



Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

28th April 2013

Mrs Ann Parish
Headteacher
Shackleton Lower School
Pearcey Road
Bedford
MK42 9LZ

Assessment Date: 25th April 2013

Summary

On entering Shackleton Lower School I encountered the magnificent 'stained glass' mural declaring that every child matters at Shackleton. The experience of my assessment visit was that the world beyond the entrance foyer was a living example of every child matters in practice. It was a joy and a privilege to witness the 'Shackleton experience'. The culture and ethos of inclusion permeates all aspects of school life and there is real aspiration and ambition for all pupils and an assertive drive to secure the best for them both in their learning and their wider developmental needs.

Your pupils are articulate, polite and able to talk confidently about their learning. They feel safe and understand where to go for help and support when they need it. Their voice is heard through a strong School Council. Pupils are making good progress and you are achieving improvement in both progress and attainment including that for the most disadvantaged children and families.

The school is clearly popular with parents who regard the school as responsive to their needs and feel that it 'goes the extra mile' to support both them and their children. There is a strong focus on parent engagement and empowerment both in terms of their children's education and their own development and well-being. One parent described the school as 'a life saver' and many spoke eloquently of the support that had been given to them too.

Staff are motivated, enthusiastic, committed, innovative and creative. They are very child-centred in their approach and a 'solutions-focused' approach is evident around the school. They know their pupils and there is a pervading culture of respect and trust in relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. The school has rigorous systems in place to assess pupils, identify and understand any additional needs and to put in place a range of differentiated teaching, learning and support strategies to ensure all pupils achieve their potential. There is a diversity of curriculum approaches to suit different needs, abilities and aptitudes.

Success is clearly based on the strong leadership and management exercised by you and your senior team. You put your vision into practice and have created a positive, dynamic and reflective learning environment that values all. There is a strong Governing Body that

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promotes inclusion, scrutinises and challenges performance and is well informed about the school both through the information it receives and its active engagement in the life of the school. The commitment, motivation and enthusiasm of staff in the school together with their real focus on the children and providing the very best quality teaching and learning for pupils was evident in all my meetings with them.

The school has clearly invested significant energy in devising approaches to teaching and learning that reflect the identified needs of individual pupils and which are focused on maximising pupil progress and learning outcomes. There are effective systems in place to plan, deliver and evaluate provision and to secure quality experiences for pupils. There has also been a strong focus on engaging and developing staff to maximise their effectiveness and impact on learning outcomes for children. There is a very good balance between learning and support frameworks that secures a holistic approach to pupil needs. I was particularly impressed by provision for EAL, Gifted and Talented and ICT. Alongside the successes in pupil progress and attainment there have been improvements in attendance, avoidance of permanent exclusions and the engagement of pupils in a wide range of activities that promote their social and emotional well-being. There are rigorous assessment and tracking systems in place and good analysis of data. Where obstacles to learning are identified proactive action is taken to remove these and there is a strong focus on advocacy – both for children and their families – to access services outside the school where they need it.

The school has established strong and effective working partnerships with a range of external agencies ranging from the local authority, other children's service providers, other local schools and community organisations.

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: Paul Burnett

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:



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

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| Name of School: | Shackleton Lower School |
| Headteacher: | Ann Parish |
| Date of assessment: | 25 th April 2013 |
| Website: | www.shackletonprimary.co.uk |
| Assessor: | Paul Burnett |
| Successful: | Yes |

Context of the School and Sources of Data

Shackleton Lower School is a two-form entry school currently providing for children aged 4+-9 years of age. The school will become a primary school from September 2013 following a re-organisation of schools in the local area and will incrementally extend to include provision for years 5 and 6. Major building works are taking place on the site to facilitate this extension to the provision.

The school is currently able to admit 300 pupils and this will extend to 420 by September 2014. The school is popular with parents and regularly over-subscribed in the main admissions' processes. The school was full at the time of the assessment. The majority of pupils attending the school are from the immediate locality. Pupils are admitted at three points of entry during their reception year – in September, January and April.

The pupil population is drawn from a diverse ethnic community with the main groups being white British, Bangladeshi and Pakistani. There is a growing number of children from eastern European backgrounds the most significant being Polish. 9.9% are black minority ethnic and about 66% have English as an additional language. There are 22 different languages spoken by children in the school. 33% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. In relation to SEN 9.5% of pupils are supported at School Action in relation to their special educational needs and 3.5% of pupils are supported at School Action Plus. 1% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The number of pupils with SEN is higher than the national average. 19.5% are at “awareness” and are catered for on a Provision Plan – not on COP. However, in another school where children do not start at such low levels, these children would be at School Action. Altogether, therefore, with “Awareness” 99 children are on the SEN register – 34% of school).

The last Ofsted inspection of the school took place in June 2010 and the school was judged to be ‘Good’. Attainment at Key Stage 1 improved in 2012. 80% of pupils attained Level 2 or above in reading which was an increase of 8% in comparison to 2011. 68% of pupils attained a level 2 or above in writing which was an increase of 3% in comparison to 2011. 88% of pupils attained Level 2 in mathematics which was an increase of 1% in comparison to 2011. Levels of progress made by pupils at key stage 1 narrows the gap between disadvantaged pupils and those of their peers but overall levels of performance place the school in the 4th quintile for reading and mathematics and the lowest quintile for writing. The attendance rate at the school in 2012 was 93.8% which was an increase of 2.5% on 2011 – but this remains in the bottom 20% of all schools and remains a priority for the school.

