



Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

23rd May 2016

Mrs Amanda Abley
Aboyne Lodge School
Etna Road
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL3 5NL

Assessment Date: 18th May 2016

Summary

Aboyne Lodge Primary and Nursery School is a warm and welcoming school with an inclusive, nurturing ethos. This was the school's first IQM assessment. On my visit to the school, I had the opportunity to verify information provided on the self-evaluation form using a sample of the documentation provided, pupils' books, a learning walk and discussions with a range of staff, pupils, governors and parents. In addition to the above, prior to my visit to the school, its website provided key information about the school, recent events and school policies. My thanks go to the Headteacher and SENCO who welcomed me into their school for a day and to all the staff, parents, pupils and governors I had the pleasure of meeting.

Aboyne Lodge Primary and Nursery School is situated in St Albans and pupils are predominantly from white British backgrounds. The number of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who are entitled to the Pupil Premium is well below national average and the number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is below national average. The school has some pupils with significant special educational needs and disabilities and it provides individualised provision as well as reasonable adjustments for these pupils to enable them to access the school curriculum and to be part of the wider life of the school.

All pupils benefit from the emphasis on developing and supporting the whole child as creativity is fostered as much as academic abilities. One pupil told me "We're encouraged to be creative." Pupils of all abilities are well supported through teacher and teaching assistant led interventions as well as classroom based strategies and resources. Outside agencies including outreach services work closely with the school to provide advice and assessment for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The SENCO has positive relationships with parents and works collaboratively with them to ensure the best outcomes for these pupils.

The school's work on the Growth Mindset approach has had a tremendous positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and the storybook creatures make the skills they are learning accessible for all pupils, even the youngest. The values and skills they are taught will equip pupils for lifelong learning. The visual image of the 'Learning Pit' makes it easy to

understand for younger pupils as well as those with special educational needs. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes here; they see them as an opportunity to learn. Staff model the approach for pupils with the Headteacher learning to play the guitar and performing alongside pupils in assembly. Pupils at Aboyne Lodge Primary and Nursery School are keen to improve with their work and take responsibility for their own learning through self-assessment. One pupil told me that they “have targets to become the best you can, it’s not against others but against yourself.”

The school is recognised by prospective parents as inclusive. A governor commented that “it is renowned as a school in the area that will happily accommodate and welcome challenging children and those with needs;” it was clear to me that she was proud of this. Pupils at the school have positive relationships with each other and with staff. “Our children know how to include and accept people with differences.” This was particularly evident with pupils at playtime and in the Year 1 classroom where pupils from the local special school played collaboratively with and had lessons with Aboyne Lodge pupils.

Careful consideration is given to provision for individual pupils and school staff work closely with parents to ensure that the impact of this is maximised. Parents feel that the school is open and offers them plenty of opportunities work with them including workshops to support them to help their children at home. “You’ve been given the tools for individual learning to support your children.” Parents report that staff are approachable and that if the need arises to speak to the Headteacher, she deals with issues well. They recognise that additional time and thought is given to making arrangements for school activities to ensure that all pupils are included e.g. one to one swimming lessons and separate transportation for school visits if required. The school is described as going “the extra mile” to support pupils and parents. An example of this is when the SENCO created a photo schedule for a parent to use outside of school for helping with the steps involved with crossing the road in order to keep the pupil safe and reduce the parents worry about this.

Pupils at this school are happy, enjoy coming to school and feel that the school seeks and values their views. Staff are equally happy with all those I spoke to unanimously reporting that they love their jobs and the variety it brings. It is no surprise that there is low staff turnover at the school as it’s “a friendly school with a family spirit.” Aboyne Lodge Primary and Nursery School is committed to inclusion and is doing some positive work in this area that has benefitted all pupils, not just those with special educational needs.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in 3 years’ time.

