



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name Rowland Hill Nursery School and Children's Centre
315 White Hart Lane
Tottenham
London
N17 7LT

Head/Principal Ms Sian McDermott

IQM Lead Ms Katherine Worthington

Date of Review 9th July 2026

Assessor Ms Lucy Ciantanni

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Inclusion London

Ambassador Dr Kenny Frederick

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2025	14 th November 2025	Yes
Spring 2026	28 th January 2026	Yes
Summer 2026	18 th May 2026	No



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The Impact of the Cluster Group (with details of the impact of last three meetings)

The SENDCO at RH spoke very enthusiastically about the impact of attending the Cluster group meetings, finding both of those she attended this year very interesting. The Autumn meeting at Sybourn Primary School was particularly valuable, connecting strongly as did with the Anchor Approach at RH. The discussions at the meeting reinforced the importance of attachment aware and trauma informed practice as well as providing the SENDCO with some ideas for the children's emotional well-being and self-regulation. There was a talk from the SALT, and the RH SENDCO had the opportunity to share the Language Lift Off project run at RH by the SALT.

The Spring meeting at King's Cross Academy was highly inspiring and the SENDCO valued the opportunity to see such a modern learning environment. The school also has a provision for the Deaf which demonstrated strong, inclusive practice and the SENDCO found the Sing and Sign sessions, ELSA, SEND PE approaches and Art therapy particularly impactful. The SENDCO advised that, following the visit, she has reflected carefully on how some elements of sensory circuits could be incorporated into provision at RH to further support emotional regulation and engagement.

Unfortunately, staff were unable to attend the summer meeting due to staffing capacity at school.



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Evidence

- IQM Centre of Excellence Review and Action Plan documentation
- School Website and policies
- Ofsted Report – September 2022
- School SEF
- School Development Plan
- Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum
- Seasonal Calendar
- Curriculum Impact report
- Presentation notes re: challenging bias in picture books
- Parent Testimonials

Other Activities

- Meeting with SENDCO
- Meeting with DHT
- Meeting with Exec. HT
- Tour of the school
- Sensory Room visit
- Talking Time observation
- WOW group observation
- Meeting with Children's Centre team
- Meetings with various staff teams
- Meeting with Finance Officer
- Meeting with staff governor
- Floor Books

Evaluation of Targets for last 12 Months

Target 1: Sharing practice with the wider EY community – to increase capacity of staff in Haringey PVI's to build resilience, health and wellbeing in children – to strengthen attachment aware, trauma informed practice in Haringey PVI's, EY settings and schools.

This target arose out of the high regard that Rowland Hill (RH) is held in high regard locally for its inclusive practice. RH were approached by the London Borough of Haringey to design a project to look at holistically at the children and support the building of the children's sense of self and wellbeing. RH then worked to develop the Anchor Project for EY, creating reviewing tools and a set of new strategies to support colleagues support the children in how to take risks and be creative.

The Anchor Approach embodies wellbeing, empowerment, safety, adventure, purpose and achievement and the Executive HT advised the Assessor that the school's curriculum is based around these areas, with all staff being highly trained. Trauma Informed Practice is well embedded within the Anchor Approach, and a set of resources has been created to accompany lessons.

RH have regularly run conferences open to colleagues from across the borough and these conferences have been reflective of the truly inclusive vision and values of RH, with themes such as creativity, racial equity and physical development. These conferences attract large numbers of delegates, with RH being able to share their practice with up to 130 teachers at a time. Considering these conferences and adding to this that this project has also been shared with 65 PVI's, as well as two projects currently running with 12 private nurseries, and another different two-year project being run with 15 schools, it is easy to see how this first target of sharing practice with the wider EY community has been met.

This target is clearly linked to the school's SDP and there has been a careful evaluation of the impact as evidenced in the school's SEF. Leaders at RH told the Assessor "we are outward looking" and it is evident that sharing good practice and running conferences/projects not only has a far-reaching effect in the borough but also has a positive impact on staff at RH. Teachers have been upskilled to lead courses and sessions at the conferences but also have opportunities to work with others to share good practice, growing and developing themselves.

Next Steps:

This target will continue to be linked into the SDP, and the school will continue to work with PVI partners to embed the Anchor approach in these settings. RH is currently in the process of bidding for some funding to enable staff to create more resources which will help parents to support their children in being "school ready."

Target 2: Teaching approaches and learning opportunities for rhythmic awareness alongside sound processing skills to develop strong speech, language and literacy skills.

Leaders at RH see language as the golden thread that runs through all learning, and it has been noted that language development and acquisition have been an issue post-Covid, as children were unable to access the same sorts of experiences from birth due to lockdowns.

RH works with parents to model strategies, which can then be worked on both at home and in school. There is a SALT project called Language Lift Off which is delivered at RH and this has been really impactful with Leaders sharing an example of one pupil who came to the school with very few words and has attended the project all year, with the result that they are now in the Talking Time group – staff are rightly proud of such “phenomenal” progress.

It is understood that children need to develop their core strength in order to be able to sit down and write, as Leaders told the Assessor, “they can’t sit on a chair unless they can climb a tree.” The NHS have a list of the first 100 movements a child should be able to do before their fifth birthday and developing movement skills is prioritised in the school.

Alongside this music and rhythm are seen as equally important, with teaching approaches being developed alongside sound processing, which helps children to develop strong speech, language and literacy skills. RH has developed a huge repertoire of songs based around the school vision and values and the Assessor was able to note some of the children taking part in these songs with much enthusiasm during the Talking Time observation. All work in the Nursery is replicated in the Children’s Centre, so by the time they move to the Nursery they will already know the core songs for example.

As part of this IQM target, the school has started to develop a music and movement progression map to support staff in linking music and movement to communication, language and literacy development. Leaders explained that the vision is not for children at RH to be “shaking a shaker for years” but to develop their skills over time and the music and movement progression map is based on NHS recommendations. Again, this is clearly linked to the SDP and is followed in the Children’s Centre.

Next Steps:

The next steps for this target are to continue to work on and complete the Music and Movement Progression map and to launch the songs that have been developed with families, so they can further support their children at home.

There will also be a thorough review of staff practice to ensure that music and movement training has been/is being embedded. This will take the form of learning walks and peer reviews. This work is seen as vital for children’s development.



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Target 3: Develop nutritional guidance for the school and children's centre to further represent cultural traditions and heritage – develop training and workshops for families to understand the importance of early nutrition.

There is a huge emphasis in EY around nutrition and healthy eating, with guidance developed to ensure children under 5 years old have healthy meals and RH has certainly stepped up to the challenge of developing this for their children. The importance of breast feeding is also highlighted and again staff at RH are responding appropriately and enthusiastically, with outreach workers taking part in the UNICEF Baby Friendly Award training. Sadly, a number of children have choked in PVI's, so safe eating habits have become a safeguarding issue for schools and will be included in KCSIE from September.

RH has developed a new Food and Nutrition policy, regularly reviewed menus and made sure they are reflective of the seasonal calendar. The RH Leadership has worked with cooks across the Federation, to ensure the same level of nutrition in all schools.

There is a community garden for sowing vegetables and herbs in spring and working with children and families to harvest them in the summer. This helps children to understand where food comes from, connecting what they are growing with what they are putting inside their bodies.

RH reviews families every half term in order to ensure that the Felix Food Project in the year-round Children's Centre is supporting the most vulnerable families in the community, as these families would sometimes need to opt for cheaper, but less healthy options. RH see good nutrition as so vital, such that they will take food and supplies to families who are unable to get to the Centre themselves.

RH has been awarded the Healthy EY London Gold Award, as well as the Gold Level Sustainable Travel Award. Parents bringing snacks for their children at pick up time, now bring carrots, fruit or plain rice cakes as a snack, instead of lollies or sweets, as in previous times.

Next Steps:

Leaders at the school are hoping to set up a kitchen club for families to come and cook healthy, nutritious meals together, using produce from the school garden.

In order to ensure this IQM target is fully and continuously met, evaluation will be ongoing both at the Nursery School and the Children's Centre. The Children's Centre will be playing a key role in ensuring healthy development for children as sometimes they are referred to the Centre by Social Workers before they are even born.

Agreed Targets for next 12 Months

Target 1: To complete action research about school readiness

Comments

This target will be linked to next year's SDP and will involve SLT across the federation planning CPD for action research targeting key groups. The Executive Headteacher explained that the aim is to find out what the "local community needs and how we can best support them." This is clear evidence of IQM standard 7, linking with parents/carers and guardians.

Action research into "school readiness" will be completed and then Leaders will think about how to prepare and manage expectations of the whole family for school. For example, some parents will dress their children in smart clothes for school, but a key part of the curriculum is learning outside. Parents are prepared for the fact their child will, in all likelihood, come home dirty. RH has built in evaluation processes and allows time to reflect on previous cohorts to see if anything can be learned from them and applied to current cohorts and this will continue as part of this target to ensure the best planning for the children. However, leaders acknowledged that, of course, all cohorts will be different, and this will be considered as well.

Target 2: Teaching approaches to learning opportunities for rhythmic awareness alongside sound processing skills to develop strong speech, language and literacy skills

Comments

This will be a continuation of the work from last year's IQM target, as leaders felt the work still needed further development. The progression map is being updated, and the Dance Practitioner has applied for funding to work with parents. The review of this target will be looking at what children can't do and how the school can help them develop their muscles as it is felt that; "there is no point trying to teach handwriting if the children don't have the muscle tone to sit properly."

Target 3: To reconstitute the Heysa federation including a new school

Comments

Part of the vision and IQM action plan is to share the inclusive practice, vision and values of the federation even further. With this in mind a new school will be joining the federation, and the vision, values and inclusive practice will be shared with this school, ensuring that it too practices inclusivity on a daily basis.

The Assessor noted that the actions for this target are not detailed enough and the Executive Headteacher acknowledged this but advised that addition of the new school to the federation had only recently been agreed and so the detailed planning is in process at the moment.

The expansion of the federation aligns with the government agenda in the White Paper of schools working more collaboratively together.



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Overview

Rowland Hill Nursery School & Children's Centre is a maintained Nursery School with places for 122 children (currently 133 on roll). There is a rich cultural and ethnic mix in the borough and around 50% of the children in the school have English as an additional Language. 38% of the pupils at RH are in receipt of Early Years PP and 27% of the children live in temporary accommodation. Over 20% of the school's roll have SEND and some are at a high level of complex needs. The onsite Children's Centre has nearly 1,000 families registered and implements a programme of parental involvement courses and classes, food and baby banks, community events and adult learning opportunities. There is also Baby Stay and Play and Baby massage on offer. The staff at the Children's Centre work closely with Nursery staff, following the same routines, interventions and curriculum.

One of the stated values on the RH website is that; "Our diverse community is a model of inclusion, offering equality of opportunity," and upon arrival the Assessor was indeed able to see a diverse community playing and learning together in one of several beautifully decorated rooms surrounded by displays of healthy eating, equality and feelings. There is also a wonderful display in the school entitled "One World, One Community," showing pictures of the children and their families on a world map with all the different countries and languages represented in the school.

There is a fundamental belief at RH that "all children can make progress regardless of starting point or need." Indeed, as the Executive Headteacher stated "All are welcomed here, we take everybody and we always make it work regardless of need"

One teacher told the Assessor that "we put inclusion at the forefront of everything we do, and we make sure we have a safe welcoming environment and that everybody can join in." Learning activities are adapted for all children ages 9 months to 5 years so that everybody can thrive and make progress, whatever their starting points.

