



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name The Willows School Academy Trust
Stipularis Drive
Hayes
UB4 9QB

Head/Principal Mr Malcolm Shaw

IQM Lead Danai Vourdanou

Date of Review 4th October 2024

Assessor Ms Maria Rodrigues

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Quality First Network

Ambassador Debbie Shirley

Next Meeting: TBC

Meeting Focus TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Summer 2023	4th July 2023	N/A
Autumn 2023	8th November 2023	No
Spring 2024	28th February 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	22nd May 2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	5th November 2024	No

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The Willows School Academy Trust has attended a cluster meeting and has also hosted one at the school for the other schools to attend.

28th February 2024: Curriculum development (EYFS and Foundation subjects)

This cluster meeting took place at Keir Hardie Primary School. The Willows School Academy Trust found this to have a significant impact on the school's inclusive practices. Transition practices shared by other schools provided innovative ideas for smoother primary to secondary transitions, which The Willows School Academy Trust has begun to implement. The introduction of the "Zones of Regulation" approach inspired the school to adopt this as a universal strategy. This universal approach is visible across The Willows School Academy Trust and has had an impact on the behaviour and attitudes of pupils as well as their wellbeing. Learning about flexible teaching and open-ended tasks encouraged The Willows School Academy Trust to



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design a curriculum that captures the potential of SEND pupils. The exchange of ideas with other schools regarding foundation book overviews and the use of widgets like Communicate in Print has led to the adoption of new, effective tools and methods, thereby enriching teaching practices and improving pupils' engagement and learning outcomes. This is evident in lesson drop-ins across the school.

22nd May 2024: Behaviour Management and Inclusion

The Willows School Academy Trust hosted this cluster meeting and led on sharing of successful strategies and initiatives to showcase the effectiveness of their behaviour management approaches with other schools. This had a profoundly positive impact on the school's reputation as a specialist setting for children with SEMH and how their outstanding practice can be shared with and applied in other settings. The Willows School Academy Trust's behaviour policies, which ensure fairness and clarity for all pupils, were highlighted as a model of consistency of implementation and inspired other schools to review their models. The positive feedback on the use of restorative practices has reinforced the value of resolving conflicts and promoting a harmonious school environment. The Willows School Academy Trust's tailored intervention programmes that are individualised to meet the needs of SEND pupils to address specific behavioural needs were particularly well received and provided valuable insights for other schools looking to enhance their inclusive practices.

Evidence:

- Website
- Ofsted report
- Ofsted parent view results
- End of KS2 progress and attainment summary
- Tour of The Willows School Academy Trust
- Lesson drop-ins

Meetings with:

- Headteacher
- IQM Lead
- Designated Safeguarding Lead/Play Therapist
- SLT, English Lead
- SLT, Maths Lead and KS1 Lead
- BRP and FFT Lead
- Behaviour Lead
- Teachers



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Summary of Targets from 2023-2024

Target 1: Quality of education and adapt the curriculum so that children's knowledge and skills are built upon over time.

The Willows School Academy Trust has made significant strides in reviewing and adapting the curriculum to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills are systematically built upon over time. The implementation of the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) has been particularly effective, combining academic, personal, and international learning in a manner that is both exciting and challenging for pupils.

All pupils at The Willows School Academy Trust have access to and engage in an academic and personal curriculum that fully meets their individual needs and has depth as well as breadth.

The Willows School Academy Trust will continue to refine its approach to curriculum review and adaptation, including targeted interventions to meet the emerging needs of all pupils.

Target 2: Personal development - To develop children's understanding of positive relationships and respect for others.

The Willows School Academy Trust's comprehensive approach to enhancing pupils' understanding of the importance of positive relationships and respect for others has led to a review and redesign of the SMSV and RSE curricula conducted in consultation with all stakeholders with a clear educational intent in line with statutory guidelines.

Weekly SMSC assemblies have been instrumental in reinforcing values. The introduction of the Eco School Award training, spearheaded by the Eco Lead, has begun to foster a greater sense of environmental responsibility for the pupils. The promotion of the Rights Respecting School (RRS) framework through various initiatives at The Willows School Academy Trust, including a promotional video and the use of UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) articles, has further raised awareness and empowered pupils.