The school has a strong vision that is inclusive of pupils, parents/carers and the wider community. The school's Mission Statement includes a statement that it will strive to provide 'the best possible opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential' and there is a very strong emphasis on 'every child matters' – taking a holistic view of the needs of pupils, families and the community.

The school has a number of awards including: Healthy Schools; International School Award and Investors in People.

Portfolio and Other Supporting Evidence

The IQM Assessment Tracking Document for Shackleton Lower School was comprehensive, well focused and well organised. It provided extensive evidence in support of its self-assessment against the ten elements of the IQM framework and a strong basis from which to undertake the assessment visit. The evidence collected during the assessment visit supports the school's self-assessment as accurate and effective.

The range of supporting evidence considered as part of this assessment included:-

- The IQM Assessment Framework Tracking Document.
- The most recent Ofsted Report (June 2010).
- RAISEonline data and the Ofsted School Data Dashboard.
- Shackleton Lower School Website.
- School Behaviour Policy.
- School SEN Policy.
- School Attendance.
- School Admissions. Policy.
- Shackleton Lower School Mission Statement.

A comprehensive programme of meetings and observations was arranged for the assessment visit by SEN Co-ordinator. These covered all areas of the Shackleton Lower School IQM submission and included:-

- Meeting with the Headteacher, SEN Co-ordinator, Reception Co-ordinator, EAL Lead and Gifted and Talented Lead.
- Tour of the school.
- A range of classroom observations.
- Observation of key inclusion programmes in action including: Read Write Inc, History Workshops, MMS iPad session, SALT sessions, numeracy catch up, reception EAL new to English, IT for inclusion, Reading Eggs, SEALS, Touch Typing, Orca SP Social Skills, Music Lesson.
- Meeting with Governors.
- Meeting with parents in both formal and informal settings.
- Meeting with Learning Mentor.
- Meeting with School Council.
- Meeting with Teaching Assistants.
- Meeting with 1-1 teaching assistants.
- Lunch with pupils.

Element 1 - Learner Progress

Shackleton Lower School has strong, robust, well-developed assessment strategies to identify individual pupil needs and to secure speedy implementation of bespoke, personalised interventions to meet these needs.

Processes of assessment begin before children attend the school. There is an extensive range of activities to support admission to the school at 4+. These include: liaison with local Sure Start and nursery providers together with other pre-school provision accessed by children, visits for the children prior to admission, home visits, opportunities for families to visit the school both formally and informally and careful consideration of Foundation Stage entry profiles. Home visits take place for all new children starting at the school and those most in need of support are identified. Parent engagement with the school and in their child's learning is encouraged.

There is a number of challenges to the school in terms of prior attainment levels on entry which include; lower than average attainment levels even amongst those that have attended nursery; the 'three points of entry' local authority admissions policy that results in summer born children only having one term in Reception; a not insignificant proportion of children that do not access pre-school provision. The pupil profile on entry shows that a significant proportion of children have: language delay or speech and language difficulties; no or little acquisition of English and; under-developed social and behavioural skills. These factors present challenges in narrowing the gap between disadvantaged learners and others both in terms of progress levels and raw attainment levels at Key Stage 1. There is strong evidence to show that, despite this, gaps are narrowed across this key stage though there remain challenges to further improve overall attainment levels.

Despite these challenges the school remains solutions focused. An example is its decision to revise the Year 1 offer across a suite of rooms to facilitate the continuation of an early learning environment and approach to raise progress and attainment levels. Data suggests that this is having the desired impact.

Assessment is holistic, sustaining the whole-child approach created by the 'Every Child Matters' framework and covering learning and attainment, health and social care needs, personal and social development and children's ability to participate in the life of the school. ECM outcomes are assessed for every child termly. There is effective engagement of both children and their families in assessment and learning and this was evidenced by my discussions with pupils throughout the day.

There are strong systems and processes in place to ensure assessment informs teaching strategies. Teachers and support staff are very clear about the needs of the whole class, groups within the class and individual pupil goals both in terms of learning and attainment and the wider ECM framework. All staff have comprehensive data and information to inform their planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of learning/progress. There is robust tracking of progress at all levels across the school. There is strong evidence of review and reflection in response to this tracking and evaluation. The use of the Creative Curriculum has clearly made an impact in terms of both learner engagement and also in terms of outcomes secured. WOW days have certainly made an impact on children as was

witnessed during my visit when year 4 pupils were taking part in a World War Two event recreating the experiences of evacuee children.

Where children have special or additional educational needs there are effective arrangements in place to assess baselines, set appropriate targets, formulate bespoke intervention strategies and to evaluate impact of strategies and provision. IEPs, PSPs, EAL trackers are well formulated, well communicated, directly linked into learning arrangements and reviewed and updated on a termly basis. The evidence that gaps are being narrowed across Key Stage 1 between those with additional needs and their peers illustrates the effectiveness of this work. Children in Need meetings provide an effective means of bringing staff together to assess, plan and review.

Significant work is undertaken to both the maximise achievement and to celebrate and value this. Pupil progress meetings are designed to stretch progress and attainment levels. The school approach to Gifted and Talented pupils is to recognise talent in all parts of the curriculum and is creatively delivered through the Rising Stars initiative. There is a wealth of evidence of celebrating success. This is evident from displays in both classrooms to information boards around the school including the entrance foyer. There is a range of ways in which success is celebrated through achievement assemblies, achievement stars and certificates, parent newsletters, class stickers, targets cards, marking systems.

