Report on IQM Inclusive School Award

School Name: Sturry CE Primary School

School Address: Park View
Sturry
Canterbury
CT2 0NR

Head/Principal Ms Michelle Mannings

IQM Lead Ms Michelle Mannings

Assessment Date 2nd and 3rd October 2025

Assessor Ms Rowena Hicks

Sources of Evidence:

- School Improvement Plan
- Walk round the school three times
- Book looks
- Observation of a morning worship session
- Look into the way iPads are used both by pupils and adults

Meetings Held with:

- SLT - Headteacher, Deputy, Assistant Head and SENCo
- Teachers
- Teaching Assistant
- Parents
- Pupils – Leaders, KS1 and KS2
- Y5 teacher explained books and recording of evidence in KS2
- CEO
- EYFS lead and EYFS teacher explained the books and collecting evidence in EYFS and KS1
- Trust ICT Lead

Report on IQM Inclusive School Award

Overall Evaluation

What is remarkable about this school is that every member of the school community told me the same thing, described the environment and experience at Sturry in the same way and I witnessed this on walking round. They love the school, whether they work or learn here, they are passionate about the whole experience offered.

The buzz around the excitement and passion for learning permeates everything. Leaders described the love of their roles with excitement, explaining that their teams are encouraged to be 10% braver by the CEO. They focus on ensuring every child and adult feels like they belong, they are all seen and valued and that "everyone is wanted" (SIP).

The energy from the Senior Leaders is clearly modelled by the Headteacher. Her view is that the children are in school from 9am -3pm, so they are her focus in this time. She is seen and known around the school, sometimes covering a class or taking an intervention to support the pupils and staff. This is enabled by a trust-wide set up to remove bureaucracy where possible so she can focus on what matters – the children.

Running through the school was an energy, passion and love of learning. Teachers were proud to show off the learning in the books, demonstrating an energy and creativity that shone in their proud faces. Teaching assistants admitted they work hard, yet they are able to make such a difference it's worth it, and they feel supported in all they do by both their teams and the leadership. The pupils told me, "We love being here and the learning is so fun! The teachers make the learning come to life!" Parents explained that they worked in partnership with the staff, and no one member of staff worked alone, so the team worked to support their children together.

The quality of learning was seen everywhere. From the learning environments to the beautifully laid out library, to colour coded labelling, was expectant of building independent learners who are keen to engage in their learning. Pupils have high aspirations of themselves and each other, explaining that, even in Year 1, they can take a photo of either their own work or their friends to demonstrate the learning to their teacher. They explained to me the benefits of the unusual layouts of their classrooms, explaining that it helps them to learn and to take ownership of how they learn best, but at the same time there were rules and behaviour expectations so they wouldn't abuse the trust shown to them.

Children are taught from the start of their Sturry journey to become emotionally aware and to understand what they need to be ready to learn. Both pupil and staff wellbeing is a high priority and as a result of this embedded culture, it is a thriving school community. This isn't an add on, it starts with the CEO and permeates throughout. Teachers tell me they are listened to, and if they are struggling with something, they can always ask, SLT is approachable, including the CEO. This is not a normal hierarchy!

The CEO told me that everyone at Sturry is "noticed, valued and successful." As I met different groups from the school community, each person echoed this as their reality. From the Headteacher explaining how the Trust supports and works with her and her team, to KS1 children explaining that "learning is fun, it's never boring here and it's exciting. If I'm worried, I speak to an adult, so I feel safe."

The IT focus enables time to be better used. One teacher told me, "What I do now, I see children engaged and learning, this is what I love and why I do the job." The school is

sharing their Microsoft status across the world. The Trust digital curriculum lead explained, "We ensure every child is successful all of the time, whatever the need or advantage, to widen their experiences. We then empower the children to become leaders of their own learning and to have equitable learning opportunities."

The Trust sets a bar of support, expectations and responsiveness to need and this then permeates through the school. The leadership is keen to continue to keep growing, improving and adapting for the children. As the Headteacher explained, "After our outstanding Ofsted report, we kept looking at how to continue on this journey."

There is something special in this school. One teacher told me, "Prior to coming to Sturry, I doubted myself, but here I am believed in, and the Headteacher is my biggest champion. SLT give us confidence we don't have in ourselves!" Another told me, "In my previous school you had to manage on your own. Here the attitude is that there is help if you need it, to learn, grow and help others." This, of course, aligns with the school vision of "go and do likewise."

