they came back to school. They were universally delighted to be back in school and although some things had changed they loved being back with their friends and their teachers. Most said it was difficult to work at home, as they got distracted by their siblings and it was hard to concentrate with so many other distractions. Some of the children said it was fun to be at home and to spend time with their family but others said it was boring.

The Key Stage 2 pupils said they had lots of work to do at home and they (mostly) worked hard completing the work set. They were worried that they would forget all they had learned before lockdown but their teachers have reassured them since they have been back at school and have been going over things they had done before to make sure they have not forgotten as much as they think. They said parents are not as good as teachers – at teaching! However, they are worried about SATS.

I asked the pupils how they know how well they are doing at school and they said their teachers tell them if they are getting things wrong and praise them when they get things right. They spoke about the various rewards, points and certificates they get for doing good work. They told me that teachers marked their work and showed them what they had to do to improve their work and they mentioned reports and parent/teacher meetings.

The children said that most children behaved well but if they did not they might be sent to time-out for some reflection time or could be sent to another room to work or if they were really naughty they could get sent to the Headteacher. The older pupils talked about the behaviour system used in the school which involved having your name on the board and getting a tick against it if you continued after a warning and they also mentioned the tick and then go to 'Reflection Table' and have to stay there. They said they might miss 10 minutes of play as a sanction. Although the pupils told me that some pupils get sent for reflection every day as they continue to misbehave they thought that some children cannot control their behaviour as well as others.

The children told me about the things that made the Forest Academy a great school to attend and they had a long list of subjects but then turned to the teachers who they say



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



are friendly and they make learning fun. They help you when you need help. They like making new friends and they think the school is a kind place. They told me that there was no bullying but if they were worried about anything they would talk to their teachers or a teaching assistant and would ask for help. If they were very anxious they would go to talk at The Place to Be which they said was really helpful in helping them to talk through what was worrying them. They said they would make sure a new pupil arriving at the school would be made welcome and they would play with them and help them. They would look after them and be kind as they thought it might be a bit scary starting a new school.

I asked the pupils what had changed since they had come back to school they talked about the tables facing the front (rather than in groups) and they cannot share equipment. They said there were more rules than last year. The playground is divided and they have to stick to their area and cannot play with children in different year groups. There is a lot of hand washing and social distancing. Assemblies still happen but they are done via Zoom and they watch them in their classroom. Most of the clubs and activities they had before lockdown have not started up again due to social distancing guidelines, but the Bike Club and Football clubs are running. When having lunch they can only sit on one side of the table so they are not facing anybody.

My next meeting was with a group of teachers and teaching assistants. Three had been at the school for many years, particularly the Teaching Assistants who had been there for a very long time. One of the teachers had joined the school in September. I started by asking them what it was like being in the school since they joined the Inspire Trust. Universal opinion was that things were much improved in all areas including the curriculum and progression. They said Inspire are far more supportive and they know more about what is happening. Communication within the school and across the Trust is really good. The Teaching Assistants said that they now had far more training than ever before and they feel their contribution is valued. The teachers spoke about the curriculum, which they said they can adapt and change for their class. They can add their own ideas and can be creative. They do not feel restricted by the curriculum or new planning formats. Instead they feel secure in the new partnership and feel their jobs are now more manageable.

During lockdown staff were put into groups and worked on a rota system coming into school to run the key worker and vulnerable children. People adapted very quickly and just got on with what they had to do. They said the leadership were very supportive and they were told if they were anxious we could talk to someone. Furthermore, SLT had a one-to-one meeting (via Zoom) with everybody to check on their wellbeing. Home learning packs were used to begin with based on the topic's pupils would have been learning in normal circumstances. The TAs worked with the teachers and prepared resources for pupils with SEN. All members had detailed risk assessment and one member of staff who is asthmatic had a personal risk assessment. There were no live lessons for various reasons but they mentioned the staff meeting that evening and one of the teachers who has lots of experience and expertise in using Google Classroom is facilitating the workshop and there will be guidelines for everybody. Currently there are work packs on the shared server for children who are at home self-isolating.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



Baseline testing happened in the first week back but not under test conditions, assessments were just 'sprinkled' throughout the week so children did not realise they were being tested. It was important to do this to get a clear picture about what they could or could not do and what they had retained during lockdown. Teachers planning includes recapping the end of year maths to ensure they address the gaps. The gaps are better than expected as children are very adaptable. The recovery curriculum is planned to remind them about what they learned previously and to build on that.

