



28<sup>th</sup> March 2019

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**Date of Review: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

## **Summary**

As a returning IQM Assessor I enjoyed this year's visit to Ranelagh Primary School enormously, just as I have in years gone by. Every year things change but the on-going and extraordinarily high level of inclusivity in this school never ceases to amaze me – Both the ethos and practice just get better and better.

The staff of Ranelagh are warm and welcoming and because of this example they set, their pupils behave in the same way. Every adult and every young person I met on 6<sup>th</sup> March made me feel that it was a pleasant treat to have an IQM assessor in their school, and I believe that this truly is the case. When a school and the people in it have so much to offer, to be given an opportunity to share freely the challenges and successes of a whole year is definitely something to look forward to.

The school website includes a joint welcome from the Head Teacher and the CEO of the Tapscott Learning Trust, and one paragraph clearly states their joint view that 'our on-going success as a high-achieving school, our commitment to combining traditional values of good manners with excellent behaviour and our enriched curriculum means that all Ranelagh children can "Be the best that they can be." This is definitely the impression that one receives after any time at all in conversation with the Head Teacher, the Assistant Head Teacher (Inclusion and Safeguarding) or the SENDCo.

The 'enriched curriculum' mentioned above includes not only the minimum expectations laid down in government documents but also a broad range of additional interventions, resources and opportunities designed to ensure that every Ranelagh child has what they need in order to work towards reaching their full potential. Sometimes families are provided with support too so that parents and carers can become better able to understand how they can work with the school, enabling their children to flourish academically, emotionally, socially and physically.

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At this school it is clear that this type of holistic work is successful because Ranelagh professionals really get to *know* their children as individuals. They celebrate the positives and work hard to help children to overcome challenges. They provide a curriculum that is different for an individual or group where it needs to be, and where they can, they judge outcomes on progress made from a baseline toward a personal target, rather than progress, sometimes from a well below-average baseline, toward an arbitrary age-related goal.

As a visitor at Ranelagh Primary one observes children being acknowledged and complimented by staff in all areas of the school. Similarly, staff members are spoken about and to in warmly positive ways. It isn't just senior leaders who do this but staff one meets in passing within the school demonstrate respect for and confidence in their colleagues: 'We are very lucky with Shella and Leigh. They will fight to the last breath so that we can work in this way'. The overall feeling is that although inspiration comes from the top, actually the whole Ranelagh team is speaking with one inclusive voice. Staff members have spoken to me about wanting to do the very best they can for the children during the few years that they have them and about wanting to ensure that learning outcomes have a lifelong impact. School lunches can sometimes seem to be a minor thing, but at this school the food is inclusive too. On the day of my visit a vegetarian meat-substitute dish was spiced just enough to be acceptable to children used to these flavours, but possibly no so much that another child would be dissuaded from trying what was a very tasty, nourishing and colourful lunch, full of textures to challenge a child with sensory needs. Even something as apparently insignificant as this might have a lifelong impact on a child who finds it difficult to try new things.

In terms of strategic management, the Head and her Senior leadership team are always part of the 'even better if ....' debate. Together with other teams from their Trust's sister schools they engage in peer reviews and planning: "Everywhere else people are winding down, but we're winding up. .... We share the same vision and values across the schools, but here sometimes we do things differently!"

One of the ways in which Ranelagh differs is in the amount of building work undertaken during the last few years. Phase 1 of the current building project is complete and when Phase 2 is finished the traditional but adapted multi-storey Victorian building will house what has been described as 'a three-form entry rather than a two-form entry school' and a 'fully inclusive model of resourced provision' where 'many children will have a personalised timetable, there will be something related to SEND on every floor, and even the old building will be mostly accessible by lift'. At present seven children are on roll as pupils of the resourced provision but this will eventually rise to twenty-one.

During my visit I had the opportunity to speak to a number of staff members and pupils as well as the Head Teacher and other senior leaders. However, a fair proportion of the day was spent with the Assistant Head Teacher (Inclusion and Safeguarding) and the SENDCo, as IQM Flagship targets have a focus that is not only on the development of inclusive practice within the school but also on how the school can be at the forefront of change, leading others toward a greater understanding of inclusivity and of how the ethos and practice can be developed within *their* school.

During the past year Ranelagh professionals have engaged in a variety of projects, large and small, both inside and outside of their own school. One very interesting idea has been the research-based development of differentiated texts to support different types of learning, from the sensory text-free resource related to a specific book, through to a

highly-illustrated simplified version, and then on to the traditional word-heavy text itself (from the concrete, to the pictorial, and through to the abstract). I am certain that these books and resources are shared with linked schools as the development of these teaching aids is just one of the ways in which staff members work so that both the neurotypical child and those with learning differences may access the same curriculum.

Now that Ranelagh has been part of a learning trust for several years, another novel idea has been for staff members to visit sister Trust schools for what has been called 'Discovery Weeks', reporting back to their own colleagues later about what they have learned from the experience. In addition, since last September one senior leader has been spending two days per week supporting the development of Year 5 reading and CPD in general in another Trust school. She reports with passion that 'systems are embedded now' and describes the creative ways in which children and professionals are working collaboratively, speaking with such enthusiasm that it's easy to see how colleagues must feel invigorated after her visit.

Ranelagh is already a research-based school where academic involvement and achievement of adults is valued too. As a school with the IQM Flagship award there is an expectation that Ranelagh will develop an outline for a classroom or school-based research project which will build on the excellent inclusive practice already demonstrated, and replace the targets set at earlier IQM stages. During the coming year 2019 to 2020 Ranelagh senior leaders are planning a multi-faceted research-based project under the IQM Flagship banner, the title of which is: Supporting Other Schools in Raising Standards in Reading and Computing. This study will perfectly complement the types of collaborative work that Ranelagh currently undertakes.

In summary, Ranelagh Primary School is an excellent example of a school with highly inclusive practice in terms of pupils, their families, staff members, the local community and other educational establishments, those who belong to the same learning trust but also those who are simply related by similar values and purposes. The Tapscott Learning Trust, the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership Team set the expectations of a child-centred and inclusive education at the highest levels and the actions of members of the staff body reflect those expectations. As an assessor I value the fact that my involvement with Ranelagh is not just a one-way street! On the day of my assessment several people mentioned to me the names of Education researchers and their books or papers, and I left the school enriched by my experience.

Having discussed the progress made since the IQM assessment a year ago and the school's plans for the future I am of the opinion that Ranelagh Primary School fulfils the criteria as an IQM Flagship very well indeed. I would like to recommend that this status should be awarded and reviewed again in one year's time.

The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach and in-school research. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Flagship status.

**Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:**



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Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd