



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name	Pioneer House High School
School Address	200 Yewtree Ln, Wythenshawe Manchester M23 0FF
Head/Principal	Ms Adele Cox
IQM Lead	Mr Fabian Ramos
Assessment Date	22 nd June 2023
Assessor	Ms Sally Judge

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

- IQM SER document.
- School website.
- Core Walk Thrus Workbook.
- Lesson Plans.
- Curriculum overview.
- Skills Builder programme.
- Parental feedback.
- Pupil voice.
- 2019 Ofsted Report.
- Christmas Newsletter.
- Target ladder.
- Staff training materials – Anti-Racism.
- Behaviour incidents data analysis.
- Attendance Data.
- Jonathon's story/video.
- Pupil Progress report example.
- Great Teaching Toolkit.
- School Improvement Plan.
- Community of Belonging Celebrations Calendar.
- Community of Belonging Overview Booklet.

Additional Activities:

- Tour of school.

Meetings held with:

- Headteacher.
- IQM Co-ordinator.
- Students/pupils.
- Sensory Integration Occupational Therapist.
- Teachers.
- Teaching Assistants.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Overall Evaluation

Since opening in 2016, Pioneer House High School has been on a journey of rapid development and improvement as part of the Prospere Learning Trust.

Ofsted assessed Pioneer House High School as Outstanding in all areas in May 2019. Pioneer House was given Flagship Status with the Skills Builder programme in Summer 2022. They are one of the first schools in the country to earn this level of award. Pioneer House is also working towards the Rights Respecting Schools Award and becoming an Artsmark accredited school.

It is clear from the evidence submitted that the school has a deeply embedded commitment throughout the school to inclusive values and practice. The school's core values of Community, Diversity, Learning, Wellbeing, Work and Independence really come to life as you spend time looking through the school website and speaking to all sections of the school community from pupils and parents through to teachers and Governors. Strong leadership reinforces inclusion as a priority at Pioneer House.

A range of policies including a very detailed SEND Information Report and SEND Policy backed up by interviews with a range of staff indicate that there is a collective responsibility for inclusion in all its forms across the school. Teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities in this regard.

Parents spoken to as part of the IQM assessment clearly felt that their children were cared for as individuals and that the school would also support them as parents through difficult times and beyond. Parents were unanimous in their praise for the way the school communicated with parents and had supported them during the Covid19 pandemic in particular with technology, food parcels, phone calls, online tutorials and support visits.

Transition arrangements are carefully planned and parents feel their children are given lots of personalised support when they join the school. The school is keenly focused on the long-term destinations for their students and preparations begin years in advance to ensure that students can successfully transition into further education, employment or training when they leave.

Students spoke with maturity about how they were able to influence change and suggest improvements at school through the School Council, but also about their responsibilities to others in their local community. Pioneer House social media accounts demonstrate just how much the school engages with the local community and enables students to make a difference to causes outside their school such as animal welfare. Pupil Voice is strong at Pioneer House; students confidently told me about their school, their friends and school events (such as the Student Voice conference). They were also able to articulate what they enjoy most and were particularly animated about the residential trip away. For some, this will have been the first time they stayed away from home and the significance of this was clear for the young people concerned. Pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic about learning. The Skills for Success curriculum and other Personal Development strategies have made a huge impact on students' resilience levels and understanding of how to become independent and successful members of their community.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Great efforts are made by the school to provide a diverse range of role models and engaging programmes of study which is representative of students from every background.

For example, pupils learn about the authors, David Walliams, Benjamin Zephaniah alongside Gillian Cross and Shakespeare in their programme of study for English. Celebrations of Achievement take place across school for character as well as academic ability. Students are praised for their independence, for their resilience and for their teamwork, as well as for high performance in more traditional tests or assessments. Pupils are also supported to take up leadership roles whether through becoming Sports Leaders or completing the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

A strong community of belonging ethos permeates every aspect of the school's development – the passion of the staff came across strongly in their interviews – both their desire to enable every young person to succeed and their commitment to self-improvement.

Teaching staff spoke about recent training they had received on the Blank Levels of Questioning which had given them knowledge of how to use a diverse range of questions in the classrooms to include all children, challenge all children at an appropriate level and promote higher order thinking skills.