Evidence gleaned from conversations with both children and parents/carers illustrated the successful engagement of pupils and parents in their learning. Pupils are not only clear about their learning goals but eager to share with you how they are doing and what successes they have achieved. There is a real pride amongst them at what they have achieved specifically those that have faced particular challenges in attaining their goals. Both children and parents recognise that staff at Shackleton 'go the extra mile' to help them achieve – and they value this.

Strengths:-

- Strong, robust, well-developed assessment strategies to identify individual pupil need that are supported by a strong nurturing environment.
- Speedy implementation of bespoke, personalised interventions to meet need.
- Excellent support to children and families entering the school at reception in which headteacher, senior staff and reception staff invest considerable time.
- Evidence of narrowing the gap in progress levels across Key Stage 1.
- Holistic assessment processes reflecting the 'whole-child' 'whole family' approach adopted by the school and reflecting the 'Every Child Matters' framework.
- Robust assessment processes that inform teaching strategies and identify whole class, group and individual programmes of support.
- Comprehensive data and information to inform planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of learning/progress.

- Effective tracking of progress at all levels that is built into review and reflection.
- Well-developed systems for children with special and additional educational needs such as IEPs, PSPs, EAL trackers.
- Effective arrangements to both maximise and celebrate success – and to make pupils feel valued and to value others.
- Effective engagement of children and parents in learning.

Areas for development:-

- Continue to strengthen partnership working with local early years' providers to engage more families in early learning, improve the effectiveness of provision particularly in relation to early learning goals and to secure a stronger baseline from which the school can secure improved outcomes at Key Stage 1.
- Identify schools that have secured outstanding outcomes with those specific groups of pupils that continue to present a challenge in terms of learning outcomes, for example, white boys so that existing improvement strategies can be enhanced by evidence-based approaches that have been successful in similar socio-economic environments.
- Translation of progress made in narrowing the gap into improved 'raw' outcomes at Key Stage 1.
- The translation of effective practice into Key Stage 2 provision as the school extends it provision into Years 5 and 6.

Element 2 - Learner Attitude, Values & Personal Development

From the moment one enters the school the ethos of inclusion and the value placed on each and every pupil and member of the school community is evident. A 'stained glass' display in the entrance foyer declares that 'Every Child Matters' at Shackleton and the experience of my assessment day witnessed that its vision and mission are truly reflected in reality.

Children are at the heart of everything that happens at Shackleton Lower School and the number of people who gave testimony to everyone going the extra mile to ensure everyone reaches their potential and accesses opportunity was significant.

The pupils that I met were without exception polite, courteous, and able to engage with adults and each other in a positive manner and clearly engaged in their learning and that of others. This positive ethos is underpinned by sound policy frameworks such as the SEN, Attendance, Behaviour, SRE, EAL, PSHCE policies and a wide range of provisions some of which are for all pupils and some that are targeted at those with specific needs. These include: Read, Write, Inc; Numeracy Catch Up; Literacy Catch Up; Maths Catch Up; Maths Makes Sense.

The Pupil Voice is heard loudly in Shackleton Lower School. There is a strong School Council that has representatives from all year groups in the school and is very well chaired. The School Council has proactively identified issues that concern pupils and effectively communicated these to the headteacher and other senior staff. It has been successful in lobbying for additional clubs for pupils including a cricket club and a taekwondo club. It is also actively involved in delivering assemblies to the rest of the school and has begun to look at e-safety as it has been raised as a concern by many children in the school. As stated under Element 1 pupils are also effectively engaged in their own learning.

Face-to-face engagement with pupils and observation of pupils on walkabouts evidenced a community of children that both value the culture and ethos of inclusion in the school and themselves value and respect their peers regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion or disability. Behaviour of pupils during my visit was excellent and they were an absolute joy to be with.

The holistic approach taken by the school in supporting pupils means that curricular and extra-curricular provision addresses the wide range of pupil needs beyond direct learning and attainment needs. There is a strong focus on children's social, emotional and health needs and a wide range of mainstream, targeted and specialist interventions to support these areas of child development. This begins with the induction arrangements mentioned under Element 1 for children entering the school at 4+. It continues across the school supported by a range of strategies and provisions including: PSHCE lessons, SEAL, considered groupings within classrooms, WOW days and other whole school activities such as mini-Olympics, sports days and the like. Specialist activities are delivered for those pupils that require additional support in these areas as mentioned above. In addition there is a wide range of clubs and other extra-curricular opportunities to supplement this core curriculum offer which include: Polish club, Bengali classes run by the community,

Attendance has been a key challenge for the school but a range of strategies and initiatives have secured improvements in 2012. The school is investing its own resources in the appointment of a Family Worker to complement the work of current staff in working with

parents and carers that face challenges in securing regular attendance and supporting their children's learning and development.

The school has also put in place a range of creative and innovative strategies to improve behaviour and social development amongst pupils. These are clearly working if the behaviour and communication of children during my assessment day are anything to go by. A wide range of approaches is used to support this including: the specialist work and interventions of the learning mentor, teaching assistants and one-to-one staff; opportunities for children to have space away from their classes where appropriate; self-esteem and social skills groups; buddy systems; PSHCE and SEAL lessons and Circle Time. These provisions are planned and targeted through IEPs, PSPS, Health Care Plans and other formal planning mechanisms.

