



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: Freegrounds Junior School

School Address: Hobb Lane
Hedge End
Southampton
SO30 0GG

Head/Principal: Mr Ryan O'Hearn

IQM Lead: Mrs Sarah Robinson

Assessment Date (s): 30th June 2021

Assessor: Mr Kevin O'Neill

Sources of Evidence:

- All IQM Elements 1-8 from SER and strategic evidence requested by assessor.
- School Improvement Plan 2021.
- Child Centred SEN Profiles.
- Curriculum Overview – ASPIRE BELIEVE ACHIEVE.
- English Action Plan 2020/21.
- Extracts from Minutes of BOG meetings and Governors Monitoring Forms.
- Data Spreadsheet.
- Literacy Planners.
- Year 3 Medium Term Plans.
- Evidence of Pupil work – Learning Behaviour Character Journey.
- Statistical evidence of Family Engagement and Pupil Learning during Lockdown (both in and out of school.)
- Parental letters highlighting outstanding teaching in the school.
- Positive Behaviour Policy 2020.
- SEND Monitoring and Reports to Board of Governors.
- Transition evidence from Year 2/Year 3 and Year6/Year7.
- Trick Boxes.
- School website.
- Documents were well presented, transparent and evidence was chronicled and well sign posted from Mr O'Hearn and his team. Every request by the assessor was facilitated by a team proud of their work and journey.



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Meetings Held with:

- Welcome meeting with Head, Deputy, SENCO, and Chair of Governors.
- Meeting with a group of parents.
- Inspiring discussion and meetings with Year 3 and Year 6 children.
- Interview with Yr3 teacher regarding communication and working closely with Infants School.
- Interview with Yr3 teacher regarding the importance of Outdoor Learning.
- Interview with Yr6 teacher regarding English curriculum and teaching provision in the school.
- Interview with Yr6 teacher regarding bespoke transition arrangements to Yr7.
- Interview with Assessment Leader and how data is effectively used to raise standards.
- Interview with Family Support Worker (Covid Outreach and Response.)
- Discussions with LSA and ELSA.



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Overall Evaluation

"Children deserve the highest quality teaching and learning experiences to enable them to begin their learning journey effectively. I feel we do that very well here at Freegrounds." Jerry Hughes (Chair of Governors).

Freegrounds Junior School (FJS) is a very inclusive establishment which is seen clearly by the values they hold dearly. Their school values are at the core of everything they do. They underpin their teaching and learning and provide an environment which prepares pupils as confident, happy citizens. Their vision is to create a safe, inspirational learning environment, in which everyone is respected as a learner and experiences success and where barriers to learning are identified and intervention put in place to overcome them.

Freegrounds Junior School is a large three-form entry junior school located in Hedge End, Southampton. 66% of pupils live out of the catchment area with some living up to 5 miles away. Almost all children transfer from the adjoining infant school, a school well-grounded in the principles of inclusion. There is good attendance and punctuality (currently 97.5% for 20/21) it has improved from previous years and rigorous support systems are in place for where attendance has been identified as a concern. The school evaluates itself to be a school that is securely good overall, and the LA identified the school as being 'low priority' for support in 2018-2019). The school was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2018 and was graded as 'good,' with many areas of significant strength.

The staff make the most of the spacious building and its grounds to accept the diversity of needs of pupils and create an exciting and stimulating environment for all its learners. Educators work hard to know each of the children in the school individually and were proud to say that they care for all the children as in the "Freegrounds' Family." They have designed an inclusive and holistic curriculum for all. SLT work hard to ensure that the community at all times remain the heartbeat of the school.

Throughout the assessment there was clear evidence of some excellent inclusive practice, driven by the Headteacher, Deputy and SENCO and all staff within the school. The inclusion agenda and the Equalities Act framework of 2010 are wholeheartedly supported through an ethos of well embedded values. There are good structures and systems in place to ensure an open dialogue with all stakeholders to continue to improve the experiences for all pupils.

There was a welcoming and friendly approach from all staff, pupils, parents, and all members of the school community throughout my very enjoyable virtual visit. My observations and involvement with pupils throughout the assessment clearly demonstrated that they are ambassadors for the school. Their exemplary manners, behaviour and comments reflected their pride in belonging to Freegrounds Junior School. Throughout the assessment everyone spoke with conviction and unity of purpose as to the inclusive nature of the school, thereby substantiating the school's impressive Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and supporting documentation, which was considered as part of the assessment. The teamwork and spirit shown by the Inclusion team really captured the assessor's imagination from the get-go. So many staff with a conviction of purpose, ready to deliver and improve the learning opportunities available to the children at Freegrounds. This ensures that



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inclusion at FJS is not just something that the school just does as an extra, it is something that they breathe.

