



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



<b>School</b>	Prince Albert Primary School Albert Road Aston Birmingham B6 5NH
<b>Head/Principal</b>	Mrs Patel
<b>IQM Lead</b>	Mrs Sam Syner
<b>Date of Review</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
<b>Assessor</b>	Ms Tracy Cockayne

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

Cluster Group	Midlands Shakers
Ambassador	Ms Jane Flynn
Next Meeting	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2024
Meeting Focus	TBC

### **Cluster Attendance**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Spring 2022</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2022	Yes
<b>Summer 2022</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	Yes
<b>Autumn 2022</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	Yes
<b>Spring 2023</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> March 2023	Yes
<b>Summer 2023</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2023	Yes

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

The Senior Leader for Inclusion at Prince Albert School, shared insights into her participation in the Cluster Group Network, emphasising the invaluable opportunity it provides to connect with peers facing similar challenges. Despite the demands of school life, she expressed gratitude for the chance to venture beyond the confines of her institution and glean insights from other professionals in comparable roles. Reflecting on her visits, the IQM Lead highlighted the meaningful relationships forged and the enriching exchanges of best practices.

Of particular note was the IQM Lead's recounting of her visit to Lickey Hills, where she observed the implementation of regular coffee mornings, with an initial focus on safeguarding—an initiative she is now integrating into Prince Albert's repertoire of parental engagement activities. Drawing inspiration from her interactions, she



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underscored the significance of collaborative problem-solving, especially concerning students with EHCPs navigating the transition to secondary school. With empathy and solidarity, she acknowledged the systemic barriers impeding smooth transitions, finding solace in the collective wisdom shared among colleagues.

Additionally, the IQM Lead shared her observations from a visit to Broadway, highlighting their innovative use of a local farm to enhance outdoor learning experiences. Recognising the potential impact on Prince Albert's curriculum, she expressed interest in replicating or accessing similar resources to foster agricultural education, particularly since the school lacks grassed areas. Through such endeavours, the IQM Lead exemplifies the school's commitment to resourcefulness and continuous improvement, ensuring all students have access to diverse learning environments conducive to their holistic development.

### **Evidence**

Today's evidence came in various forms, starting with meetings with the Head of School, the SENCO, and senior staff members, followed by interactions with students and parents during coffee mornings. Engaging with the Senior Lead for Inclusion, future group teachers, and pastoral leads provided further insight into the school's ethos and practices. A comprehensive tour of the school, including classroom observations, allowed for a firsthand experience of the inclusive environment and adaptive teaching methods.

Throughout these interactions, it became evident that inclusivity is deeply ingrained in the fabric of Prince Albert School. Staff members eagerly shared positive anecdotes and highlighted their sense of belonging to the Prince Albert family. The emotional investment of staff members, exemplified by the Head of School's personal journey from Teaching Assistant to leadership, reflects the pride and dedication within the school community.

Indeed, evidence of inclusivity permeated every aspect of the school environment, from interactions between students and staff to the tangible ethos felt throughout the premises. The commitment to inclusivity was apparent in the interactions observed and the tangible outcomes evident in student work and the adaptive teaching approaches employed by staff.

Prince Albert School stands as a beacon of inclusivity, where every member—children, staff, and parents—feels valued and supported. The palpable sense of pride and belonging within the school community serves as a testament to their unwavering commitment to creating an environment where all individuals can thrive and feel a sense of belonging.

### **Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project**

The journey towards sustaining their current achievements while fostering further development at Prince Albert School is a testament to their unwavering commitment to excellence. The focus on facilitating the seamless transition from their existing nurture group to a local authority-funded resource base underscores their dedication to



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ensuring optimal support for all students. Through meticulous planning and effective communication, they aim to uphold a nurturing environment conducive to holistic growth for pupils, families, and staff alike. Concurrently, their efforts extend to enhancing communication skills across the school, fostering collaboration with parents, and fortifying community partnerships.

Progress towards transitioning their nurture group provision into a resource base has been marked by proactive measures aimed at stakeholder engagement and comprehensive induction processes. Through clear communication channels and tailored induction packages, they have prioritised building relationships with new parents and ensuring a smooth transition for all pupils. Planning and development of appropriate provision for pupils with SEND transitioning from Nursery to Reception are well underway, laying a solid foundation for continued success.

