



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: Castle Hill School

School Address: Newsome Road South
Newsome
Huddersfield
HD4 6JL

Head/Principal Mr Steve Perren

IQM Lead Mr Dan Pearce

Assessment Date 27th June 2025

Assessor Mr Dirk Pittard

Sources of Evidence:

- Ofsted Reports
- Academy Website and Policies
- Learning Walk
- IQM Documentation

Meetings Held with:

- Meetings with Principal
- Meetings with IQM Co-ordinator
- Meetings with. Teachers & Support Staff
- Meetings with Pupils



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Overall Evaluation

Castle Hill Academy is located in Newsome, Huddersfield. The Ofsted 'Outstanding' school provision meets the needs of learners with highly Complex Needs including those with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Severe Learning Difficulties, and those with Multi-Sensory Impairments from the age of 3 to 19. It is an Academy withing the Together Learning Trust.

During my assessment visit I met with four parents who explained the transformational support that the school has provided for their children since arrival.

The first parent explained that her daughter had no support in primary school for 10 years, and it was only when she came to school at Castle Hills that she started to learn. Nonverbal, she now uses Makaton to communicate as does her father – learnt thorough the school, it was incredible him watch him communicate so fluently. Starting in the 6th form in September, she is happy and so are her parents. Such is the level of support; post 16 meetings have taken place and there is scaffolding for the future.

Another parent of a 10 year old pupil added, "everything is about including the students." Invited us in for parents evenings, hosted a craft session for grandparents, nothing is too much for this school. "We couldn't be any more supported."

The mother of an early years child explained that when he is dropped off, he struggles to go in through the front gates, so adjustments are made to use the side gates. "Nothing is too much trouble." Every student has a communication diary feeding back the day to parents and for parents to communicate back. "This isn't a school that just ticks boxes. The school runs training sessions for parents."

One post-16 student is just about to leave, the school is very aware of his individual needs. The school and parents have post-16 plans in place and transition started in year 12 to ensure success. "Connect day care services", an external support agency, attended school also to see how his needs could be met moving forward.

Another parent explained that the transition was brilliant. Not just with the staff but also with the new children coming in. The change in her son has been phenomenal. "My son is cared for, looked after and supported." "Who thinks of these things?"

The short answer is the school leadership. Thoughtful, planned and effective.

'Castlefest' is an annual celebration held on the school. It is a community event with art at its heart. Circus Jugglers, hand and face painters, musicians, a petting zoo, and puppeteers were all involved in encouraging students to join in new experiences.

Christmas and Easter events are special, incorporating the community, parents, carers, and all students are encouraged to join in. Day trip out to Shebang, the first time out on a school trip.

On Fridays the students take pizza orders from staff, make them and even take money, learning how a social enterprise operates. The Reworks eco recycling centre is another



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example of a social enterprise, upcycling clothes and working with local SEMH students for other community schools.

Behaviour plans are in place to devise strategies when things 'go wrong'. A communication book in the pupils bag also includes strategies for success. This is very valued by families and an excellent communication tool.

I met with the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors. There is a rolling programme of visits linked to the strategic plan. The purpose of the school is to help children communicate, fit into the world, and make the best of themselves. Governors feel that everything they do is inclusive. The Chair meets the Headteacher fortnightly and has a weekly check in call. Joint monitoring visits for Safeguarding and Health and safety have taken place this year.

Every single child has their own learning plan, regularly reviewed, and linked to individualised learning. No matter what your need is "you are included."

Governors feel one of the main reasons for success is the thoroughness of the systems in place. The depth and analysis of the information is complete. Every other governor meeting incorporates a presentation or briefing on school developments. The school is very good at anticipating need and next steps.

My learning walk took me throughout the school; the planning, care and thought that has been put into its design is remarkable. Every single space has been created with a clear purpose in mind. There is an onsite clinic where I observed an optometrist fitting a new pair of spectacles to a pupil. Also used as a drop-in centre for pupils, parent, and carers medical appointments during the week, this is a school that really does try and think of everything and go the extra mile to support its community of learners and their families. Classrooms are highly adapted, catering for the needs of Early Years students and progressing all the way through to a cohort of sixth form students.

