



Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

13th April 2017

Mr Ian Elliott
Headteacher
Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre
Caerphilly
CF82 7XW

COE Review Date: 4th April 2017

This inspirational Special School is extending its influence and expanding in size. A new satellite class is to be opened imminently in a nearby comprehensive school, at the same time as new classrooms are being built on Trinity Fields' own site. The school provides state-of-the-art training and support for schools in its local area and beyond. The knowledge and skills of the staff here are outstanding, and in terms of Inclusion values, incomparable. Remarkably, considering all the progress made by the school in the last year, new developments are entered upon only after full consultation of the whole school community, especially its pupils, and only after applying the Headteacher's mantra, "So what?" If it doesn't impact positively on the pupils, it doesn't happen.

In terms of the school's ability to share expertise and to influence other schools and practitioners, the school is fortunate to have the high esteem and very good support of its Local Authority, which has built excellent systems to enable Trinity Fields' outreach work to be as effective as possible.

In school, the energy and commitment of staff towards their pupils is second to none. Pupils are given high status in decision-making in school, and they grow and blossom in self-esteem, team skills and sense of responsibility. Individualisation here is about each whole person: meeting the challenge of different abilities, being creative in assessing progress, engaging and enthusing older pupils who "can be hard to engage, but who love being noisy and silly", offering a "Positive Thoughts" sheet to staff to tear off and take away with them and making time to give that small Nursery child the second cuddle he craves so much. Watching pupils on the assessment day presenting their learning to a hall full of parents and carers, professionally, confidently and with humour and pazazz, was an unforgettable experience.

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe McCann'.

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



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Dear students of Trinity Fields

I visited your school this week, and I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed it.

I liked the friendly atmosphere of the school, and I liked the way you take responsibility for decision-making. I felt your school was a happy place, where you can have fun and make progress, and where everybody feels they are important.

I wanted to say, "Thank you" for the delicious lunch I had in Caffe Oren. I wish I could have lunch there every day!

I enjoyed the production, with the terrific sunflower growing so fast and the presenters with their clear voices, and the wonderful noisy sound effects! I enjoyed the song at the end when the younger children joined in, "Hello, hello, hello!"

Thank you all for making me feel welcome in your school. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Thank you again.

Barbara Curry
IQM Assessor



School Context:-

This large Special School manages its pupils on roll both on and off the premises, with a satellite class in a local Primary School and another one imminent in a nearby comprehensive school. Currently the school roll stands at 147 pupils, but this is rising, and two new classrooms are being built on Trinity Fields' own site.

The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Pupils have a wide variety of complex and profound needs ranging from physical to learning and communication difficulties, and every pupil except one has a statement of SEN. The majority of pupils are classed as White British, with only five pupils outside this category. Welsh is taught and used in school, although the primary teaching language is English. The school continues to provide expertise and practical support for mainstream pupils attending other schools in the Caerphilly area and beyond.

The school's high standing with its Local Authority is most concisely described by its "green" support category (2016). Another Estyn inspection will be soon due, and the school is rightly confident, though never complacent, about the outcome.

One challenge facing the school and its pupils currently is the reduction in work experience placements available: this is due to health and safety regulations, not a reduction in companies' willingness to support pupils.

Sources of data:-

Interviews:

IQM co-ordinator, Assistant Headteachers and members of SLT, Eco-school's leader, 14-19 leader, Creative School's leader, THRIVE leaders and practitioner, "Better in than Out" leader. Informally, Headteacher and pupils, including Head Boy and Deputy Head Girl.

Observations:

Arrivals and departures of pupils, part of school performance attended by large number of parents and younger pupils, lessons in progress during tour of school, small group sessions and occasional behaviour management.

Documentation:

Progress records of individual pupils, pupil's ASDAN folder of achievements, PIVATS progress folder with links to levels of attainment at P and National Curriculum levels, materials developed by pupils with staff support to teach circus skills, Green Schools evidence files, Recent Estyn report (January '17) for Cwm Ifor (satellite class) including comments on inclusion and relationship with Trinity Fields, website, LA report on "green" intervention status.

