



24th February 2020

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Centre of Excellence Review Date: 17th February 2020

Summary

Kentmere Academy and Nursery is an extremely successful primary school and nursery rated outstanding by OFSTED. The school is part of the growing Wardle Trust, currently made up of three primary and 2 secondary schools. At the time of review, there was 328 pupils on roll with 32% of pupils identified as having additional needs. Pupils from minority ethnic groups continue to make up a significant proportion of the population and a high proportion of pupils speak English as a second language.

The school achieved its IQM initial assessment in 2019 and during that assessment the school demonstrated outstanding inclusive practice and a commitment to inclusion at every level.

This is the first Centre of Excellence review and my second visit to the school. Since the school's initial IQM assessment, there have been some internal management changes. The Headteacher has also just become Deputy CEO of the Wardle Trust, the previous Deputy Head is now the Head of school and a new Deputy Headteacher and three new assistant Heads have been appointed, all from within school. The SENDCO is now one of three Assistant Heads. All the newly promoted members of staff know the school, its pupils and families well, thus ensuring that outstanding inclusive provision has continued.

Throughout the day, it was clear that school has continued to prioritise inclusion and developed its high-quality provision. Staff continue to embody an extremely inclusive approach to learning with everyone working tirelessly to ensure the best outcomes for all pupils. Staff know their pupils well, they have a clear understanding of their individual strengths and needs and have extremely high expectations for all pupils, whatever their starting points. Kentmere Academy and Nursery has a clear inclusive vision which is both implicit and explicit in everything they do. Staff work together with direction and clarity to ensure pupils receive an engaging and rounded education that supports academic achievement but also the wider holistic needs of every pupil.

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Kentmere Academy and Nursery is a welcoming and inclusive learning environment, which continues to adapt and develop its practices for the benefit of all pupils, making use of every opportunity to ensure that pupils needs are effectively met and that every child is able to learn and develop at a pace that is right for them. School welcomes and celebrates the diverse backgrounds and cultures of pupils within the school and works tirelessly to ensure the all pupils feel valued and included.

The development of the Cornerstones Curriculum has provided a creative, inspiring and challenging learning experience generating an industrious atmosphere across the school.

Friday curriculum days have provided additional time for foundation subjects, enabling staff to stimulate interest and encourage deep learning and problem solving. Half-termly themed days are also used to expand pupils' horizons and increase their awareness of the wider world. School has recently held a Geography day, including a wide range of map work activities and a Geography trip which has helped to deepen and broaden pupil's understanding. Year five and six have worked on a World War II topic, which included a visit to Eden Camp and will include a VE day party. Philosophy Friday continues to work well in school to encourage critical thinking and reasoning skills; a recent session focused on plastic pollution, increasing pupils' awareness of complex environmental problems.

Reading has been targeted as an area of development throughout the school. Pupils have whole class guided reading lessons each week using a shared text. Staff, known within school as the Reading Army,' move around to deliver targeted, small group work. Staffing ratios are high, enabling pupils to work in small groups with focused adult input.

Kentmere Academy and Nursery has a dedicated commitment to including all pupils in class as much as possible. During reading sessions, pupils use the same texts working in mixed ability groups and peer pairs in Key Stage2. This ensures that all pupils are accessing advanced analysis of text. Working in mixed ability groups has given all pupils access to a range of high-quality texts, encouraging them to talk together, thus increasing comprehension skills and the development of a wider vocabulary. In KS1, children read books linked to their book band. Children with severe and complex needs, working well below their peers, also have personalised guided reading texts pitched at their level.

Staff continue to be aware of individual needs and the need to ensure that all pupils are included at an appropriate level. Teaching assistant support and scaffolding is in place to support key pupils and ensure that everyone is able to access the task and achieve their targets.

Pupils read regularly, though the frequency of reading practice is dependent on need. Targeted feedback is given using reading diaries which are shared with home. School is always looking to improve its practice and has worked with a school in the Manchester Teaching School's Alliance to carry out a reading review. As a result of sharing ideas and practice, modifications were made to the school's Reading Record to improve the quality of feedback.

Reading Records are regularly sampled and monitored by the SLT and the Headteacher. One of the evident strengths of Kentmere Academy and Nursery school's inclusion ethos, is its clear commitment to be flexible in the support it provides for pupils. Arrangements for all pupils are regularly reviewed and modified to suit need and there is a great deal of conversation and collaboration between staff to ensure that appropriate interventions and targets are in place.