They recalled how the training had supported their understanding of four levels of questioning which move from simple, concrete questions to more difficult, abstract questions. Any strategy that supports development of general language and vocabulary will help students access all other curriculum areas, so the impact of this staff training is directly linked to inclusion for all.

School leaders are keenly aware of areas for improvement as identified in their data analysis, School Improvement Priorities and Governing Body discussions. Their determination to engage with staff, embed improvement strategies and make a difference in these areas is evident at all levels.

Leadership development has been a priority at Pioneer House and this commitment to distributed responsibility has proved very successful in driving improvements. Staff feel a sense of ownership within their areas of responsibility as well as accountability, as one member of staff told me, "We are encouraged to try new things, pushed out of our comfort zones, but also supported when things go wrong". I have no doubt that this supportive, collegial work environment where responsibility and authority is shared equally by staff colleagues encourages new ideas to flourish and progress to be made.

Teaching staff discussed the importance of language in encouraging honest and open professional conversations. Lesson Observations have become lesson visits and an opportunity to share good practice.

Teaching Assistants report a close working relationship with teachers. They feel valued as professionals and there is strong partnership working in place. Support staff are given access to lesson plans beforehand so that they can prepare children by pre-teaching vocabulary for instance which increases their ability to access the learning.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



This might be particularly relevant for pupils with limited experiences and a deprived background.

Teaching Assistants report that they work mainly within the classroom and the school has an ethos of including pupils wherever possible through targeted support that might be given by the teacher themselves rather than the support assistant. In line with recognised good practice, interventions are targeted, personalised to pupil needs, and their impact is regularly monitored. In this way withdrawal from the classroom is limited and different pupil needs are supported within the classroom.

One of the changes at Pioneer House in recent years has been the development of Accessing the Community and Preparation for Adulthood curriculums in KS4/5. The evidence I was given demonstrated that this approach, together with associated teaching strategies, have supported students to be more confident, be able to solve their own problems, engage with their community and environment, welcome new experiences, build social skills, express themselves with confidence and enjoy learning.

There is evidence of very strong pastoral support at Pioneer House including rigorous safeguarding arrangements.

Strong partnerships exist between Pioneer House and a range of external specialist agencies and organisations to support and advise teaching staff on strategies for e.g., Autism or Social & Emotional difficulties.

A detailed Accessibility Plan is available on the school website and indicates a clear vision for improvement.

I was hugely impressed by the commitment of Pioneer House to the wellbeing of the whole school community – pupils, parents and staff. The amount of work they have put into this area is significant.

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 Mark and be reassessed in 3 years' time.

I also recommend that the school should consider applying for Centre of Excellence status subject to the inclusion within its plans of the appropriate areas for development and the completion of the Centre of Excellence documentation. If the school chooses to pursue this status and it were to be awarded the school would be subject to annual review from this point forwards.

Assessor: Sally Judge

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

The Community of Belonging and Rights Respecting ethos are evident across Pioneer House policies such as their Attendance Policy, LAC Policy, Pupil Premium Strategy and Behaviour Improvement Policy.

This policy emphasises the sense of Belonging that the school strives to instil in all students across school. It also references the type of consistent behaviour and responses it expects from both adults as well as children.

This policy re-enforces the importance of building pupil's self-esteem and valuing their individual contributions – it is a Behaviour Policy that clarifies how the school will support pupils to manage their own behaviour with support whilst encouraging pupils to see how their behaviour can impinge on the rights of others.

The school's own data analysis and School Improvement Plans demonstrate clearly their knowledge of strengths and areas for development. They enjoy a strong collegiate relationship with a group of schools that enables sharing of good practice around inclusion in different contexts.

Teachers are active role models for pupils in all aspects of behaviour and values. They are reflective and continually looking to improve their own practice. For instance – the recent Anti-Racism training provided for staff has developed their confidence to recognise and address more subtle forms of racism whilst promoting a shared commitment to reflect on unconscious bias.

The student population at Pioneer House is predominantly white, but the school is keenly aware of their responsibility to prepare students for life in modern Britain and be respectful of all cultures, languages and religions amongst their peers both inside school and in the wider community.

Staffs at all levels are respected and investment is made to support their professional development. Pioneer House has a strong culture of developing their own staff – some lunchtime organisers have become teaching assistants, and initial teacher training students have successfully applied for permanent jobs at the school.