Progress Against IQM Elements:-

<p>1) The Inclusion Values of the School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trinity Fields has Inclusion at the centre of its being. Every pupil, every parent/carer and every individual member of staff is valued and treated with the utmost respect and empathy. Nothing comes in the way of the children’s welfare and progress: for example, given the choice of a light, airy and pleasant meeting room for staff or devoting it to THRIVE work, the staff decided that the pupils’ needs came first, and settled for a much less attractive space for themselves. • Interactions between staff and pupils on the day of the visit were calm, quietly assertive on the part of pupils as well as staff, affectionate and trusting. • The school’s commitment to UN Rights and Responsibilities is now clearer and more visual around the school, with large durable posters featuring beautiful pictures of the school’s own pupils. The school has now achieved Level 2 of Rights Respecting Schools. The report described the pupils as being “empowered through their time at Trinity Fields to take an active role in their school and wider community”. • Pupils currently attending the satellite provision at Cwm Ifor Primary School make good progress: Estyn inspected this school in January this year and found, “The highly effective way in which pupils from the satellite class participate in school life and receive sensitive support from other pupils is a powerful example of the school’s commitment to (Inclusion).” • The school’s expertise in many aspects of SEN enables its own pupils and also staff from other schools to benefit. An outstanding example of this expertise is in ASD support and provision. The school provides 10 Team-Teach trainers who support staff throughout South Wales through the CASS scheme. “We are a small service meeting huge demand,” said the Assistant Headteacher, who is also the CASS lead teacher. Trinity Fields has developed numerous activities for ASD children to develop social and communication skills, such as Lego groups and a new programme from Australia which has different materials to meet the needs of different age groups. This assessor found that the school is very highly knowledgeable and up-to-date in this area, compared to other schools she has visited. • A delightful notice next to the school office, offering “free positive thoughts” to be pulled off and taken away was clearly valued by staff, because only one slip had not been removed by the end of the IQM day.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils in hospital or at home ill are given home support and visits where this is welcomed: the school is sensitive to positive and negative signals about this.
<p>2) Learning Environment, Resources and ICT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is housed in spacious and modern premises, purpose-built for access, with plenty of space for mobility equipment. Buses bringing pupils to school and taking them home are staffed by qualified and able drivers, and all observe parking rules and one-way systems. • Technology is very well developed, with pupils’ individual needs addressed in a personalised approach. Children use sensors to generate lights and sounds, and one child was thrilled to contribute with technology responding to muscle sensors on his arm. Other pupils use head switches, i-pads, IWBs etc so that no child is left unable to contribute or express him/herself. • Staff members are relaxed about their apparent reliance on technology: in a hypothetical power cut, “We’d just do low-tech things, like singing!” • The school’s grounds are attractive and well-tended, using parental help as well as designated school staff. There is space for growing vegetables and fruit, and also for keeping animals, a new development area for the school. The new project, “Inside Out,” encourages pupils to work in pairs outdoors, for example to build a shelter using sticks and tarpaulin. The old pond has been cleaned out and re-lined and there are plans to bring in ducks (as soon as there is a plan to contain them safely). • The school is very good at attracting funding and expertise to equip the school: recently a minibus was bought by a generous donor, Caffe Oran continues to be supported by a locally and nationally-based business, and the same company has also provided free planning and beautiful new furniture for new classrooms and other areas in school. • Pupils’ fundraising is valued as much as the larger contributions above. Pupils raised money for new recycling bins through their own efforts. • New building work will provide additional teaching space, and the optimal use of all teaching space is always carefully considered before any money is allocated.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many doors have “reference objects” to help pupils identify the room: there is towelling for the pool, white leather for the light room and so on. Sensory wall plaques low on the walls also aid navigation. • Training offered to other schools brings in useful additional funding for resources. <p>Points for development: One or two members of staff are interested in extending the animal- husbandry and food-growing aspects of school life. There is scope to extend these further. Senior leadership members rightly insist that animals’ welfare is also important, and that all new developments must be carefully introduced.</p>
<p>3) Learner Attitudes, Values and Personal Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outstanding feature of the pupils at Trinity Fields is their friendliness and confidence. They know that they are important decision-makers in school and they take a pride in this. They presented to parents their new learning (on plant growth and development) with humour and panache. They have “choice cards” to help them move towards targets and rewards. They have jobs to do, they have a voice, and they feel responsible for these. • THRIVE provides the staff with excellent monitoring and materials to develop pupils’ social and emotional skills. A new development, the introduction of animals such as a “therapy dog” and the chance to watch chicks hatch, is proving popular and effective with some pupils in particular. Children learn that not all dogs like to be petted, that chicks are fragile and need to be handled gently, and they gain confidence and skills in providing for the animals’ needs. “Better Out than In”, developing outdoor activities, is improving the emotional wellbeing, resilience and engagement of pupils aged 13-16, with a view to extending the provision to a wider age-range when it is well embedded. • The staff team is constantly looking for new ways to develop pupils’ self-awareness and confidence. Mindfulness is taught, and all decisions are democratically made and include all pupils. • Pupils recently interviewed candidates for teaching posts in another school with a specialist base. • The school has gained the second Green Flag award and pupils are all aware of their part to play in Green issues. • Welfare for pupils includes identification of priority areas such as currently, fitness activities for older girls. • Trinity Fields is a lead local school for THRIVE in measuring and fostering wellbeing.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Time Out” is sometimes requested by pupils and their use of the time is monitored with CCTV and recorded so that a longer-term picture emerges of triggers and needs. • Relationships are taught in single-sex groupings, following each child’s speed. E-safety and sexual safety are taught to all pupils.
