



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name Grace Mary Primary School
Hawfield Road
Tividale
Oldbury
B69 1LD

Head/Principal Mrs Clare Strurmey

IQM Lead Mrs Laura Willetts

Date of Review 6th November 2025

Assessor Ms Hilary Thompson

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group MidlandMixers

Ambassador Ms Jane Flynn

Next Meeting 18th November 2025

Meeting Focus Cultural Capital

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Summer 2024	4 th July 2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	5 th December 2024	Yes
Spring 2025	2 nd April 2025	Yes
Summer 2025	25 th June 2025	Yes

Evidence

- Tour of school
- Visit to focussed provision
- School Development Plan
- IQM evaluation
- Website



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Meetings with:

- Inclusion Lead
- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- Assistant Headteacher
- Art Lead
- Music Lead
- Pupils
- Parents



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Evaluation of Targets for last 12 Months

Target 1: To improve the education for pupils with neurodiversity (by partaking in the PINS DFE funded project. and implementing any training advice we are given)

Grace Mary Primary School was selected by Sandwell Local Authority to take part in the DFE funded PINS (Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity Project). This has involved a range of Whole School training sessions focussing on aspects of Inclusion in school.

The EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) Barriers to Education training helped raise the awareness of children with emotional barriers with all staff, recognising how these barriers impact their ability to fully engage with school. As a result, staff have been able to recognise and understand EBSA and develop strategies to support children within school. The work completed in school around EBSA has also supported the work completed in Target 2 around attendance.

Other training sessions for staff have focussed on effective communication including a language audit and information about resources to ensure that school can assess the language environment. As a result of the training, the school considered their use of visuals within the learning environment and have embedded their use of Widget online as a support tool for communication across all aspects of the school, with visual now implemented on all teaching slides across all year groups. Staff all have relevant visuals on their lanyards and increased use of visuals around school, both general and pupil specific are highly evident. Senior staff at the school and wellbeing practitioners have taken part in Trauma Informed training alongside all staff having a session to better understand neurodiversity and mental health, gaining a better understanding of how neurodiversity can raise anxiety and impact mental health. As a result of the training provided through the PINS project the school have modified practices, identifying additional strategies to include and support all students. Two staff members are also receiving training in Makaton, working towards their level 2 qualification. The staff are disseminating their training back in school and a Makaton sign of the week is introduced during assembly. I was able to observe some simple Makaton being used as a support tool in some of the classrooms and in the focussed provision during my walk around the school.

Further Speech and Language training for identified staff has encouraged staff to reflect upon the Speech and Language support provided in school and as a result staff practice has developed and improved.

Following the training the school has taken a number of actions aimed at improving provision for their neurodiverse children and families. Part of this has included facilitating a parent/carers forum where SEN parents were invited to a half termly workshop with the leader of Sandwell's parents/carers forum. Workshops have provided some positive feedback for the school from parents and an additional workshop around sensory regulation was provided at the request of parents.

Barnardo's came into school during the year to share a draft book on neurodiversity with Year 4 class and asking for feedback prior to the book being published. During their visit they took a group of Year 4 neurodiverse pupils on a walk around all areas of the school, asking the pupils to share how different parts of the school made them feel. Barnardo's then gave feedback to Senior Leaders, identifying areas of the school triggering feelings of anxiety. Leaders have listened to the feedback and amended practices as a result, including splitting dinner time in the hall into two, smaller, quieter sittings and providing additional adult support on the playground to support relationship building. Other changes have included allowing the children from the resource base to eat in the school hall where it is quieter and allow students struggling with the noise in the dining hall to eat in the Haven or Hive. Clear seating plans have been introduced for children whose sensory issues around food are causing anxiety e.g. messy food aversion and aversion to some strong smells.

The environment across mainstream and focussed provision has also been adapted through the addition of partitioning in classrooms, creating smaller, quiet learning spaces/breakout spaces.

DLD, (Developmental Language Delay) is becoming a concern within many of the year groups and to address this growing need whole school training for DLD has been provided using the schools enhanced Speech and Language provision which the school has bought into. This has enabled staff to identify children with traits of DLD and implement early support. Delivered by Speech and language therapist. The impact of the training was clearly evident during my tour of the school during which I observed several examples of the visuals being used to support individuals and whole classes.

