

Princes Primary School  
Selborne Street  
Liverpool  
L8 1YQ  
25.02.15

Dear Kathy,

Thank you for inviting me to your school on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2015 to conduct the verification visit for the Inclusion Charter Mark. I would like to extend my thanks to you, your Deputy Head Teachers Juliette Gelling and Joanne Cree, your colleagues, pupils, parents and governors for making the visit so purposeful and pleasurable.

I would also like to warmly congratulate you on achieving the ICM award which shows your school both values and demonstrates very high standards in Inclusive practices. The award is valid for three years and will run from February 2015 to February 2018.

The preparation and presentation of policies and materials to support the process were exemplary and the audit tool and information provided prior to the visit was very thorough and useful to examine prior to the visit.

The process was conducted over the course of one day and involved:

1. The completion of an Inclusion Charter Mark (ICM) audit tool which was completed and received in advance of the visit.
2. An examination of key evidence which was provided for scrutiny by the school. Examples of this included for example attainment analysis information and SIP documentation. During the visit there was a wealth of relevant and easily accessible information provided by the school. The website was also a source of evidence accessed prior to the visit.
3. Learning walks throughout the day at Princes Primary School, the satellite unit at Smithdown Primary and the Assessment Unit at Phoenix Primary focussed on the differentiated and inclusive practices for the ICM award as well as demonstrating how effectively these settings are interlinked and how well they use resources. One notable example was an opportunity to observe children clearly enjoying their learning and all fully engaged during a 'doh disco' session.
4. In depth discussions with parents/carers, pupils, Learning Support Assistants, the deputy heads, teachers and members of the Governing body all contributed effectively to the verification process.
5. In addition the visits to both Phoenix Primary and Smithdown Primary on the day were invaluable in providing further opportunities for learning walks, meeting other members of key teaching and support staff and observing children's activities and learning in their inclusive settings.



During the course of the day I had the opportunity to examine documentary evidence which was set out by the school, and I was able to cross reference this to the key criteria in the ICM audit tool.

I have summarised the judgements that have supported my decision to award the ICM:

**The Audit Tool** – This was an outstanding example. It was detailed and comprehensive, well presented with a clear knowledge of where the school sits in relation to the key criteria. It was also clearly linked to easily accessible school evidence which was presented to me on the day.

**Ethos and Atmosphere** – The school’s mission statement states:

**“Princes Primary is a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties, autism and additional needs. We plan exciting opportunities for children to learn in a safe, secure and happy environment where we strive to help everyone achieve their full potential. We offer a personalised curriculum in a caring, stimulating and challenging environment, encouraging independence and the skills needed for daily life. We want to make a difference for all our children and their families”.**

It was evident that this mission statement and its accompanying aims are very much a part of what the school is about on a day to day basis. There was a shared striving for excellence, shared ownership of learning and a real sense of community within the school which was evident in interviews with staff, governors, pupils and families. In addition to this there were clear community links which extended the school out into the neighbourhood. A good example of this was the Community / neighbourhood links. The interview with Janie Scott (Senior Teacher) and Anne Sweeney (Governor) provided excellent information regarding the children’s involvement in the Granby 8 community Hub and with photographs of the activities were provided. There were also lots of examples discussed regarding Business and Enterprise projects. Information was provided in an accessible photographic way about the school’s Eco School and Green Flag Award. Local, National and international Links showed that the school was a caring setting in terms of reaching out and fundraising for very worthy causes.

**Continuing Professional Development** – CPD is strength of the school. This is seen in succession planning, expertise and strategic planning. The deputy head has just been promoted to headship at another school. TAs were encouraged in their aspirations for example a TA was supported in achieving HLTA status and was in a supported secondment. A TA was supported in a teaching degree. A clear commitment to CPD and a clear promotion of staff development is apparent. Staff themselves felt supported and enabled both between each other

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and the SLT. This was evident in more than one of the settings. There was a 'hands on' ethos where Juliette and/or Cathy would attend Phoenix every day so that there was a regular managing and leading of systems set up in practical ways as well as strategically.