A teacher told me, "We can be outstanding in our job and still be mum!" Another told me, "The leaders still care. They're here because they care about the children, education and what's happening. It's contagious!" A teaching assistant (TA) told me, "We love that we have made a difference to the children."

The Headteacher explained that the belief is that teachers should be able to complete their work by 4.30pm so they can go home. The Trust has analysed all teacher jobs to see if they can be automated or made more efficient to enable better work life balance for the staff. The impact of this is a passionate staff, who have energy, creativity and an excitement for the learning opportunities they provide. The children in turn catch this excitement for being in the classroom and the opportunities they are given.

A group of TAs explained that "Inclusion isn't one person's responsibility at Sturry. We're a team, so one TA has gained a SEND diploma, one has a specialism in speech and language, and another is doing an autism Level 2." They went on to explain that every child's journey through the school is different. "We take time to get to know the children, so we can support them in the best way. We are a wonderfully diverse community."

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 Inclusive School Award 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: Ms Rowena Hicks

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

……
Joe McCann MBA NPQH

Report on IQM Inclusive School Award

Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

A TA said, “Inclusion isn’t one person’s responsibility, we’re a team!”

There is an inclusive focus throughout the leadership, planning, teaching approaches and relationships. This is seen both in a range of teaching resources, SEND interventions, TAs being trained to be specialists, layouts of classrooms, additional resource hubs, teaching methods. In so many areas, I witnessed a drive to have good practice across the school, rather than specific add-ons. For example, in each class there are boxes of resources so any child can use ear defenders or headphones. Perhaps that child likes to listen to music while working independently, or another prefers to work in a quieter space. No one looks different. This, of course, feeds through to the adapted layouts of each classroom to be inclusive to every learner’s style.

On tables were a range of additional resources for anyone to use, and children were keen to demonstrate to me that they have learnt to know what helps them to learn and do their best. TAs explained how the technology helps every learner. “I love the diverse way we support the children. IPads really help some children to communicate and extend their learning, but they don’t look any different to their peers.” One teacher recently made a Bulgarian QR code so one of her students could access books in their home language, creativity is everywhere.

The school has set up alternative provisions to enable the right support to be in place for each child. A TA explained it this way, “They are so helpful. A space to enable a child to regulate, finish their work and then return to class. This gives us an opportunity to help these children to recognise how they are feeling.”

A teacher explained to me, “We try new things, as there is no limit to what we might do for a child. We’ll try new ideas, find new resources, and we approach the issue creatively as a team.” Children were equally passionate to share their experiences. “When something is hard, that’s OK. I can try new ways to learn, get help and then I get more confident.” A child with learning difficulties recently audio’d his final piece of work and his teacher celebrated with me the level of language he had used and the quality of the work.

Belonging was a word used widely across the two-day visit. A child told me “You can trust your teacher, always, anytime!” A TA told me “We are known, the leadership invest in us because they believe we can!”

Celebration runs through the day. This is seen in the children’s excitement in getting a headteacher award through to parents and carers being told about the successes of their children. This also includes the staff. Visitors are common and I heard that if good practice is seen in a class, others from the trust come to see it, so they can share it.

Flexible workspaces/enabling environments. Each classroom has a different layout, with desks, beanbags, floor trays, sofas, corner nooks, all to enable each pupil to learn in their own way, whether standing, sitting or lying down. This is in parallel to adapted resources and learning styles. Adapted resources are seen everywhere, and children

explained to me that they can often record their learning in a style that best suits them, whether green screen, audio, clicker, white board, book etc.

Next Steps:

To broaden bespoke interventions such as Forest School and develop the sensory garden.

Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

There is a culture of trust, safety and belonging that permeates from the leadership throughout the school. No child or adult is left unseen. The pupils describe this as "Our teachers are really kind and they all care." The teaching staff say, "We are encouraged to take risks. We are well known, our strengths are recognised and celebrated. We are encouraged to try new things in a no blame culture." The SENCo said, "The best bit of my day is to be on the front gate with others from SLT as this means we know the families so well."

There is such a strong sense of team. This was beautifully demonstrated by the SENCo who explained that she had previously felt quite isolated in her office across the school. Now she shares an office with SLT and the whole team supports SEND, it isn't just for her. Likewise, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and SLT meets termly to discuss vulnerable children. "We all know next steps, actions, referrals."