The wellbeing of all stakeholders and in particular the children is of great importance in FJS. Senior Leaders have created a school with an open-minded, accepting, and inclusive atmosphere. At Freegrounds Junior School, they successfully promote positive mental health and wellbeing for their whole school community. They evidenced their recognition of just how important mental health and emotional wellbeing are to the lives of all those in the school. Through layered levels of support (universal, targeted, and specialised individual support) The Headteacher and the team recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can affect their learning and achievement. This ensures that for all their children, FJS is a haven and a safe place to learn. This is invaluable work.

During the pandemic and going forward it is clear that all adults too are well cared for and well supported in their respective roles, both professionally and at a personal level. In fact, most people with whom I spoke commented on the positive ethos within the school and numerous comments were made about the growing warmth and friendly atmosphere, happy people, and the fun experience in all aspects of school life. To produce such a culture and have it robustly tested during a pandemic, is noteworthy and highly commendable.

Another key to this success is the staff's detailed knowledge of the needs of its community and their ever-changing social demographics. Staff consult parents and carers fully and they take steps to ensure the pupils are able to thrive and achieve as well as they can. This involves a high level of tolerance, empathy, and support. Communication with families is strong, frequent, and ultimately effective. The school ensures that all its communications convey respect and value to all types of family. All stakeholders have a sense of belonging to the school and inclusion is well embraced so that each pupil is valued for their individuality and can develop their enquiring minds and spirit of curiosity through participating in a range of challenging, fulfilling, and happy educational experiences to reach their full potential.

The assessment included a series of virtual meetings with the Chair of Governors, Head, Deputy, SENCO, teachers, subject leaders, LSA/ELSA, family support worker, parents, and pupils. There was also an opportunity to discuss the context of the school, learn about a number of school initiatives and to review and evaluate a number of key school documents. At FJS, the Leadership Team do not work in isolation. The distributed leadership model has allowed many staff to develop across the school, to the benefit of the organisation as a whole. The involvement and commitment of the whole staff are significant reasons for the school's success.

While the children are encouraged in a positive way, so too are the teaching and support staff. In particular, the appreciation for the classroom assistants is very apparent. In fact, there are aspects of the school's Covid-19 provision that could not happen without the commitment of the support staff. Their roles are fully integrated into the curriculum and credit for their work was consistently emphasised throughout the assessment. It was a pleasure to meet with a few long-serving assistants and the pride they felt at working in FJS really resonated with the assessor.



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The strategic leadership of the school is outstanding. There is evidently a collegial approach to school improvement that is based on a clear, shared and child centred vision. From my visit and discussion with teachers, it was clear that leaders at all levels display the same pastoral approach and that their enthusiasm means they effectively work together with the whole school community to problem solve and surmount challenges. The Leadership Team at Freegrounds Junior School complement each other well, they are realistic about the context they work in but are proud of their achievements. The culture at FJS is very strong. A productive, strong, and highly inclusive culture that focuses on ensuring effective and enriched teaching for learning for all pupils. Their child-centred ways of working are unyielding and unrelenting, there was total commitment and enthusiasm for the priceless work that they do. Most eye-catching of all for this assessor was the ground-breaking Chestnut Room and the powerful narrative behind its evolution. The staff have driven this project forward through some outstanding initiatives and the legacy of their foresight will be felt in the children that have been cared for by them for years to come.

FJS is an excellent example of inclusive practice, energy, and aspiration for all members of the school community. The Head leads inclusion with the courageous and forward-thinking belief that more can always be done to increase levels of inclusion and improvement for the learning community at FJS. He arrived in post not too long before the pandemic. He has made a tangible impact on standards. A number of FJS's successes during the last 18 months can be put down to this appointment and the strategic forward planning that is so evident in their ambitious action plans.

Joy and celebration are important for all pupils and the voice of every pupil in this school is vibrant and significant. This is a school that clearly evidences focus, energy and enthusiasm in its commitment to the growing reality of inclusion for all. Pupils achieve very high standards as the teaching is very good or outstanding. The work they do is demanding yet perfectly pitched to ensure challenge is appropriate. FJS staff take full account of their pupils' varied life experiences and needs and then they get to work. My observations and involvement with pupils throughout the assessment clearly demonstrated that they are ambassadors for the school. Their exemplary manners, behaviour and comments reflected their pride in belonging to Freegrounds Junior School.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent, this is because there is a comprehensive and consistently applied positive behaviour system in place which rewards tolerance, kindness, friendliness, and a willingness to 'have a try'. Pupils know that bullying and behaviours such as the use of hurtful language are wrong and have been shown the impact it can have on others' feelings and achievements.