Their commitment to honing communication skills among pupils has been steadfast, with notable strides in refining the oracy curriculum and integrating Makaton where appropriate. By reviewing and cross-referencing planned vocabulary across the curriculum, they aim to facilitate language acquisition and proficiency comprehensively. Additionally, initiatives such as restorative practice techniques and the cultivation of a culture emphasising language etiquette contribute to a supportive environment conducive to effective communication.

Advancements in their partnerships with parents reflect their dedication to empowering families in supporting their children's learning journey. Collaborations with external agencies and the provision of specialised courses for parents demonstrate their commitment to enhancing parental knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, initiatives such as community coffee mornings and tailored workshops underscore their proactive approach to providing bespoke support and fostering a sense of community among parents, particularly those with complex needs.

Moving forward, their focus remains on maintaining open communication channels, fostering inclusive transitions, and leveraging resources effectively to achieve their goals. Regular meetings, personalised communication methods, and collaborative partnerships will continue to underpin their efforts. By embedding best practices, refining curricular initiatives, and nurturing collaborative relationships, they are poised to realise their vision of excellence and inclusivity at Prince Albert School.

In conclusion, the progress made towards their flagship project reflects their collective dedication to fostering a nurturing learning environment where every student thrives. Through ongoing collaboration, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to continuous improvement, they are confident in their ability to achieve their objectives and make a lasting impact on the lives of their students and their families.

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

In the future, the flagship project at Prince Albert School will be driven by a shared ambition for excellence and inclusion, with clear tasks outlined alongside detailed actions to ensure the successful execution of each objective.



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To facilitate a smooth transition from the current nurture group to a resource base, comprehensive communication plans will be in place, including meetings with parents and ongoing dialogue throughout EHCP reviews. Efforts will also focus on facilitating transitions for new children, involving home visits and tailored support to ease adjustment.

In the development of communication skills, meticulous planning will be evident, with a focus on refining the oracy curriculum, integrating Makaton, and implementing restorative practice techniques. These initiatives will aim to create an inclusive environment where every student feels empowered to express themselves confidently.

Partnerships with parents will be strengthened through targeted workshops, community coffee mornings, and collaborative efforts with external agencies. By providing tailored support and resources, parents will be equipped with the knowledge and tools to support their children effectively.

Furthermore, the school will be committed to ongoing professional development, with staff training in areas such as Makaton and restorative practice. This investment in staff expertise will ensure a supportive environment for all students, especially those with complex needs.

The process towards achieving the Leading Parent Partnership Award will reflect a collective commitment, with a working party established to oversee the application process and develop an action plan. By involving staff from across the school, diverse perspectives will be considered, contributing to a comprehensive and robust approach.

The outlined actions will be ambitious and demonstrate Prince Albert School's unwavering dedication to fostering an environment where every student can thrive. Through collaborative efforts, ongoing professional development, and a commitment to inclusive practices, they will continue to strive towards excellence and inclusion in all aspects of their educational provision beyond the specialist provision to school-wide impact.

### Overview

Upon my arrival at Prince Albert School, I was warmly welcomed by the SENCO and the new Head of School, a familiar face from my previous engagements as an IQM assessor and a member of the educational community in Birmingham. With a proud history of serving the community, Prince Albert has evolved into a multi-school trust, extending its support to six primaries and a newly established secondary school under the same name. Transitioning into her role amidst significant responsibilities, the Head of School has admirably infused the institution with fresh perspectives and a palpable sense of warmth. The meticulous planning characteristic of visits to Prince Albert did not disappoint, seamlessly facilitating a thorough exploration of the school's ethos and operations. However, what truly stood out was the organic spontaneity woven into the fabric of daily activities, affording me an authentic glimpse into the vibrant dynamics of the learning environment. The IQM Lead who is the dedicated SENCO, exemplified this spirit by fearlessly deviating from the scripted itinerary, opening closed doors, and venturing into uncharted classroom territories. What ensued was a testament to the



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school's dedication to academic excellence and holistic development. I observed firsthand the joyous engagement of students immersed in a rigorous curriculum, their achievements transcending conventional benchmarks. Prince Albert School radiates a sense of pride and purpose, propelled by its unwavering commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals poised for success.

