



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: Phoenix Primary School

School Address: Glencoe Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 5QD

Head/Principal: Pete Sears

IQM Lead: Jolanta Studniarz-Thring

Assessment Date (s): 20th September 2022

Assessor: Louise Simpson

Sources of Evidence:

- IQM Self Evaluation Report Document
- School Context
- Performance Tables
- School and Trust website
- School and Trust Policies
- Value Based Education Documentation
- Character Education Documentation
- Learning Walk

Meetings Held with:

- Head Teacher
- Inclusion Manager/SENDCo
- Deputy Head Teacher
- Phase Leaders/Middle Leaders
- Parents/Carers
- Teaching Assistants
- Pastoral Team including the Family Liaison Officer and Student Well-being Practitioner
- Pupils



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Overall Evaluation

The warmth of Phoenix Primary is palpable from the moment you enter the school. It is clear from this visit that the Phoenix Primary has a history of commitment to inclusion with a desire to continuously evaluate and develop this focus. This statement from the Head Teacher sums up the caring ethos of this school:

“Primary school days should be the most magical, fun filled days of a young person’s life. A time to make friends, to sing, dance, laugh, run, jump, play as well as learn. I hope every child that attends our school will leave with these positive happy memories.”

There is however also a constant focus on teaching and learning so that pupils in the school are given the best possible opportunities, expectations are high.

The school sends a clear message to parents and carers and states it will “work hard to ensure that your child enjoys their time at our school and leaves ready to start a new chapter in their lives. While attending our school your child will be encouraged to be independent, to persevere, be honest and caring, whilst feeling safe and valued.” This aspiration was endorsed and evidenced time after time during the visit by a range of different stakeholders. Aspirations are nurtured with and for individuals and with the broad curriculum offer including external and extracurricular experiences.

The strong relationships with pupils and parents were evident during the visit and when the Head Teacher says “[We] place a strong emphasis on building relationships with our children, parents, and their families. At Phoenix there is a dedicated team whose job it is to support children and their families so that all children can attend school and receive an education” and evidence supports that this is consistently put into action.

The previous school on the site was closed in 2012 and reopened as Phoenix Junior School. The current Head Teacher joined in 2014 and made immediate positive changes. He reflects that the children “captivated” him as soon as he arrived saying how they “just want to learn,” driving his desire to make this happen in the best possible way. He quickly identified that a way to build on any success would be to develop into a primary school. He felt this would provide consistency for the families and children, support transitions and facilitate earlier identification of need.

By 2021 all year groups were operating in the newly formed primary school. The school is part of the ‘Beyond Schools Trust’ whose ethos clearly aligns with Phoenix Primary when it states “We have a strong belief in the value of lifelong learning and in our strategic plan, we set out to develop a Trust that fully prepares children, so they have the skills, knowledge, values, and character to be successful in the world beyond our doors. We also believe that our greatest asset as an organisation, is our people, and we are privileged to be involved with such courageous, committed and child-centred employees.”



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The Head Teacher feels he is encouraged to be innovative and creative to achieve these aspirations and has ensured that this approach is shared by his staff. His financial decisions are made in this context. One teacher described the Senior Leadership Team as having a “how can we turn this around together” attitude which involves all staff. There was a strong view from staff that they felt supported, both professionally and pastorally in the school and it is clear the ‘values’ apply to all. One incredibly powerful comment from a member of staff was that they themselves had been “searching for belonging all their life and found it here at Phoenix.”

The school serves a community with significant needs, which are well understood and sensitively and proactively supported by all staff in the school. These social issues are complex and compounded by many of the local population being transient, often placed by other local authorities, mostly from London, for indeterminate but often short periods of time. This impacts on the sense of ‘belonging’ for pupils and their families, which is recognised, addressed, and compensated for in a number of ways by the school including excellent induction processes involving as wide a range of staff as is appropriate.

Phoenix is responsive to the changing demographic of the school population. A recent example of this is their response to support a number of families newly arriving in the UK. Advice was sought from expert services on how to best meet need and match expectations of education and care between school and families. This advice and training were offered out to other schools in the area who were responding to similar changes, a marvellous illustration of the collegiate view of the school. A Governor representative said she was proud that “Phoenix Primary is a school that really knows it's catchment area and community and is prepared to fight for what's important for them to cope and thrive.” Parents commented that “this school is the heart of a very big community that pulls us together.”