Assessor: Miss Smeeta Vaghela

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:



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

Element 1 – The Inclusion Values and Practice of the School

Aboyne Lodge Primary and Nursery School is a nurturing and inclusive environment that values creativity and social development as much as academic success. Staff aim to equip pupils with the skills of curiosity and reasoning in order for them to become independent and confident life-long learners. The Headteacher, Chair of Governors and SENCO have a clear vision for inclusion at the school and this is understood by staff and parents. The school is in the process of embedding Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset approach using the storybook creatures Tough Tortoise who is resilient, Super Squirrel who is resourceful and Wise Owl who is reflective. Each one of these has been introduced half termly to pupils with the final character yet to be unveiled. The creatures reflect a core value that is linked with several 'learning powers' e.g. Tough Tortoise is resilient and the 'learning powers' required to be resilient are absorption, managing distractions, noticing and perseverance. These values and 'learning powers' are linked with everything pupils do and are explicitly taught in PSHE lessons and assemblies. Staff, parents and pupils are friendly and welcoming and speak positively about the school.

Strengths

- The implementation of the Growth Mindset approach has been carefully considered and is part of a two-year programme outlined in the School Development Plan. The impact of the work on this to date is evident in discussions with pupils, parents and the way in which staff communicate with pupils and parents.
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- Transition books are used effectively for identified pupils who need additional support for the transition from one class to another. Transition meetings are also held for these pupils.
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- One page profiles are used to share information with staff about strengths, needs and effective strategies for individual pupils.
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- There is a School Council who meet fortnightly. Pupils are elected onto it by voting for one boy and one girl at the start of the year. School Council prepare assemblies and suggest solutions to problems.
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- Social stories for a transition to a new class and a school residential visit are used effectively to prepare pupils who find change difficult.
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- Headteacher Award's and Star of the Week certificates are given out in assembly to pupils.

Areas for development

The school has identified its future plans in this area and I agree that these are appropriate.

- The behaviour policy and reward system could be updated to be consistent with the Growth Mindset approach that the school has adopted.

- Pupils who are new to the school could have an induction session in which they are taught the ‘Aboyne Lodge way’ with the Growth Mindset ethos and introduced to the storybook creatures. On completion of the Induction session, they could be presented with mini creatures as a reminder. This would also support new parents to understand the approach as pupils would talk to them about it at home.

Element 2 – The Learning Environment, Resources and ICT

Classrooms are well resourced at Aboyne Lodge Primary and Nursery School with displays used to support learning in lessons. The playground has a range of climbing play equipment for pupils to access to develop their gross motor skills and build their confidence. The school environment is completely wheelchair accessible with ramps and stair lifts in place where required. There are a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs on offer (including yoga, Mad Science, athletics, tennis, choir, street dance, recorder, knitting and sewing) and these are accessible for all pupils. The school has a computer suite and access to iPads for use in classrooms.

ParentMail is used to communicate with parents and the school keeps its website and Facebook page up to date. There are photographs on doors so that pupils who cannot yet read can find staff who they may be looking for. The work displayed in corridors and classrooms is from pupils of all abilities and accessible for all pupils as braille is used.

Strengths

- The school has a disabled toilet with a hoist and specialist equipment fitted for an individual pupil.
- The school premises have been adapted with windows on doors having large, bold coloured laminated shapes on them and steps have yellow lines painted on the edges for pupils with visual impairments.
- The school has allocated additional Teaching Assistant support for one individual pupil to allow time to make special tactile resources or resources using braille to support access to lessons.
- Sensory fidget boxes are used for individual pupils.
- Braille books are provided for a pupil who is registered blind.
- The Apples Room has been renamed the Learning Zone and is now timetabled for use with pupils of all abilities. This change has been carefully considered as pupils perceived the room as the place pupils who need additional help go; it has now lost this stigma and pupils see it as a learning space for all pupils.
- Colour coded keyboards are available for use in the computer suite and in classrooms.
- Some year groups have a garden or planting area.
- Teachers in large classrooms with high ceilings use microphones to enable all pupils to hear them.

Areas for development

The school has identified its future plans in this area and I agree that these are appropriate. There are no further recommendations at this time.

Element 3 – Learner Attitudes, Values and Personal Development

Pupils at Aboyne Lodge Primary and Nursery School enjoy school and feel that their teachers listen to them. They are not afraid to make mistakes and know that they can learn from them. Pupils are taught about the ‘Learning Pit’ that may be encountered in order for deep and successful learning to take place. They are taught to understand that it is acceptable to be in the learning pit and to use problem solving skills as well as develop a resilient attitude to get themselves out. They know when they have done well and enjoy seeing their work displayed in the classroom and around school. The impact of the Growth Mindset approach on pupils’ attitudes towards their learning is impressive; they confidently use the language of the core values and relate extremely well to the storybook creatures.