FJS is a lively and friendly community where pupils achieve very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils have a huge voice in the school, they are listened to and are keen to learn. The staff constantly look for ways to improve the quality of their teaching, are imaginative and make challenging demands of pupils. The Pupil Premium Leader leads the school strategy for supporting pupils eligible for the PPG, monitoring, and evaluating the support in place for these pupils. There are very good arrangements in place to support all pupils and care for them and the school has a strong partnership with parents and carers. The school is well governed and self-critical. They know what they do well, where their challenges lie and how best to tackle them. They have shown a high capacity for improvement and an ability to sustain their own high standards. The outstanding quality of



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teaching and imaginative teaching methods foster determination to succeed in their children. Class teachers have access to a live SEND Concerns form for each year group whereby strategies are listed, and teachers are asked to keep a written record of concerns they have and what inclusive strategies and support are being put in place to support the learning for the child which the SENCO monitors and takes action as needed.

Parents also feel valued for their contribution to the life of the school and in turn appreciate the dedication of all the staff in the education of their children. Parents I spoke with could not stress strongly enough just how much the school had supported and improved the quality of outcomes that their children were achieving. The parents of the children of FJS wanted to express their gratitude to the school for all that they do.

There is a wide range of expertise on the Governing Body. They are well led and their commitment to the inclusive ethos is evident in discussions. Outcomes for all groups of pupils are periodically reported to the Curriculum and Standards Committee. They attend the school regularly and have a consistent monitoring timetable related to the school improvement plan. The infectious child-centred and 'can-do' enthusiasm of one governor in particular rubbed off on me and it was a joy to meet with such a positive and appreciative person.

The incredible atmosphere I witnessed in the school is based upon outstanding relationships between staff, pupils, and parents. I could see the importance and celebration of teamwork, the respect for each other's roles and recognising the wide range of individual talents and expertise. The staff, Governors, parents, and pupils work in unison to create an educational setting which enables all of their pupils to grow in wisdom, understanding and mutual respect, **'Aspire, Believe and Achieve'**.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded IQM's Inclusive School Award and be reassessed in 3 years' time.

Assessor: Kevin O'Neill

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

.....

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



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Element 1 - The Inclusion Values and Practices of the School

FJS is an excellent example of inclusive practice. Inclusion is evident in all aspects of the school's work and there are good links with the community to offer support for families. All members of the school community are expected to adopt behaviours which support the school's inclusive ethos. The entire Leadership Team take on the various roles in co-ordinating the support and provision for all the different groups, particularly the more vulnerable pupils and families. They plan, advise, monitor, and evaluate for the development of an inclusive practice and provision across the school. The wider staff inclusion agenda is met through meetings across all year groups that are held to assess the impact and effectiveness of the interventions for all the different groups within the school. After reading the SER and meeting with the Leadership Team it is this assessors' opinion that inclusion at FJS is not a fashion or a fad but something that is connected to deep seated beliefs and values held dearly by Headteacher and his Inclusion team.

Achievement by all is celebrated in a variety of forms. The school focuses on a child's effort as opposed to their intelligence. Fostering resilience and perseverance helps deliver a growth mindset in their children. As a community school, it was obvious that the holistic development of the children was underpinned and supported by the inclusion values of the school. The children were friendly and enquiring, proud of their school and determined to showcase all their achievements. There are leadership opportunities available to children across the school enabling them to help develop, personally and emotionally. The children I met with knew each and every square inch of their school, they took a huge delight in regaling me with their anecdotes. They were also proud that their school offered such a wide range of extra-curricular activities and that their interests were listened to and catered for.

SEND procedures are well established and the robust systems in place ensure prompt action in the early identification of needs and in making the appropriate provision available, in order to meet the needs of all children in FJS, the SENCO was aware of the all the children's' needs and displays all the hallmarks of a really good SENCO as she is one who will listen to others and work with them, especially parents. The vast majority, including those who have special education needs, make rapid and sustained progress year on year from their starting points.

SLT are progressing the priorities of the School Improvement Plan at quite a rate of knots. Regular team meetings, at a number of staffing levels, with self-evaluation and transparency at the forefront mean that FJS is able to embrace local demographic need, develop a sound self-awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses and plan better for the future. Additionally, the school evidenced how they work in partnership with parents and carers and how best to encourage them to comment on and contribute to the evolution of policies through parental consultations. FJS are very worthy holders of the Inclusion Quality Mark which recognises the commitment of all staff in the pursuit of excellence for the pupils in their care.



