



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



<b>School</b>	Red Gates School Farnborough Avenue South Croydon Surrey CR2 8HD
<b>Head/Principal</b>	Ms Melissa Hendry
<b>IQM Lead</b>	Ms Melissa Hendry
<b>Date of Review</b>	7th November 2024
<b>Assessor</b>	Ms Karen Robinson-Jones

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

Cluster Group	Cosmos Learning
Ambassador	Ms Fiona Robinson
Next Meeting	TBD
Meeting Focus	TBD

### **Cluster Attendance**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Autumn 2023</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	Yes
<b>Spring 2024</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Yes
<b>Summer 2024</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	Yes
<b>Autumn 2024</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	
<b>Spring 2025</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	
<b>Summer 2025</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	

### **The Impact of the Cluster Group**

Red Gates School is a committed and active member of Cluster meetings, reflecting its core values of openness, collaboration, and a drive to continuously improve and is committed to supporting others in order to improve outcomes for children and their families.

By sharing ideas and supporting others, the school aims to enhance outcomes for children and families across the community.



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Specific actions which have followed the meetings have included:

- Interoception strategies are being implemented across the school by the behaviour team. Leaders recognised the benefits that these strategies could have after reviewing the successful introduction of Zones of Regulation as a whole school strategy. It then became apparent that to understand their own emotions pupils also needed to understand how their body feels when it is hungry, cold etc. It was recognised that interoception provides a step before a child can understand the emotions they are feeling and many if not all their pupils need support with this.
- Moderation of trauma informed approaches, this provided an opportunity to reflect, review and validate current practices.
- Mainstream perspective on how creative activities support SEN pupils. Leaders reflected on how interesting it is to see how mainstream schools support pupils and whilst not relevant as an approach the school would be taking on it is important to be aware of what is happening in mainstream schools.
- Red Gates continues to be part of the Special School Cluster meetings which leaders feel is an important place to share current research and practice within the special school community.

### Evidence

Discussions with:

- Headteacher, Cluster meetings, whole school context and priorities.
- Deputy Headteacher relating to Pupil Voice.
- Ex-parent, Friends of Red Gates School member and Teaching assistant.
- Extra-curricular Activities Leads: Lego Therapy, Music Therapist, Horse Riding.
- Lunchtime coordinator about their role and the impact on the children.
- Community Outreach Lead, Folder of detailed information shared related to the project and parental engagement and support.
- Meeting with Family Liaison Officer about their role in supporting families.

### **Additional Activities**

- Greeting children into school with Headteacher.
- Tour of the school led by children.



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- Learning Walk with the Headteacher through the 4 pathways- EYFS, LISS, Sensory and ASD.
- Lunchtime learning walk with the Lunchtime coordinator.
- Pupil Voice with 2 students using Talking Mats
- Scrutiny of website, Ofsted Report, and paperwork including Teacher Workload Review, School Development Plan, SEF and Data analysis.



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### Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

**'To create an outreach service that supports our local community to ensure that all are able to effectively meet the needs of children with special needs.'**

The school's outreach initiative to support the local community in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs (SEN) has been a highly impactful endeavour. During the IQM assessment, it was evident that the school has made substantial strides in fostering collaborative relationships with local organizations, thereby strengthening the community's capacity to support children with SEN more effectively.

Community Collaboration has been at the heart of the project: The school has taken a thoughtful, proactive approach to developing partnerships with community organizations. This initiative is completely aligned with the school's commitment to inclusion beyond the school, recognizing both the challenges families face when engaging in community activities and the need to enhance local awareness and understanding of SEN.

A significant achievement within this project has been the training provided to the school transport team. Leaders demonstrated insight by addressing the high turnover of transport staff and implementing additional training sessions to ensure that new team members are equipped to communicate effectively with children and understand their individual needs. This approach has not only improved the children's experience during transport but has also strengthened the overall quality of service provided.

The school's outreach to various community organizations, such as the local riding school and swimming pool, has yielded positive outcomes. Training sessions with the riding school staff have visibly enhanced pupils' experiences there, and the use of social stories, check-in boards, and visual supports in swimming pool changing areas now provides accessible, consistent support for children with SEN. These efforts underscore the school's commitment to inclusivity beyond its site.

The school has shown resilience in its attempts to engage local shops, particularly larger chains, to promote SEN awareness. Although this has proven challenging due to corporate structures, staff are determined to pursue these partnerships, demonstrating a strong commitment to community inclusivity.