The Willows School Academy Trust will continue to refine and expand efforts to promote the importance of positive relationships and respect for others with all pupils.

Target 3: Behaviour and attitudes - To develop greater resilience in children when faced with challenges in their learning.

The Willows School Academy Trust has made concerted efforts to foster greater resilience in pupils when they encounter challenges in their learning. Integrating IPC (International Primary Curriculum) and SMSC lessons has provided a clear framework for teaching pupils about bullying and conflict resolution. Embedding these topics in long-term planning ensures that resilience building is a continuous process. Teachers are trained and supported regularly to ensure effective planning and delivery of these lessons.



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Behaviour monitoring systems and strategies such as “Dip in the Box” are used effectively to continue to promote greater resilience in pupils.

The Willows School Academy Trust will continue to develop its practice through ongoing training and explore the use of other digital tools to support children develop greater independence in their learning and fostering their love for learning.

Target 4: Leadership and management - To consistently build on the subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge.

The Willows School Academy Trust has prioritised the consistent training and development of subject and pedagogical knowledge with all staff to ensure high-quality teaching for all pupils. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of the pupils' needs and individualised strategies for intervention to meet the needs of pupils in a SEMH setting. This focus on SEMH has been integral to ensuring best practice within the specialist setting that meets the needs of all pupils. The Willows School Academy Trust supports ongoing staff development at all levels and fosters a culture of continuous improvement. Sustained and systematic professional development is a key component of the school's strategy. This comprehensive approach has benefited individual career growth and the broader school community, reinforcing the school's commitment to delivering excellent education.

The Willows School Academy Trust will continue to develop its in-house CPD offer and plan to strengthen its mentorship and coaching programmes.



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Agreed Targets for 2024-2025

We discussed the targets below and agreed they were the right targets for the school to work towards. The Assessor suggested and discussed plans to increase capacity at the school by expanding the age range to secondary phase as is so much needed within the The Willows School Academy Trust's community.

Target 1: Ensure a high-quality and supportive programme for parental engagement to ensure that pupils witness an evolving positive relationship between their household and their school.

- Conduct a Parental Needs Assessment
- Implement regular communication channels
- Organise workshops and information sessions
- Establish parent-teacher partnership meetings
- Create opportunities for parental involvement in school's activities
- Recognise and celebrate parental contributions regularly

Target 2: Improve the overall attendance and reduce persistent absence so that both are significantly better than the national average.

- Analyse data attendance
- Develop a comprehensive attendance policy
- Implement early intervention strategies
- Promote positive attendance culture
- Monitor and review attendance regularly
- Provide support for re-integration

Target 3: Ensure that each subject area has a high-quality curriculum map and schemes of work for each year group to secure good or better progress from year 1 through to year 6.

- Review current curriculum maps and SoW
- Develop a framework for high-quality curriculum mapping
- Collaborate with subject leaders and teachers
- Create revised curriculum maps and SoW
- Peer review and quality assurance

Target 4: Ensure that the focus is on routine and ritual and ready for learning behaviours.

- Establish clear expectations and norms
- Provide professional development
- Implement morning routines
- Embed rituals throughout the day
- Monitor and reinforce behaviours
- Review and adjust strategies



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Overview

The Willows School Academy Trust continues to be a beacon of excellence in inclusion and a model of outstanding education for SEND pupils. The school is a positive, happy and safe place for children, staff and parents. Upon entering The Willows School Academy Trust, the attention to detail, nurture and high expectations for all are visible through all areas of the school including the outstanding learning displays in every classroom and every corridor. The Willows School Academy Trust offers a calm, nurturing, caring, purposeful and happy environment for all.

The Willow School Academy Trust is a Special Primary School for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). All pupils at The Willows School Academy Trust have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with an identified need for SEMH. A significant number of pupils have identified comorbidity needs such as SLCN, ASD, and ADHD. The Willows School Academy Trust is located in the London Borough of Hillingdon but serves several neighbouring Local Authorities.

This is an exceptional school where pupils flourish. Leaders and staff work together very successfully so that pupils reach their full potential. The rich and ambitious curriculum ensures that pupils develop detailed knowledge and understanding over time in all subject areas as well as develop their character self-motivation and regulation.