The culture of respect that permeates the school at all levels whether this be staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers supports the creation of an environment that secures positive attitudes to learning, firmly held values that ensure respect, positive relationships and a thriving community spirit and positive outcomes across the child development continuum.

Strengths:-

- A strong vision and commitment to inclusion that translates into effective practice and improved outcomes for children and families.
- A school community that 'goes the extra mile' to ensure all aspects of each child's needs are understood, acted upon and supported – children at the heart of all that is done.
- Polite, courteous pupils who enjoy their learning and respect one another, the staff and their community.
- Effective arrangements to ensure that the Pupil Voice is heard and acted upon.
- A holistic approach to supporting pupils in both curricular and extra-curricular settings with a wide range of effective strategies and interventions in mainstream, targeted and specialist settings that supports improved outcomes for all.
- Focused and effective work that has secured positive outcomes in terms of attendance and behaviour.
- A culture of respect that permeates the whole school and creates a positive, thriving learning environment.

Areas for development:-

- Ensure that the appointment of the Family Worker secures further improvement in attendance and engagement of those children and families who continue to face challenges.

Element 3 - Leadership & Management

The Headteacher has a strong commitment to inclusion, has a real belief in the importance of a holistic approach to securing improved outcomes for children and leads and manages the institution in a way that provides clear direction supported by aspiration and ambition for children and the school as a whole. The SEN Co-ordinator similarly exerts a calm but determined drive to secure the very best for all children and families, to ensure individual needs are understood by all and that creative, innovative but most importantly effective provision is put in place to meet these needs supported by a robust assessment framework.

The strong leadership of inclusion is delivered in a context of collective engagement – policies and practice are developed with whole-school engagement securing the ownership of all staff in terms of priorities, key objectives and targeted outcomes. Discussions with staff at all levels in the organisation throughout the assessment visit illustrated collective support for inclusion, a coherent understanding of school policies and approaches and a staff and governor team committed, motivated and enthusiastic to maximise success. This collective approach is secured through the effective use of whole staff meetings and development days, targeted meetings of key staff across a range of areas.

A real strength of the management structure is that SEN and inclusion are not deemed separate (for example there is no formal SEN and inclusion team) but rather, SEN and inclusion responsibilities cross-cut all post holders' responsibilities and accountabilities.

The overall policy framework is strong not only in terms of the school having robust inclusion policies such as those for SEN, EAL, Behaviour and Attendance and SEAL but also in ensuring inclusion cross-cuts other 'mainstream' policies such as the Gifted and Talented Policy and Action Plan and the School Development Plan.

Senior leaders are actively engaged in monitoring and evaluation of progress and impact through both meetings to discuss pupil attainment and achievement and lesson observations. There is evidence that where improvement is required it is identified and appropriate guidance and support provided through, for example, coaching and mentoring.

There is a strong commitment to continuous learning, reflection and development to ensure that existing strategies are sustaining impact and that new ideas and approaches are incorporated into the school's offer where there is evidence that they will further improve outcomes. Staff are supported to deliver quality teaching and learning and additional support through a strong continuing professional development approach which is covered in more detail under Element 4. The school also provides placements for teacher training students from the local university and engages them in activities to develop their understanding and delivery of inclusion as evidenced in the assessment visit.

The Governing Body is similarly focused and committed to inclusion. The Governing Body fulfils its statutory duties in terms of having a governor leading on SEN but extends this to greater collective ownership by including inclusion as a cross-cutting theme in link governor roles. Governors receive appropriate information, documentation and performance information to enable them to scrutinise performance on inclusion and to provide critical friend challenge where appropriate. Key staff such as the SEN Co-ordinator make regular presentations to Governors to enable them to be kept abreast of issues relevant to their roles.

Governors are also highly visible in the school making regular visits such as link governors meeting with subject leaders prior to reports to the Governing Body.

Strengths:-

- Strong leadership and commitment to inclusion from the headteacher, senior leadership team, SEN Co-ordinator and the Governing Body.
- Effective engagement of all elements of the school community in the development and implementation of key policies and action plans that secures ownership and commitment to positive impact.
- Responsibility for inclusion cross-cutting all key roles in the school thus ensuring whole-school engagement in the agenda.
- Strong policy frameworks that support the school's vision.
- Effective management systems to monitor and evaluate inclusive practice and outcomes.
- Empowerment and enablement of staff, pupils and parents to deliver against high aspirations and ambitions.
- Effective delegation and sharing of responsibility to deliver improvement.
- A governing body that fulfils its statutory responsibilities, corporately engages in the inclusion agenda and is enabled to scrutinise and challenge performance.

Areas for development:-

- There are no significant areas for development in this element.

Element 4 - Staffing System & Organisation

Shackleton Lower School has prioritised investment in roles to support their inclusion agenda and the priorities they have set to secure effective implementation of their policies, aims and aspirations. There is a very effective SEN Co-ordinator and a range of specialist roles such as the Learning Mentor and soon to be appointed Family Support Worker to ensure there is sufficient capacity to undertake key work required to deliver on priorities set and secure improved outcomes for pupils and families.

Aside from these key roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for the delivery of inclusion are incorporated into core 'mainstream' roles, responsibilities and job descriptions thus ensuring that every member of staff, whatever their role, has a responsibility for the delivery of inclusive practice. On the evidence of my assessment visit this works – staff do present as committed, motivated and understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are confident and competent in carrying out their work.