**The behaviour of students** during the visit and throughout the learning walk was exemplary. Students were clearly engaged and enjoying their activities and lessons. The school's inclusive philosophy and its commitment to celebrating success and promoting positive relationships support an ethos which ensures a focus on the whole child. School staff described how they are person centred in their approach. Particular interests of the children and things that motivate them are fed into the planning thus building intrinsic motivation within the children. The learning is very much 'skills based' rather than 'curriculum driven' and the curriculum is fitted around the skills in a refreshing and individualised approach. The pupils I spoke to felt very safe, secure, enabled and supported. The two children who showed me around the building were clearly very proud of their school.

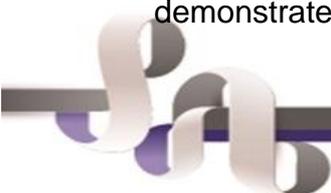
**The support from the governing body** is excellent. Governors demonstrated that they had a very clear strategic overview of school, were very well informed with regard to data and its implications and were experienced and knowledgeable in this respect which is beneficial to the school. They also spoke about the "community of the school" and the value of what was provided for all children. The governors also described how they were able to bring to their roles relevant professional and personal experiences which enhanced their positions and contributions, for example one governor was an Epilepsy Specialist Nurse.

### **Strengths of the school**

To conclude, achieving the Inclusion Charter Mark sits within the school's Inclusion Agenda and brings together the work with Princes at Smithdown and Phoenix and shows how effectively this is developing.

Tracking and supporting pupil progress is strength and there is very much an emphasis in this in learning journeys and it is evident in pupil progress files. The pupils themselves were happy and engaged and involved in their own learning and this came across very strongly.

Behaviour has been an ongoing focus and was evident in SIP visit information. The move from good to outstanding was connected to work with Phoenix and Smithdown. Further checks and evaluation is ongoing and the School's SLT are focused on being proactive on behaviour management having had staff training and also the deputy head monitors and tracks pupil's behaviour. There has been whole staff training on good to outstanding behaviour from Jason Bangbala which demonstrates how proactive the school is.



Princes school is one of only a few schools to hold the “National school support Status”. Not only is it a school which is in a very good position to share good practice but it actively does so as it is a part of the Merseyside SLD consortium and collaborates in curriculum development and moderation with other schools.

Princes is in a teaching school alliance with three other schools; Redbridge, Milstead and Rowan Park. It is also part of the DGT group and is prominent at ALSSH.

Working with parents and building upon those relationships is a real strength of the school. In addition in a school survey which captured pupil voice said that 100% of pupils enjoyed coming to school. There was anecdotal evidence of the collaboration between members of staff and parents and numerous examples of how the school engages with the parents in a person centred way to meet the needs of the children. Parents at the school expressed that not only did they feel very informed but they felt that the school staff really “went out of their way” to get to know the children and that the school “went above and beyond” expectations in ensuring that their children were happy and secure and able to express themselves well. They said that school staff were “brilliant”; being supportive and proactive in their communication with parents and that ‘Transition’ was a real strength of the school. The “open door policy”, link book, newsletters and questionnaires which capture parent voice were also commented upon. The coffee mornings hosted in Princes school were also a welcome addition. Parents interviewed spoke enthusiastically about the stay and play sessions. They felt it was a great opportunity to see their children and commented on how they notice a “huge difference” in “small steps”.

In conclusion the school already shares good practice and is very well aware of its focus and vision in continuing to move forward in an unrelenting quest for outstanding and person centred provision. The Head teacher and SLT were instrumental in leading, driving and developing the excellent provision for Inclusion and for meeting the needs of the children in a personalised way.

I hope this gives a flavour of the visit and once again I would like to thank everyone for their warm hospitality. On behalf of School Improvement Liverpool I congratulate Princes Primary School for its outstanding commitment towards inclusive practices.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine McDermott

School Improvement Officer for Inclusive Learning