Alongside buying into an enhanced Speech and Language provision leaders have explored having an enhanced Occupational Therapist service for the school to ensure pupils are identified with the correct physical/sensory needs, seen at the correct time with relevant support strategies identified. Enhanced OT provision has been purchased for 1 day each month and has included universal, targeted and specialist level assessments, recommendations, and interventions. The process has supported EHCP applications. Physical and sensory needs are now clearly identified and fed into EHCPs. The OT service has shared a 'Sensory Detective Screening Tool' which leaders have personalised to Grace Mary and implemented enabling them to assess against the 7 key areas of sensory need. The screening process has currently identified 10 children with previously unrecorded sensory needs which are now being addressed, reducing behaviour issues and mental health issues triggered when the needs are not well met, with a personalised sensory overview being written for each child. The sensory overview has been shared with parents/carers to enable the sensory support identified to be provided at home as well as in school.

Next Steps:

- Continuing with the PINS project next year, accessing any training offered.
- Further develop parent involvement through restarting regular coffee mornings, including invited guest speakers.
- Continue with the enhanced SALT provision.

Target 2: To ensure whole school attendance is in line with national attendance data.

Leaders have worked hard over the last twelve months to embed the 'Working Together to Improve Attendance' recommendations. Focus has been on raising awareness across all staff of their role in getting children to attend school, making links with the EBSA training. Following the training, work has been done with key children identifying reasons why they might not want to attend school, using picture resources to stimulate discussion, involving social services where family issues are identified as a key reason for absence. Senior Leaders and staff are always present at the school gate to greet parents at the start of day, providing support to students struggling to come into school as well as at the and end of day.

Opportunities to talk about attendance, reinforcing the importance of regular attendance including home visits, welcome meetings, parent workshops, and parent's meetings, highlighting the impact absence is having on academic, personal, and social development. The school has moved away from sharing attendance percentages, finding talking about actual days of absence more impactful. Registration data is printed frequently for key children to more clearly identify patterns. At the end of every week the children's attendance is added to an excel spreadsheet to support early identification of changes to attendance. Parents are quickly informed of any identified changes using letters and phone calls at early opportunities. CPOMS is used consistently to identify concerns that link with attendance. Amber letters for attendance are sent when attendance falls between 85% and 90% asking parents if they would like any support. Attendance below 85% will trigger a meeting with parents.

In an attempt to reduce Leave in Term Time the school has grouped all five Inset days into 1 week immediately following the May half term. Staff training is delivered twice a week after school throughout the year in place of the Inset days, enabling staff to also benefit from the week off outside normal school holiday time. This has been successful in reducing unauthorised holidays across the year.

The school became a Universal Breakfast Early Adopter around Eastertime this year. The provision opens from 8.00am with children being able to have breakfast before accessing physical activities and games either on the playground, field or in the hall. This provision, run by support staff has successfully improved punctuality and attendance.

Rewards for attendance have also been adapted this year and are now more family oriented. Whole class attendance rewards are now worked towards. Each week, the class with the highest attendance is awarded a letter towards making the word DISCO. When a class has been awarded all 5 letters, they have a disco arranged for them during the school day. Bronze, silver, and gold certificates are also awarded termly for individuals alongside verbal praise and postcards home for pupils with improved attendance.

Next Step:

- Continue to embed the strategies that have been implemented to enable the impact to be visible year on year.

Target 3: To develop pupil's oracy to support their development (part of the three-year Oracy project)

The Assistant Headteacher in school is leading on the three-year Oracy Project through VOICE 21. Using the VOICE 21 resources, pupils and teacher baselines have been created. Listening walks were completed around school to assess current practice and used to inform the training provided for staff. The baseline identified 53% of pupils reporting that they didn't enjoy speaking aloud and 33% didn't think speaking was a good way to learn. Teachers were also identified to be avoiding using Oracy as a means of learning due to the pressures of having written evidence as outcomes for learning.

Face to face training was provided for all staff and leaders visited a VOICE 21 Flagship School in Coventry to see how it could benefit Grace Mary, before procedures were implemented to enable the school to evaluate current practice and action plan. Leaders identified areas of good practice across school including the presence of staff on the school gate, quality of interactions between staff and pupils, the use of TLAC (Teaching Like a Champion) within school ensuring consistency of Teaching and Learning across the school, including using 'talk tactics' and the expectation to create IWB slides as part of all planning for lessons which can be annotated with questions and talk activities. The use of HLTAs rather than external supply to cover absence was also identified as ongoing good practice.