Systems and organisational arrangements enable all staff to undertake their roles effectively. All staff have access to a wide range of data and information on pupils to enable them to plan lessons, teaching and learning and additional interventions from an informed perspective understanding individual pupil assessment outcomes, needs and provision plans together with outcome objectives, targets and goals.

There is very effective communication between staff both through the effective use of ICT, assessment and performance data and a range of staff meetings. These range from individual meetings – for example between the SENCO and teachers to review pupil progress – through meetings of key staff working with pupils through to whole-school staff and staff development events. All staff contribute to curriculum planning discussions and training days including teachers and teaching assistants.

Teaching Assistants are skilled and make a major contribution to provision and support to pupils. All teaching assistants have achieved NVQ2/3. Each class has a teaching assistant which secures consistency and continuity and enables the TA to get to know the pupils well. This provision is supplemented by 1-1 Teaching Assistants where pupils require this. There is a real sense of team working in these class teams and observation of lessons illustrated well-planned, co-ordinated operations with movement between whole-class to group and individual working flowing apparently seamlessly – a sign of a well-oiled machine!

Teaching Assistants contribute to assessment and monitoring arrangements and have been able to access a range of training opportunities both as a group and individually. TAs meet regularly as a group under the leadership of the lead TA who herself attends management meetings.

The organisation of lessons and other educational experiences is designed to maximise inclusive practice and secure differentiated delivery that reflects varied need. Within lessons there is a mix of whole-class and group work with groups differentiated by size and ability as appropriate. 1-1 support in class is also effectively delivered for those that need it whilst maximising inclusion in whole-class activities. This is supplemented by targeted withdrawal sessions in a variety of formats – all of which are focused on key improvement priorities as set out earlier in the report.

There are strong systems in place to monitor the quality and the impact of provision ranging from reflection and review within the class team, across year group and curriculum specific teams and in whole school reviews through staff meetings and the like. Rigorous scrutiny of performance is secured through lesson observations, checks on assessment files, policy reviews and staff meetings.

Strengths:-

- Investment in staff and other resources that is targeted on key improvement priorities and effective inclusive practice and delivery.
- An effective SENCO who leads inclusion, secures the engagement and support of staff across the school, secures effective holistic assessment and targeted provision and ensures children and their families access the support they need.
- Effective specialist roles (e.g. learning mentor and TAs).
- Inclusion is everyone's business – and they are effective in delivering.
- All staff enabled to access pupil information, understand needs, participate in planning and deliver effective targeted interventions.
- A skilled team of teachers and teaching assistants that deliver quality interventions.
- Well planned curriculum and lessons within which a variety of delivery models that balance whole class and differentiated provision in a seamless manner.

Areas for development:-

- There are no significant areas for development in this element.

Element 5 - The Learning Environment

Shackleton Lower School was built in the 1920s but has had more recent additions including a major building project that is currently taking place to extend the school to become a primary school. The interior of the school is well maintained and is clearly respected by pupils.

Displays and information boards both in classrooms and in the common areas of the school are outstanding and are used to communicate key messages, celebrate success and illustrate high quality work produced by pupils. Displays reflect the school's multi-ethnic community and inclusion ethos.

Classrooms are of a good size and are arranged in ways that maximise access for all pupils, provide specialist equipment where this is required by pupils. There is provision of specialist rooms and spaces to facilitate targeted interventions including the Rainbow Room.

There has been investment by the school in the outdoor areas of the school which are very well designed and equipped – this includes outdoor play areas for reception children and play equipment including climbing frames in the playground areas. There are spaces for both larger and smaller groups of children to congregate outdoors. The pond and garden area provides opportunities for pupils to experience nature.

The learning environment creates a strong climate for learning not just through the use of the building but through the ways in which children and adults related to each other. From the moment one enters the school and throughout the 'learning walks' undertaken there was a climate of calm, purpose, mutual respect and enjoyment of learning from all that I encountered.

Strengths:-

- A learning environment that creates a strong climate for learning.
- A well-maintained and attractively presented building that reflects respect for and receives respect from its users – pupils, staff and parents.
- Outstanding displays that communicate key messages, celebrate success, present pupils' work in a positive way and which reflect the multi-ethnic and inclusive culture of the school.
- Classrooms that stimulate pupils and learning and which create a safe, accessible place for children and adults to work.
- Investment in outdoor spaces that provide pupils with stimulating places to play, engage and experience variety.

Areas for development:-

- The extension of the school to become a primary school will present challenges in sustaining the safe, purposeful and positive climate for learning that currently pervades Shackleton Primary School but the school is aware of this and is taking proactive steps to ensure growth does not reduce their ability to secure a strong climate for learning.

Element 6 - Teaching & Learning

There is a clear and robust teaching and learning policy and this includes reference to the importance of and desired approaches to inclusion. A range of strategies is employed to secure access for all and to deliver curriculum experiences that are appropriately differentiated. As stated earlier in this assessment this includes the deployment of a range of delivery models ranging from whole class teaching, through group work, paired work, one-to-one support and a range of targeted interventions outside the classroom for those pupils that need it. These include: Read, Write, Inc; Numeracy Catch Up; Literacy Catch Up; Maths Catch Up; Maths Makes Sense.

Lesson planning incorporates the outcomes of assessment to ensure that whole-class, group and individual needs are recognised and addressed. This includes provision mapping and IEP/PSPs. Lesson objectives and success criteria are used formatively during the progress of lessons and there are plenaries for assessment, pupil self-evaluation and staff reflection and review of effectiveness of strategies employed. External, objective review is secured through lesson observations and observation of specific pupils where they have additional or special educational needs.

Teaching styles are linked to learning styles to ensure visual, auditory and kinaesthetic delivery. The use of Creative Curriculum and values based approaches to education are securing a focus on children's understanding and enjoyment of learning.

There is very good feedback on achievement in a variety of forms which include verbal feedback during lessons, effective marking of work and reward strategies such as 'Star of the Week', achievement stickers, celebration assemblies.

There are positive and constructive relationships and communications between pupils and between staff and pupils that support the creation of a real climate for learning.

A particular strength in the school is the effectiveness of EAL work. This is creative, innovative, responsive to the wide range of languages spoken by children in the school and effectively targeted to balance specific learner needs with access to the mainstream curriculum of the school. The EAL lead is committed, dynamic and exudes a real enthusiasm and zeal in ensuring all pupils maximise their acquisition of English, secure access to the curriculum and achieve success. The school has been proactive in securing the services of speakers of their most significant EAL groups to facilitate improved, fast-track English language development. An example witnessed during the assessment was the support session delivered for Polish pupils.

Similarly, the school has developed a wealth of targeted intervention strategies to support learners with additional or special educational needs all of which have been referred to elsewhere in this assessment.

Shackleton Lower School invests significant time and effort in supporting transition both into the school at reception (outlined in Element 2 above) and when pupils move on to Middle School at the end of Year 4. Clearly the latter will cease as the school becomes a primary school but the school is already considering and planning for the change to transition arrangements to secondary schools which will begin in 2015.

Strengths:-

- Clear and robust Teaching and Learning policy that incorporates inclusive frameworks for delivery.
- A range of strategies employed to secure access for all and to deliver curriculum experiences that are appropriately differentiated.
- A wide range of delivery models both within and outside classrooms to secure targeted interventions for those that need it.
- Effective lesson planning that is informed by assessment and individual pupils' needs/ learning objectives and targets.
- A strong culture of review and reflection that is supported by a range of evaluative approaches.
- Teaching styles linked to learning styles.
- Constructive feedback to pupils and explicit celebration of achievement and success.
- Innovative, creative and dynamic approaches to EAL provision.
- Highly effective targeted intervention strategies for children with additional and special educational needs.
- Effective support for transition both on entry to and on leaving the school.

Areas for development:-

- Translation of existing strengths to teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 as the school extends to primary school status.
- Creation of new transition arrangements for the transfer of pupils to secondary education.

Element 7 - Resources & ICT

As stated earlier in this assessment Shackleton Lower School has maximised its investment in inclusive provision within the resources it has available and there is clear evidence that this investment links to their stated development and improvement priorities. An example is the decision to appoint a Family Support Worker to further develop the school's capacity to engage with parents, to continue to improve attendance and to enable families to access support they may require outside the school setting. Pupil Premium resources are being used to purchase resources that are targeted at the needs of under-achieving groups.

The ICT lead has taken a comprehensive approach to the development of ICT and other resource acquisition with a major focus on supporting inclusion and access for those with additional or special educational needs. Careful consideration has been given to the training needs of staff to ensure that they are confident in using the hardware and software and that the impact of these resources is maximised. Impact is monitored – for example the on-line monitoring of pupil access to Reading Eggs by the ICT leader. Review of the effectiveness of ICT has included both staff and pupils.

ICT is well resourced both in terms of 'mainstream' access to ICT and in relation to specialist resources for children with additional and special educational needs. All classrooms are equipped with interactive white boards which are well used. There is an ICT suite that facilitates whole class ICT sessions as well as providing a location for targeted work in relation to SEN and EAL. Laptops and iPads are available in classrooms to enable children to access ICT during their lessons and these are appropriately deployed.

There is a range of software available that has been selected to respond to individual pupil needs, support specialist interventions and maximise curriculum access. These include: Clicker 5, 2Simple, an autism App, EAL software including a translator app, netbooks including word shark and number shark. I was able to observe a session where pupils were using Reading Egg to develop their literacy skills and this programme clearly absorbed pupils and they confirmed that it was helping them to improve their literacy skills.

There is, in addition, a range of other resources used to support learning and access including: language master, digital cameras; flip cameras; talking postcards, easy microphones.

It is important to highlight the use of ICT in supporting staff access to pupil information including assessment outcomes, progress and attainment information and needs profiles. This is key to effective communication and understanding of pupil needs, planning, enabling all staff to be clear about the range of interventions that are taking place and the progress that children are making.

The school is to be complemented on its creative approach to current funding challenges. For example it has succeeded in sustaining its Gifted and Talented provision, despite the reductions in grant, through partnerships with local independent schools.

Strengths:-

- Maximised investment in ICT and other resources that is targeted at School Development Plan priorities – 'Investment follows aspirations!'

- Effective use of Pupil Premium to secure bespoke resources to support vulnerable learners.
- Strong ICT strategy and co-ordination that provides a wide range of resources for all staff and pupils and specialist resources for those that need them.
- A wide range of ICT hardware and software that is effectively used and contributes to learning outcomes both generally and specifically in relation to SEN and EAL.
- Effective training and support to staff to use ICT and other resources available securing confident and competent usage of the resources.
- Effective use of ICT to support assessment, planning, communication between staff and the effective monitoring and evaluation of progress.