The school has 307 pupils with 27% identified as having SEN and 20% of those working at least a year behind age related expectation. The SEN practice within the school has significantly changed since the appointment of the Inclusion Manager, a key member of the Senior Leadership Team. She is committed to the model of distributed leadership in this area, with all class teachers being accountable for pupils in their care. Staff are well supported to achieve this, have clear expectations, are monitored, and have great access to advice and expertise from the Inclusion Manager.

The Chair of Governors commented on the positive change in approach to SEN, supported by case studies provided to the Governing Body which evidenced the “shift in responsibility for the progress of individual children resting with the class teacher.” This allows the Inclusion Manager to quality assure the provision for pupils during regular class visits.

She also stated that it was clear how all staff have been involved in the inclusion journey, with a change in focus for Teaching Assistant support having a significant positive impact. A skills audit carried out by the Inclusion Lead has been used to inform CPD needs and has facilitated a more flexible deployment model to best use the current expertise as it develops.



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The practice in Early Years is growing an excellent reputation, both within the Trust and the local area with a number of requests for organisations to come and experience the practice at Phoenix. Staffing in the school reflects the commitment to inclusion. There is a strong Pastoral Team who are responsive, dynamic in their thinking and who achieve positive outcomes for pupils and their families.

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

I also recommend that the school should consider applying for Centre of Excellence status subject to the inclusion within its plans of the appropriate areas for development and the completion of the Centre of Excellence documentation. If the school chooses to pursue this status and it were to be awarded, the school would be subject to annual review from this point forwards.

Assessor: Louise Simpson

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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



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Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

There is a universally held moral purpose at Phoenix, modelled by the Head Teacher who truly believes that this is a school that serves the community and has high expectations for all pupils. There are pupils at the school who have been excluded from other schools who have thrived at Phoenix due to the determination of staff. There are also clear examples of how persistence and commitment to inclusion has transformed the prospects of a number of children who would not have been able to remain in other schools, one such pupil is now a prefect proudly wearing his tie. This is as a result of the firm conviction that this is a school who needs to include members of the local community regardless of challenges.

The school has already committed to and holds the Enhanced Values Based Education accreditation. The values are a gold thread running through the school and were confidently understood when discussed by parents, children, staff, and the Governor during the day, all stated the positive impact these had. These values are embedded in the curriculum and the approach to behaviour management in the school.

Teachers reported that “the fact that values are at the heart of the school has a positive impact on behaviour and learning. Every child can access and appreciate the concepts.” A recent example of a practical application of the values was in the context of the selection test for secondary school. Anxiety levels were increasing, so staff supported pupils using the language of things they have already demonstrated e.g., “you have shown courage before, you are resilient, you have shown self-belief,” all of which helped to reduce stress.

There are also numerous examples visually around the school which demonstrates the depth to which these are embedded. For example, each class has the current value on the classroom door with an example of an application of this. Pupils use the language effortlessly and did so on my learning walk and report how they are rewarded for demonstrating these values, are able to recommend teaching staff who also do so and how this is shared with parents in school assemblies, through the DOJO system and other forms of communication. Parents mentioned how they apply these values at home “we try and focus on the values at home and put them into practice. It is lovely hearing our children talk about them; we know week to week what they are.” They also discussed how referring to the values has supported them with behaviour management at home utilising the shared language and how children themselves are able to reflect on these independently.

In recognition of the inclusion approach in the school the Head Teacher was asked by the Trust to apply for the Character Education Kitemark. With the Values Based Education clearly embedded with positive outcomes the school was awarded Kitemark Plus Status and is able to share this knowledge and experience with other schools. They are the first school in Medway to achieve this standard and the first in the country to be awarded the enhanced award on the first assessment. Both of these standards remain live.



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The Head Teacher is also a qualified Wellbeing Lead, with this commitment evident for pupils and staff. There is a 'Nourish the Workforce' action plan in place. Workplace wellness is a priority, and the Head Teacher commits to 1:1 meeting with all staff, an offer which is universally appreciated by staff who report that they feel they can be open and transparent. A recent Menopause Awareness event was very well received and the supportive approach to this has had impact already with staff who were feeling isolated previously. This kind of approach supports staff retention as if not for this input it was mentioned that some may have felt the need to leave the school in the near future but now feel understood and confident to be transparent about any challenges. Staff also have access to private healthcare and counselling services.