Some spaces are bright, colourful, and stimulating, some are calming and reflective.

Every need is catered for. Even the outside spaces are designed to meet a multitude of different needs. For example, a wheelchair accessible play area was installed two years ago and equipped with sensory toys, wheelchair swings and roundabouts to enhance the physical curriculum. Sitting alongside a traditional play area, students frequently interact with each other despite some of their physical limitations which is an important part of their social interaction during the day.

Many students have mobility needs catered for by using a range of wheelchairs and standing chairs appropriate for the activities planned for the pupils. There are track chairs capable of following a special line that runs through the school and enables pupils to experiment with 'cause and effect', controlling their progress independently using push button steering.

All staff are involved in an annual piece of Action Research throughout the year which is linked to the performance management cycle. Currently, the focus is to look at the application of reading and what that means for Castle Hill Students.



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With so many complex needs to consider, CPD and Training is crucial.

Leaders start from the child and ask the question. *'What can we do now and where are we going', 'what's next, what's next, what's next?'*. Often, it's not about academic success, but adapting to a new piece of equipment, or social interaction.

A strength of the school is the community interaction. Staff are passionate to make a difference. The rewards are when you see the lightbulb moments. "We are relentless in creating the conditions to make progress." Some of the students have degenerative conditions so for them horizontal progress is hugely valued.

I spoke with a group of teaching staff. Communication, problem solving, and physical development have all been key drivers to the school's success. The Leadership is 'restless', in both its culture and mindset.

Staff teams meet regularly, information is shared, every child has a reading portrait and what that looks like for that child.

Progress is based on what the child need. Staff have an outside the box approach. Teachers recognise that they learn from the experiences of teaching their pupils.

History, for example, is represented for some students on a timeline of what is happening this week, tomorrow, and yesterday. Geography may look at what is available in the locality. Trips and visits may feature local transportation such as a 10 minute train ride.

The children are constantly evolving and changing. There is a Hierarchy of need. Comfortable, regulated, and ready to learn. The school is evolving with the pupils. Challenges are met head on.

There is a continued development of 'Mastery' targets for each curriculum area. Subject leads focus on key success criteria for a cohort of learners. Developmental success criteria then support staff in improving pedagogy.

AQA Unit awards and EL ASDAN awards have been completed by older students for whom higher level academic assessments are not yet accessible. The importance of applying skills in the real world is a priority. Routines are practiced during the day which prepare students well for their next destinations.

Parents receive regular training and support many are grieving for the child they haven't had, and the school recognises this and has strong support systems in place.

I met with a selection of the schools Education TAs who explained their role was to make the learning experiences 'magical'. They explained that all their students are unique and as one big team, they help and support each other.

Importantly with so many ETAs often in a classroom with a single teacher, they have become astute at taking their lead.



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Keen to promote links with outside agencies, the school regularly takes student groups to Waverly Hall for yoga on a Monday morning and also has well links with two elderly people homes, one secondary student goes to a primary school and listens to students reading.

My assessment visit concluded with the school's end of week 'Sign and Sing' Assembly. A celebration of pure unbridled vocal joy and the opportunity to reward classroom champions with Stars of the Week certificates.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Inclusive School Award and be reassessed in three years' time.

Assessor: Mr Dirk Pittard

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. McCann'.

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



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Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

Right from its outset, Leaders have put inclusion right at its heart. Their Motto is “Innovating, Communicating, Empowering” and the Mission Statement reads “We are pioneers of innovative and personalised teaching and learning, enriching lives and fostering independence.”

Ultimately, their aim is “to enable all students to be effective communicators, to engage in meaningful learning and be empowered to positively influence their world.”

With the child at the heart, everything the school does is carefully constructed to ensure learners needs are catered for no matter what they might be.