Establishing ties with local religious institutions, including the synagogue and mosque, has been a noteworthy achievement. Parent feedback highlighted these spaces as important to the families served by the school, and school staff from these communities have played a pivotal role in facilitating meaningful connections. Visits have included parents, fostering a sense of community and shared understanding.

Leaders have rightly identified the need for further SEND awareness and Makaton training within these religious communities as an essential next step. Recognition of the fantastic work the school has undertaken within the religious community is being explored by school leaders who have begun to work towards the WIRE (Widening Inclusivity in Religious Education) award.



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The school has also made progress in building relationships with two local libraries, enabling pupils to attend inclusive story sessions, which they have thoroughly enjoyed. Plans to invite library staff to the school for SEN awareness training illustrate a thoughtful approach to cultivating lasting partnerships.

In addition to the important work the school is doing to increase community understanding of SEN, leaders are acutely aware of the importance of gathering evidence of the impact of the work they have been doing. Feedback forms from the organisations and parents have been used to review and refine the project and this has fed into the plans for next year.

### Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

#### Project Title:

**Red Gates will extend its current outreach service by offering an extended range of support by working collaboratively with organisations within our community that work alongside our children to build capacity and confidence in meeting our children's needs.**

Such organisations will include:

- Staff from the leisure centre where we swim.
- Staff from the centre where we horse ride.
- Staff from local shops where we take children on community visits.
- Staff from the local library.
- Extended existing outreach services for the transport staff that bring our children to school.
- Places of worship.

#### Outline of Project:

This year and beyond, the project will expand on previous work, ensuring the community develops the skills and confidence to meet the needs of both Red Gates School pupils and other community members with SEN.

**Target 1: To update transport training to ensure it is meeting the needs of staff attending and includes new knowledge now that it has been running for a few years.**

The Headteacher and Leaders recognise the success of ensuring that all staff supporting the pupils on transport have a thorough understanding of their needs. Evidence shows that there has been an increase in transport staff's confidence in supporting pupil's communication needs. However, the challenge has been that there is a high turnover of staff supporting children on transport. Leaders have responded to this by ensuring that training not only happens in September but also in the summer term.



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### **Next steps:**

To continue to provide training for transport staff and the Headteacher to continue to work closely with the transport leaders from the council to ensure uptake among transport staff is high.

Transport staff's views to be ascertained to ensure that training meets their own perceived needs.

### **Target 2: Review and extend the programme of sessions to provide training for the wider community to develop understanding and skills in supporting Red Gates pupils.**

The extension of the programme will include:

- Staff at the local libraries.
- Members of the local mosque.
- Members of the local synagogue.
- Members of local churches.
- Staff from Oxygen Trampoline Park.

Leaders are keen to ensure that spaces in the wider community that parents want to access with their children are better able to support and understand the needs of the pupils within Red Gates School and that this in turn will lead to a better understanding of special needs generally, not just for Red Gates pupils.

### **Next steps:**

To continue to liaise with external organisations to provide them with the training and resources to best support pupils in the community.

Contact the head offices of local shops to make and secure positive links with the whole organisation.

### **Target 3: Explore extending our community outreach service to include charities that support children with special needs. For example, CASPA, Mencap etc.**

There is a drive from leaders that all services that support children with SEN should be provided with training and support to better understand how to communicate and support individual needs. Work will begin on reaching out to charities to raise awareness of the school and what they do.

### **Next steps:**

Increase social media presence including sharing details of this project to raise the profile of the unique work being undertaken.



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To contact charities that work with children with SEN to raise awareness of the work the school is doing and plan and deliver training.

To consider whether making a video of the project to post on social media and to send to services may be more impactful.

### **Target 4: To achieve the WIRE (Widening Inclusivity in Religious Education) award.**

The links made with the local synagogue and mosque have been highly successful and are the driving force behind this initiative. The school actively supports religious celebrations and events within the curriculum, fostering a rich, inclusive environment. For example, the recent, very successful Diwali week enabled pupils and staff to engage in meaningful activities that promoted cultural awareness, respect, and a sense of community. These events not only enhance students' understanding of diverse traditions but also inspire a sense of joy, awe, and belonging among all participants.

#### **Next steps:**

To continue to involve parents' feedback to work with religious groups families attend.

To continue to work with and develop links with religious communities that are relevant to the families of Red Gates School.

To increase visits from key people in religious communities to attend the celebrations held within the school.