Comprehensive data reviews take place across the school; the SENDCO carefully monitors the progress of all SEND pupils. The termly SEND data reports show many cases of outstanding progress from pupils with SEND, broadly in line with and in some cases above, their non-SEND peers. Class provision maps, termly SEND clinics, intervention lists, support timetables and IEP reviews provide the data used in the rigorous monitoring and planning of SEN interventions, ensuring that all interventions are timely, appropriate and effective.

Pupils with high level and complex SEN have a Learning Journey book– an extremely attractive document which highlights and celebrates pupils' progress. Targets are clearly set out and broken down into small steps– all staff working with the child annotate the work, giving both praise and identifying next steps.

The SENDCO carefully monitors the needs of cohorts across the school- emerging needs are quickly identified and bespoke packages are put in place to address these. Currently Speech, Language and Communication are a high priority and the school has worked with the Speech and Language Therapist to develop a number of programmes which are delivered to targeted pupils.

Mental wellbeing is an increasing focus within the school. All staff have had Level 1 mental health first aid training and six staff have undertaken further in-depth training. To further enhance the support, the school could offer pupils counselling. Training has been provided through the Mentally Healthy Schools programme for Greater Manchester. The school link with "Place2Be, a pupils' mental health charity, who provide one-to-one and group counselling. #THRIVE is used to signpost families to Early Help Mental Health Services. School is also linking with the DFE around provision of mental health practitioners in every school.

A calm and tranquil Rainbow Room has been developed. This is an extremely well-equipped sensory room used across the school as a calming space and for light-touch therapies.

As with all interventions in the school, monitoring and effective review is key to ensuring success. The school use a five-point scale within the classrooms for pupils to monitor their emotions and have regular links with home to discuss progress.

Each classroom has a Sunshine and Worry Monster Box which pupils can post notes, either named or anonymous, about any of their worries or fears. These notes are regularly checked by staff and the School Council. Support is provided either on a one to one basis or within a group setting.

During the day, I was privileged to spend time observing a wide range of interventions– all interventions were well planned, resourced and skilfully delivered by experienced

staff. The SENDCO has developed structured intervention review sheets, which are completed by staff. These are then analysed with the SENDCO on a regular basis. Ongoing adjustments are made to both groupings and content to ensure that each child receives support appropriate to their needs.

Throughout the day I met with a wide range of pupils who talked to me about the intervention groups they attended. All of the pupils enjoyed attending their sessions and felt they had made lots of progress within these groups. Pupils commented, "I have got better at my times tables", "I like doing my reading it helps me to read harder books." Pupils had also clearly benefitted from counselling sessions. One pupil commented, "It makes you understand your emotions." Another said, "It helps you to be calm."

A common thread during all the meetings was the pupils' feeling that help was always available and that they felt fully supported at Kentmere Academy and Nursery- whatever their need. Pupils made it clear that staff understood and valued them as individuals and that everyone's needs were fully supported.

Attendance at clubs has been incentivised via Golden Tickets, which gives access to and benefits from the tuckshop. Attendance at clubs and booster sessions is excellent and pupils spoke with genuine enthusiasm about their clubs and interventions.

The pupils I met were a credit to themselves and the school. They were keen to talk about their school and were justifiably proud to be part of Kentmere Academy and Nursery. At all times, pupils were courteous and polite in their interactions with both adults and peers.

Language acquisition has been highlighted as a significant area of need, especially in Early Years. The school have therefore targeted provision to support Speech and Language development.

Speech and Language support is now a real strength of the school- the school has liaised with outside professionals, in particular the Speech and Language Therapy Service, to develop a range of well-planned interventions and enhance staff skills.

Language acquisition and development is also a key development area within classrooms. Vocabulary lessons take place each week and during the sessions I witnessed pupils being supported and guided to extend their vocabulary, through a wide range of strategies.

School has developed Kentmere Academy and Nursery Top Tips for Talking and this is displayed across all classrooms.

Another example of the highly responsive approach to need is the Funky Fingers group. Issues with motor skills were identified as an increasing need and coordination groups were set up. The school liaised with the EP around appropriate strategies and equipment to ensure needs were fully met. During the day, I observed the Funky Fingers group. Pupils were fully engrossed using threading equipment paperclips and tracing equipment to develop their fine motor skills. One child proudly showed me how neat his work was.

An afternoon Maths session for Year five and six are very reactive and responsive to the mornings lesson. Fluid groups are taken in the afternoon, which helps to reinforce the mornings teaching and learning and were necessary to prepare for the following day.

