



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name William Ford CofE Junior School
Ford Road
Dagenham
Essex
RM10 9JS

Head/Principal Mr David Huntingford

IQM Lead Mr Lee Buckingham

Date of Review 29th September 2026

Assessor Ms Sharon Marsden

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Drive to Thrive / London 1

Ambassador Dr Kenny Frederick

Next Meeting TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2025	8 th Oct 2025	Yes
Spring 2026	20 th Jan 2026	Yes
Summer 2026	22 nd Apr 2026	Yes

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

The Deputy Headteacher shared that William Ford have attended all cluster meetings this year and that these sessions have had a significant impact, providing valuable opportunities to reflect on practice and consider approaches that would benefit the school. The school found it particularly helpful to explore how other settings use effective teacher-led provision and flexible TA deployment to reduce the need for allocated adult support.

Coaching circles were a new concept to William Ford and following the presentation at the cluster meeting, this has become a point of interest and discussion back at school. The Deputy Headteacher also noted similarities in areas such as pupil progress meetings and high-quality teaching, leading to a reduction in interventions as a result. This approach is something William Ford have a direct interest in to develop in their



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own setting. One cluster meeting had a focus on pupil premium and the school was inspired by the presentation of a five-pillar model, with its clear rationale and demonstrable impact, which offered both a strong professional insight and a valuable contact for future collaboration.

Evidence

- SDP
- Staff Survey
- Inset PowerPoint Slides for Mantle of the Expert Lessons
- The Scholas Programme and Impact Report
- Data Report to Governors
- Pupil Premium Strategy
- BDSIP Quality Assurance Report
- Ofsted Report
- Place2Be Outcome Report

Meetings with:

- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- SENDCo
- Three support staff
- Three Governors
- Learning Mentor
- Family Liaison
- 6 pupils of mixed year groups and backgrounds
- 1 Parent

In addition, I visited the school TV show area, Lighthouse Provision and a selection of Classrooms. I observed the pupils taking part in lessons in classrooms, breakout spaces and the library.

Evaluation of Targets for last 12 Months

Target 1: To develop and embed inclusive, real-world curriculum experiences that remove barriers to learning and build confidence through consistent use of Mantle of the Expert, adaptive teaching, digital strategies, targeted dyslexia-friendly strategies and career-linked opportunities.

The school has made good progress in developing and embedding inclusive, real-world curriculum experiences that build confidence and remove barriers to learning. Their careers-linked approach is intentional and clearly understood by pupils. The Headteacher showed me a display in his office and described how the school is, “promoting careers for the future.” The Headteacher spoke about the diverse range of visitors including a rapper, an actor, a leader of global finance and the local MP all of whom have visited William Ford and openly shared personal challenges or experiences of neurodiversity. These visitors have provided pupils with real-life role models and reinforced the message that expertise can come from different starting points.

The Headteacher also explained that the school has ensured visitors represent different faiths and backgrounds. One Sikh visitor described to the pupils that for him, “work is an outpouring of faith,” and spent time interacting with pupils and families outside of assemblies, modelling inclusive community partnership in practice.

The Assessor was particularly taken by the ‘visiting soon’ labels added to the office display, which help to prepare pupils and build excitement around upcoming experiences.

Next Steps:

To strengthen Mantle of the Expert within maths, where the approach is currently less established compared to science and the humanities. We discussed that as Mantle of the Expert becomes the Flagship model, the school should work with staff to design maths-focused Mantle of the Expert units for use in lessons and use their developing partnership with UCL’s Institute of Education to refine and review this work.

Target 2: To strengthen the school’s inclusive approach to behaviour by ensuring consistent routines and expectations across all settings, while promoting emotional literacy, respectful dialogue and self-regulation.

Place2Be continues to sit at the heart of William Ford’s whole-school behaviour strategy to ensure emotional regulation across the school is in a good place. The Senior Leadership Team are able to identify and respond to pupil’s needs, whilst ensuring appropriate expectations are upheld. The continued work using the Hamish & Milo scheme has been particularly successful in supporting emotional literacy and self-regulation, giving pupils structured opportunities to explore feelings and develop coping strategies. The school has a traffic-light behaviour system that provides a clear, consistent framework for all classes. This system enables staff to spot emerging patterns early and meet with pupils to consider triggers and explore next steps. The Deputy Headteacher stated that, “this model is helping us maintain high expectations while promoting respectful dialogue and emotional understanding.”