The Deputy Headteacher oversees attendance which is very high, and the school are rightly proud of this. We discussed why this is, and clearly a lot of work goes in to supporting the children within a very robust set up. However, what became clear, is that the fundamental reason attendance is so high, is the quality of relationships that exist between all the staff, at all levels and the families.

There is a culture that children WANT to come into school, there are lots of fun things going on, where learning is brought to life. Even in lunchtimes, sports coaches come in to play games with the children. SLT on the gates is recognised to make a difference and parents agreed that this has made a difference to them. The Headteacher pointed out that this system means many issues are dealt with there and then, which then reduces both the number of meetings required and build-up of concerns.

Parents and carers also pointed out that soft starts to the days and to the new term can really benefit their children. They agreed that SLT, as well as their children's teachers were very accessible which reduced everyone's anxiety.

The leadership model is unusual at Sturry. It is layered rather than hierarchical. The team approach is engrained to a level that staff feel free to contact the CEO, the CEO is regularly visible. The Headteacher is hands on, even in playtimes the children told me she takes part in skipping with them. Pupils are confident to put their ideas to leaders and TAs are encouraged to train to become specialists. A teacher explained how she has been trained to coach others which has really developed her skills. As the CEO put it, "I may be in charge, but I don't make all the decisions or have all the ideas."

Next Steps:

Audit middle leader skills to ensure there is a development plan in place for each leader to build confidence, capacity and expertise.

Element 3 - Curriculum – Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

Teachers were excited to explain how children are given opportunities to demonstrate their learning. They explained that children are independent in how they capture it. In a recent science lesson on intestines, one child used a 20-foot piece of string down a corridor, another playdoh, another canvas…no worksheets.

Teachers told me, "Learning is meaningful, linked to real life learning, it has purpose, both adults and pupils have autonomy and engagement is high." This is what I saw both walking round classrooms and also in books. In class, collaboration was common and purposeful. Children were excited to explain what they were learning and why.

Books were exciting to see. Teachers were proud to explain how feedback in the moment both had cut workload, but also enabled meaningful moving on of learning and this is what I saw. I saw creative approaches, where no book looked the same, with a good level of adult engagement, links to audio and video clips clearly laid out and even video messages left for a pupil as feedback from their teacher, and the pupil can respond in kind.

Adults were never superfluous. They were proactive and clearly loving what they did. Energy was high in all classes. I struggled to spot children with additional needs as so many were accessing additional resources independently. A teacher explained, "One of my classes has a bespoke curriculum but no one knows as he doesn't stand out. I can check on his learning from across the room." Again, the use of technology supporting learning.

A teacher told me, "Other schools appear scared of change, but we embrace it! There is no stigma if we get things wrong, it's OK, we get help. Rather, we look for creative ways to support each child and so we are able to be responsive to their needs."

Children were proud to demonstrate the challenges they were overcoming, the choices they made in their learning and overall, the enjoyment across their day. In one class, a child was writing on a table with an adult, another on a clicker board, another lying down to investigate something, another pair planning their video recording.

Children are offered a wide range of opportunities and experiences. Clubs, visits, virtual reality, carefully chosen books are just a few of the resources and additions chosen to supplement the rich curriculum offer. The outside areas are increasingly well used, with Bushcraft in place and a Forest School leader just starting their training. There is an outdoors classroom, and a grant has been received to create a sensory garden.

Teaching is practical and hands on. The headteacher observed that this impacts engagement and behaviour, and technology has replaced worksheets.

Next Steps:

Continue to investigate further ways to use technology to overcome barriers to learning and enhance engagement. Looking into specific resources as well as training staff in all resources available as the resource banks continue to grow

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

The emphasis is to engage the children and to encourage a love of learning and excitement about their day. One teacher described how in order to introduce a book, she acted out being a monster in the dark, with the other teacher recording her so they had a hook. “We were so excited to teach it. We got the headteacher to send a message to our classes that she’d heard there was a disturbance in the wood, so the site team came and did a Q&A session with the classes. We then took the children out to investigate, where they found footprints and feathers, so the reports they wrote were beautiful.”

One teacher said, “What makes me love teaching is to see children who are difficult to engage make progress and be proud!” She continued, “I enable children to access the learning objective via different routes, but all still achieving learning objectives.”

The curriculum has been carefully designed with the specific intake at Sturry. It enables every child to achieve and be successful. To this end, displays are carefully planned, inclusive and celebrate hard work. Areas such as the creative room with music, sensory circuits and digital performance also enhance the offer.

Staff are encouraged to share resources and ideas, opening up further creative pathways. This is both within the school and across the trust. This also has the benefit of joint planning and resourcing, as well as trouble shooting, to reduce workload. Where good practice is seen by leaders, it is shared across the trust and other staff are invited to come and see.

Children are also given a voice in the learning, both of content, approach and encouraged to share their own new ideas. In response to need, the alternative provisions were set up. Both staff as well as children reported to me that these help many children. TAs have been trained to run these spaces, and the TA who runs it reported that she was so encouraged to be chosen for the role. The headteacher explaining that her particular skill set matched that which would best benefit those children.

It is worth noting that every class looked quite different. This is because, although many of the resources were similar, the way the children approached their learning varied according to their preferred learning style for that lesson, independent choices being valued and there was always a purposeful buzz around the classrooms. Children were proud to explain how their classrooms worked, how they accessed their learning and also how their adults supported them by trusting their choices and encouraging them to try new things.

Next Steps:

Embed Every Child a Reader across all subject areas, looking at new resources to build vocabulary and comprehension.

Element 5 - Assessment

NFER has been brought in to ensure there is a robust system in place, with clear gap analysis. Termly moderation takes place with real conversations and honest challenge through the Canterbury Hub. Books are monitored across the Trust, including specifically those with EHCPs.

Teachers are responsible for the personalised plans of children in their classes, and they are robust. Now online, parents can also track progress, and this is appreciated by them. Tapestry has been extended into Year 1 and 2 as parents appreciated knowing more about their child's learning, and Little Wandle catch up is carefully implemented.

Pupil progress meetings are attended by all or most of SLT, so they are given a priority that reflects the importance of every child being important to SLT. Interventions are tracked electronically, and TAs find it quick and easy to populate these, making review simple.

A child started in the school with significant learning challenges. In his book I saw evidence of photos of him recording his story, green screen, a QR code he can scan to access handwriting practice, bespoke learning, language through colour resources and small step learning objectives. The progress seen within weeks was so exciting. Teachers were proud to show off their books and talk about the benefits of the marking policy both for them and their class.

In other books, I saw drafting, presenting, video responses, clicker alongside independent writing and self-assessment, all ensuring the children were engaged in their own learning progress. There were KEEP IT UP stamps, post its, and language through colour sentence strips. A teacher explained, "Modelling, feedback, all marking is done live with children."

One teacher explained, "The marking in the moment ensures planning, next steps and extension is personalised. This is why all adults in the classroom are so proactive. All staff want every child to succeed."

SLT explained that the iPads also offer tools to support the needs of each child, for example where there is no, or little, language. Small steps start in EYFS and Tapestry supports this development and assessment.

Other resources are also used to track progress and areas of concern such as Boxall. The SENCo has a secure understanding of what is available and needed in their setting.

Next Steps:

embed NFER and use it to inform teaching priorities, while training more staff to administer it and interpret the results.

Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

The behaviour policy was updated two years ago in conjunction with both staff and pupils. It is based around children understanding themselves and how they learn. There are recognition boards, class Dojo and other positive boards. Behaviour is tracked using Arbor, and the DHT monitors this closely. Questions are asked if there are concerns, such as whether adaptations in place are enough, is additional support required?

In response to need, the additional provisions were put into place. The headteacher told me that largely due to the adaptive and responsive nature of classroom layout, teaching approaches and available resources, behaviour incidents are few and far between. Pupils explained that outside each class is a box of resources and a timer. "We can take ourselves outside to calm down or use the fidget toys and then go back into class, it really helps. We are trusted to use this space safely."

The headteacher went on, "Since setting up the APs, there has been a decline in incidents."

The SENCo told me, "We find out from the box ideas for supporting each child. We are careful to listen to the child so they can explain what is going on for them." She continued, "Our strength is our willingness to make changes and adapt."

Many staff spoke to me about relationships and how key these are for both staff and pupils to feel safe and seen. This clearly also impacts behaviour as the children told me they trust their adults, they trust many adults, and they feel safe. If they have a worry, they can go to the nearest adult or if they prefer, they have a QR code to access a specific person they feel safe to speak to.

