



Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

18th May 2014

Mrs Sarah Lewis
Interim Head teacher
Downs Way School
Downs Way
Oxted
Surrey
RH8 0NZ

Assessment Date: 15th May 2014

Summary

Downs Way School is a safe, happy and very welcoming school with an inclusive family atmosphere. It is a pleasure to visit. Inclusion is embedded within the ethos of the school and there is a very caring atmosphere where every achievement is valued. The school considers that “Everyone at our school whether child or adult is a star; we enable them to shine” and this is evident in all aspects of school life. The school works hard to build and maintain honest and strong relationships and is committed to school improvement. There is an experienced and enthusiastic staff team who have a passion and commitment to developing pupils’ learning in a safe, happy and caring learning environment. As one parent commented, “Staff here are so supportive. Learning is individualised and children feel happy and safe in school.”

All pupils are encouraged to do their best, irrespective of ability, disability, social background, ethnicity or gender. Pupils are offered a curriculum which caters for all learning styles and supports the inclusive ethos of the school. The curriculum is enriched through many first hand experiences, including educational visits and very good use of the outdoor learning environment. The school makes good use of its many links with other schools in the Tandridge Education Partnership and with outside services and providers to enhance the curriculum and to provide specialist support and advice for particular groups of pupils. External partners are complimentary about the school, commenting that “The school is very child centred and is always very welcoming.”

Classrooms are busy and happy places to be, where pupils are focussed on and fully engaged in their learning. Pupils are polite and able to talk confidently about their learning. There are good quality displays, which are informative and reflect the achievement and abilities of all pupils, and a wide range of well organised and appropriate resources. Written communication, following ELKAN guidelines, supports the teaching and learning of all pupils, but especially those with speech and language difficulties or EAL. The best possible use is made of all available learning spaces and the layout of the site ensures access for all. Designated spaces are well suited to individual needs.

Assessment and tracking systems are increasingly rigorous. Analysis of data and half termly Pupil Progress Meetings ensure that pupils not making expected progress are identified and

appropriate intervention is provided. The provision of a good range of carefully monitored intervention strategies is making a significant contribution to improving standards.

The wellbeing of every pupil is the school's key priority. Members of staff have a very good knowledge of the individual needs of all pupils, understanding their medical and academic needs, social and emotional needs and family histories. As a result, children feel safe and nurtured. They are happy, enthusiastic and well-motivated and as one pupil stated, "We enjoy our learning. Our teachers are kind and help you if you don't understand."

All pupils are treated with respect. Indeed, one of the key aims of the Behaviour Policy is "To value every child as an individual and treat them with consideration and courtesy." Pupils are well behaved and they show care and consideration for each other, whatever their background. They are particularly enthusiastic about the "Buddies" system which is in place on a Friday afternoon, where pupils from each year group work together. As stated in the prospectus, "In this way everyone gets to know everyone else so everyone is a friend and no-one is a stranger."

The interim Head teacher is providing strong leadership and the Inclusion Leader co-ordinates the Inclusion agenda with enthusiasm. Strong relationships and a real sense of teamwork are evident throughout the school, a fact commented on by staff members, who refer to "A love and loyalty for the school" and "Lovely community feel." Teaching Assistants are valued members of the staff team and make a significant contribution to teaching and learning. Staff lead by example and model inclusive practice. The Governing Body actively endorses and promotes the school policy on Inclusion.

The partnership between parents/carers and the school is strong. Parents/carers are very appreciative of the support that is provided for all pupils and feel confident that the staff team know and understand their children well, recognising their abilities and needs and catering well for their individuality. Their views can be summarised by the following comments, "All teachers know all children which is really impressive", "Staff quickly identify what children need and put things in place to make them feel secure" and "Staff at this school go above and beyond what is expected."

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: Viv Earwicker

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:



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