Areas for development:-

- The need to consider the implications of the expansion of the school to include Years 5 and 6 in terms of the further development of resources and ICT.

Element 8 - Parents & Carers

The holistic approach to learning and pupil needs employed at Shackleton Lower School includes a major focus on 'Family'. There is a clear and explicit intention to engage effectively with parents, secure their participation and support in their children's learning and to support families when they need help – both through direct provision and by sign-posting them to other services that they need. Shackleton Lower School is a strong advocate for its parents, carers and families.

The school is clearly popular with parents. This is illustrated by the fact that the school is regularly over-subscribed at the main point of admission and any places that become available are quickly filled. The school is a positive preference for parents as was communicated in my meeting with parents during the assessment.

Proactive steps are taken by the school to engage and promote the participation of parents and carers. This begins before children attend the school when parents are welcomed to visit the school before admission and a series of home visits occurs for those children who may have additional or special educational needs. Throughout their children's stay in the school parents have a range of opportunities to visit and engage which includes: parent consultative evenings; parent forums; assemblies; school productions; homework clubs and; informal discussions with class teachers. In addition there is a range of other mediums of communication including: parent questionnaires; information leaflets; annual reports and; newsletters.

Parents testified that staff in the school operate an 'open door' policy – including the headteacher - and they feel confident to contact and communicate with those they wish to meet with. Parents also recognise that their voice is heard. One parent used the example of the school erecting a gate to prevent her child leaving the premises. Comparing their experiences at Shackleton to that in other schools one said that 'We were spoilt parents'.

In addition those whose children have additional or special educational needs are actively encouraged to engage in assessments, reviews and provision planning. This extends to parents of children that are identified as gifted and talented.

There is a good staff presence in the playground at the beginning and end of days to enable informal contact between parents/carers and staff.

A common statement by the parents that I met during the day was that 'Staff here go the extra mile to support us and our children'. Parents that have faced particularly challenging circumstances in their own and their children's lives provided testimony of the significant lengths that Shackleton staff will go to ensure that they get the support they need. One parent described the school as a 'life saver'. Parents that I met also validated the fact that there are effective communications between the school and parents both in general terms and in relation to specific issues or concerns. Parents are extensively involved in assessments and discussions about their children's needs and proactive steps are taken to break down barriers to communication for example with those parents for whom English is not their first language. Creative approaches are taken to securing translation of information.

The school adopts a strong advocacy role in its work with parents specifically in supporting them to access other services that they may need for themselves or for their children. This includes effective engagement in formal safeguarding and child protection processes administered by social care services and health services.

Strengths:-

- A family-focused approach that places significant importance on the participation and engagement of parents and carers in the life of the school and their children's learning.
- Popularity with parents with the school with significant demand for places from the local communities.
- Proactive and effective strategies to engage parents both before and during their children's time in the school with a wide range of strategies deployed to achieve this.
- An 'open door' policy that makes parents and carers welcome and enables them to seek and secure support when they need it.
- Very effective communication strategies both through face-to-face engagement, written communication and participation in assessments, planning and delivery of intervention strategies for those with additional and special educational needs.
- A culture of 'going the extra mile' to ensure parents and carers access support including a strong focus on advocacy to sign-post and secure access to services families need beyond those provided by the school.

Areas for development:-

- There are no significant areas for development in this Element.

Element 9 - Governors, External Partners & Local Authority

The Governing Body is effective, meeting its statutory requirements and is strongly committed to ensuring that children receive the best possible start in their lives. They also illustrate a strong commitment to the community focus of the school.

Discussions with Governors evidenced that the governing body receives, through both the Headteacher's report and other reports, comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data to monitor and scrutinise performance. In particular there is very effective communication of work related to inclusion through reports from the SENCO and other key staff.

There is a designated Governor for SEN and for Safeguarding. All Governors are linked to a subject area and meet regularly with their links. These meetings are supported by an effective meeting framework that ensures that these visits focus on: standards; progress; curriculum opportunities; key priorities for development; monitoring and evaluation; governor involvement and; next steps. This information is fed back to the full governing body for information and discussion.

A number of governors carry out work within the school to provide additional support.

The Governors are committed to their own development and have attended a range of training and development opportunities.

There is a strong relationship with the local authority. The services provided by the LA are generally well regarded and there is targeted use of key services including: education psychology; education welfare; interpreting service; autistic support service; local authority behaviour support. The relationship with the local authority is mature and robust and the school feels able to challenge and secure appropriate responses when the quality of services does not meet expectations. There is extensive engagement in early help processes such as CAF and teams around the child/family.

There are similarly positive working partnerships with other agencies particularly those providing services for children with special/additional educational needs. There are strong links with the school nursing service, speech and language therapy service and; paediatric consultants. The Headteacher reported good relationships with the local social care team in relation to referrals of child protection concerns and other safeguarding matters.

An example of practice observed during my visit was work with HM Prison, Bedford to support children of a mother serving a custodial sentence.

The school has been proactive in developing its own services where it has developed concerns that reductions in statutory service provisions from the local authority and others are impacting negatively on outcomes for children. However, the school needs to take care not to overstretch its own resources where others should be providing support. This will require determined efforts to challenge statutory services to deliver that which they have a statutory responsibility to deliver.