Following a conversation with the Head of School and the Senior Lead for Inclusion regarding recent staffing changes and the Head's vision for the future, it was evident that Prince Albert School continues to undergo positive transformation under new leadership. The Senior Lead for Inclusion, who has been in their role for two years, expressed satisfaction with the progress made since the previous assessment and highlighted the unique challenges faced by an inner-city school in Birmingham advocating for children with complex needs, particularly within a financially strained local authority. In the context of a community where many families are vulnerable and restricted to the local area, Prince Albert School serves as a vital hub offering comprehensive support across various aspects of their lives. It is more than just a school; it symbolises hope for families impacted by poverty and limited access to resources and support. Indeed, Prince Albert embodies the belief that education is the key to social mobility, with high aspirations shared by students, parents, and staff alike. The mantra of "aspire to be more, not to have more" encapsulates the school's ethos, guiding its moral compass.

To provide a firsthand glimpse into daily life at Prince Albert, I was taken on an impromptu tour, reflecting the school's ethos of transparency and accessibility. This unscripted tour offered a genuine insight into the school's culture, allowing for spontaneous interactions and inquiries. It reinforced the school's commitment to openness and authenticity, highlighting its dedication to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where all individuals can thrive. Prince Albert School exemplifies resilience, compassion and a steadfast commitment to the well-being and success of its students and the wider community. Under visionary leadership and guided by a shared ethos of aspiration and inclusivity, the school continues to serve as a beacon of hope and opportunity for all who pass through its doors.

Our next stop led us to a coffee morning hosted by the school for parents of children with SEND. Contrary to being a showcase event, this gathering was one of many regular meetings attended by parents. The atmosphere was vibrant, filled with light and energy, as conversations flowed freely among attendees. What struck me was the level of self-advocacy demonstrated by the parents, exemplifying the trust and rapport established between staff and families. One parent took the initiative to inquire why another parent, whose child had SEN in Year 1, had not been invited, advocating for their inclusion. The commitment to personalisation was evident in the planning of these sessions. Parents were informed that the next session would feature a representative from speech and language, with the opportunity to share questions in advance for a tailored experience. This approach reflected a dedication to meeting the individual needs of parents, as previous sessions had covered topics such as sleep, autism, and parenting. Newsletters were available for those who may have missed information and the event was staffed by the leader of the resource base and additional staff members. What stood out most was the empowerment of parents in choosing the strategic direction of the group. While expressing their views, parents actively



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participated in shaping the agenda, which was attentively listened to by staff. This collaborative approach fostered a sense of ownership and inclusivity, ensuring that the voices of parents were not only heard but also valued in driving positive change within the school community.

Upon entering the school, I am consistently impressed by the welcoming atmosphere and the vibrant environment it exudes. The exterior of the old building contrasts with the bright, modern walls adorned with exemplary student work, creating an ambiance of warmth and aspiration. Immediately noticeable is an illuminating board showcasing 'where they are now,' highlighting past pupils who have become influential leaders in the local community. Directly in front, the recently relaunched Student Leadership Team stands as a testament to the school's commitment to empowering students. This team actively engages in strategic decision-making and provides valuable feedback to staff, ensuring that students have a voice in shaping their own futures. The spacious hall, adorned with large flags displaying the school's non-negotiable standards of honesty, equality, understanding, friendship, respect and commitment, serves as a focal point for assemblies, PE, and community events. The hall's versatility was demonstrated during an educational breakfast event, which was so well-received that plans are underway to utilise a second hall to accommodate the high demand. The nursery area is a place of wonder, designed with natural influences such as wood and natural materials, creating a bright and inviting space. Children are fully included in nursery activities, enjoying both teacher-led activities and free play outdoors. The outdoor play areas are thoughtfully constructed with pallets and imaginative elements, fostering playfulness and excitement among the children. The school's dedication to families is evident, as they identified a need for English-age-appropriate books and subsequently developed a nursery library. Books are regularly taken home and swapped, ensuring that families have access to quality reading material. The investment in staff and resources in this area underscores the school's commitment to inclusivity, which permeates every aspect of its operations. From empowering student leadership to providing enriching experiences for young learners, Prince Albert School truly embodies a culture of inclusion and excellence.

