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**Date** 1st March 2023  
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**Inclusion Quality Mark Accreditation Report**  
**St. Thomas's C.E. Primary School, Bury**  
**1st March 2023**

St. Thomas's C.E. Primary School was accredited with Bury's Inclusion Quality Mark in December 2019. St. Thomas's were provided with feedback and a written report that described strengths and suggested possible areas for development.

St. Thomas's have requested re-accreditation so that their current practice can be assessed against the Bury Inclusion Quality Mark standards. These standards are organised into four areas: Whole School Approaches; Inclusive Learning; Supporting Emotional Health and Wellbeing; Participation and Involvement. School's performance against the standards was assessed during a full day accreditation visit on 1st March 2023. The visit was conducted by Gareth Rennie (Primary Inclusion Lead) and Ian Sutcliffe (Primary Inclusion Lead).

Activities for the accreditation included:

- Extensive learning walks through school; including break and lunch times
- Interviews with pupils
- Interviews with parents
- Interviews with the senior leadership team
- Interviews with teachers and teaching assistants
- Examination and discussion of school plans
- Review of school policies and procedures
- Scrutiny of pupil work
- Discussion of pupil records

## Whole School Approaches

### Ethos

- As a school, considerable effort is focussed on ensuring that provision is inclusive, and as a result, pupils with a diverse range of needs feel safe and happy. The leadership team clearly articulate their 'inclusion journey' and evidence a programme of high quality CPD and follow-up.
- A high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a high proportion of pupils do not have English as their first language. The school is situated in an area that is classified as having high levels of deprivation (Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2019). Teachers are able to talk about the school's context, the needs of its learners and how the school's curriculum responds and seeks to raise aspirations and broaden horizons. The curriculum journey is based on the questions, 'Where am I going?' and 'Who will I meet?' During a pupil's time at St. Thomas's they will have had opportunity to 'meet' a culturally diverse range of people who have influenced the world and to experience diversity through high quality literature.
- Parents said that they feel listened to and valued, and gave examples of how the school have made adjustments to their child's provision following parent-initiated contact.
- Teachers and teaching assistants spoke about their strong working relationships and the positive impact that this has on classroom learning.

### Leadership and Governance

- Leadership evidence accurate assessment of the school's inclusive practice. This self-evaluation feeds into a SEND action plan that is systematic and contributes to the school's development plan. Further developments in inclusive practice continue to be prioritised.
- The school's environment has been designed and maintained effectively in order to support good behaviour for learning and pupil engagement; e.g.:
  - Consistent working walls which pupils were observed to be using
  - Good use of space, including a focus on motivating pupils to read with attractive, well organised reading areas
  - Well-presented and maintained communal spaces
  - Well kept and functional outdoor spaces
- The Inclusion Quality Mark Accreditation Report, December 2019, made recommendations with regards to the impact of teaching assistants. At that time the school were carrying out a review into the effectiveness of teaching assistant deployment, and have followed up with a systematic programme of support and training. During the visit, teaching assistants were effectively deployed and were observed:
  - leading interventions
  - supporting SEN learners with independent routines and work
  - modelling expected behaviours

- quietly re-phrasing for pupils who may not have understood
- proactively dealing with the early signs of distress in pupils with SEMH need
- to have developed strong relationships with pupils which were conducive to good behaviour for learning

### **CPD**

- Teachers and support staff are provided with a strong training offer, and this is reflected in the delivery of provision.
- Curriculum leaders access supportive professional networks to ensure the quality of St. Thomas's curriculum offer.
- Teaching assistants feel that they are well-supported; commenting on the quality and quantity of CPD that is provided, as well as the facilitation of time out of class for planning, preparation and assessment. Teaching assistants also spoke about the usefulness of sharing CPD opportunities with staff at Holy Trinity Primary School and Millwood Primary Special School.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have accessed 'Trauma Aware,' Dyslexia and SEMH focussed training. This is reflected in classroom practice.

### **Person Centred Planning**

- Pupil meetings are structured around person centred approaches; e.g., annual reviews.
- Parents/carers spoke about how the school has supported them with problems they have encountered and difficult times in their life; e.g., one parent spoke about the difficulties they have transitioning their son from home to school, and how school helped by designing a routine that supported a more manageable journey.
- Where required, St. Thomas's have experience of developing alternative curriculums, and have successfully re-engaged and stabilised pupil presentation through this practice. The school presented case studies which demonstrate how their inclusive practice has facilitated positive outcomes for pupils and their families. In these case studies, the school describe the transition process, and how they work in partnership with parents and pupils to ensure success.
- The school have successfully transitioned pupils who have experienced placement breakdown at previous settings.