Starting with inspirational leadership, supported by strong governance and experienced, passionate staff, a carefully crafted bespoke curriculum, highly personalised learning and a broad enrichment programme helps inspire pupils to achieve all they can.

Each achievement students make is celebrated, no matter how big or small. The end of week ‘Sign and Sing’ celebratory assembly is truly inspiring, uplifting, and joyous.

Behaviour is overwhelmingly positive due to the whole school inclusive ethos and systems in place to help positive regulation. This has resulted in no fixed term exclusions during the past year and beyond.

School leaders value national accreditation as a framework for self-reflection, having achieved the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award Silver, the SMSC Quality Mark Gold, the School Mental Health Award Gold, as well as the Inclusion Quality Mark.

There is a clear commitment to ongoing professional development for all staff with clear reference to targets on the school improvement plan. Teachers and senior support staff form triads, working on action research projects to support pupil learning. All teachers have curriculum responsibilities, formulating guides to their area that are inclusive for all learners. The school supports other professionals, offering training and advice via a network of opportunities.

The school is bright, welcoming and was built from the outset with the needs of its pupils in mind. Leadership constantly review and adapt this as needed. Currently, there are plans in place to make adaptations to accommodate an expanding 6th Form offer to meet the need of local demand from the LA and wider community.

Leaders ensure transition at all phases is successful. All pupils experience transition fortnight at the end of the school year, working in their new class with their new staff. Pupils leaving school will benefit from transition visits to their new setting supported by school staff. Staff from other settings also come to school to get to know the pupils.

The school has two Family Liaison Officers (FLOSO) who support families with advice and guidance and a dedicated Reviews Officer who supports families through the EHCP process.



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Wellbeing of staff, students and families is treated with high importance. All pupils have a wellbeing target as part of the assessment process, a staff wellbeing working party is in place and feeds into whole school briefings fortnightly.

Next Steps:

- There is a proposed development of rooms to accommodate more potential pupils with Complex needs due to an expanding 6th form and the differing needs of student as they grow in size compared to the early years and primary cohort.
- Development of the onsite recycling facility is to be used as a work-experience centre for children with SEMH needs from the local community to work alongside our pupils.



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Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

School Leaders help support pupil achievement through well-established systems and practices within school. Thoughtful, bespoke planning and assessment systems ensure progress is achieved and early interventions are put in place should issues be identified.

Safeguarding is highly effective, not least because of the communication difficulties that our pupils face, so a watchful and respectful culture has been established to monitor for even the most minor signs of need.

Leaders constantly review practice and develop innovative approaches to support pupil development with support from School Improvement Partners and the Governing Body.

Wellbeing for pupils, staff and families is a priority and support is targeted according to need. Through our use of Pupil Premium and other funding, a wide range of enriching activities support the pupils' communication and engagement needs effectively.

The school Improvement plan (or CHIP) is reviewed annually and serves as the blueprint document to hold staff accountable for the quality of education, personal development, leadership and management, and behaviour and attitudes of the school community. In addition, SLT meet monthly to review the school SEF.

External partners add rigour to leader's accountability; the LA recently completed a Safeguarding Partnership audit in January 2025 which found that the school met all expectations with no actions. Further support and challenge are provided through the local MAT and two school improvement partners.

The leadership team and curriculum lead conduct regular learning walks and scrutinise planning and pupil work folders half-termly.

Teachers take part in moderation sessions as part of the half-termly meeting cycle for assessments supported by termly meetings between senior leaders and teachers to discuss all pupils' individual progress.

All teachers work with SLT to set three CPD targets for the year. This is revisited mid-year to ensure progress. Additionally, all support staff, including lunchtime support staff, have PD targets and facilitators to support them. There are working parties, twilights, and early birds available for all staff on a range of curriculum areas and professional development opportunities. School training days provide whole school opportunities for PD and records of training are kept providing an overview of all staff members' engagement.