Leaders began the Oracy development introducing low stakes high gains small activities which required minimal preparation to encourage buy in from all staff. Simple discussion starters e.g. 'If I ruled the world I would...' plus other games supporting oracy were introduced to staff and pupils, with the intention for the skills and activities introduced becoming transferable across the whole curriculum.

A resource bank was created for teachers to easily add activities into planning. Oracy activities have been introduced at transition times; start and end of break, lunch, start of day etc which has combatted low level behaviour and speedy engagement back into class alongside developing language, becoming a good regulation strategy.

Staff have received training on a range of strategies to support language development and the skills of discussion and sharing an opinion. This has included the use of 'Concept Cartoons' to stimulate discussion, critical thinking, and learning. Prior to any discussion, thinking time, followed by everybody writes, is instigated, regulating pupil's thoughts before being encouraged to discuss or share an opinion. Turn and Talk has also been a way of encouraging pupils to share thoughts and ideas in a 'non-threatening' way prior to sharing their ideas with the whole class. This has successfully reduced student anxiety around speaking and cognitive load.

Pupils are provided with appropriate vocabulary including relevant technical vocabulary to support their discussion, alongside sentence start prompts.

For those who find writing difficult, talking tins are available to support the Everyone Writes' activity.



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Leaders have included oracy into their ongoing monitoring programme involving regular 10-to-15-minute drop-in sessions, using STEPLAB to record the instructional coaching.

All teachers have remained in the same year group this year, supporting staff knowledge of the curriculum, enabling greater focus on an adaptive practice amending delivery to needs of class rather than planning the curriculum alongside integrating the Oracy.

Changes have been made to the assessment requirements and processes for non-core subjects, using pupil voice with selected groups of students to identify the learning that has taken place, ensuring pupils are able to articulate their learning using appropriate technical vocabulary. Pupils are provided with the vocabulary and sentence starters to support the assessment process and reduce anxiety.

Next Step:

- Interweaving oracy across the curriculum – developing subject specific talk. Talk like a scientist. Alongside this, leaders want the oracy framework to be linked to writing opportunities in subjects, including spoken delivery.
- Face 2 face training set for 10th December 2025 to inform SLT and oracy champions of next steps.
- Implementation plan to be shared with staff in staff meeting – Spring.



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Agreed Targets for next 12 months

The school are looking to move to Flagship status following their third Centre of Excellence review and have identified a three-year project; 'Everyone Can Thrive.'

Due to the depth of needs of pupils at Grace Mary with 36% SEND and 38% Pupil Premium the school has acknowledged the importance of supporting their most vulnerable and challenging pupils, ensuring their social and emotional growth, attachment, and mental health needs are met enabling them to thrive academically, strengthening their behaviours for learning and coping strategies. Leaders want to ensure all Grace Mary pupils have a sense of belonging and all pupils have a common understanding of differences and what makes them unique as individuals.

The three-year project plans to introduce and embed THRIVE alongside the whole school approach to shared language and nurture as a whole school approach and will include developing the programme for pupils with complex communication and language needs as well as ASD. Thrive will run alongside the Hive and Haven practices, continuing to support pupils at lunchtime and providing co-regulation. The school are investing in four staff becoming licensed practitioners to enhance the quality of service to families and pupils. These staff members will work closely with the inclusion and safeguarding teams. The service will offer bespoke one-to-one 6-week courses of intervention and small group interventions. Following discussions during the review the school will now look to incorporate Years 2 and 3 of the Oracy projects into the overall Flagship plans. The school are looking to create a Thrive base using The Hive with the aim of both staff and pupils viewing the Hive as normal adaptive practice to support the access to learning, rather than any form of 'failure' on behalf of child or adult. The project will involve baselining all pupils identifying key groups of students, creating Year 1, Year 2 and KS2 Thrive groups. Action plans for these groups will be created following baselining, and all classes will also have a daily Thrive session added to the class timetables, with work within these sessions being targeted to the needs identified within the class. Monitoring and evaluation process will be built into the schools work at all stages of the project to track and measure impact.

Training will be provided for all staff, delivered by Thrive, through staff meetings to enable class teachers and well-being staff to be able to complete the baselining confidently. Plans are also in place to train four in-school Thrive Practitioners over a staggered timescale, initially training two staff at a leadership level with two further staff attending practitioner training later in the year.

By Year 2 of the project the school are aiming to focus on 'Thrive Families' meeting the needs of the wider community with Year 3 then looking at developing the Thrive provision across the Focussed provision, meeting the needs of the most complex children. Medium term the school hope to be able to apply for Ambassador status and longer term would like to gain the 'School of Excellence Award.'

Alongside the work on Thrive the school will also be expanding the SEND provision catering for pupils with complex needs including autism, communication & language, global delay, ADHD, DLD and other neurodivergent, medical, and non-medical conditions. A nursery age assessment unit for young children in the Rowley/Oldbury



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locality will be implemented and the work on Thrive will be key to ensuring the most complex pupils have the opportunity to develop socially and emotionally within their parameters of needs.

A Pupil Referral Unit local to Grace Mary is at a similar stage with introducing Thrive and leaders will work closely together to share good practice and developments.

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

The school really appreciates the cluster group meetings and value the opportunity to share good practice. They are conscious that they have yet to host a meeting but are mindful of the size of the group and the numbers they would need to be able to host that number of people. We discussed the suggestion from IQM that clusters could consider small schools hosting two half day sessions with the cluster splitting into two smaller groups and attending either in the morning or afternoon.

The school regularly attends all the meetings with the inclusion lead often taking a second member of staff particular relevant to the theme of the meeting. The next meeting on cultural capital will be attended by Deputy Head Teacher with responsibility for Teaching & Learning.

Following the cluster meeting which focussed on the role of Mental Health Ambassadors Grace Mary has begun work with the Reflection Team from CAMHS to identify the best way to appoint pupil Mental Health Ambassadors at the school. Plans are underway to deliver a whole school assembly prior to encouraging children to apply to become ambassadors. The Reflections Team will then provide training for the children selected to be ambassadors.

The meeting at Priory Primary school looking at early reading reinforced the practices currently at Grace Mary, enabling staff to fully reflect on the provision available. Priory Primary school particularly focused on the use of visuals, adaptive strategies, and consistency across the school. Following this the inclusion lead delivered a staff meeting on the use of Visuals in the classroom and two staff members are now enrolled on an 'Adaptive Teaching course led by Ambition.



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Overview

Inclusion continues to be central to everything that Grace Mary Primary School does, driving the desire to support the pupils who are from one of the most deprived boroughs in the country. The school remains oversubscribed despite current falling roles within the area and demand for places within the focussed provision continues to be well in excess of the places available. The Local Authority is planning to revamp the Focussed Provision, rebuilding the Sunshine Room.

Ofsted inspected the school in November 2024 and reported that Grace Mary has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified in their previous report when they were graded outstanding. Inspectors highlighted the school's curriculum driven by their three Pillars that ensure exemplary behaviour, explicit teaching and a knowledge rich curriculum are central to all learning opportunities. Inspectors reported; 'The school's build, track, challenge, agree, disagree, track approach helps pupils to learn well.'

Teaching and Learning, and the consistent approaches embedded through the 'Grace Mary Way' was recognised. The consistent approaches to Teaching and Learning across the school, embedded through 'The Grace Mary Way' were also praised. The schools teaching and learning and curriculum are exemplary and I was 'blown away' by the approach to delivering exceptionally high-quality music and art provision to all pupils within the school. Art and Music specialist teachers have been employed, based in KS2 teaching the full KS2 curriculum alongside delivering weekly art or music sessions to every class from Year 2 each week. The level of teaching provided, and the outcomes achieved by the children are remarkable and pupils' enjoyment of these subjects was highly apparent around the school through displays and talking to pupils. Artwork across the school is exceptional and opportunities to learn to play a range of instruments as part of the day-to-day curriculum amazing. The school has purchased electric drum kits to enable all Year 2 and 3 pupils to learning drumming and have Ukuleles in school for Year 5 and 6. Year 4 have teaching on percussion including learning the glockenspiel and younger children learn the recorder. All pupils learn the 7 core skills in music; Pulse, rhythm, composition, notation, active listening, performing singing and instrumentation, with planning for each unit of work identifying how each of the 7 skills will be introduced/focussed on, visiting most of the skills in each lesson.

The art specialist teacher has fully mapped out the teaching, ensuring any teacher covering an art class is fully supported to deliver the teaching appropriately. Art teaching is broken down into 7 skills: line, shape, form, colour, texture, space, and tone with each lesson focussing on 1 skill. Most topics will start with a shape focus and art skills are developed through excellent scaffolding of learning using live modelling, identifying basic shapes within images. The 'My Turn Your Turn' approach within the school's 'Grace Mary Way' actively support the drawing process and new vocabulary and technical terms are taught in line with the whole school approach. Every art unit of work will begin with a cold task with the children creating their own composition at the end of the unit of work enabling skill development to be tracked.

Both the art and music specialists are looking for ways of supporting and upskilling all class teachers through the detailed planned lessons and team-teaching sessions with the aim of enabling both subjects to be taught by the class teacher moving forward



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whilst maintaining the incredibly high standards. The music specialist is also producing videos demonstrating the teaching of each element of the music curriculum for all staff to access if delivering the planning.

Behaviour across the school on the day of my visit was exemplary. Leaders have very successfully introduced Zones of Regulation and differentiated this effectively across the different age groups. Children placing themselves in the Yellow or Blue zone can be supported by adults within the classroom or use strategies they have identified themselves. Children placing themselves in the Red zone will receive a helping hand from the Rainbow room. Throughout the day and specifically in the morning and after lunch, children complete their Zones of Regulation strategy board that has been effectively differentiated across the different age groups. The use of Visuals has been incorporated into the Zones of Regulation with children from Year 3 onwards having Zones of Regulation cards on their desks which include strategies they can use to help regulate their feelings, emotions and behaviour, personalised to the child. Each child has three strategies identified and these are revisited regularly and changed whenever needed.

As part of their work on personal development the school has implemented a focus around raising aspirations and careers. Display boards around school are used to make links to careers related to the different curriculum subjects and all teaching staff have a plaque outside their classroom summarising their route into teaching and any previous jobs they have done. As a result, pupils are keen and confident speaking about their aspirations and goals for the future, very much driven by the subjects they enjoy learning at school. As a result of the incredibly high standard of art teaching a number of pupils are now actively considering careers related art having identified a growing talent for the subject.

Pupil Leadership has been further developed this year with the school having Year 6 pupils as safeguarding champions, who actively support other children during playtimes and lunchtimes. Every Year 6 child has a responsibility in school ranging from safeguarding champion to library, ICT and assembly monitors, and nursery support. The introduction on Mental Health ambassadors this year will further enhance the leadership opportunities available.

Pupils I met with are incredibly positive about the school. Pupils told me 'Learning is fun' and particularly enjoy the range of enrichment provided by the school across the academic year. Enrichment Friday runs weekly with a new focus every half term. Autumn 1 offered the children the choices of gardening, chess, science, cooking, STEM, DT, and board games, with Autumn 2 being given to the production of two Christmas performances, which all pupils across the school will have a role in. Plans are being developed for the focus to be on Space in the Spring term with art and music working closely together creating music based on The Planets by Holst and a range of different art related activities including sculpture whole school, mechanical elements, with parents invited to each class performance. Ofsted clearly recognised the strength of the school's enrichment programme stating, 'The exceptionally strong enrichment offer helps pupils to learn important life skills, such as managing money and thinking about future careers. Pupils value the vast range of opportunities to broaden their horizons.'



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Pupils also commented upon the recently introduced Oracy project telling me, 'Teachers always check if you're confident to speak before asking you to talk to someone. It's ok to say you don't want to.'

Parents very much echoed the views of the pupils and rated the work of the inclusion lead as phenomenal, telling me that the school listens to parents, identifies needs and puts in necessary support immediately without waiting for any referrals or diagnosis. Whilst parents realise the importance of receiving a diagnosis and EHCP prior to moving to secondary school they all felt that, whilst in Grace Mary any diagnosis once obtained will be 'just a piece of paper.' A number of parents shared the support received from the school with a consistent message evident from all.

The school continues to move from strength to strength in terms of its superb inclusive practice and I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to pursue Flagship School status. I therefore recommend that the school moves to Flagship 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 Flagship status.

Assessor: Ms Hilary Thompson

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH

Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd