



Basic Skills Quality Mark (BSQM) – Visit Feedback Report

School name Yew Tree Community School

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Alliance BSQM Assessor Nigel Edge

Visit date 25TH January 2018

Purpose of Visit	Renewal Assessment
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The Assessor spoke with the following people

Headteacher and/or Senior Leaders YES	Literacy Subject Leader YES	Numeracy Subject Leader YES	Assessment Manager YES
SENCo NO	Pupil representatives YES	Governor representative(s) YES	Parent representative(s) YES

'Learning Walk' completed? YES	Relevant evidence-base reviewed? YES
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The previous development points have been considered have been implemented

Suggested areas for development in preparation for the next Quality Mark visit and links to the 10 Elements of the Quality Mark:

- To continue with the focus on improving pupils' reading skills; embed the strategies learnt from research.
- To continue to share the excellent practice at Yew Tree with other schools.

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"Good practice" identified in relation to the 10 Elements of the Quality Mark:

Yew Tree Community School is very welcoming. Since the last visit the school has become an academy and formed a multi-academy trust; the Trust (Inspire Education Community Trust) has been approved as a sponsor to support other schools. There has been further investment in the school and some teaching areas have been refurbished. Basic Skills are at the heart of teaching and learning at Yew Tree Community School. The school is continuing to develop a balanced curriculum that encourages the children to become independent learners and functions in a calm and ordered manner, where learning is enjoyable for the pupils. The focus on reading for pleasure has had an immense impact on the enjoyment of all subjects. The displays are of a high standard and reflect the quality of the work taking place in the school. The Executive Head Teacher and Heads of School supported by the rest Leadership Team provides strong leadership and have a clear vision for the role the school plays in the education of the whole child. The passion and enthusiasm for the established philosophy is to be commended. The social, emotional and academic development of each individual pupil is an important focus. The Management Team's vision is shared through the School Improvement Plan. There is a firm commitment to creating a caring environment, where individual needs are met. Everyone articulated their enthusiasm and appreciation for the school and felt valued as an individual. The children were very clear about expectations and there was clear evidence of differentiation, they are encouraged to be involved in their next steps through both verbal and visual prompts. A positive feedback and marking system is in place to inform next steps. Teachers' marking gives pupils a good idea about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.

There is a comprehensive assessment system that clearly tracks progress and identifies where additional support may be needed. All staff have high expectations of pupil's performance and continuously seek new practice to improve and build on this, promoting independence. The children articulated their appreciation for the school and felt valued as individuals and they spoke highly of their teachers. During discussions with children they were happy to talk about how they enjoyed coming to school and demonstrated an enthusiasm for learning. They talked about the way they worked in the classroom. They understood about the feedback and marking policy and explained and how they used the verbal feedback by teachers to help them move forward.

Assessment is continuous and informs planning with a range of assessment strategies used. This is an information rich school, data is interpreted and used effectively to personalise individuals learning opportunities. Pupil Progress meetings ensure that pupil progress is maintained and that any interventions are timely and appropriate to the individual's needs. This data gives a picture of strengths and weakness for individuals and this information is used to inform future planning, learning and teaching. Reading, writing and oracy underpin every lesson and have an immense impact on spoken and written outcomes across all subjects. The same passion and commitment for ensuring the basic skills in maths are taught to a very high standard, as is evident in the outcomes. The school has a consistent approach to the teaching of English across the school, with all year groups learning to read and write using the Talk for Writing process. In all of the classrooms there is evidence of Talk for Writing processes such as text maps, hand actions for connectives, "magpie" word banks and vocabulary books. The school is a training centre for Talk for Writing and supports a number

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of schools through its workshops; hundreds of teachers have visited Yew Tree to observe lessons and receive training from leaders. The English and Maths teams are particular strengths of the school. Together they are valued team members who work alongside their colleagues to share their skills and develop good and consistent practice across the school. The school is running a project, the 'West Midlands Transforming Reading Project' jointly with St. Matthews C.E. Primary School and Pie Corbett/Dean Thompson to support the teaching and development of reading in 30 schools from across the West Midlands and beyond.

Throughout the visit there was clear evidence of some excellent inclusive practice. The inclusion agenda is wholeheartedly supported through an ethos of well-embedded values and there are good structures and systems in place, to ensure an open dialogue with all stakeholders, to continue to improve the experiences for all pupils. This is driven by the SENDCO. Pupil Premium funding is used to employ additional staff to focus on the individual and group needs of the disadvantaged children. In addition it is used partly, to employ additional staff in order to reduce class sizes in a number of year groups, as well as improving opportunities for personalised learning and accelerating progress across the school. There have also been new resources bought and a whole school drive to raise standards. As a result there is no longer a gap between pupil premium and non- pupil premium children.

The parents commented highly on the relationships that the staff have with the children. They feel the school supports the family as well as the child. A parent commented that, "We feel our children are safe and secure. The teachers' hard work and their commitment benefits the children and encourages their love of learning." Yew Tree has an 'open door policy'. Parents are encouraged to talk to teachers and leaders to discuss any concerns. Teachers also request to meet with parents if additional support is required to help their child make progress.