<p>4) Learner Progress and the Impact on Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual pupil progress records show pupil and parent involvement as well as rigorous assessment by staff. Recent developments have included increased external moderation of ALN pupil progress through PIVATS (for small steps of progress), with Trinity Fields staff taking the lead in working with other schools. • The school is extremely creative in devising assessment methods which will work with each child’s abilities, so that every child can contribute. This might involve the use of Makaton or picture-sequencing, technology or tiny movements of face or hands. Targets might be expressed as “now you can.....and next you will...”. • Moderation with other schools is having a clear impact on robustness of assessment methods and data. • Class team meetings are held on Fridays so that issues can be dealt with in next week’s planning. • As a result of this work, pupils seen in class were responsive, cheerful and engaged.
<p>5) Learning and Teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalisation of teaching and learning is based on intimate knowledge and understanding of each child. Because the school uses THRIVE assessments, factors such as individual motivation and reward are intrinsic in all teaching. Pupils who have arrived from other schools make sudden leaps in progress because until now, schools have treated them as one in a crowd, and now they feel known and understood. • Communication and social skills are very well taught, with the school having on its staff teachers and TAs with up-to-date knowledge and state-of-the-art teaching methods. • The emphasis in teaching is on engagement and fun: social and emotional skills are taught through “Emotive Face Bingo” and the use of puppets, for example.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school maintains excellent relationships with partner schools and constantly reviews how to share and make use of other school’s capabilities and resources. To benefit older pupils, a new satellite class is about to begin at a nearby comprehensive school. Three Trinity Fields teachers are currently working in mainstream schools. • The school is part of the Creative Schools Project and leads in this area. The school uses multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory approaches in the arts and in teaching generally. Pupils are responding well to this, as seen in their booklets to teach other pupils how to learn circus skills such as working with hoops and scarves, and in the enthusiasm they showed in their Easter presentation, using images on screen, percussion effects, acting, voice projection and recorded music, with younger pupils enjoying their own participation in the final song. • The importance of the learning environment was exemplified on the IQM visit by the nursery class, where children are welcomed for the school day with music, songs, lights and the warm affection of the staff. If children need a cuddle, they get one, and if they need another one after that, they get that too. • The school is extending its curriculum offer through break-time and lunchtime activities.
<p>6) Parents, Carers and Guardians</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The very large number of parents and carers attending the school production in the middle of a working day testifies to the loyalty and involvement of families. This production had to be arranged as an addition, because the original day planned was fully booked. Not long before this, parents and carers had turned up in large numbers to attend an Easter church service. Parents are always asked after an event, “What would have made your visit better?” and as a result, the school is always seen as welcoming. • Parents of Special Needs pupils can often feel isolated, and the school organises class coffee mornings to help parents form new friendships in a safe setting where they can develop friendships. The “Early Bird” programme for children identified with ASD includes home support. • The PTA is active and there is no problem getting parents to serve as governors: and it has to be remembered that this school serves a much wider catchment area than most mainstream schools, so attendance at school can involve a long drive.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops for parents are well attended. Parents have recently attended a 6-session THRIVE course so that they can work at home to reinforce what the school is doing with their child. • Family Support reaches out to the wider family surrounding each child, so that parents and siblings are included. • The school is working towards opening its pool for family sessions. This will enable families to use the pool without the pressure on vulnerable youngsters of attending the local large, noisy pool with its unheated water. • Holiday sessions and weekend activities at the school extend pupils' opportunities and provide additional respite for parents and carers.
<p>7) Governors, Management and External Accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's large senior leadership team (currently of 14) spans all levels of seniority and works closely with Governors, who are well informed and very supportive. • Monitoring of teaching and learning is well established, with clear roles and responsibilities in place. At the same time, there is a democratic approach here, in which the opinions and contribution of every member of staff are valued. • The school's central decision-making question comes from the Headteacher, who famously asks, "So what?" In other words, if a new idea isn't going to impact positively on the pupils, it won't be implemented. Staff members say the Headteacher's clear vision drives the whole school community. On the day of the IQM visit, he visited briefly on phased return from sick leave, and his effectiveness as a leader was obvious in the way the school community functioned calmly and well because of the systems he has put in place. • The Local Authority Challenge Advisor visits regularly and considers the school to require only a minimal level of support.
<p>8) The School in the Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a school serving a wide catchment area, Trinity Fields has a high and positive local profile. • Belonging to Wales is important in the school, which is proud of its heritage and fosters the language, legends and arts of Wales, Children learn the story of Gelert and take part in their own Eisteddfod. They learned of the disaster of Aberfan, remembered on its anniversary.

- The “Windows” project, through the Global Learning Network, is making pupils more aware of how neighbourhoods change over time: the plan is to share work through “e-twinning” with other schools nationally and eventually globally.
- Orange Box, the company supporting the school’s cafe and now new buildings and furniture, raised £20,000 for the school with a sponsored bike ride from London to Hengoed: the achievement is recorded on YouTube.

Points for action: Currently, because of health and safety requirements and changes in legislation for provision for school leavers, opportunities for young adults to experience work and study environments are rather limited. The school might consider using its network of contacts to lobby for good decisions for future provision.

Recommendation:-

I am of the opinion that the school continues to be very well qualified to lead other schools as an IQM Centre of Excellence.

Assessor: Barbara Curry

Date of Review: 4th April 2017