Both teachers and Teaching Assistants felt their voice is heard and they are listened to, they can question things and are always treated with respect. It helps that members of SLT are also in class and they are 'real' teachers who can relate to what is happening in classrooms across the school. They have been to other Inspire schools and visited classrooms (before they officially joined the Trust) and they found this to be a very powerful experience.

It is clear that staff at the school feel valued and cared for, their professionalism is respected and they feel fully included in the school and within the Inspire Partnership. They are ready for whatever comes next and will deal with any further lockdown or crisis as it arises, they are very positive and have a can-do attitude.

My final discussion of the day was with the Inclusion Team, The team is made up of the Pupil and Family Support Worker, the Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead, the SENCO and the Attendance Officer. This group meet weekly to discuss children who have been referred because of concerns expressed by teachers or parents or others.

The Pupil and Family support Worker described her role, which is to look at children and what is happening at home. So for instance if a child has not done the spelling or reading homework they need to look at the reasons behind this. The school has to break down barriers in homes where education is not a priority and getting parents to trust the school and support the work they are doing with their children. This is 'a long game' and different techniques are used to get them in. Being in the playground every day where she can speak to parents on a daily basis helps to build that trust. Parents are often suspicious of authority and see schools as fitting into this category. It is a stereotype that has to be constantly challenged.

We talked about the work that had gone on during lockdown including the provision made for vulnerable and as key workers children. The list was a long one. Providing laptops for children is not a particularly useful action if the parents do not have the money to pay for electricity or broadband.

I was told that the Inclusion Meeting has no hierarchy within the team and they take turns chairing the meetings and taking notes. Although the Associate Head has the title as Head of the team they work very closely together. They take running minutes and follow up actions every week. There is a menu of interventions on offer and the fact that they know the children and families so well they can ensure that the right provision is put in place quickly. The school works in partnership with other agencies to ensure that children and families receive the support they need.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



Despite the high pupil mobility the attendance officer told me (very firmly) they do not lose any child and she said, "I would not rest if I did not know where they had gone to". She tracks them down and nobody is taken off role unless she has evidence of where they have moved to and which school they are now attending. She has developed strong relationships with parents and attendance figures are very high. Where there are issues and if children are not turning up at school they will receive a home visit, so there are very few persistent absentees.

We talked about safeguarding, which is clearly a priority for the school, there is a lot of training for staff. The Business Manager maintains the Central Register and the Safeguarding Governor and Inspire Safeguarding Lead monitor this on a regular basis.

The Forest Academy have had a difficult journey in the past but are clearly rising above their former difficulties. It is a supportive and inclusive school for pupils and staff and it goes to great lengths to support families. The expectations for all stakeholders are high and there is a can-do attitude. The school is leading very well and have benefited from being part of the Inspire Partnership. Despite the current circumstances in terms of COVID-19 the school is going from strength to strength and together they can break down the barriers and move forward to the next stage of their development. They have much to be proud of.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in 3 years' time.

The school has stated that it wishes to continue as a Centre of Excellence and has submitted an Agreement to Participate which commits the school to annual reviews for the next 3 years (minimum) and attendance at termly IQM Cluster meetings with other IQM Centre of Excellence and Flagship Schools. As such the school meets our Centre of Excellence criteria and I am happy to confirm that Forest Academy continues to hold Centre of Excellence status at this time.

**Assessor: Kenny Frederick**

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

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