### **Understanding and valuing difference**

- Staff understand that 'equality' does not equate to 'treating everyone the same,' and talk about their commitment to getting to know their children, so they are able to put in place provision that enables them to succeed.
- The curriculum has been designed to give pupils insight into a breadth of cultures, and role models from different backgrounds are used to inspire pupil learning.

## **Policies and plans**

- St. Thomas's are part of the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools programme and have been accredited with the Silver Award. Pupil representatives spoke about how the programme works at St. Thomas's, relating the articles to their everyday lives. Pupils talked about:
  - Article 17, 'Every child has the right to reliable information from the mass media,' and how this linked to their learning about internet safety.
  - Article 23, 'A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community.' Pupils spoke about the inspirational visit of a Paralympian athlete, and how they ensure that no one at their school is left out.
  - Article 24, 'Every child has the right to the best possible health,' and how this linked to their learning about healthy eating and caring for their community's environment.
- Pupils spoke about some of the practical activities they had carried out following their Rights Respecting Work, which has included leading assemblies to share learning with peers and litter picking in the community.

## **Inclusive Learning**

### **Curriculum and teaching**

- Teachers were observed to be using a wide range of effective quality first teaching strategies to ensure good accessibility.
- Work is differentiated appropriately and considerate of different learning styles.
- The school use drama and role play across the curriculum, this was observed during the learning walks; e.g., in key stage 1 pupils acted out the fairy tale, Little Red Riding Hood. This created opportunities for New to English EAL learners to communicate with others, as well as giving all pupils the chance to hear and use the focus vocabulary in a meaningful context.
- A high proportion of pupils arrive in the EYFS with below average starting points. In particular, the school have identified that there is a need in the area of speech and language. St. Thomas's conduct speech and language screening of all pupils in EYFS using WellComm. EYFS practitioners use the WELLCOMM 'Big Book of Ideas' in their whole class teaching to ensure that all learners access a quality speech and language curriculum. Teachers at St. Thomas spoke about how their speech and language provision provides a strong foundation for progression in writing.
- Teachers champion the spoken word in the classroom:
  - Repeating and reframing pupil's verbal responses so that the whole class is able to access and understand key vocabulary and the answerer's thought processes

- Writing and displaying pupil responses clearly, so that other pupils are able to view spoken responses as text
- Pupils are given the opportunity to engage in learning focussed speaking and listening activities with peers
- Teacher-pupil interactions are friendly and supportive, and there is a strong atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Teaching assistants were observed to be effectively deployed and pupils with SEND were discreetly integrated into classroom support systems.
- Pupils are encouraged to make use of practical resources that promote independence in the completion of their work; i.e., word mats, dictionaries, practical mathematical resources, etc.

### **Learning and progress of all groups**

- Throughout the school, pupils are being taught to use metacognitive strategies to produce independent work. For example, during an English lesson, a Key Stage 1 pupil told an observer, “I say the sentence 5 times before I write it... this lets me know what I want to write. Then I check what I have written.” Appropriate pupil groups were observed to be engaged in teacher-set extension activities. At the same time, other pupils in the class, who were at earlier stages of English language acquisition were engaged in the oral retelling of stories using props and small world resources.
- The school demonstrate high aspirations for all pupil groups and effectively support new to English EAL learners in whole class teaching and learning. Practitioners were observed to be using a range of experiential, visual and pre-teaching strategies to actively involve pupils at different stages of English. This inclusive practice is embedded and teachers lead the learning in each lesson using this approach. Where required, pupils access the ‘Racing to English’ language intervention in order to support their immersion in classroom learning. There are also several bilingual practitioners on the school staff who are able to provide additional language support for both pupils and parents.
- Where National Curriculum assessment guidance does not present a clear enough reflection of a learner’s progress and attainment, practitioners use PIVATs for assessment and to plan progress.
- Where pupils have more significant speech and language needs the school seek additional support from the local NHS speech and language service. Speech and language advice is valued and acted upon.
- Pupils were observed to be engaged in purposeful learning activities throughout the school. Pupils were predominantly in class and a small number of pupils were outside of the classroom accessing targeted small group interventions and bespoke 1:1 learning. The Deputy Head/SENCO demonstrates an awareness of the importance of ensuring that the scheduling of interventions does not prevent pupils of all abilities from accessing a broad and balanced curriculum.

- St. Thomas's was re-accredited with the Dyslexia Aware Quality Mark. Dyslexia friendly teaching strategies and discreetly made adaptations are embedded in classroom practice.