There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and clubs offered across the school. During the day pupils were observed attending ukulele practice and a group of pupils were enthusiastically taking part in a drumming lesson. The school is very aware that not all pupils are confident and keen to take part in clubs. They have taken proactive steps to engage all pupils and ensure no child is left out. Energy Club is an invitation only club and especially targets vulnerable pupils. This provides an opportunity for increased involvement and peer interaction; the long-term intention is to provide a doorway to other clubs.

Activity Tracker has been used to monitor and encourage attendance at the clubs. It is also used to target specific pupils who are either not attending clubs or would benefit from a particular club.

Additional SEN sports activities through Rochdale School Games Partnership have been offered to specific pupils. Pupils have attended an inclusive gym session in Rochdale and taken part in Tri-Golf sessions using specially adapted equipment.

The school is very aware of the needs of parents, understanding that not all parents feel comfortable attending or are able to access meetings in school. The SENDCO highlighted a case where a pupil progress review was conducted over the phone, as the parent in question was unable to come into school. This was one of many adaptations made to ensure parents were fully included in their child's education.

Recently, the school has delivered parental pre-SATS workshops to Year six parents who are also provided with information and support around SATS during parents' evenings. This ensures that at all times parents are full partners in their child's education.

Parents are kept fully informed of their pupils' needs and progress towards their targets. IEPs are discussed at parents evening and if necessary, further meetings are called to discuss progress in greater depth.

The school is a bright, stimulating learning environment with exceptional displays both in classrooms and communal spaces. All areas are well resourced and have been developed to stimulate and engage pupils. All classrooms have a book corner to encourage pupils to choose and enjoy books. Throughout the day I saw creative and imaginative book corners used to inspire and entice the pupils to read. All areas are well planned and adapted, the pupils' needs being the prime consideration at all times. A wide range of adaptive and supportive aids are readily available to pupils with additional needs to ensure that barriers to learning are minimised. Scotopic sensitivity materials, including coloured papers and overlays, are readily accessible and all classrooms have a sensory snack box, including materials such as sensory sticks and stress balls.

No area is left unoccupied and spaces have been developed and utilised in a creative way to enable a wide range of interventions to take place and ensure opportunities for learning are maximised.

Staff at Kentmere Academy and Nursery share core values and a desire to work cohesively. They are outward looking and involved in a wide range of networking opportunities to evaluate their own and learn from others good practice. The SENDCO is currently an active member of both Rochdale and Manchester SEND cluster groups. Schools within the Wardle Trust also work collaboratively to review, develop and implement good practice. The school intends to do a 'deep dive' into SEND to help share expertise and highlight aspects of outstanding practice. This "deep dive" will be completed with local schools as part of the Pennine Collaborative group.

Transition processes at Kentmere Academy and Nursery are excellent– clear, detailed information is shared with secondary schools. All pupils complete a transition book, which is taken to their high school. Additional information is shared for especially vulnerable pupils to ensure that receiving high schools are aware of individual pupils' needs and of successful support strategies.

The SENDCO has recently attended the 'Warehouse Project', a multi-school meeting where schools share transition information to support pupils transferring to high school.

Kentmere Academy and Nursery provides an outstanding, inclusive learning environment where inclusion is a natural part of school life. Despite this high-quality inclusive provision, the school is constantly looking for ways to develop and evolve to ensure that every child gets the best experience possible and consequently, the inclusion agenda moves from strength to strength.

Everyone at the school works tirelessly together with an outstanding level of commitment to meeting pupil' needs. Throughout the school there is a wealth of sensitive, high quality support and inclusion is evident in every aspect of the school. Throughout the school each child is valued as an individual and a dedicated team of staff provide a rich inclusive learning environment that supports not only outstanding academic achievement but also provides truly effective support to ensure each child is able to reach its full potential.

Having discussed progress made since last year's review, completed a thorough review of the school's Action Plan and having identified and agreed the targets for 2020, I am of the opinion that Kentmere Academy and Nursery continues to be a school with inclusion at the forefront of all it does. I recommend that the school continues to hold Centre of Excellence status, to be reviewed in one years' time.

The next review will look at how the school continues to develop its inclusive curriculum and how it works collaboratively both within IQM cluster groups and with other local school groups to share and develop good practice.

Assessor: Julie Hughes

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

J. McCann

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



Sources of Data

Prior to the day, key information including the action plan and review were analysed and evaluated. The school's evaluation of progress continues to be accurate and insightful and it has a well-considered action plan for the coming year.