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Strengths:

- The school promotes inclusion across every aspect of school life. Children are valued for their unique identity, there is a determination and a celebratory ethos that all pupils will succeed. The atmosphere round the school is very calm and friendly. Pupils are courteous and polite with aspirations to learn. Parents and carers highly value the progress that their children are making in FJS.
- Development and deployment of their human resources to best reflect the various levels of need experienced by pupils. All LSAs are trained in evidence-based intervention programmes for pupils and receive additional training to support the pupils they work with. Three of the school's LSAs are trained as ELSA or FEIPS practitioners with one LSA also trained to deliver a Therapeutic Story writing programme. All stakeholders are responsible for the promotion of an inclusive environment within the school.
- Using the school priorities as a Launchpad. The Inclusion Team provide teaching and non-teaching staff with the support and training they need in order that their work promotes the best outcomes for each pupil. Freegrounds Junior School also has a set of core learning behaviours that form the drivers of the school curriculum (both within the classroom and in other experiences offered to pupils). These are displayed and celebrated in every classroom and across other areas within the school and are referred to on a daily basis and link clearly to the ethos of inclusion and achievement for all. **INDEPENDENCE, RESILIENCE, CREATIVITY, TEAMWORK, CRITICAL THINKING and REFLECTION.**
- The Headteacher has communicated his vision extremely clearly, which manifests itself in the strong inclusive ethos. The SLT work in close partnership with the Governing Body and local community, they ensure that inclusion for all remains a priority.
- The staff provide excellent role models for the children. They realise the importance of being effective role models for their children and understand and fully engage with their inclusion action plan and policy to promote high standards. They have developed professional but friendly relationships with the children who respect them but also find them very approachable. This in turn leads to a happy, industrious atmosphere with children demonstrating their enjoyment of school life. One Year 3 child remarked on the day; "I love it here. Everyone is very friendly and looks after you."
- A whole school Emotional Management programme called Trick Box has been introduced this year to support the whole school community in developing healthy life habits around 4 key areas – communication, calm, creativity, and confidence. All children have been taught the first 15 'Tricks' with training offered to all school staff as well as parents.

Next Steps:

- Celebrate the Inclusion Quality Mark by placing the logo on the home page of the school website, twitter, Facebook and on school headed paper. Perhaps even have a day of



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celebrating. Make a big splash with local press. This is newsworthy and a story worth sharing.

- To enhance the teaching of British Values within the classroom and curriculum content.
- To continue to develop the expertise of all staff in understanding the constantly changing needs of pupils and providing targeted and timely support to ensure success for all pupils.
- To embed Trick Box to ensure the whole school community are actively using the strategies or 'Tricks' to help themselves with their emotional regulation.



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Element 2 - The Learning Environment, Resources, and ICT

Increased visibility of displays and artwork in corridors is a hallmark of the new approach. They are contemporary, relevant, and engaging. The staff plan for high quality and consistency of display in classrooms and shared areas which show a balance between celebrating children's work and providing a focus for learning. The pupils attend a bright, warm, and inviting school. The teachers and teaching assistants ensure that noticeboards are covered in pupils' work and are changed regularly to reflect the taught curriculum. A lot of thought has gone into the learning environment both indoors and outdoors. It is bright and appealing, and children make good use of it.

Classrooms are well resourced and ordered in a way that ensures thought is given to pupil access. Expectations are signposted throughout the school and pupils are mindful of these.

The Chestnut Room is a magical place. Listening to the calming influence it has on pupils with a range of additional needs was touching. This is a transformational resource for children and places their inclusion high on the agenda of the school. Credit must go to the school for their foresight and perseverance in getting to develop such a program.

Learning environments reflect the broad curriculum and celebrate every child through displaying their contributions. Displays are interactive and act as inspiration for children to learn more about the depicted topics. The displays, mottos, slogans, and artwork around the school provide children with high aspirations.

An outstanding strength of the school is how they consider the best marking and feedback to be the dialogue which takes place between teacher and pupil while the task is being completed. After a child has undertaken a task, they should know what the next step in their learning is. Groups of children discussed their personal targets; the importance of well-presented work and their appreciations tell the narrative of child and teacher working as a partnership across the school year to secure improvement.

At FJS, the use of ICT consistently supports learning through interactive whiteboards, tablets, targeted software, and other hardware appropriate for the age and stage of learning of the pupils. Teachers are aware of how to use interactive learning resources and deploy these effectively throughout their teaching. The brilliant support offered to families and learners during lockdown ensured children had access to devices and school continuity.

Strengths:

- The school is a vibrant and welcoming place, which is well presented and cared for by staff and children.
- Leaders and managers, including the Governing Body, have undertaken rigorous monitoring and evaluation of how well the school was doing to enable them to identify where there were new additional needs and areas of the school environment that could be improved upon.



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- Classrooms are tidy and well organised with a range of resources, which support the children's learning. The children have access to prompts within their individual classrooms, which are age appropriate and designed to promote independence and support with their work.
- The support staff, both class based and those who support individual children, make an excellent contribution to the learning experience of the children. There is an ongoing commitment to analysis and intervention and the school has implemented a range of successful programmes.
- The school also identifies children who need the external expertise of outside agencies.
- The IQM/SENCO coordinator ensures that children who are receiving additional support are in receipt of a tailored programme, which is regularly reviewed and evaluated. The school has no hesitation in rethinking interventions if evidence indicates slower progress than desired.
- The performance of support staff working with pupils with a high level of need are evaluated annually and often rotated to avoid counter-productive attachments and over-reliance.
- Pupils and their parents recognise that children enjoy being at school and this is supported with feedback from pupil and parent questionnaires.
- The school frequently receives positive comments from parents and carers following events. These have included maths, internet safety and parent workshops which have all been held in the most recent academic year, with more planned for the future.

Next Steps:

- Audit the skills of staff to offer bespoke training in ICT. Not all members of staff that I spoke to felt that they were as confident in their ICT skillset as others.
- Develop the use of the outdoor space to support learning further (development of outdoor learning strategy, curriculum overview and intent). Working closely with lunch time staff to improve positive play experiences for children and to further promote positive behaviours.
- Continue to use information and communication technology in a more interactive way to motivate pupils and enhance their learning (Use of Google Classrooms with home learning engagement, use of quality online resources available).



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Element 3 - Learner Attitudes, Values and Personal Development

Everything I witnessed on my visit would concur that behaviour at FJS for all pupils is outstanding. The school has a holistic approach to the education of its pupils ensuring that they have opportunities to develop skills which will prepare them for life. Pupils have an excellent attitude to learning and have a high level of engagement, resilience, and interest in their work. Pupils are tolerant of each other and show a mature and growing understanding of each other and of different viewpoints. The mutual respect that exists between staff and pupils is at a very high level. The unity of purpose and strong trusting relationship that exists was a pleasure to behold.

In conversation with the pupils, it was clear that they respected each other and were co-signatories in the inclusion values of the school. They selflessly recognised the additional needs of some pupils but were protective, empathetic, and caring. These values and attitudes are a credit to the teachers and support staff who have nurtured these children for many years. From my interviews the one thing that stuck with me was the length of service by some inspirational people. The magnetic and emotional pull they feel for FJS means they want to come to work each day knowing they are making a difference in the lives of these young people. Some of the stories of dedication and devotion to the children were truly humbling and it is something that would make me a fortune if I could bottle it and replicate it in any school, as this workforce is unique and valued and long may it continue. The best schools such as FJS recognise that support staff are key to school success.

It is a truism to say that FJS is a successful school as it has a high degree of shared values. These values manifest themselves through a commitment to success, for all members of the community, rather than success for some at the expense of others. The staff inspire, excite and motivate the children in their care, where they are able to know what Freegrounds Junior School stands for, the masterplan and their specific roles in it.

Relationships between staff are excellent and pupils feel cared for and supported in their learning with teachers and LSAs understanding their pupils' needs. Children enjoy their time in school and consequently attendance is excellent. Disadvantaged children achieve well, and the school uses its pupil premium funding to good effect. The work of the SENCO/FSW ensures that parents and staff are well informed of the inclusion agenda.

Parents and carers recognise and appreciate the child centred focus of all staff. There are good communication systems which give parents and carers confidence in the school and in its support for their child's needs. The close links with a range of external agencies to support vulnerable families and the sign posting of families to groups which can address their needs is given much attention.

Strengths:

- Behaviour is a strength of the school. Bullying is rare, the number of reported incidents has declined over time. Behaviour is celebrated regularly in assembly both verbally and with rewards. Pupils know what to do if they have a problem and are confident that unkind behaviour is tackled quickly, as a result, exclusions are rare.



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- In class children show that they are keen to learn, they collaborate well with their peers and have the confidence to respond to questions posed by adults. There is a purposeful ethos across the school and children take a pride in their work.
- The boundaries are clear to children, and they respond well to the lunchtime support staff. Whilst eating lunch in bubbles, the children chat to each other, and everyone is included. The recently revised behaviour policy, now embedded across the school, ensures that pupils and staff have a clear understanding of expectations around behaviour and personal conduct as well as learning outcomes which ensure that all children are reaching their full potential.
- The School Council system is strong and has impact on school improvement. This is due to the high status given to the role and the proactive members. A member of the SLT is responsible for co-ordinating the meetings and the agendas and the children, who have been selected as school councillors by class voting system, form a diverse group.
- The school's open-door policy begins right from the start of the day with members of SLT welcoming children into school at the school gate ensuring they are visible to parents to build on relationships and communication.
- The Family Support Worker, SENCO, and dedicated teaching team, also ensure that parents are fully included in supporting pupils' attitude to learning and their personal development through school life, from the transition from infant school to the transition to secondary school.
- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility within the school. During the IQM Assessment there were numerous examples of children having been given a role linked to the support of the other children.
- The assessor is familiar with both schools and has seen just how 'both the Junior and Infants work extremely closely to build relationships with parents and children before they start with us which includes our Family Support Worker doing ELSA sessions, attending outside agency meetings, and inviting infant parents to attend our successful Family Links Programme run twice a year by our Family Support Worker.'