Strengths

- Pupils feel listened to. They report that they have been responsible for changes in the school such as the sports equipment available in the playground.
- The school asks pupils for their views and takes actions in response to these views. A recent pupil voice survey revealed that pupils lack confidence in Science and the school has introduced a Mad Science club.
- Pupils behave well and are polite to each other and to adults. They play with each other even if they are not in the same year group.
- Independence is promoted and carefully considered for all pupils including those with special educational needs and disabilities to prevent them from becoming dependent. Pupils in Year 6 report that they choose the level of work they will do based on the level of curry spiciness e.g. korma or vindaloo.
- Year 6 pupils are buddied with Reception pupils to support them with settling into school. This involves eating lunch with them, playing in the playground and joining them for one lesson a week in class. Year 6 pupils reported enjoying this responsibility and Year 5 pupils reported that they are looking forward to this.
- Pupils report that they have someone to speak to if they are worried and all classes have worry boxes for pupils to let their teacher know if they are worried about something.
- Pupils Always Love Smiles (PALS) pupils organise events and support pupils who have fallen out to resolve conflicts.
- There are nurture groups in place for pupils in Key Stage 2. There is an Eco Committee who are currently campaigning for people to have shorter showers in order to save water.

Areas for development

The school has an action plan in place for becoming a Growth Mindset school. There are no further recommendations at this time.

Element 4 – Learner Progress and Impact on Learning

Pupils at Aboyne Lodge Primary and Nursery School make good progress. They are well rounded with opportunities to develop their creativity through year group productions and music lessons. Pupils' attainment and progress data is carefully tracked and monitored. They know when they have achieved well and what they need to do to improve. A variety of interventions are used to support learning; these are run by both teachers and teaching assistants and take place within the classroom as well as outside.

Strengths

- Pupil progress meetings are held termly with the Deputy Headteacher, Pupil Premium Manager and the SENCO. Year group provision maps are devised to outline individual needs, in class and withdrawal interventions at Waves 2 and 3 for targeted pupils. The impact of interventions is reviewed on the provision map.
- The Growth Mindset approach has had a significant impact on the attitudes of pupils towards their learning. They are inspired to develop a lifelong enthusiasm for learning, to be independent and to see mistakes as opportunities to learn from.
- Pupils are supported to make progress socially as well as academically through friendship groups and pupils taking roles of responsibility e.g. director for their year group production.
- Pupils' targets are displayed at the front of their books. Pupils self-assess against these targets as well as the teacher assessing them.
- Success criteria are used effectively to ensure that pupils are clear about what is required for them to be successful in their work.
- Review meetings are held for pupils with special educational needs to review progress and provision in place.

Areas for development

- The school has identified its future plans in this area and I agree that these are appropriate. There are no further recommendations at this time.

Element 5 – Learning and Teaching (monitoring)

Pupils love coming to school and enjoy their lessons. Practical resources are used to support pupils' learning in class as well as through targeted interventions. Their teachers are enthusiastic and provide opportunities for independent as well as collaborative learning. Each class teacher has a SEND file which includes current and historical provision maps, relevant professional reports, one page profiles for individual pupils and Teaching Assistant led interventions. These files enable teachers and support staff to have a sound understanding of the needs of the whole class as well as of individual pupils in the class in order to inform their teaching.

Strengths

- A range of continuing professional development opportunities are provided for teaching staff and support staff, these are linked to the school's development plan. Training opportunities are provided both in school and externally.
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- The SENCO has completed the National Award for SEN Co-ordination and plans to work towards the OCR Level 5 in Specific Learning Difficulties.
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- Teachers carefully plan for lessons for pupils to sustain their interest and cater for their varied learning styles. A Year 6 pupil told me about a lesson in which they mummified fish as part of their Egyptian topic. As part of the same topic, they created masks of Egyptian gods and goddesses using papier-mâché. A Year 4 teacher teaching solids, liquids and gases used a practical activity with smells to enable a pupil with a visual impairment to access the lesson. Lesson plans are personalised for individual pupils.
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- Pupil progress meetings are used effectively to identify pupils at all ability levels who require support and additional provision.
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- Key Stage One pupils have time in the curriculum for child initiated play. This is known by pupils as "CIP time."
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- Talk partners are used regularly to engage pupils in their learning and to provide opportunities for them to learn from each other.
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- The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher run intervention groups for more able pupils.