During the day, discussions were held with the Inclusion manager, a range of staff, the SEND team and groups of pupils.

Learning walks, observations of a wide range of interventions and documentary scrutiny further informed the assessment, providing a comprehensive picture of the school's continued commitment to inclusion and evidence of outstanding inclusive practice.



Progress Towards Targets

The school has conscientiously worked towards the targets identified in the action plan. It provided a comprehensive summary of actions taken to meet the targets set and evaluated the impact of these actions.

Centre of Excellence Action Plan

The school has worked hard to increase parental participation at SEND parent coffee mornings. The number of parents attending the SEND coffee morning has steadily increased throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. However, some parents remain hard to reach. The school is always looking for strategies initiatives to further include parents, including invitations to regular parent meetings and through letters home. Parental feedback forms after coffee mornings have been used to gather parental voice and are, without exception, very positive with parents rating workshops as 5 out of 5. Parents were also unanimous in their view that meetings were very helpful, provided useful information and that pupils with additional needs received excellent support.

The school has linked with the Local Authority, who have visited to provide advice on increasing parental involvement.

In order to ensure that pupils receive the most effective support, Kentmere Academy and Nursery has provided comprehensive and targeted training packages to staff with a particular emphasis on developing the skills of SEND teaching assistants. Training courses have been offered through the local CPD provider (Real Trust). Courses have included: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Lego Therapy, Nurture Group training and Language Acquisition training. Following CPD, staff share their knowledge and individualised support strategies with the other teaching assistants during SEND meetings. The school has an evident commitment to CPD and the staff are dedicated to improving and deepening their knowledge and practice in the best interest of pupils. The inclusion co-ordinator regularly delivers whole school SEND training. All in-house training is supported by PowerPoints/handouts to provide a reference bank of information and strategies for staff.

The school prioritises the provision of training for staff. The appraisal system is used to discuss and highlight training needs. The CPD manager has an overview of all staff training. All courses are evaluated and particularly effective courses can be highlighted to other key staff.

In order to ensure training is effective and targeted to need, the Inclusion Manager undertakes a breakdown of current SEND needs across the school and identifies any skills deficits within the team.

Training is highly responsive to need. Recently, school training was undertaken in supporting pupils with cochlear implants. This was delivered by the Rochdale additional needs team and was in direct response to individual pupil needs. Pupils have also been encouraged to deliver assemblies across the whole school to help other pupils understand individual needs.



Kentmere Academy and Nursery has developed well planned and cohesively implemented needs-led SEND interventions, which cater for a wide range of individual needs. Interventions are timely and carefully tailored to meet specific needs.

I witnessed many high-quality intervention groups during the assessment day. These included Speech and Language Therapy, Lego Therapy, Sensory Room provision, Funky Fingers and small group Maths intervention.

There are many other interventions in place– including vocabulary training, Toe by Toe (daily dyslexia intervention) Narrative Therapy and Nurture Groups, gross motor skills activities, memory training and Occupational Therapy. The I Can Talk boost program is used in Early Years to develop language skills for targeted pupils.

This list is far from exhaustive but highlights the comprehensive range and diversity of support on offer at the school.

COE Action Plan for 2020

Following review and discussion, a new action plan has been agreed for the next twelve months.

Developments for the Future:-

Some areas of the previous action plan are on-going and will continue over the next 12 months.

- To increase further the number of parents who attend SEND coffee mornings and parental workshops. Continue to look at ways to further engage SEND parents in all opportunities.
- Look at opportunities to develop a support group for parents of pupils with SEND.
- Develop the use of pupil voice when making decisions about interventions.
- Further develop lesson study to include teaching assistants.
- To ensure that pupils with SEN are offered a rich curriculum which allows them to acquire the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed in later life.
- Continue to focus of reading developments– ensuring that pupils with SEND have appropriate additional support, including adjusted texts.
- To look at the reading policy, with the English lead, to ensure that an emphasis is placed on outcomes for pupils with SEND and reading.
- SENDCO to become familiar with the new 2020 SEND Code of Practice and the implications for pupils with SEND under the new Ofsted framework and to disseminate information to all staff and ensure appropriate actions are in place.



The school may also consider:

- Combining SEND coffee morning with a charity event.
- Using IQM cluster groups to share good practice and showcase the inclusive practice at Kentmere Academy and Nursery.

Assessor: Julie Hughes

Review Date: 17th February 2020