Children as leaders has a key focus. Speaking to a group of these children there are a lot of opportunities for children to take on this role, they clearly took it seriously. They explained they can help other children and also help their teacher.

A child in Year 5 explained, "We are all different and some children need more help than others and I like to help other children. We all help each other!".

Another child explained, "There are consequences in school because there are consequences in life." He went on, "We, go and do likewise" in our school. This means go and do what you can for others. Be a role model. This may just be that if I sit quietly then others around me will."

Another child explained it this way. "What matters is trying your best, never give up, take part!" These children all spoke of the school values and vision and explained how important perseverance, for this term, was to them all.

Next Steps:

Write policies in an age 10 accessible format. In addition, to trial the introduction of child talk, so pupils can reflect on behaviour, restorative practices and emotions in age-appropriate ways.

Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

One parent explained, "Communication and working together as a team is the best bit for me." She explained that all staff support her and her child, that the headteacher is very hands on.

"Even children who aren't so keen to go into school, they are nurtured and supported into school. It feels like we are supported right from the gate, and my child is safe from the start." Another parent told me.

Parents told me leaders seem to know every child by name, and they even know the name of the parents, it's remarkable.

Another parent told me, "I feel I can easily come in to talk about something that isn't working. I am supported with referrals, and they manage my emotional journey with my child with so much support."

Parents appreciated steps taken by the school to adapt their use of adults when good relationships had been formed between their child and a safe adult. They explained that behaviour is really good as school is calm and ordered and routines are clear which helps many of the children.

Parents told me they were part of the community and listened to. They felt the school was a fun place of learning and extra resources such as the alternative provisions were a great help for their children.

They saw the support they received as a whole staff team effort but recognised the skills of the SENCo and others from the wellbeing or inclusion team in particular. They celebrated the transition support given as well as the way their children with additional needs were supported for times such as the Y4 camping trip. One parent commented, "This is a free weekend, where even those with special needs are supported, encouraging independence and confidence building for the most vulnerable in such a sociable yet safe space."

There is an active parent association which supports fundraising events such as the summer fair. In addition, parents are regularly invited into the school to share in their child's learning. This benefits both the parent so they know what is going on and helps them to feel involved, and also for the pupils who get to show off the work they are so proud of.

The parent support adviser is an active and pivotal member of staff. She is another member of the staff team who focuses on building the crucial relationships with families that the parents and carers value so highly.

Next Steps:

Develop and deepen a strategic approach to digital communication to strengthen collaboration and transparency with parents and carers. This has started and will be embedded and extended, with regular reviews as to impact and efficiency.

Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

As a Microsoft showcase school, a range of opportunities have opened to both share good practice and also for enrichment opportunities. KCC are using the school for case studies.

The school organises termly vision and values days, to enable pupils to engage in meaningful and self-directed activities in the local community. These take on a wide range of opportunities from litter picking to artistic projects for housing projects.

The church links of the school ensure strong community links. They are also involved with Global neighbours and proud to have achieved their gold award.

They access Jubilee centre resources and Picture news. Every opportunity is taken to encourage the pupils to reflect. I saw a picture news display that had post its and pencils beside it, where children had added their comments and views, following an assembly on the topic. No opportunity is missed to encourage the children to extend their thinking.

The school has achieved a gold award for sports from the Canterbury sports academy.

Children told me their trips are, “Really cool!” They also mentioned the virtual reality headsets they can use to experience a wider range of experiences from all around the world. The children are given opportunities such as visiting Kent life and taking part in the BBC 500 words competitions, all of which they are keen to talk about, and about why they do these things and the benefits, as well as the fun!

On the first day of my visit, the children had all dressed up as what they’d like to be when they grow up. They explained this sort of day is regular and so much fun. The discussions we had around possibilities of what they could be, from zookeepers to hairdressers, footballers to doctors were wonderful. It was remarkable how the children dreamed big. They had big aspirations and were ready to discuss the pros and cons of their current thinking.

The Christian ethos threads through everything. This includes visits to the local church, the vision and values, prayer spaces within school, collective worship and the Christian Aid run Global Neighbours for which Sturry has earned a bronze award.

Next Steps:

Deepen community engagement and outreach. This can be through intergenerational projects, a community innovation forum or service-learning modules.