The shared accountability for SEN is evident in the school. Interventions which need to be delivered outside of the classroom are always made with a view to full reintegration. All staff can contribute to ideas to support individuals and often independently research areas in their own time to make suggestions. These are always considered carefully, and the Head Teacher has established a culture where ideas are valued, considered, and supported where it is clear an idea is worth pursuing for the benefit of an individual or group. Successful strategies that can be embedded in general practice are quickly identified by the Inclusion Lead for wider impact.

The Inclusion Lead piloted a programme for five pupils at risk of exclusion with innovative ideas to support behaviour and learning, which was a huge success and has been extended to further groups. The key success was their reintegration full time into classrooms with progress in learning evident.

The Inclusion Manager conducts 1:1 meeting with every teacher termly to discuss pupil needs and progress and coaching sessions are also held three times a year with Teaching Assistants. The Deputy Headteacher leads termly progress meetings where individual needs are discussed and plans for improvement are made. Teachers and Support Staff are fully involved in supporting children with SEN or those requiring reasonable adjustments set out in Individual Learning Plans, Pastoral Support Plans, and Behaviour Support Plans. Inclusion meetings take place where the Assess, Plan, Do and Review cycle is initiated. SLT carry out regular Learning Walks to ensure consistency of approach across year groups.

The DOJO communication system is working well, and parents and carers feel informed about their education, "it helps to unblur the lines between home and school" and that communication works both ways.

Pupils all gave examples of how their successes are celebrated and clearly value these.

Next Steps:

- To consolidate the use of newly introduced systems CPOMS and Edukey as tools for building a fuller profile of each child covering all areas of development.
- Continue to evaluate SEND interventions.
- Full engagement with Behaviour Hubs.



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Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

Leaders at Phoenix Primary are committed to driving and promoting inclusion through their policies as well as their direct work and involvement in various projects. The Inclusion Manager is an integral part of SLT, and all Senior Leadership Team members are involved in Pastoral and Inclusion meetings that run on a regular basis.

There is clear leadership of inclusion in the school evidenced by systems, values, staff structures, the modelling of practice and financial support. The Governing Body feel well informed, updated, and involved in developments and are regularly informed through the Head Teacher Report and Link Governor visits. They have opportunities to challenge and analyse progress and other data sources. They also receive information regarding pastoral and pupil progress meetings.

Governors feel confident in holding the school to account and are knowledgeable regarding the range of support in the school and how these are financed. They are supportive of approaches and have been involved in the development of some, particularly the Values Based Education. They are also informed about the early stages of the Behaviour Hub development which the school is involved in.

Their Learning Walks consider pupil engagement, appropriateness of resources and Teaching Assistant support. They feel involved in the drive for consistency and accountability for SEN and other areas of inclusion. The Governor representative also commended on the commitment of the Head Teacher to ensure funding enables full participation in experiences for all children, demonstrating the school commitment to full inclusion.

When asked about the sustainability of inclusion in the school there was confidence that there was good succession planning with Phase Leads being well informed and focusing on inclusion during Learning Walks. Staff and Governors meet regularly, and the Inclusion Lead reports to the Governing Body on progress. Pupils have also attended Governor meetings.

The school engages in several self-evaluation processes, the results of which form part of immediate action plans as well as contributing to the SEF and SIP documents. Leadership actively seek staff views and encourages their involvement in self-assessment processes. Leaders in Phoenix Primary promote a “hands on” approach in the implementation of policies and strategies. This allows them to not only actively support all staff but also creates opportunities for dynamic assessments of the procedures and identification of areas for development and next steps.

Regular moderation meetings are held to ensure consistency in approach, and they are conducted in atmosphere of mutual respect and support. PPM meetings are held three times a year to allow for any pupil or staffing issues to be resolved.

CPD is prioritised with teaching and support staff offered a range of development opportunities, this can take a form of online training, face-to-face internal sessions, as well as external training. Professional development is addressed through weekly staff



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meetings as well as targeted twilight sessions. Review of implementation and impact of this newly gained knowledge on children's progress is incorporated into PDP cycle. Midday supervisors are invited to INSET days and have been given specific responsibilities to promote wellbeing.

