

# **Stephen Holden**

## **Director of Education and Skills**

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024  
Please ask for Caroline Haughton  
E-mail c.haughton@bury.gov.uk

### **Inclusion Quality Mark Accreditation Report**

**1<sup>st</sup> July 2024**

St Stephen's Church of England Primary School requested that their practice be assessed against the Bury Inclusion Quality Mark standards. These standards are organised into four areas: Whole School Approaches; Inclusive Learning; Supporting Emotional Health and Well-being; Participation and Involvement. The school's performance against the standards was assessed during a full-day accreditation visit on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024. The visit was conducted by Caroline Haughton (Inclusion Project Officer) and Claire Wheeler (SENCO of ST Joseph and St Bede Roman Catholic Primary School)

Activities for the accreditation included:

- Extensive learning walks through school; including break time
- Interviews with pupils
- Interviews with parents
- Interviews with the senior leadership team
- Interviews with teachers and teaching assistants
- Interviews with the Pastoral lead
- Examination and discussion of school plans
- Review of school policies and procedures
- Scrutiny of pupil work
- Discussion of pupil records

#### **Whole School Approaches**

##### ***Ethos***

- When it comes to fostering an inclusive culture at St Stephen's Church of England Primary School, effective leadership plays a pivotal role, and this vision was clearly articulated by all members of senior leadership. The head teacher talked passionately about the vision of inclusion stating, "it is to inspire a lifelong love of learning regardless of children's starting points." She went onto say, "it is ensuring the children have opportunities to flourish, through knowing them, their families and the needs of the community in which we serve."
- All staff demonstrated genuine care for each other within the school community. Well-being, emotional support, and positive relationships amongst children,

staff, and parents were clearly valued and supported and it is through this culture that an inclusive environment thrives.

- From the moment the children arrive, they are greeted warmly by staff and peers. The atmosphere is friendly and inviting, with staff members taking the time to connect with each child. This welcoming approach helps children feel safe, comfortable and accepted. The children talked about how they feel staff give up their time to support the children, particularly during lunchtime. One child said 'They don't do this for the money, they do it because they love us'
- Parents were complimentary about the school stating how happy their children were at St Stephen's and that "teachers always have time for you, especially Mrs Denney and Mrs Taylor."

### ***Leadership and Governance***

- The school has both a special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) governor and inclusion trustee that have been involved in carrying out a learning walk with the headteacher to further strengthen the inclusive offer at the school, focusing on areas such as adaptive teaching, the learning environment and curriculum development and design.
- The governors feel fully involved in decision making. They know the progress being made against school priorities through termly governing body reports and the opportunity to observe lessons and be part of the monitoring process for school improvement.
- The leadership team has cultivated an environment where inclusion is not just a policy but a deeply ingrained practice. Their commitment to fostering an inclusive community is reflected in the school's operations, culture, and daily interactions.

### ***CPD***

- The school has invested in the expertise of an independent consultancy (Redefining Education Ltd) to develop strategies for resilience and independence amongst the children e.g. 'show me' boards and 'cold calling'. 'Cold calling' ensures that all children have an opportunity to participate, regardless of their confidence level or willingness to volunteer.
- These strategies helped to promote attention, engagement and participation in learning and were clearly embedded in all lessons.
- The school has also been pivotal in hosting the "Bury Good Offer" which was a way of inviting professionals into school to showcase their services. This was well attended by parents as well as staff from the trust so this offer could be disseminated more community wide.
- Teaching assistants talked passionately about the opportunities and training they receive and how they feel an integral part of the school effort to drive forward inclusion at St Stephen's.
- Time is given for staff to work alongside outside agencies (Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy) to develop and broaden their knowledge to best support children in their class.

### ***Person Centred Planning***

- Parents talk very positively about their children's experience of school. They feel well informed and are kept updated about their child's progress with regular communication through the school jotter app and conversations with class teachers and the pastoral lead when required.
- Pupil meetings are structured around person-centred approaches e.g. annual reviews. The purpose of these meetings is to identify what is important to the children and what is important for them, ensuring barriers are identified and quickly addressed to ensure success. By involving children and families in decision-making, person-centred planning at St Stephen's leads to positive outcomes and effective multi-agency collaboration.