Pupil Premium is used creatively to enhance the curriculum and provide unique opportunities for individuals and small groups. Pupils not in receipt of Pupil Premium can also benefit from group sessions including dance therapy, music therapy and additional sports provision.

Next Step:

- To continue to develop the Pupil Premium offer with regard to the delivery of bespoke enriching activities for pupils.



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Element 3 - Curriculum – Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

The Curriculum is broad, balanced, and flexible. The offer is bespoke for each pupil who is therefore able to access it appropriate to their own needs. All teachers have a curriculum area responsibility to drive its development, ensuring the teaching and resources are of the highest standard.

The school has a termly curriculum guide for the development of reading skills and a pathway designed to support the identification and next steps for development in reading. Reading is supported by a 'letter of the week' theme which provides focus for the delivery of phonics and literacy sessions and there is a baseline of practice for receptive vocabulary including photos and symbols to ensure continuity through school.

All pupils have individual Social and Emotional targets, highlighted, and recorded linked to their EHCPs which support the growth of the pupils' character.

The community is used well as a learning resource, supporting life skills such as using money and road safety. Work experience opportunities out in the community occur in Secondary and Sixth Form and students also use a local farm for life skills. Both Primary and Secondary pupils use community resources such as sports centres.

All curriculum areas are developing an understanding of how to achieve 'mastery' for different groups of learners. All teachers and HLTAs are part of curriculum teams and are given meeting time and time out of class to work on their curriculum action plans. Curriculum teams then present to their peers and governors on their area and progress.

Extra-curricular activities are widely promoted. There is an after-school club, which is available to all families and for pupils who have been unable to access the school building, outreach is available through home visits by class leads and support staff.

Residential trips have been held at the Calvert Trust for the Sixth Form pupils, ensuring age-appropriate outdoor activities, accessible to all.

The school ensures that all pupils are developed to their fullest, with pupil-centred key skill targets in English and Maths as well as covering Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Creativity, PSHE and the Physical curriculum. Many lessons are cross-curricular and are mapped for full coverage with adaptation to ensure pupils are able to access fully.

Next Step:

- Continued development of 'Mastery' targets for each curriculum area for PMLD, SLD and SLD+ learners.



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Element 4 - Teaching and Learning – Learning Environment, Planning Resources, Pedagogy

Castle Hill have developed their own bespoke planning and assessment systems that use the EHCP as a starting point. Pupil targets are derived from this, and steps of progress are identified and planned for by class teachers. The school environment is constantly under review in order to ensure the evolving needs of all students are met.

Class sizes are small, and pupils are grouped according to learning needs to ensure that the curriculum is delivered most appropriately. ICT is used very effectively to aid pupil communication through assistive and augmentative communication aids.

Classes have high staff to pupil ratios, which depend on the learning needs of the pupils. Teachers use the curriculum guides to create their termly long-term plan. Their medium-term plans provide more detail adapting to specific needs of the pupils. Pupil progress is evaluated through their PiP trackers and shared with families through their Learning Journals.

There are a considerable number of specialist rooms including hydrotherapy and sensory within school that pupil's access for physical development, sensory or regulation needs. In addition, all pupils have access to bespoke outside areas with accessible play equipment. This includes areas designed for wheelchair access.

Teachers develop bespoke resources to meet the needs of their pupils, mapped to an action plan that details further resources required. Teachers have a comprehensive CPD process, setting targets for the upcoming year, with midterm reviews. Weekly teaching staff meetings focus on a wide range of pedagogical skills, reflection, and discussions.

The 'Engagement Model' is a Statutory Assessment for pupils working below the Pre-Key Stage Standards in KS1 & KS2. The school has been at the forefront of developing and launching the Model nationwide, running 'train the trainer' sessions nationally. Pupils at early developmental level can follow the schools 'switch pathway' to develop their skills of using ICT.