The Pastoral Team are effective in this school and work in a very cohesive way. The Head Teacher is the Designated Safeguarding Lead, with all Senior Leaders and the Family Liaison Officer as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. There are close working relationships with the LADO, Police, Social Care, and the Virtual School for Medway.

The Head Teacher holds individual wellbeing meetings with all staff twice a year to gauge and, where necessary, implement any individual or whole school changes. The workload is under regular review as the school promotes a healthy work-home balance. The school has representatives of the teaching staff and support staff on the Wellbeing Team. A Wellbeing Lead is part of the Pastoral Team. She is constantly adding to her repertoire of interventions, recently adding Play Therapy and Drawing and Talking. A NELFT professional is also employed.

Any fixed-term exclusions are well considered and viewed in a holistic way considering safeguarding and intended impact which might include family support. The SLT view exclusion instances as a trigger for reviewing practice and support so that pupils can be better supported to manage behaviour for improved learning. These situations are communicated well with parents.

Next Steps:

- As Phoenix school is still expanding there is a need for further consolidation in monitoring and assessment cycles to ensure that it is consistent across all Key Stages.
- Continue to focus on the development of skills within the Leadership and Pastoral Teams and Phase Leaders.
- Include Midday Supervisors more in rewards celebrations.



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Element 3 - Curriculum –Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

Knowledge and skills are intertwined at Phoenix and Subject and Phase Leaders have clear expectations for planning and delivery to ensure every lesson counts. The use of resources and Teaching Assistants is well planned and coordinated, with their views and expertise being valued and used creatively for maximum impact

At the beginning of each half term, a stimulating hook is planned to engage the pupils in their learning. Pupils commented on how this is exciting. For each new core text or theme, this is carefully planned so that the children are immediately enthused and excited by the learning. Alongside this, trips which are specific to the learning, and visits within the local community are planned to enrich the children's experiences and to further engage and immerse them in the learning.

Specific visitors are invited into school to provide the children with an insight as to how the skills they are learning at school can lead to success in later life. These opportunities are not viewed in isolation but provide a stimulus for learning across the curriculum.

Teach, Rehearse, and Apply is a teaching cycle from EYFS to Year 6 embedding the skills and knowledge securely throughout the school creating an environment of purposeful and deliberate conducive practice.

Retention is sustained at Phoenix by rich processes to aid and embed long term memory. Knowledge organisers observed on the Learning Walk are used to build subject specific vocabulary and knowledge but are also available to build links and enhance learning and application across other subjects. Retrieval, Feedback, and Assessment are prioritised to ensure fluency and the understanding and application of new knowledge as skills. Assessment is used to highlight gaps for planning, identify misconceptions, remove barriers, and enhance learning priorities for rich dialogue with pupils through enquiry questions, PiXL and Insight.

Parents commented that "Phoenix gets that not all children are the same.... but they have realistic and high expectations [for all pupils.]" They gave examples of how teaching in the school was accessible and fun for their children.

Six strands enable staff to use a universal language to promote and build the meta-cognition of pupils, creating highly effective questioning for challenge, understanding and concise feedback whilst ensuring the cognitive load is low as children move across the school. It is an expectation that the teacher's feedback is actioned to move learning forward and the children capitalise on this. Consequently, they flourish and make good progress over time.

The 'values' run as a vein throughout the curriculum and daily life at Phoenix. Each year the Phoenix curriculum is reviewed 'as a community' with meaningful staff involvement based on responses from the pupils and information obtained throughout the year and they ensure it is thematic and sequential, building a holistic curriculum for all.



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Extra-curricular opportunities are varied and wide in this school ranging from a popular Science Club, which inspires with the wonder of science without some of the academic rigour of the classroom through to sports and Brownies. Many staff commit their time to these extra-curricular activities reflecting the dedication and passion witnessed throughout the visit. External visits are particularly valued by students and parents who acknowledge the opportunities these provide, which might not have been accessible otherwise.

The school is outward facing and always on the lookout for ways of engaging the pupils in the school to ensure further progress.

Next Steps:

- Further develop and embed the curriculum in order to ensure consistency and progression across the newly formed year groups and phases.