Next Steps:

- Some excellent improvements in the field of promoting positive behaviour. However, the forward-thinking Leadership Team must continue to update/review the behaviour policy alongside the needs of the children with all staff.
- Continue to recruit well and provide bespoke coaching and training for new members of staff on FSJ way.
- Further increase the profile of learning behaviours around the school to impact on increasingly positive attitudes to learning (banners, celebration, interspersed throughout displays).



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- Continue to embed the new positive behaviour policy (LSA performance management targets, increased opportunities for PBS involvement, introduction of Trick Box).
- Development of wider curriculum to impact on personal development and character.



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Element 4 - Learner Progress and the Impact on Learning

There is a varied use of resources to provide a practical approach to learning and monitoring procedures are rigorous which ensures that lessons at FJS are sufficiently challenging and consistent in approach. These monitoring procedures and the detailed tracking of pupil progress data ensure that pupils' personal needs are met. To ensure that policy is reflected in practise, monitoring is conducted regularly. Classroom observation, planning reviews, book scrutiny, drop ins, learning walks and pupil voice are all used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and quality of teaching and learning in the school.

Safeguarding procedures are excellent and effective in ensuring children are safe and their concerns are addressed.

The focus on marking and feedback has provided children with opportunities to respond to their work. The tracking procedures and related pupil progress meetings which constantly review provision for individual pupils are an indicator of a school that is assessing children in the right way. The pupils showed themselves to be confident and highly motivated learners, they took great pride in their achievements and showed a capacity that enabled them to apply what they had learned to new work.

I met with support staff members, I found their work and interventions to have had a positive impact upon the pupils. The work of the staff is fully appreciated by the Headteacher and indeed by the Board of Governors. All of my chats with the children evidenced that they enjoy their time in school and consequently attendance is excellent.

There are good systems in place to improve the quality of children's learning. The SER shows that leadership use data to target interventions and groups of underperforming children. The school is aiming to improve the progress of pupils with low starting points. I was struck by the powerful work ethic of the children, their good behaviour, friendliness, and politeness which impacts on their engagement with their school work.

Strengths:

- The school has made year on year improvements in relation to attainment results. The school has absolute clarity in relation to the context they find themselves in with children returning from lockdown behind in their age-related expectations. The time taken to get the next steps to be taken right are both measured and correct. The school has already employed a range of strategies to ensure that the gap narrows.
- Children with SEN are identified early and are assessed for a provision that best suits their needs. The SENCO works very closely with class teachers to ensure the SEN children's needs are being met in the main classroom. All children are baselined before beginning any programme and impact scores are taken at the end. There is intense monitoring in between to ensure every child is responding positively to the additional support, resources or equipment provided.



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- The very detailed analysis which takes place ensures that the school are strategically focused on ensuring that children are supported to reach their potential. The school's analysis indicates that middle attaining girls in mathematics and the engagement of boys in writing are the key areas for improvement reflected in the end of KS2 data. These have been part of the current school improvement plan and all teachers are aware of individuals who are not making expected progress in these groups.

Next Steps:

- Assessment and pupil tracking procedures (for all children) and policies are robust and ready to maximise resources.
- SLT continue to evaluate staff CPD considering assessment and pupil tracking.
- Incorporate new technologies/tablets further into lessons.
- To diminish the difference between the progress made by different groups, particularly those in receipt of the pupil premium grant and children with an EHC plan.
- To improve the progress made by all groups.
- Embedding the process of identification and documentation of SEND by use of the SEND concerns form and shared understanding of the SEND Guidance.



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Element 5 - Learning and Teaching (Monitoring)

The high standards that the Headteacher and his team set have raised expectations. Pupils in turn have risen to the challenge, clearly enjoy their work and engage well in lessons. The focus weeks throughout the year ensure that children have an exciting, broad, and balanced curriculum which stimulates their interests on a range of topics.

The outstanding teaching which ensures children present their work to a high standard that had been noted in the SER was visible across all Key Stages. The role of the additional adults in supporting learning and supporting individual children at FJS is priceless. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding so that they can move on to new concepts as soon as they are ready, this maximises learning time. Standards are rising as a result; this can be seen in the data analysis. Teachers use imaginative resources and make intellectual and creative demands on pupils to extend their learning.

Challenging questions are used to consolidate, extend, and verify what pupils know and understand. The methods chosen are well geared to the particular focus and demands of the lesson and make the most productive use of the time available.

LSA's work effectively to support learning in class by checking pupils' understanding and intervening to clarify misconceptions. They also lead carefully targeted sessions for small groups of pupils who need to catch up.

The highly supportive relationship between staff and pupils means that children can make progress safe in the knowledge that the adults at FJS, in loco parentis, really do want them to maximise their full potential.

Strengths:

- The School Improvement Plan is a precise and honest document, with interim reviews inbuilt within the process. It demonstrates the rigorous approach to raising standards and the emphasis on high expectations for all children.
- The Leadership Team have been rigorous in their monitoring of the quality of teaching, which has impacted on the percentages of good quality teaching. This in turn has impacted positively on raised standards of attainment, leading to year-on-year improvement. Learner attainment is regularly tracked.
- Children complete peer and self-assessments in each subject. Learning plans are adapted to developing needs. Different learning needs are identified and acted upon.
- The Leadership Team are never complacent and have set targets to further the quality of teaching.
- The staff is stable, demonstrating a commitment to the school and to the Leadership Team. There are high levels of reflection and collaboration, demonstrating a



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determination to break down any barriers to learning which the children may experience.

- Learners engage positively in lessons. They are keen to learn and pose questions. They respond well to the positive behaviour policy which helps to create a conducive learning environment for all. Learners have a growing understanding of the school's learning behaviours: Teamwork, Resilience, Reflection, Independence, Creativity and Critical Thinking which are helping the children to develop lifelong skills to support them with their learning.
- Wellbeing has been a key school priority this year with the SENCO taking on mental health & wellbeing and implementing a new whole school approach to wellbeing; **“The school’s strategic approach to wellbeing is a strength and could be shared with other schools.”** (LLPR report, January 2021)

Next Steps:

- Continue with regular surveys of pupils on their learning experience.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching by sharing best practice across the school. Staff CPD to remain bespoke and targeted.
- Continue to monitor the use of questioning so that they deepen and extend children's learning ensuring that more able children are challenged.
- To continue to improve outcomes for key groups of children across the school.
- To increase rates of progress through improved formative assessment and to further refine approaches to assessment which have impacted positively on pupil progress during the period of lockdown.
- To develop year group leaders understanding of data and moderation to evidence their impact on pupil attainment and progress across their year group.



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Element 6 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

During my visit, I met with a vocal group of parents with children in the school. The parents could not be more praiseworthy of the inclusion ethos of the school, They continually reported that the Headteacher and all the staff go the 'extra mile' to provide all children with opportunities to achieve their full potential even when the circumstances can at times be challenging. They greatly appreciated the human side of the staff and seen the school's ability to respond swiftly and effectively to family and children's needs as an undoubted strength.

They are very content with the communication from the school and cited the website, Google Classroom and a range of parent friendly publications that enable them to keep up to date with events, practice, and policy. All agreed the increased quantity of engagement with parents is improving the chances of all children. They confidently asserted that the opinions in the meeting were shared by a growing and significant majority of parents at the school. One parent described how the children learn 'through enjoyment and fun'. While this is a very busy school, especially at this time of year I was heartened by the continuous positivity towards the children and motivating comments on pupil work.

The school has a very good range of productive and consistent links with parents and carers that help pupils learn. These extend from involvement in hearing individual children read to community involvement in the upcoming carnival. At FJS there is evidence of improvement in children's learning, behaviour and personal development resulting from good liaison with parents and carers.

Strengths:

- The parent community feel that the school communicates effectively with parents, carers and guardians and that staff are approachable.
- Positive relationships are modelled by the Headteacher, who is valued and respected for his warmth and professionalism, but also his ability to roll the sleeves up when necessary and to lead by example. This ensures that parents receive clear and accurate information and trust the school.
- Family Support Worker plays a vital role in enabling the school to meet the needs of some of their parents and families. When pastoral issues are identified the FSW intervenes as a support and in many cases these issues do not escalate. The FSW has provided a range of Parent Learning opportunities to support their child's learning and acts as an incredible home/school conduit.
- Parents of children who have special needs describe the proactive quality of the school's engagement with any challenges which may occur. Children are never 'a burden' but rather are welcomed into the school community with 'open arms' and are made to feel valued. Parents report that the staff work extremely hard to find solutions and are highly professional.



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- An active parent association, who work tirelessly to organise fund raising events to buy resources for the school. The events such as a Christmas Fayre, Christmas shopping events, Summer Fayre including Maypole and Country Dancing by the children are well attended.
- During the school COVID closures, the school actively brought the whole school community together via Google classrooms by setting regular family challenges and creating fun video collages of all those participating with many positive feedback comments provided by parents.