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Behaviour in school is calm and well managed, but leaders remain alert to concerns arising outside of school. The Headteacher has responded proactively by maintaining regular communication with residents and showing a visible presence in the community. The school acts quickly by contacting parents and sharing concerns. The SENDCo shared that, “parents are seen the same day if they have a problem, we are an open school” and this balanced communication is reinforced by a strong Senior Leadership Team presence around the school and at key points outside the gates.

Next Steps:

William Ford will continue to build on their inclusive behaviour strategy by refining the use of the traffic-light system in order to capture emerging patterns across classes. Using this information to inform targeted emotional-regulation support will help maintain high expectations.

Target 3: To ensure every pupil has meaningful opportunities to build confidence, character and aspiration, including leadership roles, careers exposure and wider life experiences, with a focus on embedding pupil's rights across the whole school community.

The school has made great progress towards this target, their work around pupil's rights and responsibilities continues to be embedded across the community. Pupils benefit from regular careers exposure through visits from a diverse range of professionals, alongside thoughtfully sequenced trips that build independence and widen life experiences. These opportunities are increasingly purposeful and aligned with pupil's rights, supporting the school's ambition to create a culture where every pupil feels empowered, informed and able to contribute.

Next Steps:

Leaders will develop the school's rights-based work by improving pupil leadership opportunities and continuing to build pupils' independence through the carefully sequenced experiences. William Ford intend to continue building on the existing success of inviting visitors who broaden pupils' understanding of the world of work, offering insight into careers they may not have previously known existed and helping them recognise new possibilities they can aspire to.



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Agreed Targets for Flagship Project

Project Title: Mantle of the Expert as an Inclusive Pedagogy: Exploring its Impact on Engagement and Attainment for Pupils, including those deemed to have SEND and/or Disadvantage.

Target 1: Establish research baseline and design Mantle of the Expert curriculum units with explicit inclusive intent.

William Ford has been using Mantle of the Expert in areas of their curriculum and shared how this has led to noticeable increases in pupil engagement. The Curriculum Lead for STEM shared examples of pupils demonstrating sustained interest and enthusiasm, noting that even after moving into the next year group, many could still recall the Mantle of the Expert units they had experienced. Leaders are keen to extend this practice into additional curriculum areas, with a particular focus on maths, to strengthen inclusion and deepen conceptual understanding. As part of this next phase, the school plans to audit current Mantle of the Expert practice to identify where and when it is happening, ensuring a clear picture of existing provision. Alongside this, baseline engagement and attainment data is being collected for SEND pupils so that future Mantle of the Expert development is grounded in an accurate understanding of need and can be designed with explicit inclusive intent.

Target 2: Implement Mantle of the Expert units, gather evidence and conduct mid-point review.

The Deputy Headteacher outlined clear plans for implementing the next phase of Mantle of the Expert, with staff preparing to deliver the planned units and to gather a wide range of evidence to inform reviews. Pupil voice, including through focus groups with SEND pupils, staff reflections, lesson observations, engagement and attainment data will be collected and analysed against the established baseline. The Deputy Headteacher explained how this will enable the school to adjust planning appropriately. Plans are being made to present to the IQM cluster group and to be shared with partner schools at a later stage.

Target 3: To refine models, extend to Lighthouse provision and develop dissemination resources.

The Deputy Headteacher outlined how the findings from the initial parts of the project will be used to refine their Mantle of the Expert unit plans, ensuring that inclusive content becomes increasingly explicit and embedded. The leadership team plan to extend the Mantle of the Expert approach into the Lighthouse provision, adapting units carefully for pupils with more complex needs so that the model remains meaningful, accessible and rooted in real-world contexts. As part of wider dissemination, the school are planning to develop a resource guide and invite cluster schools to observe Mantle of the Expert in practice.

Overview

It was a pleasure to visit William Ford CoE Junior school where commitment to inclusion is visible and embedded across the whole school community. During my visit, parents described the school as, “phenomenal” and explained that staff, “go above and beyond not just for the pupils but the parents as well.” The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher describe inclusion as central to the school’s identity. They spoke about their commitment to ensuring every child is known, supported and challenged, explaining that, “the pupils come first in everything which is how it should be.” Their approach to leadership is relational and visible, with the Headteacher maintaining strong community links, including regular communication with local shopkeepers and a daily presence outside the school. They describe themselves as, “a very open school, parents are seen the same day if they have a problem,” reinforcing the culture of transparency and responsiveness that I saw throughout the day.

Parents spoke warmly and described the school as, “phenomenal, the staff really do go above and beyond, not just for the pupils but the parents as well.” They highlighted the high level of emotional support available, noting the school’s structured and thoughtful approach to wellbeing. The Hamish & Milo programme provides pupils with supported opportunities to explore feelings, develop emotional literacy and practise regulation strategies which can offer comfort when challenges arise at home or in school. The school are committed to the Place2Be whole school approach giving pupils access to a trusted adult for confidential, therapeutic conversations, with a simple self-referral process through a worry-post system that enables pupils to seek support independently when they need it.

Parents described feeling listened to and valued by the school and commented that staff are always responsive to their needs. Communication was highlighted by parents as a major strength of the school, explaining that, “even if a specific person isn’t available to speak to, they will find someone who is.” Parents told me how the removal of homework has reduced pressure at home and allowed pupils and parents to enjoy their evenings together. One parent described this change as, “absolutely amazing.” Families also praised the school’s financial support for trips explaining that parents feel comfortable enough to ask when they need help.

William Ford’s commitment to inclusive practice was evident throughout the learning walk, where I had the privilege of visiting a range of classrooms and learning spaces. A repurposed science room now functions as both a classroom and a TV studio. The Digital Leader explained how the radio station provides a range of opportunities for neurodiverse pupils to both lead and work with others to create broadcasts. The SENDCo described how the school has invested in iPads to support learning for all pupils and this investment in digital technology has provided a level of, “invisible inclusion” whereby personalised adaptations such as coloured overlays, enlarged text, and adapted resources can be sent directly to the devices. This is a positive step for pupils with barriers such as dyslexia, visual impairment or motor-skill difficulties. In terms of intervention provision, the SENDCo described how grouping is used to support all pupils, with breakout groups enabling targeted learning within lessons. The Deputy Headteacher explained that ongoing staff professional development is revisiting Rosenshein’s principles, with a particular focus on vocabulary following findings from

gap analysis. Leaders identified that pupils enter Year 3 with lower starting points in times tables and have therefore prioritised fluency as a key area of development. During the visit, I observed a maths lesson where pupils were highly engaged in a times-tables game, reflecting this whole-school focus on strengthening fluency from Year 3 onwards. Pupils spoke confidently about their learning and were keen to share their favourite subjects with me. They described how much they enjoy maths and English and one pupil explained that science and geography were the best subjects because they help her to understand, "what is going on in the world." When I asked whether they felt supported in the classroom, one pupil shared, "I am dyslexic and they gave me a purple overlay, it really helped me," while another explained, "I have ADHD and I found school difficult but I went to the Lighthouse and it changed me." Pupils also showed their understanding that adaptations should be used appropriately by telling me, "If a fidget toy becomes loud teachers will take it away."

The pupils were proud to tell me about their roles within School Council, describing how important it feels to represent their peers and make sure everyone is happy while thinking about how they can change and improve the school. Pupils talked enthusiastically about enrichment opportunities, including football teams, art activities, cooking sessions and the wide range of visitors who come into school. They were particularly inspired by a recent visit from a police officer with ADHD and dyslexia, explaining that despite her barriers, "she got to work out how to achieve her dream." The pupils talked about trips at William Ford with great excitement, describing eating marshmallows at Forest School and sharing their pride in attending Young Voices at the O2, "we practise all day and then sing to the audience. We come back at midnight!" Their comments reflected the high levels of enthusiasm and enjoyment they have for the opportunities William Ford provides.