Pioneer House has a well-established Code of Conduct for students which is regularly reinforced so that they gradually develop an understanding of how to demonstrate respect for each other and their environment. Safe and Respectful posters in the school corridors remind everyone of expectations for all.

The school has an extremely warm and welcoming atmosphere. All learning spaces visited were calm and purposeful and there was evidence of student's work being valued and celebrated on every classroom wall.

Wellbeing for all sections of the school community has a high profile at Pioneer House. The Healthy Lifestyles curriculum encourages all students to be comfortable with who



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



they are as well as develop wellbeing strategies for life such as physical exercise routines and healthy eating.

Next Steps:

- School to consider pulling together the two Behaviour policies into an overarching Attachment Aware & Trauma Informed Behaviour Regulation Policy.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

Strong leadership is evident at both a school and Trust level.

Highly experienced quality leaders are committed to their own professional development and are clear about their role in school improvement.

Staff report high levels of support, training and professional opportunities. School leadership is committed to ensuring high quality consistent practice runs throughout the school with systems such as WalkThrus which enable staff to learn from each other.

Effective self-evaluation systems are in place. The school encourages self-reflection at all levels from pupils through to Governance.

Professional Learning time has continued despite periods of significant challenge such as the Covid Pandemic using remote systems where appropriate such is the commitment to staff training.

Senior leaders report there are opportunities for “cross-fertilisation” between the Trust schools which supports rapid development and professional growth for staff. Governors are highly experienced and knowledgeable within a range of fields. They have clear responsibility areas and liaise closely with their staff counterparts. Governors are enjoying coming together for live meetings after all business moved online during Covid. There is a strategic approach to Governor recruitment at Pioneer House which has created a strong overall skill set within the group. Agenda items are mapped out across the year so Governors can see the links between their discussions and the School Improvement Plan.

Careful decisions are made by school leaders regarding best use of additional funding based on current research and best practice guidance as well as in-depth knowledge of the changing school context. Innovative use of funds to join for instance the Manchester United Foundation enables new opportunities for students such as the chance to gain a refereeing qualification.

Pupils are aware that their voice is respected and listened to by school leaders. Regular consultations with students, parents and staff are used to inform future decisions. Pioneer House is extremely aspirational for its students. It is proud to note that all students who have left since 2017 have gone onto further education or employment. The focus on employability skills gives lessons a meaningful context. Within a national picture of majority unemployment for adults with a disability, the work of Pioneer House is life changing.

Next Steps:

- School to consider celebrating more of its groundbreaking work around Healthy Lifestyles, Employability and Independence on the school website and social media platforms. The current website does not do justice to the amazing school offer that exists at Pioneer House.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 3 - Curriculum –Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

A highly effective and engaging curriculum has been designed which emphasises Enterprise, Employability and Independence.

Pioneer House offers personalised pathways to suit individual learners. Outcomes from Education, Health and Care Plans are woven seamlessly with National Curriculum targets so that teachers maximise lesson time to develop multiple layers of skills and knowledge at the same time. For example, Communication targets from an EHC Plan will be included in a history lesson plan so that both things are developed simultaneously.

The curriculum has been designed to be inclusive and relevant to the local community. Themes are linked to the Manchester context to support students in becoming confident citizens of the place where they live. Learning is engaging and practical – full advantage is taken of moving learning outside the classroom and into the real world.

Students undertake independent travel training as part of their geography curriculum while they explore the local area. They visit Manchester art galleries as part of their Arts curriculum whilst developing confidence around how to make use of their leisure time.

Development of the Reading curriculum in recent years has seen the establishment of the Fresh Start phonics programme which supports older readers to make progress with age-appropriate resources and materials. Pioneer House aims for all students to develop as independent readers and demonstrates a commitment to making that happen through the use of technology such as E-readers where appropriate. Inclusive themes are threaded throughout the curriculum not just confined to limited sections and timeframes such as Black History month. British Values are embedded throughout the curriculum as are human rights as highlighted in the Rights Respecting Schools framework.

Pioneer House has a clear idea of what they mean by Cultural Capital and how to develop this for all their pupils so that they can become successful learners and citizens. There is a very rich offer that supports students develop life skills such as eating out in local cafes, visiting the local library, taking money out at the bank and shopping for ingredients to use in Food Technology lessons, through to widening cultural experiences by visiting the Science and Industry Museum and establishing confidence in leisure activities by going to sporting competitions and events.