Many strengths have been identified at this visit, including the following:

Element 1 - A whole school strategy and planning to improve performance in basic skills

Strengths:

- The School Improvement Plan is a clear and informative. Priorities are identified through a thorough evaluation of provision and standards.
- A Teaching and Learning policy is linked to the feedback and marking policy that is in place, both of which are reviewed and monitored regularly along with all policies and, more importantly, practice to ensure good learning.
- Teaching quality is monitored formally and informally, as part of a comprehensive monitoring plan.
- Timetabling ensures that each year group has identified times for Maths and Writing as well as ample time for the teaching of Reading as this is one of the school's key targets areas. This means that all children get above the minimum in each subject. The children are also given opportunities to use the skills taught in Maths and English in their topic sessions away from these subjects.
- In recognition of the support needed across school, additional teachers have been deployed to target specific groups of children.
- There are comprehensive assessment procedures with a good use of tracking systems.

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- Support programmes for underachieving children have clear impact.

Element 2 - An analysis of the assessment of pupil performance in basic skills

Strengths:

- The analysis and comparison of teacher assessment and test results assists the school in monitoring the learning across the school. Pupils are also tested at intervals during the year, and these tests are used to monitor children's progress. An evaluation of teaching and learning, the curriculum and children's achievement informs the school improvement plan priorities for the year ahead.
- Assessments are detailed and thorough, and include expectations for all children.
- There is a moderation programme to verify teacher assessments.
- Pupils' basic skills are assessed on entry and inform the provision made to ensure these pupils make rapid progress. Marking of pupils' learning complies with the school's guidelines, and is used to motivate pupils and to provide them with specific guidance on what further learning is required.
- Pupil progress meetings are held with all teachers highlighting both achievement and attainment on a regular basis and are part of a rolling programme.
- Book scrutinises are carried out and also cross-referenced with planning.
- Teacher assessments are made in reading, writing, speaking and listening and maths every term.
- EYFS GLD for 2017 was 63%; children in EYFS make good and better progress from their starting points. The school has continued to focus on improving attainment levels across the school. The 2017 KS1 phonics-screening result was 82%. In Key Stage One, they achieved working at the expected level in the following: 75% in Reading, with 71% in writing and 75% in Maths. The end of Key Stage Two results for 2017 were as follows, Writing, 90% at the Expected Standard, with 25% at Greater Depth. Reading was 80% at the Expected Standard with 33% achieving the Higher Standard and in Maths 87% met the expected standard with 60% achieving the Higher Standard. GPS was 92% at the Expected Level with 62% achieving the Higher Standard. The combined RWM was 78%, which is well above the National Expected Standard.
- In 2017 75% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard at KS2 and 25% achieved the higher standard. This was due to the whole school approach in raising standards with strong quality first teaching across all year groups

Element 3 - Target setting for the improvement of the school's performance in basic skills

Strengths:

- FFT Aspire is used to set end of key stage pupil targets in order to achieve ambitious outcomes for children and to track the likely progress of different groups of pupils in order to check the quality of provision.
- Group or individual empowering learning targets are set every half term. Each pupil across the school has individual targets for Reading, Maths and Writing based on their progress. Pupil progress is shared with parents on a continual basis.
- The marking and feedback policy enhances the target setting process as children can respond to feedback quickly and effectively during actual learning time.
- Targets are set for individual children in need of extra support and are based on their

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- learning needs as identified through on going assessment.
- Discussion with the leadership team clearly emphasises the commitment to the development of the basic skills across the school.

Element 4 - Basic skills improvement planning for pupils underattaining and/or underachieving

Strengths:

- The school has very clear well managed support and intervention strategies for under attaining and/or underachieving pupils. Children that have learning difficulties have a One-Page Profile, which is reviewed continuously. The profile ensures that children have achievable and measurable targets, which will make them successful in their learning outcomes.
- Teachers' planning takes into account those children who may need extra support and the differentiation they may need. This may be in different forms and may be individual or within groups. Intervention strategies are used across the school such as 1 to 1 tuition, phonic support, small targeted intervention groups, SATs booster classes and additional staff deployed to support individuals following analysis of data and progress against targets.
- Teaching Assistants play an important role in supporting children, with particular emphasis on specific groups and individuals, as well as playing an important part in wider school developments.
- At Yew Tree Community School, children arrive at 8am for a 15 minutes session of fun, exercise and socialising prior to starting their early morning reading in years 5 and 6. This has helped all children develop a love of reading and the confidence to choose more challenging texts. In the rest of the school, children arrive at 8.30am to read with their teachers. Parents are highly supportive and have played a huge role in ensuring their children are punctual and ready to start the day promptly each morning. Reading diaries are regularly signed and parents have the opportunity to support with choosing books to read at home, thorough weekly workshops (particularly for children in EYFS and KS1) Competitions and opportunities such as Reading Champions are continuously motivating children, to read and compete against each other.
- Children with underdeveloped speech/ language/ comprehension difficulties are referred to Speech and Language Therapy. The S&L therapist sets targets.