### **Target 5: Continue to explore providing outreach services for the care agencies that provide respite for our children.**

Leaders have been keen to particularly work with services that provide respite for pupils from the school and are working hard to overcome barriers related to the cost of releasing carers for training and the high turnover of staff.

#### **Next steps:**

The Headteacher and leaders will continue to work with Croydon Social Services to develop a positive working relationship and share positive outcomes with carers.

### **Target 6: Open Red Gates playground for families 1 weekend per half term to support them to be able to confidently access a playground as a family.**

The Headteacher has recognised the difficulty that parents have in taking their children to local playgrounds as often, other parents have a lack of understanding and tolerance of the way children of Red Gates can interact and play in the same space as others. With this in mind, the Headteacher has explored opening up the school playground to families and found that there are no legal barriers to this happening. The school plans to invite both children and staff, along with their families, to regularly use the fantastic space within the school at weekends.



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### **Next steps:**

To invite families of pupils and staff to an inclusive event to access the playground as a family.

### **Target 7: Continue to explore developing a school social media presence and share the services provided.**

Work has begun on exploring how other schools use social media, with the extended school's coordinator having attended workshops from outreach services from other services. Quotes from outreach suppliers are being collated in readiness for further work on this.

### **Next steps:**

Consider increasing the notoriety of the successful rock band and choir by making a CD and releasing it on social media.

Liaise with other special schools who can share what they have done with regards to their social media presence e.g. local television links, invitations to local news events, recording studio, record company and professional videos of events.

Consider posting a video about the outreach work on social media.

### **Target 8: Continue to develop and extend whole school cultural celebrations across the year.**

Whole school celebration weeks have been timetabled into the school calendar 3 times a year. During the assessment Diwali week was being held and it was clear that the hard work of all staff ensured that this was meaningful and fun for pupils and staff alike.

### **Next steps:**

To reflect on the successes of these celebrations and plan further celebrations that are meaningful for more groups within the Red Gates family.





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### Overview

Red Gates School is an outstanding primary special school located in Croydon, dedicated to supporting pupils with severe learning difficulties and complex behavioural needs.

The school serves a vibrant, multicultural community, which is mirrored in the diversity of its dedicated staff team.

The curriculum is thoughtfully structured into four distinct pathways—Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Learning, Independence and Social Skills (LISS), Sensory, and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)—ensuring that each pupil receives a tailored educational experience that meets their unique needs and supports their development.

This is a joyful place, led by a highly inspirational Headteacher who is adored by staff, pupils and families.

From the moment you enter, it is clear that this is an extremely special place. As children arrive, most from school transport, they are met with a warm welcome. This comes not only from supportive staff but also with a personal greeting from the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. They use Makaton signs and address each child by name. It is evident that this welcoming routine has been carefully designed and thoughtfully structured. This provides children with a comforting sense of familiarity, care, and predictability each day.

For any child showing signs of dysregulation, staff respond with patience, sensitivity, and understanding, offering the time and support needed to help them settle. This approach ensures that each day begins as positively as possible for every child.

The Headteacher and her team have a clear understanding of the school's context and a drive and passion to support pupils and their families beyond the confines of the school day and site. There is a constant reflection and relentless commitment on how to improve and adapt approaches to meet the needs of not only the pupils within the school but the wider SEN community.

A parent spoke about what it is like being welcomed as a member of the community at Red Gates, 'it felt like a big hug, like having an arm around you the whole time.' This is evidenced in the way the leadership team carefully consider what parents need, regularly seeking out their views and feelings.

The school recognises that it can be difficult for families, they face challenges in accessing everyday experiences like visiting the park, the supermarket, or participating in community activities. The school is dedicated to finding ways to provide some of these opportunities within a supportive environment. The voice of families is highly regarded, and leaders talk about constantly seeking their views to best support them.

Leaders have recognised the difficulties families have in attending activities outside of school hours and now everything is offered within the school day. The take up of parental engagement opportunities is good and includes a range of meaningful activities.



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The Community Outreach Lead talked positively about the parental workshops that cover a range of topics that go beyond the academic. Family learning workshops have a particularly high uptake as these allow parents to learn about a particular topic e.g. play and then experience that activity with their child.

There has been an increased uptake by families with English as an additional language (EAL) because of the drive from the school to ensure that a family's own language is the method of communication.

Support for families goes above and beyond what might be expected from a school. When parents shared the challenges, they face in getting their children's hair cut, the school responded by designating a staff member to facilitate haircuts on-site. This approach allows children who may find haircuts distressing to experience them in a familiar, comfortable environment, gradually building their confidence and tolerance until they feel ready and capable.