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Element 4 - Teaching and Learning – Learning Environment, Planning Resources, Pedagogy

The physical environment of Phoenix School is a joy to see. It is engaging and purposeful and direct links between displays and learning were evident. There was consistency across the phases in relation to whole school strategies, yet with appropriate modifications in other areas to reflect learner needs. There is a sense of pride in the school which is clear when you speak to teaching staff, parents, and pupils, with examples shared of how each of these parties 'belong.'

Space has been used creatively and purposefully and any activity outside of the classroom was focused on the intended outcome. There are accessible reading areas along with a range of other well-resourced rooms. During a tour of the school two visually impaired pupils were making use of new technology that had been provided for them to increase their independence and prepare for potential changes in their conditions. For one pupil this was part of the extended secondary transition planning. Another pupil proudly showed the breakthrough he had had through support in understanding number relationships. He was able to articulate his learning and visibly showed his pride.

The Pearl Room is an exciting area which is coordinated by the Inclusion Lead to provide a range of interventions and experiences to develop individuals as part of a wider group for successful reintegration. The class teachers are involved in the planning and delivery in this area.

One teacher commented on the role of the Inclusion Lead saying that it was “to observe, reflect and guide.” They felt that any feedback was “solution driven.” Whilst visiting The Pearl Room there was a crystal-clear example of how staff used this member of staff for advice. One came with an idea on further support for an individual, discussed the context in more detail, and were then advised to use a new resource purchased by the school, which would be even more targeted to meet that need. The support was immediate and bespoke.

Learners are guided to achieve their targets through differentiated tasks, questioning, levels of support and verbal and written feedback. Achievements are celebrated individually, in phases, as well as in a whole school arena. Pupils' achievements are celebrated through individual DOJO messages to parents, recognition from SLT, as well as through achievement and/or Values Assemblies where parents are invited to attend. Children's work is also displayed and celebrated throughout the school.

Progress of pupils with SEND is monitored through their Individual Learning Plans and/or any additional assessments like Boxall or WELLCOM.

Phoenix employs a monitoring system called Review, Reflect and Grow (RRG) with transparent and effective procedures for monitoring, evaluating, reviewing, and refining professional practice. There are regular moderation meetings. Pupil Planning



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Meetings are held three times a year. The Trust Improvement Team are used to ensure best practice is disseminated.

A new Pupil Premium Strategy was introduced at the beginning of academic year 2021-2022 in response to additional challenges due to the pandemic and is reviewed regularly including at Governing Body meetings.

Teachers take responsibility for outcomes with one saying that “if a child tells me they don’t understand something I make a point of saying well that’s because I haven’t explained it in the right way for you because we need to deliver adaptive teaching.”

Both Teachers and Teaching Assistants commented on their non-hierarchical relationship which ensured that they were mutually benefiting the pupils they were teaching saying “we are good at being reflective and welcome ideas and support from each other.”

In EYFS there is excitement about ‘planning in the moment’ resulting in children being leaders of their own learning.

In Phoenix Primary each class has assigned TA. Deployment depends on the skills of the adults and needs of the class or individual children. TAs provide in class assistance during core subjects focusing on working with small groups which vary so that all groups receive teacher input.

Teachers in each year group are expected to plan together, therefore, PPA is set in such a way that it supports collaboration and allows Subject Leads to attend if/when necessary. This translates into consistency and high standards in lesson delivery.

Next Steps:

- Embed a consistent review of the RRG process in response to quality assurance analysis, School Improvement Plan and SEF.



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Element 5 - Assessment

Phoenix works closely with other schools both within and outside of the Trust to ensure effective assessment and improvement of quality of education. The Deputy Headteacher leads on teaching and learning, and with support of Phase Leaders, she also drives monitoring and assessment cycles. The Deputy Headteacher also chairs all Pupil Progress Meetings, and the Inclusion Manager leads termly SEND Progress Meetings.

Phoenix has clear processes for identification of SEND which incorporate Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle. Teachers are confident in identifying barriers to learning, which are then discussed on an individual basis during Inclusion Meetings. Inclusion Meetings take place fortnightly; they are alternated on a weekly basis between Inclusion and Pastoral Meetings. Progress of agreed actions and provision is reviewed within 6 weeks and recorded on ADPR. This process plays a vital part in the quick and efficient identification of children's needs and review of the effectiveness of the provision.

At Phoenix there are two programmes designed to create a detailed picture of each pupil, they are CPOMS and Edukey. CPOMS is primarily designated to record safeguarding and/or behaviour concerns as well as, any communication between home and school. Edukey is used to provide detailed record of child's needs, provisions (past and present) as well as record of involvement and advice from any external agencies.

For children who present with specific difficulties or whose attainment cannot be assessed with standard methods the school uses Boxall Profiles and Teach Talk assessments. There are number of adaptations and reasonable adjustments available to children with SEND. In addition to regular parent's evenings, parents of children with SEND are invited to attend parent's conferences three times a year to discuss their child's progress and next steps.

Children at Phoenix Primary are taught from the early stages of their education to discuss their learning and their personal targets. The children are confident in talking about skills they need to develop to successfully complete their learning goals, and this was confirmed on the Learning Walk and in discussion with pupils. Children with SEND are involved in setting their personal targets and they are aware of the steps they can take to meet them.

In Early Years assessments and plans are based on the adult's observations of the child in that moment and also draw on any previous knowledge of the child. The response is planned in the moment and is uniquely suited to that unique child in the unique moment. There is a strong view held at Phoenix that "a child who is not happy cannot become deeply engaged. A child who is not challenged by what is on offer, will not be engaged. A child who is being controlled by adults, will not be as deeply engaged. A child who feels insecure will not be able to become deeply engaged. For a child who is bored, passive, planning in the moment, moving children's learning on, will ensure each child's needs and interests will be being met." The school are considering how the success of this approach can be utilised in other areas of KS1.



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Next Steps:

- Building on from the embedded use of PiXL and Insight continue to monitor consistency.
- Create a whole school assessment system to enable Phoenix to monitor the correlation of progress from Year 2 to Year 6.



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Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

There is clear evidence that expectations of behaviour are high across all year groups. Procedures and routines are clear for both staff and pupils. Most pupils follow the routines with no or minimal support from adults. Any issues during the day were managed with confidence and the school atmosphere felt calm and focused.

Children at Phoenix Primary have a clear understanding of the school's expectations and consequences. Children are confident in discussing issues and they are often involved in decision making regarding reparation and restoration.

At Phoenix, the Values Based Education system centres on twenty-four life values the whole school community has chosen which include love, compassion, respect, teamwork, understanding and honesty. Pupils, parents, staff, and Governors speak about these with ease and familiarity. There is universal agreement that these benefit both pastorally and academically. One pupil remarked that it "makes me a better role model."

Pupils who had received interventions were positive about the impact. "If they take you out it's to help you learn extra things to then help you learn more." For one individual who had support from Rowans, an external provision, they commented how it had helped them to "get control of my anger so I get into less trouble which is a nice feeling and what I've learnt helps me outside of school [too].... I would recommend it!"

The pupils clearly articulated the rewards and sanctions in the school. They loved Celebration Assemblies and the opportunity to spend DOJO points. There was a keen desire to have their values recognised.

There is a Student Council which helps pupils to have their voices heard and a children's survey which identifies common themes to be addressed.

The school also holds Character Education Kitemark plus. Phoenix is the first school in the country to be awarded Kitemark Plus at the first assessment. This is another key component of the ethos of the school which is evident when you visit.

Next Steps:

- Fully complete the Behaviour Hubs Programme and include aspects in school planning.
- Continue to develop strategies and support to enhance attendance.



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Element 7 - Parents, Carers, Guardians

The Senior Leadership Team see themselves as having a crucial relationship with parents, carers, and guardians (referred to as parents.) They understand that some parents have had a poor experience of education or limited education themselves and that for some the UK education system is unfamiliar. Additionally, many of the parents have challenges in their home lives and have often been moved to the area without the support of extended family. One parent commented that she “had no faith in any school” due to her previous experiences elsewhere and therefore didn’t trust the school initially. This difficult starting relationship has been completely transformed.

Support from the Pastoral Team for pupils often includes work with families and external agencies who are required to help families in very complex situations. They will challenge those agencies where the family are not receiving the support to which they are entitled. The parent group confirmed the ‘open door’ policy of the school saying that there were always people to approach at the gates with the school being very understanding, “with mutual respect between the teachers and the parents” as both parties have responsibility for the children. They stated that “the school is positive about our children...strict, fair, and patient. They see children as individuals and remind us of what they CAN do when there are problems.” Another said that they get “support and compassion from the school” and praised their understanding of neurodiversity in particular.

Parents feel the DOJO system works extremely well, with communication working both ways keeping them informed and allowing opportunities to update the school on relevant issues. They enjoy opportunities provided to come into school and value the reward systems.

Relationships with the school were praised even when difficult issues were being addressed. Parents talked about “not having to worry about how I am perceived as a parent” so I can ask for the things I need help with. Another commented that “whenever I have asked for help, they have given it and have dealt with things that have happened out of school like dealing with social media.” One parent had been helped with strategies for engaging with the new secondary school after her child had started there.

All commented on the individual specialised approach to supporting their child’s needs. These included bringing chicks into school which helped with anxiety issues, helping a non-verbal child to be a speaker through their understanding and the Head Teacher being “on their level, respectful and strong.”

Parents seemed to have a good understanding of curriculum issues including the rationale for grouping in a particular year group, appreciating that children were at the heart of this with “no child being set up to fail but with high expectations.”

Parents can refer to the Pastoral Meetings where provision for their child will be discussed along with any signposting to external services to support the family. One parent was clear that the school were responsible for moving forward her housing situation which was having a negative impact on her child’s well-being and learning and



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the family in general. They had also been involved in helping their child by having discussions with them about a sad family situation which was much appreciated.

The school has invested in a Family Liaison Officer, who is skilled and knowledgeable and knows families well. She attends cluster meetings with other FLOs and receives informal group supervision. She also has links with other schools for ideas and support and attends Early Help Area Meetings to enhance support for parents. She gathers, evaluates, and shares this information with other members of SLT.

One parent summed up saying "Phoenix is like a good family. I could knock on any[one's] door, and they would find a solution for me."

Next Steps:

- The Pastoral Team have worked in some capacity with approximately half of the school pupil's or families. There will be further analysis of this support to identify next steps to meet demand and see what strategies need to be deployed to ensure sustainability.
- As the school has only recently become an all through primary some parents have limited experience of different teachers and there is a danger that a positive experience with one means that transitioning to another could be seen as problematic. The school are aware of this and will focus on non-standard transition times so that parents experience a comprehensive handover to feel confident that the good relationships, knowledge and understanding of their child will not be lost.



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Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

Phoenix School utilises services provided by the Local Authority and signposts parents where appropriate. They also engage with Forest Schools to enhance learning outside of the school environment and use external tutors for music. Hook days are used to ignite new topics and outside companies provide resources and activities to enhance learning such as Roman or Egyptian Day. Parents are encouraged to share experiences with the school such as work and cultural events. There is a strong commitment to build and enrich the cultural capital of children in the school.

Links with some agencies are clearly aligned with the values approach of the school. Phoenix School works with Age UK, local Boxing and Judo Clubs and the Greenacre Sports Partnership. The school, as a Community Hub, also runs drop-in centres for newly arrived Afghan and Ukrainian families. They also link with local providers of foodbanks to provide vouchers for families and other services which can support families. The school truly see themselves as part of an integrated service for children with other partners.

The school are aware that the experiences of some families outside of the home are limited for financial and practical reasons so plan activities to broaden pupil's experiences with financial commitment undertaken by the school, for instance the Young Voices choir event at the O2 in London was subsidised for both pupils and parents to ensure that they were able to experience the wonder of seeing their children perform in such an iconic venue. The community is welcomed to attend events at the school.

The school is outward facing and is part of a range of networks where good practice and ideas are shared. The Head Teacher states he "wants to be a school that others want to come and see." He has presented at a number of forums and participates in local Head Teacher Network Meetings to inform and influence practice for local schools. The school is a valued Trust member.

CPD is varied and often with external partners. Online CPD often engages with global providers. Although focused on the local community, the school pride themselves on developing children as global citizens, with the curriculum supporting cultural understanding and an awareness of world issues. The values embedded in the curriculum often draw from wider and global contexts reinforcing the fact that these values are universally important.

The commitment to Behaviour Hubs is another example of the school having an outward focus. Although it is apparent that practice in Phoenix was better in some respects to that in other schools in the Behaviour Hubs the SLT are not resting on their laurels and continue to stretch their goals and targets.

Next Steps:

- Increase the range of visitors into school to promote aspirational work.
- Maintain and extend networks.