### ***Understanding and valuing difference***

- St Stephen's serves a diverse demographic and cultural diversity, and celebration of a range of faiths and ethnicities is pivotal to the personal development of the children that attend.
- The leadership team consistently communicates and demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, emphasising that these values are integral to the ethos of St Stephen's. School leaders talked about "celebrating the uniqueness of every child as they are all beautifully different."
- Black History Month was celebrated with children writing their own monologues inspired by the "I have a dream" speech. They wrote about their dreams for the future and how they will achieve them. This included a variety of current world issues such as ending disability discrimination, stopping the war in Ukraine, ending global warming, and stopping gender stereotyping. All this was shared with parents and documented in an article that appeared in the Bury Times.
- Displays around school celebrate the success of influential people and how they have overcome adversity in their lives. The school also has links with a community school in Uganda.
- Parents talked favourably about the Eid celebrations that the children had been involved in recently and how this resulted in heightening the children's curiosity for other faiths and beliefs both in school and at home.

### ***Policies and plans***

- The school's policies and practices are designed to promote diversity and inclusion. The leaders actively champion and reinforce policy and practice to ensure that it is embedded in the culture of the school.
- The school's development plan has a strong focus on the implementation of adaptive teaching strategies to support the needs of all children and help them to build resilience and independence.

## **Inclusive Learning**

### ***Curriculum and teaching***

- The curriculum at St Stephen's has been skilfully designed both to reflect the school's vision "learning, loving and growing; together as God's children" and to ensure National Curriculum requirements are met.
- The curriculum ensures a need for a thorough programme of teaching and learning to embed the core skills of literacy, numeracy, and oracy alongside a cyclical subject based offer to prepare them for life within and beyond school.
- The curriculum is designed to broaden pupils' experiences through a variety of enrichment events which take place throughout the week and on Friday afternoons. Parents and children talked favourably about these opportunities and how it supported their health and well-being. Examples of such activities include 'hungry tums', sports clubs, gardening club, orienteering, sewing club and choir.
- Opportunities are in place which enable all children to demonstrate their personal strength, talents, skills and abilities through a forthcoming talent show and the Year Six leavers' production of Matilda.

### ***Learning and progress of all groups***

- Children were engaged overall in purposeful learning activities throughout the school. The children were predominantly in class with a small number outside the classroom in the afternoon, accessing targeted group intervention and bespoke 1:1 learning. The SENCO demonstrates an awareness of the importance of ensuring that the scheduling of interventions does not dilute the breadth of the curriculum; it is more about enhancing and enriching the current offer, giving children the tools to access learning and prepare them for future learning and life skills.
- The headteacher, SENCO and pastoral lead attend termly pupil progress meetings and support teachers with the development of plans to ensure that any children falling behind can catch up.
- Parents talked positively about how they are kept updated about their child's progress using the school jotter app, sharing of twitter feeds, and bi-annual invites to parents evening, as well as an increased participation in parents attending Friday assembly, where certificates are given and children's learning celebrated.

### ***Transition***

- All transitions are well supported at St Stephen's because staff are keenly aware of the needs of all the children. Additional visits to high schools are arranged to support the needs of some children to aid the transition process.

- Parents of children that had passed through the school were complimentary on how transition was managed especially for those children with more complex needs.

## **Supporting Emotional Health and Well-being**

### ***Resilience***

- St Stephen's staff play a vital role in creating a safe and supportive environment where children can build life skills, resilience, and a strong sense of belonging. Healthy relationships are essential for children's positive experiences of school and children's holistic development.
- Children can access the HUB ("Helping Understand Behaviours"), a quiet, calming nurture space that gives children the opportunity and time to prepare for the day ahead. At playtime it opens as "Hungry Tums" allowing children to eat and chat with their friends and an adult. At lunch time it supports children with more significant need enabling them access to participate in mindfulness activities or to be supported with developing friendships.
- All children complete a strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) at the start of the year; this enables any child's social, emotional and mental health needs to be identified quickly with bespoke programmes such as My Happy Mind and 1:1 intervention from the mental health support team (MHST) being put in place in a timely manner. Support from the MHST team this year has evolved to support children with anxiety, for transition and with year six workshops on promoting a positive self-image and healthy eating.
- A well-being team led by Mrs Taylor has looked at ways of promoting positive well-being amongst staff. They talked positively about their own health and well-being and strategies that have been put in place to support this, such as streamlining policies, reducing workload, and marking and introducing restricted times to send and respond to e mails.

### ***Belonging***

- St Stephen's serves children and families that have a wide range of beliefs and cultural experiences. The school's religious curriculum gives children the opportunity to learn about the beliefs and experiences of others and encourages the values of tolerance and respect. An example of this was shared within Early Years where a child from Nigeria had started school. The class looked at family life in the country, so children developed a real understanding of culture and customs helping the new child to feel a sense of belonging from the outset.
- When speaking to the children about their thoughts of school one child stated, "our whole school are friends" and another child is quoted as saying, "we can all be upstanders for each other."
- The children talked about how they all lived out the school's vision to 'love one another' and how this created a school where bullying is not seen.
- All children are encouraged to join pupil groups throughout the school. Children talked enthusiastically about being part of the school's Picture News

Pioneers and how this gave them confidence to speak in front of the whole school.

## **Participation and Involvement**

### ***Whole school approach***

- Parents that were interviewed felt fully involved in decision making about their child. Regular meetings are held, and they provide the opportunity to discuss what is working well and to consider areas for development.
- Parents felt that communication between home and school is effective with teachers always visible and approachable at the start and end of the day.
- Parents felt that any issues raised are dealt with in a timely manner and they are therefore confident that school will always provide support when needed.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns with their child's class teacher and any issues that parents did comment upon were based around more opportunities for trips and visits. Some of the parents are also part of the "Friends of St Stephen's"; they clearly understood the financial implications for some parents and produced solutions for fundraising to ensure that any future opportunities would be available for all to engage in and enjoy.

### ***Participation of stakeholders***

- Parents/carers talked about all the different opportunities that are made available for parents to network and share experiences, for example, the "Friends of St Stephen's" organise fund raising events such as movie nights, Easter bingo and school discos.
- All parents interviewed felt reassured that their child's needs are being met and are happy with the way they were being supported.
- A parent voice box is on display in the reception area. This encourages parents/carers to have a voice and know that their opinions matter. They also commented on school's open-door policy and the opportunity to speak to staff both before and after school if they have anything to discuss.

### **Wider community links**

- School is outward facing, sharing with and drawing upon the expertise of partner agencies. School has been innovative in creating links with other schools in Sycamore Trust to network and share good practice with each other.
- The school choir has sung in several events including for the elderly residents of a nearby residential home to help bring joy and a sense of community spirit. Eco Warriors support Water Aid and harvest celebrations engage pupils in actively supporting local charities such as Porch Boxes, and Community Grocery Store.
- The school has an active Ethos group who over the years has taken part in charity events, intergenerational linking projects, and welcoming visitors to the school. The group discusses ideas for raising awareness or helping the community and through a democratic vote decide on the best actions to take.

## **What is working exceptionally well?**

- All staff at St Stephen's can articulate with passion the vision and values for inclusion. They are aware of the backgrounds of their families and the needs of their children and look to ensure equal opportunities for all.
- Personal development is a real strength of the school. Children talk about their school with pride and are keen to showcase all they do.
- The school provides children with access to a wide, rich set of experiences in a coherently planned way. These experiences go beyond purely academic outcomes and help children develop and nurture their talents and interests.
- The staff are fully aware of the demographic context of their school and ensure cultural diversity and equality is woven throughout the curriculum, so children have the knowledge and skills to understand and appreciate the diversity that makes up our wider world.
- The behaviour and attitudes of the children are a real strength of the school. Children feel safe and happy and know there is always someone available to talk to. Staff understand that behaviour is a form of communication and can draw on a range of strategies to support children in situations that they find challenging. The school has a progressive and compassionate approach to behaviour management that uses the mantra of "respond, reflect and repair." This gives children the opportunity to engage with an adult in a restorative conversation and creates space for healing and growth.

## **What might school consider in moving forward?**

- Consider the range of interventions currently on offer and ensure they are aligned to research-based evidence e.g. the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to maximise impact and demonstrate measurable outcomes.
- Ensure assessments are used that capture small steps of progress for some children across core subjects, so that teachers' planning and activities in the classroom reflect attainment and gaps in learning can be swiftly addressed.
- Consider the offer for children working at greater depth and whether staff understanding of what this looks like across teaching and learning is secure.

## **Final Outcome**

By instilling a passion for inclusivity from the top down, St Stephen's CE Primary School has created a vibrant and empowering environment where everyone can thrive and contribute their best. Levels of children's enthusiasm and engagement serve as a testament to the school's success in nurturing confident, articulate, and resilient individuals. The outcome of the efforts of all stakeholders has delivered a supportive learning community that prepares pupils not only academically, but also emotionally and socially for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter in the wider world. Therefore, Bury Council is delighted to be able to award the status of our Inclusion Quality Mark to St Stephen's Church of England Primary School.



Professionals conducting the accreditation:

*C Haughton*

Caroline Haughton-Inclusion Project Officer

*C. Wheeler*

Claire Wheeler- SENDco St Joseph and St Bede's RC Primary School