



Quality Mark

EARLY YEARS VISIT FEEDBACK REPORT

School/Setting name	William Harding School	Visit date	9.11.2022
Head of School	Miss Cotchin	NOR	897
Telephone number	01296 421733	Assessor	Helen Kelly
Quality Mark Contact email at school/setting		Quality Mark Contact Name at school/setting	Miss Brydon

A brief context of the School/Setting

- William Harding School is a larger than average primary school, situated in Aylesbury, with about 900 pupils on roll, aged between 2 and 11.
- The ethnic diversity of the school, where about a third of pupils have English as an Additional Language (EAL), reflects the demographic of the local area.
- There are two Specialist, Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) within the school. One is for children with Physical Disabilities, and the other is for Speech, Language and Communication Needs; each has 8 spaces for children from Reception to year 6.
- The Early Years provision comprises of 4 Reception classes and a preschool, with a 2-year-old room and 2 3-to-4-year-old rooms. The school was an early adopter for the new EYFS framework.

Visit Type	Initial Assessment Visit
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The Assessor spoke to the following people			
Headteacher and/or Senior Leaders YES	Communication / Language Subject Leader YES	Mathematics Subject Leader YES	Assessment Manager YES
SENCo NO	Child representative(s) NO	Governors/Trustees YES	Parent representative(s) YES

Does the School/Setting meet the requirements of the Quality Mark?	YES
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Suggested areas for development, in preparation for the next visit based upon the 10 Elements of the Quality Mark, with clear indication to which element(s) the development is referring.

1. To continue to explore ways to engage parents more in their children’s learning, expanding and adapting the present offer to include and support a wider range of families, with varied and different experiences and days or times, to allow for different parental commitments. Develop the new assistant headteacher Inclusion and Community role, working to improve parental opportunities.
(Element 9)
2. To work more closely with Governors, especially with a new EYFS governor, once appointed, giving training and experience so that the EYFS curriculum, and relationship to future learning, is more understood. Encouraging governors to take on the role of critical friend, monitoring alongside and challenging leaders to improve, and providing an informed voice for EYFS on the governing body.
(Element 10)
3. To continue to develop support within the setting for Speech and Language needs, with targeted staff training so that some of the impact of lockdowns on children’s speech and language skills can be resolved within the setting, lessening the need for SALT referrals. Continuing to work with Little Talkers, with the possibility of recruitment of a school-based speech and language therapist to add to the expertise and training available.
(Elements 4,5,6)

Summary of ‘Good practice’ identified in relation to the 10 Elements of the Quality Mark:

Early Years Quality Mark Elements

- 1. A whole setting strategy and planning to improve young children’s abilities and achievements**
 - The devolved leadership in this school ensures that there is an ongoing dialogue at all levels, ensuring that improvement is continually discussed. Data from the EYFS is shared with governors and subject teams across the school, including SEN.
 - Regular and rigorous monitoring gives leaders a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the EYFS staff and provision, which can then be addressed through training and adaptation.
 - The whole school SDP has a specific section for EYFS as well as referencing it throughout. The specific success criteria for improvements link to the monitoring and evaluation timetable to ensure there is a clear process and timeline for improvement.
- 2. An analysis of the assessment of young children’s abilities and achievements**
 - Use of Tapestry means that parents, pupils and staff can all contribute to an understanding of the child’s learning journey.
 - Observations and practitioner knowledge are used to judge children’s progress and ability, and recorded on a school “flight path” to share between practitioners, before being discussed and quality assured by EYFS leaders and used to inform planning. Changes can then be planned to the curriculum or environment to ensure that needs are met, with interventions also planned for individual needs as necessary, based on assessment knowledge of those children.
 - Information is gathered from parents and from previous settings, and 2-year-old assessments are carried out within the setting to indicate where a child may need extra support. Information from outside agencies is also taken into account when planning support and next steps.
 - The whole EYFS team is involved in reviewing the curriculum and using assessment to inform planning, ensuring consistency of understanding and approach.

- Joint observations of pupils, between leaders and staff, ensure a clear understanding and consistency of judgements.
- EYFS has support from the school SENDCo, as well as a member of the SEN team working with Reception, and a Pre-school SENDCo, all of whom can inform assessment and support staff to address any needs.

3. Setting appropriately high expectations for young children's development

- In addition to the continuous provision across the setting, enhanced provision plans specific activities giving children the opportunity to challenge themselves and practice skills which have been taught.
- Planning, using findings from assessment and observation, focuses on next steps and challenge, and is annotated and adapted to meet the needs of individuals.
- Assessment information is discussed with staff and moderation ensures that it is quality assured and consistent across the setting.

4. Planning 'next steps' in learning for young children's development

- Early baseline assessments mean that specific interventions can be quickly put in place to support children's learning and address difficulties, run by SEN staff, or EYFS staff who have been trained by them.
- Continuous provision is planned weekly, responsive to the needs and interests of the children, and staff are trained to enable them to adapt planned activities for individuals.
- Use of Tapestry, and interactions throughout the day, allow practitioners to consider each child's next steps, and how to scaffold and challenge them in the moment.
- Pupils, and their attainment, are regularly discussed, including during joint observations, and all staff are confident to speak about barriers to learning and next steps, for pupils.
- An ambitious curriculum, designed using a number of different resources and taking into account various factors relating to the school community, ensures clear progression across the EYFS, from the 2 year old room through Early Years and into Year 1. There is a clarity of expectation for ages and stages, and a clear understanding of the progression of skills.
- Annotation of planning includes next steps for extra support and for challenge.

5. Regular review of progress made by all children

- EYFS practitioners constantly monitor children's progress, and consider and plan next steps in consultation with leaders.
- Progress is shared with parents both informally and formally, and parents can use Tapestry to share progress at home with staff.
- As children move through the setting their progress is tracked, and information is passed on to ensure a smooth transition when they move on.
- Data is reviewed termly by leaders and analysed to pick out key strengths and areas for development across the setting, which then inform the strategic plan.

6. A commitment to improving the skills of all practitioners

- Leaders have protected CPD time to ensure they continue their own professional development, alongside providing CPD to staff to meet school, setting or individual needs. Staff also have CPD time to investigate relevant research and build up their knowledge and expertise.
- There is an ethos of self-reflection, with all staff encouraged to reflect on, and find ways to improve their own practice. The collaborative nature of the team means that all staff have the opportunity to contribute ideas and opinions to adapt or improve the environment to support children's learning.
- Staff can mentor other practitioners and offer support and knowledge, so that strengths and strategies are shared and there is a consistency of approach and expectations.

- Staff have worked within the county with different groups, sharing strategies and support ideas, and leaders have worked alongside other schools to help them understand and work with the new EYFS framework.

7. A balanced use of child-initiated and adult guided play-based learning

- Children experience a mix of adult led and independent learning opportunities throughout the day, with activities planned to support their learning, interests, and development of skills.
- Children have access to a range of activities which encourage interest and engagement, and staff support them to make independent choices about their learning.
- Staff are trained to provide an environment where children question and reflect on their learning, modelling activities and challenging children to investigate independently.
- Writing and mark-making equipment are found in all areas of the setting, and mathematics resources are also widely available across the areas, so that children use what they have learnt, independently in different contexts.

8. The use of appropriate environments and resources

- A sports coach works across the EYFS setting, modelling and teaching physical development skills and activities with groups of children, as well as giving staff a chance to improve their own skills and knowledge in this area.
- Areas for fine and gross motor physical development are regularly reviewed for effectiveness, and early literacy resources are found across all areas of the setting, with planned vocabulary and texts evident throughout.
- Staff are encouraged and supported so that their interactions with children develop inclusion, autonomy, and independence, as well as promoting learning and effective use of resources.
- Understanding of cultural and language backgrounds enables staff to create a culturally diverse setting where all children feel valued.
- The environment is regularly discussed and adapted considering the needs of the children, and supporting their learning and development.

9. Partnership working between families, carers, practitioners and professionals in supporting young children's learning and development

- Effective use of Tapestry, alongside Parental Involvement Sheets and a shared curriculum map, with workshops throughout the year, and stay and play sessions, means that parents are aware of what children are learning and how to support this; parents can also share with the setting what their child has done at home.
- The setting offers both formal and informal opportunities for parents to speak with staff, from a conversation at the door to Reception parents' evenings. All parents of EYFS children receive an end of year report showing learning levels and ways parents can prepare their children for the next stage of school life.
- Transitions for those already in the setting and those coming from outside are planned, with visits and familiarisation opportunities.
- Parent events are organised considering information from parent surveys, to increase engagement.
- Family learning flyers are shared with parents; these can be to support parents with their own learning, or to give them skills and strategies to support their children's learning.
- Where outside professionals are involved, the setting encourages parents to share advice which can be implemented within the setting.

10. An effective procedure for monitoring, planning and assessing improvement in practice and provision

- All staff members contribute at half termly staff meetings, where data and the environment are reviewed looking at successes and areas for development; from these discussions, new focus points for the following term are then decided by leaders and shared with all staff.
- The above are also discussed with SLT, the LA advisor and the EYFS governor.
- Regular monitoring by leaders of practice, including observation of teaching, ensures that any CPD needs are recognised and quickly met.

Strengths

1. The setting has a strong commitment to training staff, including those new to the school, so that they are confident and consistent in their approach, with consistent standards maintained across the EYFS. A devolved leadership structure means there is always someone to help, clarify or answer questions, and staff feel comfortable to ask; they say that they feel listened to and supported, with training available so that they can improve their own practice. All staff have dedicated time for CPD, at school, group, or individual level, depending on need. Because of the size of the school, much of the training can be delivered by staff; in appraisals staff have asked to train others in something which they feel is a strength. Online CPD, local authority networking groups and other training to meet identified needs, is also accessed when appropriate.
(Element 6)
2. As an early adopter of the new EYFS framework, they designed an assessment approach across the setting, which is underpinned by rigorous staff training, focusing on consistency and sharing common expectations, with joint moderation and joint observations. The children are central to everything, and paperwork has been shared so that all staff are clear on what to expect of children of a specific age at a specific time of year. There is clear identification of individual and cohort needs, as well as analysis of groups; data is then used to identify next steps at these levels, through collaborative discussion and planning, so that all staff involved are clear on what happens next.
(Elements 2,3,4,5,6)
3. Across the setting everything is planned to meet the needs of individuals, to enable them to learn and grow in confidence and independence. There is a clear focus on recognising and understanding children's needs and difficulties, with planning and resources adapted to support these. Transitions are planned to develop familiarity with new routines and environments, and extra support is put in place for children who need it, to ensure that children feel confident as they move on, and are quickly ready for learning.
(Elements 2,7,8)

Areas for Improvement

4. To continue to explore ways to engage parents more in their children's learning, expanding and adapting the present offer to include and support a wider range of families, with varied and different experiences and days or times, to allow for different parental commitments. Develop the new assistant headteacher Inclusion and Community role, working to improve parental opportunities.
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(Elements 4,5,6)

Additional Comments:

- It is clear that the staff within this setting work closely together as a team; the collaborative approach and supportive ethos means that expertise is shared, with staff confident to share knowledge and ask for advice or clarity, in a positive atmosphere. Thus, there is a real consistency of approach, where the needs of the children are central, and staff feel confident to adapt to meet these needs.
The school provided a good range of evidence for all ten elements of the Early Years Quality Mark and demonstrates that they meet the criteria for renewal of the award. Congratulations.