Another member of staff told the Assessor that "inclusion is really important to us" and it is obvious that language and culture are celebrated here as well. This is evidenced in the seasonal calendar with time built in for Diwali, Hanukkah, Christmas, Easter and Eid. There are Community and Heritage events in the school and the Children's Centre, when all families are encouraged to come in traditional dress and bring food to share – this is planned with the Parent Forum. Windrush Day is celebrated and the Assessor also noted an excellent display in the entrance to the school celebrating Pride month.

The Assessor visited the school on one of the hottest days of the year and observed care routines put into place to keep all children, but especially the babies, safe in the extreme heat. Staff were continuously taking the temperature around the building and acting to move children to cooler spaces as necessary (going so far as to close one building altogether), again this was particularly evident with the babies' sleeping spaces in the Children's Centre.

The Ofsted report of September 2022 noted "this is a joyful place" with "laughter and cries of glee" being heard all day. Four years later and the Assessor found this still to be the case. Taking a tour of the school, it was obvious how much all children enjoyed being there. There is an aptly named "Discovery Room" where children are free to



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explore and experiment with water, paint or clay, and several outside spaces which host a huge variety of zoned areas, such as a growing area, a woodwork area (with real tools), a mud kitchen, a Forest School Space amongst many other things.

RH is key school for Natural Thinkers and there is a big emphasis on outdoor play. Being a part of this programme was a natural development for the school, as it has a key commitment that “no child is excluded from activities.” One of the spaces is deliberately not “perfectly manicured” in order to allow children time and space to play in the dirt, find bugs, pick up leaves and all of this sparks imagination, questions and discussion – skills which are held in high importance at RH.

The Assessor observed an expertly led session in the sensory room, with children/staff singing and using gestures/communal language throughout to ensure effective communication. It was a delight to hear laughter and happy screaming during the session. The sessions were led by staff who built on whatever a child was choosing to do, joining in, asking questions, and supporting children to solve problems in their chosen activities.

Part of the RH vision as seen on the school's website states: “we nurture hearts and minds to be kind, challenge stereotypes as to construct a better society for the future” It was pleasing to see how much the school had thought about the resources in use for the children, especially the books in the library and in class – which are being actively used to challenge stereotypes, making sure that all books reflect the community. This work has also been shared at a conference organised by RH, when the Deputy Headteacher led a session for delegates entitled “auditing books, visual imagery and authors – challenging bias in picture book.” Sharing such inclusive practice is a key part of the IQM development plan.

The library, in one of the main teaching spaces, is full of books which have diverse characters to ensure all children can see themselves represented. Teaching staff talked about the importance of this and were keen to note that the whole staff team is also diverse, meaning that families could recognize themselves in staff, helping to build the all-important trusting relationships with families that is key to much of the work at RH.

The school describes the curriculum as “ambitious” and has been meticulously planned to “ensure all children reach age related expectations.” The planning started with the child first, followed by “key relationships” and “an understanding of the child and their family”, only then are the ways through which children will learn described. The Curriculum Intent diagram at RH shows entitlements of play based and inclusive learning, alongside established care routines and supporting children with their self-regulation and well-being.

Learning for a child at RH typically starts with “Learn to Learn”, which lasts between three – four weeks, staff assess starting points with “I can....” statements, meaning they are able to assess all children and plan for their progress and development. The themes of relationships, inclusivity and play were returned to again and again when discussing the play-based curriculum. Staff explained that the curriculum focuses on the seven areas of learning in EYFS, including communication, personal development, physical development, literacy and mathematical understanding.



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A key activity for all children is "Talking Time", it begins with a "Talking Tub" with several resources, the children will look at these, handle them, and ask questions facilitating vital discussions enabling oracy development. The children will focus on a key thing, and this will become their key learning prompt. A great example of this could be a simple feather, prompting questions such as "what sort of bird is it from?", "What might it eat?" or "Where does it come from?" Staff will then find other resources to deepen learning, and it is all recorded in floor books, showing what the children have learned. Staff told the Assessor that chosen topics could last all year or just a couple of weeks depending on the level of interest.

Another expertly led activity was observed being led by the school's apprentice, emphasizing the excellent training available for all. Sign language was used throughout, and very young children were being supported in social skills, numeracy and phonics. Children responded enthusiastically with the activities provided.

Children are continually and robustly assessed in order to facilitate planning in the moment, and alongside this, each child has a planned focus week each term, where the child's key worker dedicates time to do focused activities with them. Staff strive to understand each child's starting point and assess them termly as well. Staff are highly trained in high-quality interactions and senior staff will model this for staff regularly as part of the CPD programme.

Governors are fully immersed in the life of the school and helped to develop the inclusive vision and values of the school. The Assessor met with a staff governor who explained that there is an Inclusion Governor who conducts regular Learning Walks and meets with the SENDCO. The Assessor also heard that data is shared with the full Governing Body, by both the school and the Children's Centre manager, and this data shows diverse groups of learners, allowing governors to track their progress, helping to ensure that all children are making progress.

The Ofsted report of 2022 states that "parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive" and this is testament to school's commitment to building and developing trusting relations with parents. The aim of this is, as one Key Worker noted, "to gradually unpick concerns" in order to support them to support their children. Another Key Worker told the Assessor that "we build a rapport with the parents."

The belief is that good relationships with parents are replicated in the Children's Centre, and staff there noted that "we do whatever we need to do to make sure parents don't worry and to show them that we can support their children."

It was not possible to meet parents on the day of the assessment, but written testimonials were provided by parents. One parent, with a child on the autism spectrum wrote to say that the support provided by RH for her child has been "greatly valued" and noted that the staff "demonstrated a clear understanding" of her child's needs. Other parental comments focused on the open communication which had always been "professional and constructive".



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Another parent noted “brilliant keyworkers” who worked hard to broaden the children’s horizons, getting to know the children, then planning interesting activities for them. The Executive Headteacher reinforced this, telling the Assessor that 50% of the curriculum planning is child led and each child has a special week when they “get to wallow in the things they adore,” with activities planned just for them. These special weeks are also planned in partnership with parents.

One of the testimonials finished with profuse thanks and the statement “her first few years of life have been enriched so much by being at RH.” What a wonderful tribute! As well as excellent links with external professionals available to support any child who needs it, RH also benefits from a seasonal calendar. This calendar is fully inclusive, reflecting and celebrating the diverse nature of the pupils in the school, for example Black History Month, religious festivals, and Neurodiversity Celebration Week, as well as home languages which are recognised and encouraged.

Children at RH take part in National and International events, International Day of Sign Languages, World Nursery Rhyme Week, National Storytelling Week, Children in Need and Recycle Week – to name just a small number of a very long list of events.

There is an Artist in Residence who is currently working on a beautiful installation that has involved all children and children all have the opportunity to go on local trips and visits. It was explained to the Assessor that lots of the trips are local and in this way parents who might not necessarily know where to take their children on days out can access the sites at a later date. This is an excellent way of developing cultural capital in children in the fourth most deprived borough in London.

I therefore recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence status and is reviewed again in 12 months, with a view to considering applying for Flagship status at that point. The Assessor is also firmly of the opinion that the school is ready to apply for Flagship status but has not done so for operational reasons. The Assessor hopes very much that the school feels able to do so in the near future.

Overall, the Assessor found Rowland Hill Nursery School and Children’s Centre to be a lovely, friendly, and happy school, where inclusion is clearly embedded in all aspects of school life. The Assessor is firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Centre of Excellence, 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: Ms Lucy Ciantanni

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Chief Executive Officer
Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd