



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



**School Name** Northfield St Nicholas Primary Academy  
St Margaret's Road  
Lowestoft  
Suffolk  
NR32 4HN

**Head/Principal** Mr Iain Owens

**IQM Lead** Ms Lindsay Higgins

**Date of Review** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Assessor** Dr Andrea Hall

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

**Cluster Group** MADIE A

**Ambassador** Ms Hazel J Simmons

**Next Meeting** 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025

### **Meeting Focus**

#### **Cluster Attendance**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Autumn 2023</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	Yes
<b>Spring 2024</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Yes
<b>Summer 2024</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	No

### **Evidence**

Evidence was gathered from a variety of sources within the school. The range of evidence provided was extremely useful presenting what life is like for a child at Northfield St Nicholas. A tour of the school with two representatives of the pupil parliament and safeguarding officer, and discussions with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher (IQM lead), Senior leaders, SENDCo, LSAs, Governors, parents and children also informed the evidence base. The Assessor also spent some time observing an assembly (No-Outsiders) and the variety of activities that are available to the children during the lunch break. The self-evaluation report reflects the school's progress with the current targets and the exciting plans for the future as seen by the assessor.



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### Summary of Targets from 2023-2024

#### **Target 1: To ensure that diversity of all cultures is promoted, celebrated and reflected in the school environment and community.**

- The school started the year with a coffee morning so they could capture all their families' views and experiences which has enabled them to develop the school calendar with key dates and celebration events.
- All staff have completed a questionnaire to explore how all cultures can be celebrated across the school and curriculum links enhanced. Next steps have been actioned.
- There are a plethora of celebration boards, maps, flags and photographs throughout the whole school.
- The Deputy Headteacher has been working with a specialist teacher to develop English as an additional language [EAL] practice and with a local school to ensure the 'no outsiders' approach is embedded. She also attended a school in Ipswich to see effective EAL practice.
- There is a clear 'school promise' which ensures everyone in the school community has a voice. Children can articulate this promise well.
- The admission pack has been developed so it is more accessible for families.

#### **Comments**

The children are rightly proud of their school and were keen to share how all cultures are celebrated within their school. They showed me their celebration boards within the classrooms and explained how lots of children at Northfield speak more than one language. Support staff and parents highlighted how wonderful it was at Christmas when all the children were able wish each other 'Merry Christmas' in their first language. When talking to the children they explained 'nobody should be left out'. The children have lots of opportunities to learn about their local area (beach school) and the wider world through their exciting curriculum and the trips and visits linked to this. All the children take part in adventures '11 before 11'. The school is outward thinking and are keen to continue working with experts to ensure that the provision is developed for all.

#### **Next Steps: To ensure that staff have additional training to support EAL learners in the classroom.**

#### **Target 2: To use the church as an extension of the RE classroom.**

- The school follows the Jigsaw RE curriculum which is enquiry based and is enhanced by Cultural Capital days.



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- The connections with the local church have developed, and there are weekly RE lessons in the church, which are evident on the school's website. This has raised the profile of RE and ensured that the lessons are more memorable.
- Reverend Simon completes half-termly assemblies and is part of the life of the school.
- Pupil voice shows that the children enjoy going to the church and their engagement in lessons has increased.
- Staff at Northfield value the positive connection with the church.

### Comments

The connections with the local church have clearly developed over the course of this year. Reverend Simon supports the school well and is an integral part of Northfield St Nicholas as he is also a Governor. The children like visiting the church and seeing their artwork displayed there. They talked about their assemblies with Reverend Simon and that he brings his guide dog Mayne too. Assemblies are considered as fun. Children have a plethora of opportunities to showcase their work at the church and are proud to do this. Active learning is a key component of the RE curriculum; children have the chance to dance, sketch, and take part in yoga, drama and music. The floor books demonstrate the exciting curriculum on offer.

**Next Steps: To ensure that the children have the opportunity to visit a variety of places of worship.**

**Target 3: To develop a more in depth understanding of the needs of pupils joining reception to develop bespoke transition support.**

- Transition plans were written prior to September so all staff were aware of the support needed in the first few days of school.
- In depth review meetings following effective transition took place including the sharing of EHCPs which informed the assess, plan, do, review process.
- A member of the safeguarding team attended every transition meeting to support where needed.
- Safeguarding and Inclusion teams were present at the parent welcome event, so all parents were able to make links with key personnel.

### Comments

It was clearly evident that everyone at Northfield St Nicholas puts the needs of the children first. Support staff confirmed this positive culture highlighting that 'everyone wants to do the best for the children'. Therefore, plans are in place to support effective transition as soon as the children join the school with home visits completed. Parents are appreciative of the support they receive stating that the 'SEN team are incredible.



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The level of care received here is brilliant'. The school goes over and above to support families from the start, providing uniform and food if needed. EYFS staff reiterated the importance of early identification of need so that support can be put in place straightaway. Transition activities are key such as stay and play, tours of the school and meetings to ensure the right approach is adopted.

