

# **Meadowbank Primary School**

## **IQM Assessment Summary Report: key strengths and areas for development**

**Reaccreditation assessment visit, 17/07/2017**

### **Assessors:**

Liz Cooper, Senior Practitioner, Child and Educational Psychologist

Max Turton, Senior School Improvement Advisor

### **Information about the IQM Assessment**

The IQM assessment took place on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017 from 8.30 am-4.00pm. It included a learning walk with observations throughout the school and a tour of external grounds, discussions with staff, parents, children and governors. Written evidence provided by the school and a number of external agency partners was also made available.

The assessors recommend that the school be awarded the reaccreditation of its Inclusion Quality Mark, with Ambassador Status, for exemplary practice in relation to pupils' personal and social development, including their sense of wellbeing and mental health. Meadowbank Primary has many notable strengths which are particularly apparent in the school's use of pupil voice, action-research and development of the physical environment. This report should be read in conjunction with the school evidence documents.

### **School Context**

Meadowbank is a Community Primary School with a Nursery. The school is larger than the national average with a current NOR of 458 pupils. The percentage of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the percentage of pupils for whom English is designated as an additional language (EAL) is lower than the national average. The school has an additional resource base unit to support pupils with identified additional and sometimes complex learning needs. The unit supports 12 pupils allocated from across the local authority who work in a small group setting and are included with their mainstream peers for much of their learning. Whilst the percentage of pupils with an SEN statement or EHC plan is above national average, the proportion of pupils receiving SEND support is lower than national.

Judged by Ofsted to be a good school at its last inspection in January 2014, Meadowbank primary was successful in its original IQM assessment in June 2009. The school is also currently accredited with the Leading Parent Partnership Award and ICT Mark.

## **School Strengths**

### **Summary**

Meadowbank Primary is a vibrant, welcoming and highly inclusive community. The school actively promotes the importance of positive partnerships with parents and the wider community, presenting itself as a family of learners where all individuals are encouraged and empowered to develop the skills necessary to ensure that each child receives the best possible education. The school's creative, child-centred curriculum effectively enables pupils to take a significant lead in their own learning and constructively support the development of their peers. Pupils' views are constantly canvassed and acted upon to ensure that learning experiences are shaped to meet their needs and interests. This approach also helps pupils to develop an increased sense of confidence and independence as they reflect upon their learning and achievements across a broad range of outcomes.

Efficient devolvement of power and leadership within the staff team is evidenced in systems that promote innovation and encourage action-based research with robust evaluation of outcomes. This is particularly well exemplified in the school's reflective leadership journals focused on key areas of development including the refined use of restorative approaches, enhancement of the school's provision for PHSE and the introduction of the We Eat Elephants (WEE) approach as an aspect of the Living Life To The Full programme whereby pupils are to enabled to approach personal challenges, anxieties and potential problems in a positive and manageable manner, developing resiliency skills for the future. Similarly, boys' writing across the Foundation Stage has notably benefitted from the staff investigation of gender specific activity boxes to increase pupils' sense of choice and purposeful engagement with a more differentiated range of writing opportunities.

The school is outward facing and champions collaboration with other schools through its involvement with the *Empower Schools' Alliance*. Additionally, participation in a regional, subject specialist hub for mathematics development and a range of partnership opportunities supported through various LA networks, including regular, cluster moderation with a neighbouring group of schools, has enabled

Meadowbank to develop a comprehensive overview of most effective practice in response to recent curriculum and assessment changes.

Provision for pupils' wellbeing and mental health along with their personal and social development is exemplary. The school clearly ensures that every learner is enabled to feel engaged in the life of the school and able to contribute and value their interaction with others. Pupils feel very safe and secure within the environment. They are confident to express themselves and very purposeful when discussing their learning. This view is completely endorsed through conversation with parents, other members of the school community and in documentation from external partners. Several parents offered very powerful accounts of the sensitive, flexible provision and specialised guidance which the school offers to ensure that their children's needs are effectively met and their families well-supported through often, extremely challenging personal circumstances: *"We've done it together."*; *"The school has been like a family to me..."* and *"Everyone understands that some children do things differently and everyone has worked so hard - my child now really loves coming to school."*