Areas for development

- The school has identified its future plans in this area and I agree that these are appropriate. There are no further recommendations at this time.

Element 6 – Parents, Carers and Guardians

Parents of pupils at Aboyne Lodge Primary and Nursery School feel the school is open and welcoming. They trust school staff to do the best for their children and feel that difficulties their children experience are dealt with sensitively. They value the relationships they have with staff and feel that all staff are approachable. Parents describe the school as “very nurturing,” accommodating and proactive in dealing with difficulties.

Strengths

- Parents report that “the school act quickly on concerns they have and that a solution is always found.”
- They value opportunities to link with the SEN team and with other parents through the SEN Coffee and Chat mornings that are held termly.
- Parents are pleased with the progress their children make in school, in interventions and in the nurture group.
- Parents find that the SENCO is very well prepared for review meetings and the school is very supportive in these meetings.
- Curriculum evenings e.g. Maths are held to support parents to work with their children at home using the same approaches as in school.
- Parents are invited into school for sharing assemblies, hearing readers, practising times tables, reporting on their jobs for Careers Day and New to Year meetings at the beginning of the year.
- There is a monthly newsletter for parents called ‘News on the Ninth’ to keep parents informed and a Growth Mindset newsletter to share this approach with parents.
- Parents value the advice and information packs they receive prior to their children starting Reception.
- Written records are kept of parent consultations that are signed by parents.

Areas for development

- The school has identified its future plans in this area and I agree that these are appropriate. There are no further recommendations at this time.

Element 7 – Governing Body and Management: - External Accountability/Support

Governors at Aboyne Lodge Primary and Nursery School share its inclusive ethos and are proud of their school. Governors visit the school regularly to focus on their area of responsibility and have governor badges to wear when they are in school so that pupils know who they are. These visits include learning walks and pupil interviews. They are knowledgeable about the school's work and are supportive of the school.

Strengths

- There is a named SEN Governor who has worked with the SENCO to review the IQM self-evaluation review form and attends SEN Coffee and Chat mornings.
- Governors have access to governor training and are invited to join staff training when the content is relevant to them. Recent training attended includes Safer Recruitment, Health and Safety, Preparing for Ofsted, Special Educational Needs, Finance and Complaints. All Governors have safeguarding training.
- Governor visits to school have become more strategic, focussing on the school's priorities.
- Governors are aware that staff ensure that all school activities are accessible for individual pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- They recognise that inclusion is a strength for the school and that the Headteacher's proactive attitude to inclusion is imperative for the ethos of the whole school.

Areas for development

- The school has identified its future plans in this area and I agree that these are appropriate. There are no further recommendations at this time.

Element 8 – The School in the Community – How this supports Inclusion

Aboyne Lodge Primary and Nursery School uses local resources in the community for school visits and to support learning. There are very close links with the local special school with pupils from the school regularly joining a Year 1 class. This is of mutual benefit to both schools with pupils developing friendships and enjoying this time together. The SENCO attends the local SENCO forum termly and the Exceptional Needs Funding Clusters. The Headteacher is part of the behaviour sub-committee of a team in the Local Authority called delivering special provision locally.

Strengths

- Pupils in Years 3 and 5 use the local swimming pool for swimming lessons.
- Pupils in Year 6 have drama lessons from a student from the local independent school sixth form.
- On the day of the assessment, pupils in Reception visited St Albans market to buy fruit for tasting.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have residential visits.
- Pupils in Year 5 have Science lessons at the local independent boys school.
- Outreach services, including play therapy and Links Academy for transition, are accessed to support pupils.

Areas for development

- The school has identified its future plans in this area and I agree that these are appropriate. There are no further recommendations at this time.