Throughout the school, there is a clear recognition of children with complex needs who require additional support. Various areas around the school are dedicated to specific groups of students, all while maintaining inclusion within the mainstream school. The building itself has undergone transformation with the installation of glass doors, departing from traditional classrooms to create a multipurpose area that offers flexibility in combining or segregating classes. Notably, the reception class draws from the community without segregating children by need. Understanding that some children may not access mainstream classes, the school has established reception nurture groups staffed by specialists who focus on pre-reception levels of personal care and play-based learning. This proactive approach enables staff to implement a graduated response, ensuring funded support plans for all, with pathways for Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) already in progress. The presence of focus provisions and pastoral areas underscores the school's commitment to meeting the diverse needs of its students. This commitment is reflected in the school's atmosphere, which exudes calmness and orderliness, with engaged children in every classroom. Observing the interactions between teachers and Teaching Assistants, it becomes challenging to discern who holds which role, as both demonstrate authority and control



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over their respective groups. The animated and joyful demeanour of the Teaching Assistants is evident, contributing to the significant progress observed among the children. This progress is particularly evident in a Reception class. Their independence in learning was apparent, showcasing the high aspirations and expectations set by the staff. Innovation is ingrained in the school's ethos, as demonstrated by the introduction of new learning aids that not only support education but also enhance students' digital literacy skills and online safety awareness. At Prince Albert, opportunities are never missed, and everything appears purposeful, reflecting the school's dedication to providing an enriching educational experience for all students.

Despite receiving 48 responses in the parent survey, which may seem low, the Pastoral Lead recognises that parents have varied access to technology and literacy skills, with some unable to read and write. Consequently, they actively engage parents in alternative ways. The overwhelmingly positive results from the survey are guiding their actions, leading to the introduction of more coffee mornings and guest speakers. They also spoke passionately about community initiatives, such as litter picking, to instil pride in the area and educate families about community care. Collaborating with Modeshift, a Birmingham council initiative, they promote walking to school and have received a WOW grant to run a walk-to-school challenge in the summer term to address parking issues in the school area. Moreover, they continuously address attendance issues with families, including concerns about walking to school in the rain to educate them about colds and flu. Their partnership with Saarthi House, which offers learning opportunities to women's groups on topics like English, domestic violence and accessing support services, is particularly crucial, given the high incidence of Operation Encompass alerts at Prince Albert, necessitating support for families and students alike. Recognising the cultural dynamics, the pastoral team works with girls in school to ensure they have high aspirations, even featuring key female scientists to broaden their career horizons. Moreover, they employ innovative measures, such as using AI to translate communication into audio bytes or translating letters on Arbor, to bridge the language barrier. Additionally, they are reinstating ESOL classes held in the school before, acknowledging the community's need and recognising the importance of communication in fostering a supportive environment.

The pastoral team, safeguarding and inclusion lead now collectively refer to themselves as the 'Welfare' team, as they collaborate to triangulate support. The SENCo, recognising the increasing demands and capacity requirements, has transitioned from a 50% teaching role to a 100% non-teaching role, focusing on developing and upskilling staff. The inclusion lead bravely removed differentiation, opting for fully embedded adaptive teaching methods through scaffolding instead of color-coded or different worksheets. EAL children are not segregated into special classes but rather supported within the mainstream, as evidenced by EAL interventions taking place in corridor spaces to facilitate smooth transitions back into classroom-based activities. The Head of School emphasised the importance of oracy, aiming to ensure all children leave 'loud and proud'. I spoke with the inspirational oracy lead, whose reach extends beyond Prince Albert School to the Trust and beyond, thanks to her nationally published informative papers, crediting the school's investment in Voice 21 to structure the oracy provision. Transition is a top priority led by the Executive Head, collaborating with Prince Albert to maintain high standards of academic excellence and proficiency from Year 6 to Year 7, aiming to avoid the Year 7 dip in expectations. Various transition packages are



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available both within and outside Prince Albert, tailored to individual needs. Even when there are no explicit school names on an EHCP, efforts are dedicated to preparing pupils for their next move through mentoring and planning.