Most pupils attending The Willows School Academy Trust have had previous difficult and/or disrupted school experiences. Despite joining the school with significant gaps in their learning and understanding, pupils make outstanding progress at the school from their starting points. This is evident in both the progress and attainment measures of the pupils' KS2 results. The latest KS2 results data shows that a staggering 55% of pupils achieved the expected standard in Reading and SPaG and 44% in Writing and Mathematics. The Willows School Academy Trust considers that the results, combining the number of children who made at least expected progress, and/or met the standard in SATs for the 2023 – 2024 academic year, were: Reading: 17 children (94%), Writing: 15 children (83%) and Mathematics: 18 children (100%). These exceptional results can only be achieved for pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities as a result of receiving excellent support to access the curriculum. Staff assess pupils and know their individual needs very well. They use appropriate resources and skilful strategies daily to provide pupils with the help they need.

The wider personal development curriculum is a strength of this school. School staff provide exceptional support for all pupils so that they stay physically and emotionally safe at all times. All children have access to and participate in a wide range of activities such as cooking, art and outdoor learning that are cross-linked to subject areas and designed to develop individual skills such as fine and gross motor skills. The Willows School Academy Trust uses combined play and learning very effectively to ensure high expectations for all pupils are maintained at all times, thus allowing them to consolidate knowledge, explore, problem solve and collaborate. They offer a large range of wider curriculum projects, enrichment classes, experiences and theme days to all children designed to build character and develop social skills. Some examples of these are the



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Christmas Book, Healthy Me, World Book Day, Red Nose Day, Black History Month, horse riding, gardening, fundraising, Forest School, papercraft and photography. During African week all the school's displays are reflective and celebratory of the themes and activities that children take part in. The Willows School Academy Trust brings in musicians, artists and storytellers who share their experiences and promote diversity and inclusion.

The behaviour and attitudes of the children are excellent and well managed through a consistent positive and therapeutic approach focused on praise and reward. There are no suspensions nor exclusions and pupils are taught how to self-regulate so they do not miss out on lessons. Rates of attendance are very high as pupils feel really happy and safe at school. All staff, including the Attendance Leads at the school, go above and beyond with every child and every parent to ensure good attendance every day, therefore attendance at the school is outstanding and well above the national average for special schools as this is the place where children feel safe.

The Willows School Academy Trust uses a therapeutic approach that is expertly blended into the curriculum as well as individualised to meet the needs of all children. The therapy cabin is a beacon of excellence where children can explore and seek an understanding of themselves and others through play and other therapeutic methods and approaches.

Safeguarding and meeting the needs of all children and their families are at the core of everything they do at The Willows School Academy Trust. The school is a calm and purposeful environment where everyone feels safe, happy and valued. All staff take safeguarding very seriously and all staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe at all times. This ensures families receive the help they need.

Parents report that their home life was previously affected by school life and that now, "we can have a happy family unit, we feel we now have our son back". They feel that the school caters for all their child's needs and say, "Thank you for understanding my child". The Willows School Academy Trust has gained The Leading Parent Partnership Award (National Standard for Effective Parent Partnership).

The Headteacher has a clear vision for The Willows School Academy Trust and promotes an inclusive child-centred culture that permeates throughout the school in everything they do. All staff share this vision and are committed to nurturing, caring and improving outcomes for all children. The culture and ethos of the school are excellent and everyone works together as a team to deliver an outstanding education to every child, in every classroom, every day.

Pupils and staff make this school great. The very high expectations, constant drive for improvement with the fostering of excellent relationships based on respect ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for all children at all times. Every child has familiar and trusted adults to work with and every adult places children before their workload. Children at this school are always a priority. Staff are relentless in their pursuit of what is best for the children at all times. I wholeheartedly recommend that The Willows School retain its Centre of Excellence Award.



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It has been an honour and a privilege to visit The Willows School Academy Trust and meet such a devoted team that dedicates their lives to ensuring the best outcomes for the children and community they serve.

I am firmly of the opinion that The Willows School Academy Trust 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: Ms Maria Rodrigues

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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