The Learning Environment is highly adaptable to ensure as many learners needs are catered for as possible, some pupils have difficulty processing extraneous visual information, so their classrooms have no visual clutter, resources are kept away until required. Other classes are more stimulating and vibrant in their use of displays and resources.

There is a termly lesson observation and feedback session for each teacher led by SLT. A peer observer is also involved in the process, so all teachers have the opportunity to observe their peers and reflect on the impact this has on their own practice.

Next Steps:

- Development of our offer of a work-experience centre for children with SEMH needs from the local community to work alongside our pupils in our onsite recycling facility.
- Development of new learning spaces to augment current provision.



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Element 5 – Assessment

The school has developed a bespoke assessment system based on each pupil's learning needs, mapped to each pupils EHCP. Progress is assessed and recorded through class discussions daily and weekly with pupils' targets being regularly updated throughout the term. The school focusses heavily on the development of skills which in turn are measured against four criteria: prompting, fluency, maintenance, and generalisation. All pupils have social and emotional targets, encouraging positive interactions with their peers.

Termly SLT meetings focus on each pupil's progress based upon prior and current attainment. These progress discussions ensure that any interventions required are put in place.

Teacher planning reflects prior learning and pupil understanding, building small steps of progression. Progress is also shared with families informally through daily home school diary messages or phone calls.

Due their developmental delays, many pupils will not be able to identify their learning, but a culture of celebration ensures that learning is recognised and applauded when it occurs.

All lessons have personalised objectives, shared with pupils and staff. Staff are then given regular feedback; verbally and/or physically dependent on their cognitive ability. Pupil understanding and progress is supported by having a predictable, well-scaffolded learning experience so that new skills are built on top of those that have been consolidated.

Individual yearly pupil targets are informed by their EHCPs. Teachers use their pupil knowledge to determine the small step targets that will enable the pupils to achieve. Support is available for targets around specific curriculum areas, physical and medical needs, and communication as required.

For some students' assessment can be more challenging. During my visit, we discussed that for some students; particularly those with life debilitating conditions, a horizontal achievement rather than a step forward could be seen as progress and a significant achievement.

Assessment from a traditional viewpoint is also not always appropriate. Instead, it is based on the level of understanding a student is capable of comprehending and processing. For example, where you might assess the historic understanding of the Tudors; for some Castle Hills pupils, History may be more relevant taught as 'today', 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow'. Geography might feature the locality around school rather than further afield and how to navigate the journey to home and back.

Next Step:

- Development of Progression Guidance using the school's bespoke assessment systems.



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Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

School Leaders strive to ensure all pupils are regulated and feel secure in within school and their understanding of the school day. When pupils feel safe and can anticipate events, they are more able to be receptive to learning. When pupils experience dysregulation supportive systems in school are employed to great effect.

Learning takes place in classes which are constructed according to a wide range of needs. Some pupils have higher medical needs or sensory impairments; therefore, their classroom environment will include clearer spaces for chairs and physical interventions, or for sensory and light equipment. Some pupils will have difficulty processing extraneous visual information so their classrooms will have no visual clutter, resources kept away until required.

Displays around school support inclusion through celebrating achievements of all pupils and highlighting specialist approaches to learning. The school rule 'we are calm and kind' is clearly displayed in all areas.

Positive behaviour is supported by teacher planning ensuring that pupils understand expectations through building up of routines. Weekly meetings between the Principal and FLOSO ensure that patterns in non-attendance are identified and addressed.

Incredibly, School has not had any exclusions. This is indicative of its outstanding inclusive practice. Positive behaviour and attitudes are also supported through the school's work on the Engagement Model, which focuses on pupil engagement to support their learning.

The school has achieved a number of Awards and accreditations recently, including the Healthy Schools Award and School Games Mark. All pupils have physical development targets and personal development is a large part of each pupil's curriculum.

Pupils display high wellbeing and interactions with others are positive. Where issues arise, usually related to self-regulation, staff swiftly problem-solve and communicate with each other to mitigate ongoing issues. Pupils who experience dysregulation will have interventions put in place and their behaviour monitored and reviewed weekly to support them.