The Lighthouse provision continues to go from strength to strength and staff spoke proudly about the progress the pupils are making. The Lighthouse supports pupils from Year 3 to Year 6, with some pupils attending full-time and others accessing a hybrid timetable. The environment is highly organised and adaptive, with planning being a shared activity amongst all adults. Staff spoke enthusiastically about this approach and the positive impact it has on their practice, explaining, "because we are involved in the planning we know how to deliver and adapt."

This term, the team has introduced personalised adaptation booklets, with activities carefully designed to meet the outcomes identified in each pupil's EHCPs, alongside the use of puppets to support learning in foundation subjects. One TA explained, "I can concentrate on one set of pupils while the others are occupied, that's really worked for me." It was impressive how the staff use their ability to adapt provision in response to individual needs. This has included providing one to one support for a child working at an 18-month developmental level, while ensuring that the wider group continued to access their learning. Staff described how the team pulled together to make this happen, demonstrating the collaborative and responsive nature of the Lighthouse provision. The SENDCo also showed me the continued development of the Lighthouse outdoor area, which is being expanded to provide further opportunities to support pupils' regulation.



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My meeting with Governors focused on the importance of accountability, communication and shared commitment across the school. One Governor reflected on their own school experience and contrasted this with pupils' experiences at William Ford saying, "here, it's not a tick-box exercise, they really want to help."

Governors spoke confidently about their involvement in school improvement, including their exploration of the use of iPads across the whole school. They explained how they had been involved in the consideration of both the cost and the feasibility of this, demonstrating that their involvement extended to discussion and challenge. Governors shared that communication between the Headteacher and Governing Body is strong, illustrated through half-termly meetings and the open sharing of the School Improvement Plan.

Governors spoke positively about Mantle of the Expert project and the way it contributes to pupils' engagement in learning. They described lessons as, "very engaging," highlighting the opportunities pupils have to act, take on roles and immerse themselves in their learning, while also recognising the importance of maintaining a clear focus on learning objectives

Governors have a strong understanding of and commitment to the school's SEND provision, they talked about the support provided for pupils with additional needs and the importance of ensuring that every child is able to access and benefit from school life. Their understanding of the school's disadvantaged pupils was clear, with one governor commenting, "everything we do is aimed at them." A response that reflects a genuine commitment to ensuring that the school's priorities are focused on improving outcomes and opportunities for all pupils, particularly those who may face additional barriers to success.

The Inclusion Team shared with me how their weekly meetings provide a consistent focus on tracking every pupil across all areas of vulnerability to ensure support is specific to individual need. Interventions are reviewed more frequently than termly, allowing the team to identify quickly what is working and where further adjustments are needed. This felt like a real strength of the school, ensuring that pupils do not have to wait for support to be reviewed when their needs change.

The school's approach continues to be proactive with staff working together to identify and respond quickly to issues such as behaviour, housing, attendance and safeguarding. The Family Liaison Officer spoke with genuine pride about the ways the school supports families, she shared that, "the opportunities available to families are amazing." She also explained how the partnership with The Felix Project foodbank has become a powerful example of this community-focused approach, enabling families to access support in a welcoming and dignified way, emphasising that parents are, "comfortable seeking support." She also noted that ex-pupils and local residents with no prior connection to the school are volunteering to help at the foodbank. I was impressed by the Inclusion Team's strength, demonstrated both in their response to need and community-focused way of working.

William Ford CoE Junior School is proud of its Centre of Excellence status, which reflects the school's strong commitment to inclusion and support in the community. The school's vision to support pupils to be, "successful, healthy, fulfilled and empowered to



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make a difference" is clearly lived out in practice. Thank you to everyone at William Ford for a welcoming, informative and enjoyable visit. It is clear from the review process that the school continues to be deeply committed to inclusive education and to ensuring every child is valued.

The school continues to move from strength to strength in terms of its superb inclusive practice and I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to pursue Flagship School status. I therefore recommend that the school moves to Flagship Status and is reviewed again in 12 months. The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach. Evidence of cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Flagship status.

Assessor: Ms Sharon Marsden

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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