The Family Liaison Officer spoke highly about the support offered to families, explaining that early help support is really offered by the school.

Her role is extremely important as she is also a Designated Safeguarding Lead and has worked hard to build trusting relationships with families and outside agencies. Parents know that they can phone her when they need to.

Her role is diverse and includes supporting housing issues and working with the NHS behaviour and continence teams. She will go on school visits with parents to view secondary schools and support them through the transition.

She reports that a parent shared 'I'm glad my child has come to you because they can be who they are.'

Leaders are incredibly mindful of staff wellbeing and are constantly reviewing ways to develop practices further to support this. Staff speak extremely highly of the support available to them particularly the open-door policy that the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher have. Leaders recognise that it is not always an easy job, 'If your heart is here, it is the easiest job in the world.'

Staff voice is regularly captured. The school has a wellbeing inset each year which enables staff to reflect and take time for their own wellbeing in a way that is appropriate for them.

This year has been difficult for staff with the deaths of two highly regarded members of staff. A memorial garden in the grounds was used to enable the families and staff to remember together and this year's wellbeing inset will enable all staff to attend the funeral of the other staff member.

Teacher workload is reviewed yearly and it is clear that their voice is valued and steps are taken to improve and take on board ideas. Recently a staff meeting was held to celebrate Diwali with food and time to be together.



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The highly intensive induction programme over the course of 16 weeks shows the commitment that leaders have in ensuring staff are well supported to do the best job they can.

Lunchtime clubs at the school play a pivotal role in enriching the school day, offering students meaningful, enjoyable activities in a structured and inclusive manner.

The success of these clubs is largely due to the enthusiasm, drive, and dedication of the lunchtime coordinator, whose passion for creating diverse and engaging opportunities for pupils has transformed lunchtimes into a positive experience for staff and pupils alike.

The coordinator has developed a comprehensive timetable, thoughtfully incorporating staff expertise and interests to inform the variety of clubs offered. This careful planning has ensured that clubs are well-suited to the needs and interests of the students, making them accessible and inclusive for all.

The clubs, which have been running successfully for a couple of years, are designed to foster potential long-term interests and hobbies. For example, the Recycling Club allows pupils to actively participate in environmentally friendly practices. Wearing high-visibility vests, the children take pride in collecting and tracking the school's recycling efforts, instilling responsibility and teamwork.

Additionally, the school demonstrates sensitivity in using lunchtime clubs to support individual student needs. One new pupil, for instance, was introduced to a music session with the music therapist, allowing them to adjust gradually to this new experience.

Similarly, the ICT club provides a space for children to enjoy computer time, helping to manage overreliance on devices during lessons.

The lunchtime coordinator carefully monitors each club, assessing and adapting activities to meet student needs effectively. The clubs are also used to assess progress against targets as they provide an opportunity to generalise skills with less familiar adults and peers.

This thoughtful approach exemplifies the school's commitment to inclusive practices and demonstrates the coordinator's passion for ensuring that each child feels valued and engaged, with activities that support personal growth and enjoyment.

The lunchtime coordinator is now working with one of the feeder secondary schools to work on their lunchtime provision.

Extra-curricular activities are not an add-on at Red Gates School but are woven into the curriculum. During the assessment visit the Music Therapist, Lego Therapist and member of staff who leads the horse riding activities explained how.

The school has an impressive commitment to Pupil Voice demonstrated through its use of Talking Mats, a tool that facilitates structured communication for students, particularly in expressing their views for EHCP (Education, Health, and Care Plan) assessments and other key discussions.



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The Deputy Headteacher shared how the school effectively used Talking Mats to identify the cause of a pupil's dysregulation on the school bus; the child was able to communicate that he felt unsettled due to a change in seating, which disrupted his routine of pretending to drive.

By responding to this insight and returning the pupil to his preferred seat, staff were able to significantly reduce his anxiety and support a positive, calming routine.

Talking Mats are also employed to address a variety of safeguarding and dysregulation concerns, providing students even those who are non-verbal with a way to share their thoughts and emotions. The information gathered from these sessions is also shared with parents, fostering transparency and enabling families to understand and support their children's needs. This inclusive, collaborative approach underscores the school's dedication to creating an environment where every child's voice is heard, respected, and acted upon.

Red Gates 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 maintain its status as a Flagship School. I therefore recommend that the school retains its 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 Karen Robinson-Jones**

**Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:**

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