## **Supporting Emotional Health and Wellbeing**

### **Resilience**

- School have adopted principles of the Pivotal Approach to behaviour management; e.g., their one page code of conduct and restorative practice questions. Peer mediators were observed to be using the school's template restorative questions during playtimes to support peers in resolving minor disagreements.
- Expectations of the conduct of adults is also outlined in the code of conduct document; e.g., adults are expected to provide a positive 'meet and greet' for pupils as they enter school / the classroom.
- The school have created a space for nurture interventions called the 'Zen Den.' As well as acting as base for sensory and SEMH interventions, it is opened up at lunch times, so pupils can go there for adult support. Peer mediators can make referrals to the Zen Den if there is an issue that they feel requires adult support.
- This academic year, alongside other schools in the locality, St. Thomas's are participating in the Hamish & Milo Programme and training within the University of Bath Research Project. The programme supports the delivery of an emotions curriculum and a range of SEMH interventions. St. Thomas's, along with other schools in the locality, collectively identified the programme as being able to support groups of learners with specific SEMH needs, and are working collaboratively to embed effective delivery within their setting.
- St. Thomas's are in tune with the needs of their pupils. Notwithstanding this, there is also recognition that pupils can sometimes experience crises and the school has responded by drawing up risk assessments and de-escalation plans where needed.

### **Belonging**

- St. Thomas's C.E. Primary School serves children and families that have a wide range of beliefs and cultural experiences. The school's religious curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to learn about the beliefs and experiences of others, and encourages the values of tolerance and respect; e.g., pupils are given the opportunity to visit different places of worship such as local Churches, Synagogues and Mosques. And important religious festivals of different faiths are celebrated by the school.
- All staff demonstrated an awareness of the importance of giving children the space and time to talk to a listening adult. Staff were observed to be sensitive to the needs of pupils, and to respond compassionately to signs of distress. One teaching assistant commented, "Adults are never too busy to listen to children."

## **Participation and Involvement**

### **Whole school approach & Participation of stakeholders**

- School provide a Parent's English Workshop which supports parents with emerging English to develop their language skills.
- Since the last accreditation visit St. Thomas's have engaged the parent community with the re-writing of the school's SEND policy.

### **Wider community links**

- The Deputy Headteacher/SENCO has provided inclusion-focused support to Bury school colleagues for several years and currently leads the SEND Peer Review on behalf of the local authority. Colleagues from other schools that have been supported by the deputy head have provided feedback on the high-quality mentoring that has been provided.
- The headteacher supports headteacher peers through their Chairship of the Bury Association of Primary Headteachers.
- Pupils visits to local residential homes are supported by the school and pupils get to meet their pen pals who live in them. Residents from the homes are invited to key celebrations at school, such as the Easter and Christmas shows.

### **What is working exceptionally well?**

- Class-based, inclusive quality first teaching that meets the needs of all learners is embedded throughout the school. Pupils are engaged in their learning and from low starting points make strong progress.
- The school have designed a curriculum that is specific to their context and is effective in raising aspirations, achieving high standards and promoting the values of respect and tolerance.
- St. Thomas's provide a high-quality universal PSHE curriculum, and are expert at providing more focussed SEMH intervention when this is required.
- Adult-pupil relationships are strong and founded in mutual respect; this has supported the establishment of a calm and purposeful learning environment.
- Pupils with a range of special educational needs are supported discreetly and effectively.
- Teachers and support staff are provided with a strong training offer, and this is reflected in the delivery of provision.

### **What might school consider in moving forward?**

- The school promote the '4 Bs before me' approach to help pupils to develop their independence and resilience when completing follow-up activities. However, not all pupils follow this framework, with some pupils saying that if they get 'stuck' they 'just ask the teacher.' The school may decide to revisit this approach; ensuring that adults

are referring pupils to this framework, and that pupils are with familiar with the four steps.

- As mentioned, adults champion the spoken word, and pupils are encouraged to engage in speaking and listening activities. Within 'shoulder-partner' dynamics, there can sometimes be a tendency for pupils to adopt dominant and passive roles. More direction in the structuring of partner and group work would help enable pupils to experience a variety of roles to their full extent; e.g., speaker and listener; scribe and dictator, etc.

## **Final outcome**

As a result of this accreditation visit, Bury Council is delighted to be able to re-accredit St. Thomas C.E. Primary School with the Bury Inclusion Quality Mark.

Bury Council professionals conducting the accreditation:



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Date: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023