This highly ambitious curriculum brings together multi-agency practitioners such as speech therapists and music therapists to ensure that all students are supported to develop their skills, talents and interests.

Next Steps:

- Pioneer House has self-identified an area of focus on Disability awareness. They aim to foster understanding of the obstacles faced by people with a range of disabilities so that students understand themselves, learn to empathise with each other and staff have greater knowledge around how to support a broad range of need.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



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

Teaching staff are aware of different learning styles across the pupil group and plan for independent exploration of topics as well as more supportive partner and group work. Learning is regularly linked to real life to help pupils make connections and uncover the relevance to their own experience. Strategies such as the development of alternative communication systems and the pre-teaching of core vocabulary support all pupils in accessing the new curriculum.

Clear expectations for each Key stage in every subject have been devised collectively between phase leaders and subject co-ordinators. This clarity for teachers and their support assistants improves outcomes for all as staff work towards common goals. Achievement of all kinds are celebrated across school using displays to add value to children's work. For example, high quality artwork is given public praise and acknowledgement by being displayed with care in the same way as high-quality writing. The active teaching of Growth Mindset and adult role models are both utilised to encourage active participation from all pupils. Staff share their own mistakes in order for pupils to understand these are an essential part of learning something new. A collegial work atmosphere at Pioneer House has fostered a commitment to personal growth amongst staff. Like the pupils they feel safe to try new things and readily support each other through collaborative working groups. As an Initial Teacher Training school staff are comfortable with being observed and have become reflective practitioners able to identify their own areas for development.

An Intervention Manager is utilised to deploy teaching assistants to maximum effect in response to analysis of progress data. The interventions themselves are evaluated for impact and next steps collectively agreed.

The school is extremely well resourced with a number of purpose-built rooms such as the training kitchen, and more are planned for the future. The school is growing and has an ongoing programme of expansion of both buildings and resources.

Students are supported to become confident users of digital technology to both enhance learning and prepare them for adulthood.

There is a consistent approach to pedagogy across classrooms with all staff demonstrating the cycle of clear visuals, carousels, scaffolding, task lists, differentiated tasks and think, pair, share. New staff are effectively supported to understand the school systems and approaches to learning and assessment.

Equally there is a consistency of classroom design with Zones of Regulation boards, Code of Conduct and Rights Respecting displays in each room.

Next Steps:

- The school has self-identified a target of extending a successful trial of professional development for all teaching assistants.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 5 – Assessment

Teaching staff have a clear understanding of their responsibility to input attainment data to the whole school software – Classroom Monitor. This information is then carefully analysed on a termly basis and shared by school leaders to inform planning. High quality data analysis indicates that outcomes for students are improving for most groups over time.

Teacher judgements are matched against book looks, lesson observations and learning walks. Pioneer Portfolios are used to gather evidence throughout the year of pupil progress. Pupil Progress meetings are held regularly for all class groups.

Students and their parents are kept informed of progress, attainment and any interventions as appropriate through termly progress reports, Parents Evenings and Annual Reviews.

All staff are aspirational for students and strive to ensure no-one is left behind by identifying and addressing any gaps in knowledge as quickly as possible. Staff have received training in high quality teaching which has given them confidence in addressing a wide range of individual need within the classroom. The Great Teaching Toolkit has been used to support staff looking at a range of pedagogy including questioning.

Students have ownership of their own learning journey – they are aware of the success criteria for each lesson and the use of strategies such as quick-fire questions and mini quizzes enables them to acknowledge the learning that has taken place in small chunks as well as over time. 1-1 EHC Plan tutorials enable class teachers to discuss personal targets with students who are taught how to be reflective and given the confidence to talk about which things they are finding difficult.

Supportive, partnership working is encouraged in the classroom, so that students can receive help from their peers as well as the adults in the room. Children at Pioneer House are empathetic to each other, they understand the value of helping someone else to achieve as well as themselves.

Pioneer House aims high for students and strives to ensure that wherever possible students can achieve formal accredited qualifications.

