



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: Oliver Thomas Nursery School and Children's Centre

School Address: 1 Matthews Avenue
East Ham
London
E6 6BU

Head/Principal Ms Lorna Prynne

IQM Lead Ms Johanna Edwards

Assessment Date 24th June 2024

Assessor Ms Debra Joyce

Sources of Evidence:

- IQM Self-Evaluation Report (SER).
- School Website.
- Ofsted Report 2015.
- School Development Plan (SDP).
- Learning Walk - a tour of the Nursery.
- Staff Wellbeing Policy.
- Newham School Improvement Advisor (SIA) Service Report 22/23.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inclusive Education Policy.
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Information Report.
- Governors' Report.
- 'Special Books'.
- Observation of a carpet session.

Meetings Held with:

- Parents.
- Chair of Governors (virtual).
- Teachers.
- Senior Early Years Educator and Early Years Educators.
- Children's Centre Lead Practitioner.
- Inclusion Lead.
- Headteacher.



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Overall Evaluation

This was the second IQM assessment for Oliver Thomas Nursery School. Oliver Thomas is a maintained, inclusive nursery school serving a diverse catchment area in the London Borough of Newham. Newham is the 3rd largest borough population in London. There is a wide range of backgrounds with the highest being Asian Indian, then White British, Asian Bangladeshi and Black African. It is in the 10% most deprived boroughs in the country. The main language spoken in Newham is English with the next most spoken languages being Bengali, Urdu and Gujarati. Over the last few years, the school has identified a high level of children of Bengali heritage having SEND.

Oliver Thomas Nursery is very welcoming and has a warm, positive ethos with an open, friendly, happy atmosphere. The Headteacher, Centre Lead and Inclusion Manager lead by positive example and set the tone for the supportive, caring, framework, where inclusive values are fundamental. One obvious thing was the positive relationships between staff, staff and other stakeholders, and staff and pupils. Pupils and their families are genuinely at the heart of the school's purpose and everything staff do is always for the benefit of the children. Teaching and support staff (Early Years Educators) are valued for their skills and expertise; classroom teaching demonstrates excellent practice and teachers continually review and further develop their skills to meet the diverse needs of all children. This is not by chance. There is a culture of learning and sharing of good practice not only within the school but across the borough and nationally. This culture is driven by the passion of all of the staff.

The Senior Leadership consists of a Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, Children's Centre Lead and Senior Early Years Practitioner. Each room is led by a teacher and 2 Early Years Educators. The room for the two-year-olds has a Senior Early Years Educator and three Early Years Educators.

The staff welcomes the challenge presented to them as they recognise that everything they do, they do as a team. Others allow them to see what they are capable of and this drives them further to want to do their best for the school and the children and families they serve. The training projects and the staff themselves presenting at conferences have helped improve inclusive practice and continuity in approach. They show commitment to the school by all attending the Autism Show - which includes a Saturday! It was evident on the tour of the school that all staff were not just interacting but were in tune with the children. This, they said, was an outcome of the Autism Show as it shows "how you can have a vision of our children now and how and what they can achieve in the future". Staff want to ensure that every opportunity becomes a learning opportunity for the children. The staff are proud that they give "fantastic foundations" and that they ensure the security and happiness of the parents. Their diversity as a team supports conversations with parents and gives insight into celebrated cultural differences.

The Children's Centre builds good relationships and trust with the parents and perseveres in promoting the centre and the school. The centre uses the resources of the nursery in holiday times and visits to the library promote the centre and the classes it runs. Families are confident that answers will be found around issues such as funding and school applications. There is a sense of belonging - the Centre Lead describes it as "a feeling of being a part of a family. There are some families that are extended, but some are not and can be quite isolated - the centre gives them that feeling of belonging to something special".



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The school has a clear vision for the development of learning outside the classroom. The school embraces the ethos of natural activities and learning based on the Frobelian Principles. There is a bank within the playground and various purpose-built areas used for this way of learning. Oliver Thomas ensures that the children learn holistically and stress that learning should never be compartmentalised. The Nursery and Children's Centre sees each child as unique and looks for what the children can do rather than what they cannot, as the starting point for their learning. They recognise that children learn best by doing things for themselves and by becoming more aware of their own learning. The staff respect children for who they are and value them for their efforts.

Many children have low levels of development on entry into nursery, especially in terms of language development and communication. 40% of the children have SEND; 20 of these occupy funded Assessment Places. Two children are in Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) resource provision places, with two more due to start in September 2024. Four children have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and twelve more are currently in the application process. The majority of the children enter the nursery at below or significantly below age-related expectations. 87% of children come into nursery below or significantly below in at least one area of development. 37% of children aged 3 come in significantly below and are classified as having SEND and 53% of 2-year-olds come in significantly below and are classified as having SEND.

The nursery is a beacon of inclusive practice and continues to share its expertise with other schools in Newham. For example, Oliver Thomas is instrumental in organising a large two-day Early Years Conference every year in Newham. Over 600 people attend from Newham and across the country. SEND and inclusion are a key part of the day with various focussed workshops as well as featured key speakers.

All stakeholders that were spoken to hold the Nursery and Children's Centre in high regard and parents in particular were delighted with the support they have received from the school.

The school is continually developing its excellent practice on inclusion. It is sharing its practice with a range of other schools and has several projects already being undertaken to improve inclusivity. In particular, it is having a significant impact in terms of inclusive practice within the borough and further afield.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in three years. I also recommend that the school should consider applying for Centre of Excellence status 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, it would be subject to annual review from this point forwards.

Assessor: Ms Debra Joyce

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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