**Next Steps: To consider adding a formal presentation slide to EYFS presentation and meeting each family separately during the whole school transition days.**

**Target 4: To develop communication with all feeder high schools to develop an appropriate transition plan for all Year 6/Year 7 pupils.**

- Key feeder schools attended Northfield to speak to the children and to meet with the teachers and the safeguarding and inclusion team.
- Transition clubs were instigated so that children had the opportunity to share any worries and ask questions.
- Mrs Leech was able to be a listening ear for children worried about high school.
- High schools attended the school's SEND forum.
- The school ensured that the open days were promoted to parents. This was completed on one sheet so as not to confuse parents.

### Comments

The pastoral support available to parents and children is extensive and effective at Northfield. The children know if they have a worry that they will be listened to and that the staff will help them. One child explained 'they check in to see how we are feeling'. Therefore, the school has ensured that there are clear transition plans in place for all children with extra provision in place for the most vulnerable. The school supported families to attend the high school open days and helped families to complete paperwork. All children transferred to high school successfully.

**Next Steps: To develop an effective transition package for the 'in year' transfer process.**



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### Agreed Targets for 2024-2025

**Target 1: To ensure staff are confident in meeting the needs of EAL learners and that this is reflected in practice and progress/attainment outcomes.**

#### Comments

The school has recognised that the school's demographic is changing and there has been an increase in number of children joining the school with English as an additional language, therefore they appreciate that their practice will need to develop further. The school has booked some additional training for all staff to enrich practice. The impact of this training will be measured through feedback and results. The school is intending to use the EAL assessments from the Bell Foundation to ascertain the children's English proficiency. This will enable the school to tailor support and show progress. The school is currently using widgit software as a visual tool to support learners, but this will be rolled out more widely across the school. Pupil passports are going to be introduced for EAL learners following the assess, plan, review, do process.

**Target 2 To ensure all groups of pupils are making measurable progress across the curriculum to achieve excellence for all, including all at risk groups.**

#### Comments

Leaders intend to develop their assessment practice across the school ensuring that 'at risk' groups become a key focus for all staff and all subjects. This will be monitored through pupil progress meetings, learning walks and OTrack. Adaptive teaching will be developed further so all children can access the learning. Additional support will continue to be swift and effective within school. The school environment will continue to be advanced so that it supports children's cognitive load in classrooms and key vocabulary displayed with images where needed. Children's voice will be captured regarding the whole school environment and displays revised accordingly.

**Target 3 To make sure all pupils transition successfully into Northfield's including at risk groups during in year starters/transfers.**

#### Comments

To continue on the transition work from the previous year the school feels there are further actions required to enhance the admission procedures such as adding visuals to the admissions pack for EAL families. The school will consider requesting further information from families to support the admissions process. Meeting children and families before they start and asking the children to draw a picture are useful tools for gaining valuable information. Pupil passports will be established for children with EAL will also be completed. The school intends to implement some parenting courses and is considering different options e.g. Thrive, families connect.



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### **Target 4 To ensure that anti-racism practice is developed at Northfield.**

#### **Comments**

A new Assistant Headteacher joined the school earlier this year and will be leading on the 'No Outsiders' programme across the school. The 'No Outsiders' programme educates children about diversity and addresses issues such as sexism, ageism, race, and different types of families, through the use of age-appropriate books. Through the picture books the children will explore the concepts of equality, diversity, acceptance of differences, and the right of someone to have an opinion different to their own. Parents will be invited into school to learn about the programme and to look at the books that will be used. Staff will have training regarding key vocabulary and tackling prejudice. To ensure curriculum cohesion, links will be made with the current curriculum provision. Governors will monitor the impact of this programme. In addition, the school intends to visit schools with excellent anti-racism practice and develop actions from this. Staff will undertake equality, diversity and inclusion [EDI] training and establish a working party.

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

The school is a member of the MADIE A cluster group. They attended a meeting at Red Oak Primary School, Lowestoft and at Bramfield House. However, they were unable attend a third visit due to staff shortages at the time.

The impact of the visit to Red Oak Primary School was extremely useful. The schools now have very strong links and have worked together on a number of projects. The children and PE lead from Northfield took part in an anti-racists day at Red Oak which they really enjoyed. This was corroborated by the children I spoke to as they told me about the medals they had received and how this event was very memorable. When the staff visited the cluster group day, they also learned about the Thrive gold award and have since achieved this themselves.

The visit to Bramfield House was also positive as there were lots of similarities and approaches between the two schools. Staff valued the opportunity to see some past pupils and how they have progressed and the impact of their initial work before they transferred. The use of therapy dogs also generated discussion back at school.

The school values the visits to the other IQM schools and endeavours to send staff to these at all times. Although they could not attend one of the cluster groups, they did visit another Centre of Excellence school in Ipswich to help support one of their targets for the year which they found valuable.



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### Overview

Northfield St. Nicholas Primary Academy is a wonderful, inclusive school that always puts the needs of the children first. It has 339 children on roll and is part of Reach2 Academy Trust. All children and families are welcomed and the school works hard to meet the needs of every child. The Headteacher works effectively with his leadership team, the Governing Body, the Trust, parents, and staff to ensure that everyone has high expectations for what the children can achieve. Meetings held across the school are purposeful and child centred. Moreover, when introducing new initiatives, leaders are always mindful of how they will benefit the children and the impact it will have. The school continues to encourage all children to 'look smart, think smart and be smart'. The parents and carers I met hold the school in high regard. They unanimously agreed that the support offered at Northfield was exceptional. One parent stated, 'I cannot fault the school'. Further comments included: 'I have nothing bad to say', 'this school supports not judges' and 'if I didn't have the school I don't know what I would do'. There was lots of praise for the office team too who go over and above to support families with school processes: 'we can't thank them enough'.

As well as emotional support and effective SEND advice, parents reported that the school considers all aspects of a child's experience in school. The school works with parents to ensure that all children can take part in adventures, trips and visits, '11 before 11' is actively promoted. They reported uniform is available at a pre-loved uniform stall, effective medical support is in place, and dietary requirements are carefully considered, so children do not miss out on meals. Support staff said the school catering team go above and beyond to ensure the children have the food they need in order to support their learning. All parents reported that their children felt 'happy at school' because they were listened to and that the school had an awareness of what they need to thrive.

Staff are proud of the school's ongoing journey and enjoy working at Northfield because the culture is supportive: 'everyone who works at Northfield wants to do the best for the children'. Staff turnover is low. Leaders know the children and staff well. The universal approach to supporting the well-being of staff and children is embedded. Staff complete 'check ins' throughout the day where individuals stipulate a number to demonstrate how they are feeling. This enables support to be directed (everyone has an opportunity to ask for help). The children corroborated this and said 'all staff help us to keep safe, they check in to see how we are feeling'. In addition, everyone has a voice and can contribute to developments across the school. The children reported that 'the school parliament makes sure our school is safe and gives new ideas'. The children are proud of their school.

The representatives from the school parliament were keen to show me all the wonderful displays, highlighting the art gallery, the school's promise poster, the Diwali celebration, the library, the sensory room, the beach school, and sustainability display boards, the IT room, and the Hub space where conflicts are resolved. The children could explain the school's restorative practice approach and were pleased that they had developed the skills to resolve problems. This approach is clearly embedded across the whole school and contributes to the smooth running of the school. The parents reported that 'the children are nicer to each other', 'they know how to co-operate with each other'



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and 'teachers deal with incidents straight away'. It was clear from my visit that the children continue to have high engagement in the schools' rules and expectations for high quality learning and conduct.

On my visit I was fortunate enough to observe an assembly which explored inclusion through a story from the 'No-Outsiders' programme. The children entered the hall calmly and were keen to learn the theme for the day. The behaviour throughout the assembly was impeccable. The children were keen to share their views about the story discussed and were encouraged to speak clearly and in full sentences. The children's views were compassionate and clear, explaining that 'everyone should be included'. It was great to observe the curriculum cohesion between the chosen story and the school's promise.

The Deputy Headteacher and new SENDCo play pivotal roles in ensuring all children can access the learning. They go above and beyond to ensure that there are high quality interventions and emotional support available throughout the school day. For example, the Hub continues to help the children to understand themselves better and how their behaviour impacts on others. Interventions across the school range from soft starts to breakfast clubs, Lego therapy, Thrive groups, lunch clubs, sensory circuit, and coaching opportunities. Management plans are in place for children who need additional support, and the staff team exhaust all available strategies to avoid suspensions. It was super to see the lunch club in action and see how the children use this to develop their social skills, regulate their behaviour and check in with the staff. Lunch club was calm, supportive and reflective. The clear systems and procedures in place across the whole school are excellent; they are enabling the children to grow and thrive.

The school continues to have an excellent understanding of the 8 elements of the IQM framework. Leaders explained how they have continued to focus on these as the school strives for outstanding. The school continues to ensure that the curriculum is creative, inclusive and challenging. The school follows the CUSP curriculum (Curriculum with Unity Schools Partnership). The structure provided to the staff and children is excellent and is continually being adapted to meet the needs of all children. The school's focus on oracy is also having a positive impact. Teaching and learning are monitored by leaders through regular learning walks, book looks, data analysis and academy reviews. Staff are encouraged to complete NPQs and to take part in high quality CPD opportunities that meet the school's requirements but also develops the individual. They appreciate the excellent training they have received and value the opportunities to work in academy clusters to share best practice.

Northfield St. Nicholas Academy is an outstanding example of a school committed to meet the needs of its children and is resolute in its commitment to and implementation of inclusive practice. The whole school has a clear commitment to inclusion and supports staff well. Adults within the school wholeheartedly support the direction of the school, and staff are kept well informed about the IQM process. Governors are proud of the school and contribute to its development through linked visits. There is a good understanding of the targets set for the coming year. They are closely linked to the School Development Plan and how they will continue to move the school forward.





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I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Centre of Excellence. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence status and is reviewed again in 12 months. The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Centre of Excellence status.

**Assessor: Dr Andrea Hall**

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

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