Reading is high on the agenda - only 2 students in Year 5 cannot read as free readers, but bespoke interventions are in place. They have a phonics agenda that starts in nursery and is used to fill reading gaps across the school. This is complemented by staff offering workshops, guides, and sharing tips on how they can help their children at home. I met with the SLT team and it is clear that inclusion is everyone's business, with everyone having a priority for SEND students in their area or phase. The team speaks in harmony and are upskilled to do EHC reviews, meet with parents, set IEP targets and much more. All SLT are parent-facing, meeting and greeting from the gate throughout the day. Doors are always open for staff, pupils, and parents alike. They believe it is essential that everyone knows the children and it doesn't just fall to the SENCo. They glowed when talking about parent-staff relationships and how they were able to communicate with families who had closed their doors to the outside. The relations are built on trust, transparency, and honesty. The school is oversubscribed in many years, being the parents' choice for complex children and those with moderate needs. Parents recounted stories where they had been declined a place at their school and directed to Prince Albert, claiming they could not, or did not, want to meet needs. They do everything they can to avoid part-time provision, changing the shape of what their school looks like at great cost and with great investment from the Trust. The school changes year on year to meet the needs of the ever-changing community.

I also had a conversation with one of the Teaching Assistants in the resource base, whom I initially mistook for a teacher. She expressed her passion for leading change from the bottom up and advocating for the use of sign-assisted teaching. Together with another Teaching Assistant, they run a deaf club for students, organise Makaton workshops for parents and introduce sign language to all class teachers through weekly sessions. The whole school has embraced the use of sign-assisted teaching and, in return, all she has asked for is support in pursuing Level 3 and Level 4 courses. The school strives to ensure their CPD is well-rounded but they face barriers with local availability. The fact that the staff remain in their positions speaks volumes, as they find happiness, fulfilment and credibility in their roles. Another inspirational Teaching Assistant, whose first language is sign language, could seek employment in various fields but has found true contentment and appreciation at Prince Albert. She has brought Deaf Awareness Week and BSL club to different cohorts and works with deaf parents to ensure they can access meetings and opportunities like all other families. The Prince Albert approach never fails to find a way to be truly inclusive. Teaching Assistants have agreed to run a club on a half-termly basis, providing students with opportunities to experience a range of activities. This only becomes an issue when students want to attend the BSL club year-round due to its popularity. Every child has access to cultural capital beyond what is found in the local community and it is presented in the most creative of ways.

The outstanding behaviour at Prince Albert School is driven by high expectations and well-established routines, fostering a sense of safety and belonging among the pupils. Each child feels they have a key adult who supports them, with the belief that all behaviour is a form of communication. Staff are adept at identifying students who may





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be dysregulated, providing safe spaces and support to address their needs. Despite occasional challenges, the overall behaviour of the pupils is exemplary, thanks to effective intervention and support systems in place. Kindness is not just a concept but a demonstrated practice by both staff and students alike. There is a clear hierarchy of support which students can access, from peer mentors in their red jumpers to support staff, safeguarding leads and senior readers. The Head of School's warm and approachable demeanour sets the tone for the entire school community, embodying a maternal figure who oversees the well-being of the Prince Albert family. It's evident that staff members, from top to bottom, genuinely care for these children, which reflects in their outstanding behaviours, attitudes and engagement in learning.

My visit to Prince Albert School was truly inspiring and left me with a glowing impression of their commitment to inclusive education. From the leadership's dedication to the welfare of every student to the innovative practices implemented by Teaching Assistants, Prince Albert shines as a beacon of excellence in education. The school's emphasis on communication, personalised support, and cultural inclusivity stood out during my visit. I was particularly impressed by the resource base's transformative approach, where children's voices are empowered through sign-assisted teaching and other innovative methods. Overall, my experience at Prince Albert School reaffirmed my belief in its status as a Flagship institution for inclusive education and I wholeheartedly recommend it for the fourth consecutive year.

**Assessor: Mrs Tracy Cockayne**

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

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