The school works very effectively with its external partner agencies and other agencies, drawing skilfully upon specialist guidance and support to shape pupil provision appropriately and develop staff confidence, professional expertise and capacity to ensure that their practice is highly inclusive. This approach is well exemplified in a compelling range of witness statements provided by the school's external partners:

*"When it was suggested that a pupil may benefit from wearing ear defenders in class, the school suggested that they would buy a number of pairs so any member of the class who felt they would benefit from wearing them could and the pupil in question would not feel singled out."*

*"I was impressed to learn of the school's policy of using TA's to teach specific interventions, and work with various pupils, rather than just an individual pupil. I have noticed that this enables pupils with significant individual needs to spend more time with teachers than they are likely to have done if they had a TA with them all the time."*

*"The school had a great understanding of Young Carers and is always keen to try new ideas or ways of supporting them. The support they offer is reactive and adaptable to the child's needs. I know that my advice is acted upon and any uncertainties are followed up."*

There is a strong ethos of collaborative learning and mutual respect which permeates throughout the school's organisational structures. The school community strives hard to ensure that pupils who are experiencing difficulty or are disadvantaged receive the support necessary to ensure that they succeed. Consequently, pupils make good progress and those with additional needs do particularly well. The school is rigorous in its target setting, monitoring and intervention strategies. The strong and clear leadership offered by the Headteacher and wider leadership team is rooted in a passionate commitment to inclusion. The highly-skilled governing body is fully involved in all aspects of the school and provides an active and positive influence on the strategic decision making process. This is effectively reflected in the governors' recent decision to appoint the school's Safeguarding and Pastoral lead on a full-time, permanent basis, to work in tandem with the school's SENCO and other key leaders and provide a clear focal point for liaison and communication between staff, parents, and external agencies.

The physical environment is fully considered and cared for. Every space is used to create safe, stimulating areas of learning. All classrooms are designed to provide pupils with continuous access to an appropriate range of activities and resources, encouraging pupils to support each other's learning and foster their sense of independence and creativity. In many instances the pupils themselves play a very proactive role in the design of learning environments. The Key Stage 1 multi-sensory outdoor space, for example, was designed by year 5 and 6 pupils working in conjunction with a professional design team; following pupil identification of the bath as an inviting space for reading, a large tub containing several colourful cushions has been installed as a corridor reading break out zone. There is a consistent approach to display which ensures that spaces are bright, attractive and purposeful, clearly reflective of pupils' learning and achievements but never overwhelming. This approach enables pupils receiving targeted support in the school's additional resource base, *The Meadow Room*, during the morning to engage positively in a more fully integrated range of activities, learning alongside cohort peers during the afternoon.

Most notably, relationships at all levels throughout the school community are excellent. There is a collective commitment to ensure that the school offers a secure base of belonging for all, where difference is explored and celebrated. The pupils are very proud of the way in which their school provides them with significant opportunities to shape its ethos and practice. In the words of one year 5 pupil, "*We look forward to someone new coming to join us. We find it refreshing.*" In addition to detailing the rich contribution of pupils' from other cultures and backgrounds to life

at Meadowbank Primary, pupils speak positively about their own leadership of inclusion taking on the role of Playground Buddies, undertaking independent conflict resolution through reference to the school's restorative leaf programme and the impact of *Worry Box* responses on the addition of vegetable patches in the Foundation Stage garden and more effective taps in pupil toilets. A comprehensive range of forum such as the Leadership Council and Eco-Group complement the diverse ways in which the school is constantly seeking to encourage pupils' to voice their concerns and present their ideas for further school improvement and ways in which to improve outcomes for everyone.

**Agreed areas of development:**

- To increase opportunities for all members of the school community, including parents, to share and develop their understanding of inclusive practice and restorative approaches through participation in a range of "RA circles" activities
- To capture key elements of the Living Life To The Full programme in a video resource designed to exemplify the WEE approach and raise awareness of its potential impact upon pupil outcomes with other schools across the Local Authority.

Liz Cooper

Max Turton