Strengths:-

- An effective governing body that is proactive in its support for attainment, achievement and inclusion and ensures it has evidence of impact in these areas.
- A strong governor presence in the life of the school including rigorous visits and focus on key issues such as SEN, safeguarding and community issues.
- A governing body that is committed to and proactive about its own training and development.
- Positive partnership with services delivered by the local authority, health and other agencies that secures appropriate support for pupils and contributes to improved outcomes for children and their families.
- Effective delivery of statutory responsibilities in relation to special educational needs, safeguarding/child protection and behaviour support.
- Proactive advocacy for both pupils and parents in accessing the support they require.

Areas for development:-

- The school needs avoid 'filling gaps' in service provision with its own resources where statutory services should be providing such services.

Element 10 - The Community

The school proactively uses local community resources to enrich its own curriculum particularly within its Creative Curriculum offer. Pupils are taken into the community in a range of ways including faith tours, visits to the recycling centre, local village/community walks and visits, Ark Farm, Zoo lab, Maths Puzzle, Knebworth House, Living Eggs, e-Learning Centre, Healthy School Hazard Alley.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs many of which draw on resources from the local community (including being delivered by members of the local community) e.g. sports clubs and Polish club. In addition there are themed weeks and days including international week and Black History month.

Local faith groups are actively involved in the school and make contributions to the life of the school – the Salvation Army have made contributions to RE and to the harvest festivals.

The school has taken proactive steps to secure wide community use of the building and resources in the school but has encountered some challenges as a result of a recent health and safety assessment. They are now considering ways of overcoming this impediment to their aspirations.

There are very good links to the University of Bedfordshire and Bedford College both in terms of student placements and also CPD within the school.

There are strong links with local schools through school cluster inclusion meetings, transition arrangements with early years' providers, middle and secondary schools. The school has accessed training from a local special school to support its development of inclusion and PSG has been run for other schools through Shackleton Lower School. The school actively welcomes other schools to view provision – I witnessed one such visit focused on EAL practice. The school is engaged in a range of cross-authority initiatives in relation to SEN, inclusion, EAL and PHSE.

Strengths:-

- Proactive use of local community resources and people to enrich the curriculum particularly within the Creative Curriculum offer.
- A range of visits and experiences for pupils off site into the local community.
- Engagement of the local community in clubs, special events and enrichment activities.
- Positive engagement with local faith groups and community groups.
- Strong links with other local schools, higher education and cross-authority initiatives.
- Encouragement to other schools to visit and observe good practice delivered by the school.

Areas for development:-

- Continue to explore ways of enabling the community to visit and use the school building and resources.
- Shout more loudly about the good practice that is taking place at Shackleton to encourage others to come and view effective practice.

Summary

On entering Shackleton Lower School I encountered the magnificent ‘stained glass’ mural declaring that every child matters at Shackleton. The experience of my assessment visit was that the world beyond the entrance foyer was a living example of every child matters in practice. It was a joy and a privilege to witness the ‘Shackleton experience’. The culture and ethos of inclusion permeates all aspects of school life and there is real aspiration and ambition for all pupils and an assertive drive to secure the best for them both in their learning and their wider developmental needs.

Your pupils are articulate, polite and able to talk confidently about their learning. They feel safe and understand where to go for help and support when they need it. Their voice is heard through a strong School Council. Pupils are making good progress and you are achieving improvement in both progress and attainment including that for the most disadvantaged children and families.

The school is clearly popular with parents who regard the school as responsive to their needs and feel that it ‘goes the extra mile’ to support both them and their children. There is a strong focus on parent engagement and empowerment both in terms of their children’s education and their own development and well-being. One parent described the school as ‘a life saver’ and many spoke eloquently of the support that had been given to them too.

Staff are motivated, enthusiastic, committed, innovative and creative. They are very child-centred in their approach and a ‘solutions-focused’ approach is evident around the school. They know their pupils and there is a pervading culture of respect and trust in relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. The school has rigorous systems in place to assess pupils, identify and understand any additional needs and to put in place a range of differentiated teaching, learning and support strategies to ensure all pupils achieve their potential. There is a diversity of curriculum approaches to suit different needs, abilities and aptitudes.

Success is clearly based on the strong leadership and management exercised by you and your senior team. You put your vision into practice and have created a positive, dynamic and reflective learning environment that values all. There is a strong Governing Body that promotes inclusion, scrutinises and challenges performance and is well informed about the school both through the information it receives and its active engagement in the life of the school. The commitment, motivation and enthusiasm of staff in the school together with their real focus on the children and providing the very best quality teaching and learning for pupils was evident in all my meetings with them.

The school has clearly invested significant energy in devising approaches to teaching and learning that reflect the identified needs of individual pupils and which are focused on maximising pupil progress and learning outcomes. There are effective systems in place to plan, deliver and evaluate provision and to secure quality experiences for pupils. There has also been a strong focus on engaging and developing staff to maximise their effectiveness and impact on learning outcomes for children. There is a very good balance between learning and support frameworks that secures a holistic approach to pupil needs. I was particularly impressed by provision for EAL, Gifted and Talented and ICT. Alongside the successes in pupil progress and attainment there have been improvements in attendance, avoidance of



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permanent exclusions and the engagement of pupils in a wide range of activities that promote their social and emotional well-being. There are rigorous assessment and tracking systems in place and good analysis of data. Where obstacles to learning are identified proactive action is taken to remove these and there is a strong focus on advocacy – both for children and their families – to access services outside the school where they need it.

The school has established strong and effective working partnerships with a range of external agencies ranging from the local authority, other children's service providers, other local schools and community organisations.

Assessor: Paul Burnett

Date: 28th April 2013