Element 5 - Regular review of the progress made by pupils underattaining and /or underachieving in basic skills

Strengths:

- The leadership team meet every Friday afternoon and monitor English and Maths; basic skills are at the forefront of the school's monitoring.
- Children's progress is discussed at pupil progress meetings and phase meetings. Decisions are made about groupings/re-groupings and intervention for children under attaining/underachieving. Particular attention is given to children who may not be making as much progress as they should, training and support for teachers is put in place to ensure all children make good progress.
- Reports and discussions with Trustees and governors ensure that they know that

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underachieving is not acceptable and is continuously addressed. Parents are fully aware of the progress and needs of their children.

- Shared partnership is absolutely crucial to the way the school works. Other schools are invited in regularly to work with staff, particularly in reading and writing. This shared partnership is two-fold, whilst supporting others to identify and make a difference with underachieving pupils, through the school's outreach and support work, it also ensures Yew Tree Community School builds on its own accuracy of assessment.

Element 6 - A commitment to improving the skills of staff to teach and extend basic skills

Strengths:

- Staff CPD needs and opportunities are well planned.
- There is a training plan for all staff based on the School Improvement Plan. Insets have been planned regularly for staff to support with reading, writing and maths. The impact of monitoring has heightened the sustained professional learning by putting in developmental plans, where teachers have a leader/mentor in an environment of trust and support to monitor their books, set clear, specific and challenging goals for them to focus on.
- Both teaching and non-teaching staff are fully involved in CPD and have clear opportunities to develop their knowledge and expertise across the basic skills, including in house training from the subject leaders.
- All staff receive training and resource material so as to ensure they are informed on and can deliver current developments in school.
- Appraisal is linked to pupil progress and assessment data.
- The school actively seek links with other schools to enable the observation and sharing of good practice.

Element 7 - The use of a range of teaching approaches and learning styles to improve basic skills

Strengths:

- A range of teaching and learning styles are clearly evident and are used to meet the needs of different learners. Teachers adapt their planning to meet the needs of learners in their groups/classes.
- Focussed feedback in lessons moves learning on quickly. Children know to respond to the marking in books edit and self-reflect about their work which is based on basic skills. The process that has been embedded ensures the children are successful independent learners and books clearly show that children are very proud of their work.
- Children's work is celebrated by being displayed in the classroom and around the school; achievement is celebrated weekly in whole school assemblies where parents are invited into school to share celebrations.
- All provision is well planned and pupil progress is thoroughly assessed, with good communication with parents, through newsletters and regular meetings, including reports on children's achievement.

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- Homework is in place across the school, differentiated appropriately and valued by parents.

Element 8 - The use of appropriate teaching and learning materials to improve basic skills

Strengths:

- The most significant aspect of Yew Tree Community School is the amount of the budget that is spent on teachers in order to facilitate the teaching groups across all year groups. This is having a positive impact on the progress of all pupils. Teachers ensure their environments enhance learning; the environments are language rich, focussing on reading, writing and maths plus topic and science.
- The learning environment is supportive, e.g. learning prompts for English and Maths can be found in all the teaching areas and this is supported with resources, which are used to support learning effectively.
- There is a balance of learning prompts; celebration of pupil achievement and motivational materials throughout the school with examples of children's work displayed in the corridors.
- There has been a major investment in reading materials and parents are encouraged to read with their children. Maths, English and Spelling homework is consistent across the school.
- The Outdoor environment has been developed and is used to enhance learning opportunities.
- ICT is used to support and enhance Maths and English. The classrooms are equipped with banks of I pads for cross-curricular work and computing.

Element 9 - The involvement of parents and carers in developing their child's basic skills

Strengths:

- Parents are well informed about basic skills provision in the school.
- Parents are encouraged to come into school to talk to staff; Teachers are readily available to support parents and carers with information about their child through daily informal conversations and through regular planned parents' evenings.
- Yew Tree has a long-term commitment to working closely with parents to develop children's full potential, academically, physically and emotionally.
- The school communicates regularly with parents about basic skills provision in school and actively encourages parents to support their children's learning through regular family workshop involvement. The workshops support parents to be able to interact more confidently with their child about learning and also feel more able to communicate confidently with the teachers about their child's learning needs and how they can support them.
- Parents feel appreciated and valued, they know their children are happy and safe at Yew Tree Community School.
- Parents are signposted to courses that support them with their own literacy and numeracy skills and workshops have supported parents in building basic ICT skills,

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which has enabled them to support their children at home.

Element 10 - An effective procedure for monitoring planning and assessing improvement in performance in basic skills

Strengths:

- The Trustees and governors are kept informed about the achievements made within Academy in raising the skill levels of pupils.
- A great deal of emphasis is placed on English and Maths skills and the continued training and updating of staff skills will continue to maintain and further improve standards in the classrooms.
- The Executive Head Teacher and the Leadership Team update the SEF as part of a rolling programme and produces good reports to keep the Trust Board and Local Governing Body fully informed.
- There is a very thorough monitoring programme in place.
- The Trustees and governors challenge the Senior Leadership Team.

Summary:

Congratulations to the whole staff team at Yew Tree Community School for their excellent daily teaching of basic skills. The school was well prepared for the visit. The School continues to meet the standards required for the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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