Pupil voice is supported and encouraged in all lessons and through the school council and all pupils have social and emotional targets, encouraging positive interactions with their peers.

Attendance is very high and monitored daily. Where lateness or non-attendance occurs, a telephone call is made by school admin or the Family Liaison Officer. Weekly meetings between the Principal and FLOSO ensure that patterns in non-attendance are identified and addressed. Monthly attendance reports are then discussed by SLT and the LGB.

Next Step:

- Develop objects of reference and multi-sensory references to support pupils understanding of transitions.



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Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

Despite the challenges of a catchment area that covers the whole Local Authority, family engagement is high due to the extraordinary level of communication and support the school gives its community. This includes the website, letters, texts, and social media.

For families where English is not the first language, the school has bilingual assistants to support families in meetings or calls home. Where needed, translators are hired.

The school website is an excellent and well used resource. For example, the Inclusion policy is shared through the website as is the school's educational offer.

The school provides a number of workshop sessions for families based around needs including communication, positive behaviour, and Makaton.

There are two Family Liaison Officers who are able to provide support, advice and guidance to many of the challenges that families encounter. The Parent/Carer Questionnaire provides very positive feedback relating to parental satisfaction and engagement.

The use of CPOMS helps track communications with families and ensures that positive outcomes are identified.

Families are invited to two parents' evenings to discuss progress. There is also the yearly EHCP review held in school and led by the class teacher. End of year reports show the pupils' individual learning journey.

Parent engagement with activities outside of the school day is good. The FLOSOs and school's Event Coordinator provide wellbeing opportunities for families including meals and craft sessions. Workshops run have included communication, positive behaviour, and Makaton.

Due to the specialised nature of the school and the size of catchment area it can be a challenge for parents to attend meetings at school as the vast majority do not live locally or are able to remove themselves from the caring role when the pupil returns home.

However, during my assessment visit, parents spoke highly of the school at every opportunity and see the school as an extension of their home or family. Nothing is too much for staff and leaders are 'restless' in their pursuit of educational excellence.

Next Step:

- Leaders continuously building upon the school celebrations and special days that families can come and access whilst ensuring that they remain a secure and safe environment for their cohort of learners.



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Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

School Leaders feel that Castle Hills has a visible presence and audible voice within local and national education.

The school has four school buses to enable visits and links to the community and uses the local area as a learning resource, for example, visits to the local shops for independence and supermarket shopping for life and money skills.

Enrichment is employed at every opportunity; the local sports centre is used for swimming. An Events Coordinator organises enriching activities for pupils and brings in link schools and artists. The school is part of the Kirklees Sports Partnership and enjoys taking part in appropriate sporting competitions.

An annual highlight is 'CastleFest', other schools and community partners celebrate and put on performances with Castle Hills pupils. The school also works with local artists and performers including inclusive collaborative art works with Fabric Lenny and live performances from 'Shabang!'.

Some pupils in the Sixth Form and Secondary are able to access work experience opportunities out of school such as Asda, Netherton Primary School, and Greenacres Care Home.

Onsite, located prominently at the front of the school is the 'ReWorks' facility. This project celebrates inclusivity for all children, by providing a vocational workshop for children to learn about recycling and sustainability. It is a unique space that functions in line with their innovative and spatially interactive approach. It is a building that goes beyond just teaching, facilitating and participation of students in learning about sustainable living and the importance of recycling for the greater good.

The vision was to create an independent space for learning, not just for the school but also for the wider community. They specifically wanted the new building to reflect its purpose, as a sustainable energy efficient eco pod.

Activities within involve pupils taking part in the recycling process with the pupils, assisting with processing and preparing used packaging and other materials.

Next Steps:

- Further development of the ReWorks onsite recycling facility to be used as a work-experience centre for children with SEMH needs from the local community to work alongside Castle Hills pupils.
- Continue re-establishment of link schools initiative.