Next Steps:

- The school is already working to further raise expectations for lower-ability pupils so that they too consistently achieve the school's ambitious aspirations for all pupils, including the skills and confidence to live independently and get a job.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

The deep commitment of the school to Inclusive Values and respecting individual differences shines through during my conversations with staff and time spent at the school. All adults at Pioneer House act as role models for behaviour and attitudes. The SEMH Support for Learning team focuses on supporting students to manage their own emotions and behaviour in positive ways. Strong teamwork between teachers and support staff is evident.

The school has invested heavily in approaches that develop personal responsibility amongst the pupils and their ability to reflect on decisions. The Rights Respecting Schools framework, Zones of Regulation, Calm spaces and Skills Builder programme all support this work.

Pupils have access to a wide range of experiences and opportunities from outdoor learning, residential trips, sports competitions, money management lessons, work experience and more which all support strong character development and positive attitudes to learning.

Wellbeing is high on the agenda at Leadership meetings, and in School Improvement objectives. Both staff and pupils have been trained in mindfulness and are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles.

Students are aware of who they can speak to about their worries or concerns. A range of Policies such as Anti-Bullying, Online Safety etc support pupil wellbeing. Mental Health Champions in Key Stage 4 support younger pupils with learning how to regulate their emotions.

A wide range of external support is available to staff as appropriate from CAMHS, Mental Health Practitioner, Music Therapist, school nurse, SaLT, Occupational Therapist, EP service and more.

The extended curriculum at Pioneer House that includes enrichment afternoons and vocational studies allows students to explore interests, and gain skills which boosts their confidence and self-esteem.

The ethos at Pioneer House is strongly in favour of recognising and rewarding positive behaviour. Over time careful analysis of behaviour incidents shows a reduction year on year as practices such as restorative justice, reflection and emotional self-awareness have become embedded.

Next Steps:

- Consider the development of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy for students/staff.
- Consider training one or more teaching assistants as Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/what-is-elsa-intervention/>
- Further develop outdoor spaces. There is a wealth of research evidence that links time spent outdoors with improvements in mental health <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/nature-and-mental-health/how-nature-benefits-mental-health/>



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 7 - Parents, Carers, Guardians

Parents spoken to during the assessment were overwhelmingly positive about their experience at the school. They reported that staff at all levels take the time to understand their child's needs and family circumstances.

Parent consultations have influenced decision making at the school.

New communication systems such as Classroom Monitor have improved home / school relationships.

The opening of the Strawberry Fox café has enabled Parent workshops to take place which have supported key areas of learning.

Strong multi-agency working such as Early Help supports vulnerable families. The school employs a Family Liaison Officer who has regular contact with parents. Annual Reviews are high quality and provide opportunities for parents to discuss their priorities for learning and next steps.

Termly parent reports support families to understand where their child is doing well and the priorities for development. In addition, parents have access to the direct email of their child's tutor in order to share further information or ask any questions.

Personalised support is available for families who are multi-lingual, or with literacy difficulties. In addition, the school assists parents with DLA forms, PIP applications, referrals for medical support, and helps as appropriate with food parcels and transport.

Next Steps:

- Consider creating a formal consultation group to gain ongoing parent feedback such as a Parent Council. Ensure that there is representation from all sections of the school community.
- Further develop school website to provide more in-depth information about school life for parents.
- Recruit parent Governors to join the school Governing Board.
- Consider the use of parent volunteers to support for instance the horticulture project.
- Consider new ways to gather snapshots of parental feedback throughout the year e.g. electronic surveys sent following Annual Reviews.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

Pioneer House demonstrates strong performance in the aspect of links with the local and community. There are well established links with local organisations and businesses which enhance the school's resources and the children's experiences such as work experience placements at Manchester airport and Wythenshawe farm.

Students also have chances to link with their local community in a number of ways such as taking part in the Carbon Ruins workshop and joining Wythenshawe Good Neighbours.

Students are supported to develop awareness of current issues through their carefully planned and enhanced curriculum.

Next Steps:

- Continue your Rights Respecting Schools journey as this will support children to gain an understanding of how children's rights are affected globally e.g., by war or culturally different attitudes to education for girls.
- Consider subscribing to Amnesty International Reading Rebels as a way of enriching the reading culture of Pioneer House but also to help raise awareness of global issues through stories <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/giving/donate/join-reading-rebels>.