Next Steps:

- To continue to make efforts to further engage those 'hard to reach parents' particularly so that they can better support their children with reading.
- To continue to improve lines of communication with parents to ensure that harder to reach groups are active in giving their views on issues within school.
- Continue to develop the Family Support Worker role around effective and regular communication with families.



Element 7 - Governing Body and Management: External Accountability /Support

FJS benefits from a pro-active Governing Body which supports the work of the Headteacher to lead a progressive, inclusive school. The Board meets regularly, and the Head not only informs but consults with members about the self-evaluation process and more recently about how best to monitor implementation and the impact it has had upon school improvement. The Board of Governors are fortunate to have members with the skills needed to support the on-going journey of improvement. The close monitoring of data and teaching and learning which have had an impact on raising standards.

The Governors contribute substantially to the effectiveness of the school, they have high levels of expertise and are well organised through their approach. They are also open to new ideas and adapt quickly. They have trust in the Leadership Team but expect them to be fully accountable to them. They in turn, account well to the parents of the school. The Governors are active and keep themselves very well informed about what is going on in school, they make regular visits and report back to meetings of the Governing Body.

The Board of Governors demonstrated strong leadership, their accessibility and shared commitment to inclusion and improving the opportunities for all children. Under the direction of this Board of Governors I am left in no doubt that the school is supported and challenged in equal measure. The success of the school means that the Governors have the ratio between the two elements in the correct proportion. The performance management systems operated by the Board of Governors and in turn by the Headteacher, ensure there are common themes and personal development opportunities which in the case of FJS are quite correctly related to whole school improvement.

The Governing Body were most informative with their unique hands-on perspective and understanding of the unique context that FJS operates in. They were fully aware of the Board's responsibilities and accountabilities; they knew they key priorities of the school. The strong Governing Body ensures that the quality of education is high on its agenda.

There remain challenges such as, pre and post-pandemic budget restraints, new curriculum requirements and demographic changes. However, it is clear that these do not impede the substantial future work planned by the Governors. It is commendable that this Governing Body, all volunteers as we know, are so committed to FJS and its inclusive and caring ethos.

Strengths:

- There is a high level of commitment to the school from Governors who work in close partnership with the Leadership Team and the staff. They have a good knowledge of the school and its key priorities for improvement.
- Governor interviewed on the day was very clear in relation to their role of support and challenge. He gave examples of not only his own but of all the governors' involvement in working parties and instances where they have put forward ideas, which have in turn been implemented by the school.



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- Pupil progress and data is shared regularly with Governors and this information enables them to scrutinise results and pose relevant questions. There is an ethos of openness and reflective practice, which impacts positively on the exchange of ideas between staff and governors coupled with frank dialogue.
- The Board of Governors work closely with the Head and other senior leaders to hold them to account for the quality of their work. Advocacy for disadvantaged pupils is a key principle for Board of Governors as a whole and through their governance they have successfully ensured that outcomes for this group have improved.

Next Steps:

- The Governing Body continues to keep inclusion high on its agenda and support the school as they embark upon their next steps with IQM.
- To create a succession plan or talent spot for future Governors.



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Element 8 - The School in the Community

Freegrounds Junior School always seeks to be involved in the community. The school believes that the quality of its relationship with parents and the community is fundamental to the success of its pupils. For families in need, the Inclusion Team signpost parents to the most appropriate and relevant support.

The Juniors have a strong working partnership with the Infants and other local schools. The team at FJS run a wide range of successful after school clubs to promote healthy lifestyles for the children and also to promote artistic, strategic and social skills. The children and parents seem to think this aim is being realised.

Leadership is very appreciative of the community support that FJS receives, recognising the immense efforts of all the stakeholders involved. The Headteacher utilises his team of talents to its maximum and his huge efforts in promoting community involvement proves itself to be a beacon of inclusive practice.

Strengths:

- The school embraces the school community to enhance the children's learning, this enables children to access first-hand experiences which bring learning to life.
- They are active in supporting community events such as the Poppy Appeal, Active Kid's vouchers, Genes for Jeans Day, World Book Day and the shoebox appeal.
- The school seeks the views of parents through regular questionnaires, but also informally listens to parents' points of view. Staff are available at the beginning and end of the school day, so parents can raise any quick questions. In the case of more complex issues, an appointment can be made with the relevant member of staff.

Next Steps:

- Continue to work with local schools through planned moderation and cluster meetings. What opportunities for middle leaders can be created through the cluster?
- To continue to develop links with the Infant school PTA to run joint events across the two schools and reach/involve a greater number of people in the community.