



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name Fawbert and Barnard Infants' School
Knight Street
Sawbridgeworth
Hertfordshire
CM21 9AT

Head/Principal Lee Wells

IQM Lead Ms Esther Potma

Date of Review 13th May 2026

Assessor Ms Jo Jo Morrall

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Inclusion London

Ambassador Dr Kenny Frederick

Next Meeting 18th May 2026

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Summer 2025	13 th Jun 2025	Yes
Autumn 2025	14 th Nov 2025	No
Spring 2026	28 th Jan 2026	Yes

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

The school's engagement with cluster networking has had a positive and practical impact on staff development, professional reflection and the sharing of effective practice across settings. Staff report that "networking with other SENCos have been helpful" highlighting the value of structured collaboration with colleagues who are working within similar inclusion and SEND contexts. This has supported the development of shared understanding and reinforced consistent approaches to common challenges across schools.

A particularly valuable element has been participation in a cluster with a Teacher of the Deaf, which staff identified as helpful in strengthening awareness and practice in supporting pupils with hearing needs. This type of specialist input has contributed to



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broadening staff understanding and has supported more informed decision making when working with pupils who have complex communication profiles.

Staff also reflected on the impact of observing practice in other settings, noting that it is “really nice to be able to walk around in a different schools”. This opportunity for professional dialogue and observation has enabled staff to see alternative approaches in action and consider how these might be adapted within their own context. One of the key strengths of this process is the recognition that “all schools have the same difficulties”, which helps to normalise challenges and promote shared problem solving rather than isolated practice.

A particularly impactful example was the observation of a sensory circuit, which staff described as “inspiring”. This has had direct influence on internal practice, with ideas being shared with PE teachers to support the development of physical and sensory provision within the curriculum. This demonstrates clear evidence of external learning being translated into internal curriculum enhancement.

Staff noted that there are “so many ideas that you can pick up”, although there are also practical barriers, including the challenge that cluster meetings can be “difficult to get to”. Despite this, the value of the sessions is clearly recognised, with acknowledgement that while some schools may have a particular profile, the learning remains relevant and transferable.

Evidence

- COE report
- Meeting with Parents
- Meeting with Governors
- Learning Walk
- “Nest” observation
- SEN register
- Meeting with SLT
- Meeting with Teachers
- Meeting with Pupil Premium leads
- Meeting with Teaching Assistants
- Observation of Nursery sharing
- Observation of playtime



Evaluation of Targets for last 12 Months

Target 1: Embed and extend outreach work by continuing to share expertise and build capacity across local and partner schools, ensuring sustained collaboration and mutual improvement.

The school has clearly taken purposeful steps to strengthen and extend its external partnerships since the previous review. There is now a stronger sense of intent around collaboration, with a range of agencies contributing to both family support and classroom practice. Importantly, these partnerships are not operating in isolation; there is evidence that advice and strategies are being retained and applied even when direct support reduces, suggesting a growing level of internal capacity. Staff spoke positively about the value of partnership working, commenting that “outreach work is essential- we are not experts in everything” and that “we have been able to build up partnerships”. This reflects a leadership team that is reflective, outward facing and committed to continuous improvement.

Work with Rivers Education Support and associated family support workers is a notable strength. The case examples provided demonstrate a holistic approach, addressing both educational and wider family needs. For several pupils, there is clear evidence of improved engagement and stability in school, supported by consistent use of strategies such as safe spaces, sensory circuits and structured routines. The impact is particularly evident where home and school approaches are aligned, with increased parental confidence and more consistent routines translating into improved outcomes in the classroom. Staff recognised that “you can see the need is increasing, by getting outside staff in we can upskill and support the staff”. Importantly, staff who have received training and support from outside organisations are now beginning to lead on these approaches internally, demonstrating the school’s growing confidence and sustainability of practice.

There is a strong culture of collaboration across the school. Staff described “stop and swap sessions” where teaching approaches can be adapted responsively in the moment to meet pupil need. This flexibility was evident in discussions around curriculum access, particularly within science, where leaders explained they had “looked at removing the barriers”. Staff reflected thoughtfully on how writing had become a barrier to science learning for some pupils and therefore adapted methods of recording and participation to ensure pupils could demonstrate understanding in alternative ways. The use of “Evidence Me” to record work further demonstrates a proactive and inclusive approach to assessment and engagement.

The partnership with Amwell View is another strong feature. The support provided has been both practical and strategic, particularly in the development of the school’s internal alternative provision. Staff spoke positively about adapting approaches to reflect “how we have adapted to the change in our cohorts”. There is clear evidence of a school that is willing to reflect, evolve and respond to increasing complexity of need. The commitment to professional dialogue is also evident within foundation subjects. In music, staff explained they were “talking to specialist to get ideas on how to adapt music for the children in The Nest”. This willingness to seek expertise and refine practice reflects a highly inclusive culture.



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Engagement with the Envision partnership demonstrates a more structured and evaluative approach to collaboration. The focus on Ordinarily Available Provision is well placed and there is evidence that this has increased staff confidence and consistency. Staff spoke about “working hard for consistency across the school”, alongside promoting values of “being resilient” and “being nurtured”. These themes were evident throughout the review and underpin the school’s inclusive ethos. The school’s outward-facing work, including support for leadership at Ansty Lower School and links with county advisers, further reflects a culture of collaboration, humility and openness to learning.

Next steps:

The school’s next steps are appropriately focused on sustaining momentum and ensuring continuity of support. Awaiting the panel decision, leaders will continue close communication with the communication and ASD teams while monitoring pupils through the SEN and pastoral registers. Transition arrangements are rightly prioritised, with an emphasis on thorough handover of strategies to new staff. Family engagement remains strong, with ongoing contact planned for key families and continued involvement from Rivers on their return. Partnerships with Amwell View will be maintained, alongside scheduled specialist input. The school should now ensure that impact from these actions is clearly recorded and informs future SDP priorities.

Target 2: Ensure the now well-embedded curriculum has a measurable impact on pupil outcomes by using assessment information effectively to drive improvements in attainment and progress across all groups.

The school has continued to build effectively on the strong curriculum foundations identified at the previous review, with a clearer emphasis now placed on the role of assessment in evidencing impact. There is a growing consistency in the use of formative assessment within lessons, and this is beginning to translate into more responsive teaching. In practice, staff are increasingly confident in identifying gaps in learning and adapting their approach through scaffolding, pre-teaching and targeted in-the-moment support. This reflects a positive shift away from reliance on additional interventions as a first response, with more pupils able to access the core curriculum successfully.

Assessment systems are increasingly well embedded and are being used thoughtfully to track the progress of all learners, including those with more complex needs. Staff explained that “for all children they have check points to track progress” and that “for each child we can see the data point and visually see the progress”. Importantly, leaders recognise that progress “looks different for every child”, reflecting a mature and inclusive understanding of achievement. This approach is allowing the school to celebrate small-step progress meaningfully while still maintaining high expectations for all pupils.

Assessment information is being used more strategically to identify pupils at risk of falling behind, particularly those within vulnerable groups, including pupils with SEND and those accessing The Nest. There is a stronger sense that assessment is informing ongoing provision, rather than being viewed as a standalone process. For pupils with additional needs, assessment is more closely aligned to individual starting points, enabling staff to track small-step progress more accurately. Staff reflected positively on



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this approach, stating that “the progress is massive, even if it looks quite small”. This demonstrates a school culture that values growth, perseverance and individual achievement.

Monitoring activities indicate that the curriculum is being delivered with greater precision. Learning walks, book scrutiny and pupil discussions suggest that pupils are building on prior learning more securely, and that teaching is increasingly tailored to need. Subject leaders are playing a key role in this development, with a sharper focus on analysing data across different groups, including those who may be more vulnerable. Staff discussions demonstrated strong professional knowledge and a deep understanding of individual pupils. One member of staff commented, “we are really good at knowing our class, and knowing the need”, while another reflected that “we have a resilience, we will not give up on that child”. This determination to ensure success for every learner is a significant strength of the school.

The school's leadership team has worked hard to ensure assessment information is understood and communicated effectively across the wider community. Governors are kept informed through innovative approaches, including videos produced by the school to support understanding of provision and progress. Staff described Governors as a “forward thinking group of people”, reflecting positive relationships and shared ambition. Leaders also highlighted the importance of “constant reiteration and communication”, particularly with families. Parents are regularly included in assessment discussions and reflections, ensuring progress can be jointly celebrated and supported. As the Headteacher explained, there is “constant communication with the parent so progress can be celebrated”. This strong partnership approach is contributing positively to pupil outcomes and engagement.

Next steps:

The next steps appropriately focus on sustaining and refining the curriculum offer to ensure it remains responsive to the evolving needs of each cohort. Continued development should ensure that curriculum planning is flexible and inclusive, particularly in relation to the needs of pupils accessing the internal alternative provision, so that progression pathways remain coherent and accessible for all learners. The planned focus on inclusion and SEND within the yearly HIP visit provides a valuable external lens to support further improvement. This should help the school to evaluate impact more precisely and ensure that curriculum intent continues to translate into meaningful outcomes for all pupils.

Target 3: Ensure pupils continue to develop the skills to self-regulate and take increasing responsibility for their behaviour, both in lessons and during unstructured times, to sustain the school's strong culture of respect and high expectations.

The school continues to demonstrate a well-established and highly effective culture of behaviour, with pupils generally calm, respectful and responsive within both structured and unstructured times. Relationships across the school are notably strong and are underpinned by a consistent culture of nurture, respect and high expectations. The next stage of development appropriately focuses on strengthening pupil independence and



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self-regulation so that this positive culture becomes increasingly pupil-led rather than adult-directed.

There is clear evidence of thoughtful and responsive adaptations to meet the needs of current cohorts, particularly within EYFS and Year 1. Adjustments such as staggered transitions into the dining hall, revised lining-up procedures and increased MDA involvement show a reflective approach to identifying and resolving pinch points in the school day. The development of additional spaces, including quiet and movement areas, alongside investment in playground resources, further supports pupils' ability to regulate effectively during less structured times. These adaptations are not reactive in nature but demonstrate a proactive approach to anticipating need and reducing escalation before it occurs.

The consistent use of Zones of Regulation, sensory strategies and structured emotional literacy approaches is a notable strength. Pupils are increasingly supported to recognise and articulate their emotions, with some beginning to move towards greater independence in regulating their behaviour. Examples such as pupils using visual supports, safe spaces and restorative approaches demonstrate that regulation is being actively taught and reinforced, rather than left to chance. Parents spoke highly of the school's approach, with one explaining that "they have always followed her lead", reflecting the school's ability to adapt support sensitively around individual pupils.

The school's emphasis on restorative practice is particularly positive. Opportunities for pupils to reflect, repair and restore are well embedded, helping them to take ownership of their actions in a supportive and structured way. Parents described how "the staff would talk to them in a coaching way to support him to understand", and they are now seeing "a real difference this year in our child being able to make the right decisions". This demonstrates the long-term impact of the school's relational approach and the consistency of support provided by staff.

There is also strong evidence of highly effective partnership working with families. Parents consistently described feeling included and listened to. One parent reflected that "it's been a partnership 100%", while another explained "we can be cohesive" between home and school. Families valued the way the school works proactively to secure wider support, with one parent commenting that "the school put us in touch with an outreach support team". The phrase "blended effort" was used by parents to describe the collaborative nature of support around pupils, highlighting the strong relationships that exist between home and school.

The school's commitment to bespoke provision is another significant strength. Parents spoke positively about how the school "embraces bespoke learning journeys for the children", ensuring support is responsive and individualised. Alongside targeted SEMH support, including Learn and Thrive interventions, counselling provision and external training, this contributes to a consistent whole-school approach. Leaders and staff should feel proud of the calm, nurturing and reflective culture they have established. The next stage will be to continue strengthening pupil voice and further reducing reliance on adult co-regulation over time, enabling pupils to internalise strategies and sustain the school's highly positive climate independently.



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Next Steps:

The next steps appropriately focus on maintaining a flexible and responsive approach to meet the evolving needs of pupils. The school should continue to monitor the impact of strategies and adjustments through a range of evaluative methods, including learning walks, book looks, assessment data and pupil voice, ensuring triangulation of evidence is consistently applied. The planned review of assessment in September 2026 provides a useful opportunity to refine practice further.

Ongoing monitoring of targeted interventions, including Learn and Thrive and SEMH provision, alongside SLT oversight of ABC logs, will support consistency. The use of earplugs should be carefully reviewed to ensure appropriate and proportionate use. Continued evaluation through PMR targets and PSHE curriculum review will further strengthen impact.

Agreed Targets for next 12 Months

Target 1: Embed a consistently high-quality Ordinarily Available Provision across all classes, ensuring adaptive teaching meets the needs of all learners, particularly pupils with SEND-before additional or specialist intervention is required.

The school is well placed to move this work forward given the increasing clarity around inclusive practice and adaptive teaching. The focus on embedding a consistently high quality Ordinarily Available Provision is appropriate and builds on existing strengths in staff understanding of SEND, neurodiversity and SEMH needs. This is further reinforced by the strong sense of shared responsibility across staff, captured in the view that “team effort” underpins provision and that inclusion is understood as something enacted in the moment, reflected in the phrase “inclusion for that moment”.

There is a clear and well developed culture of adaptation within the school, supported by a commitment to ensuring access for all learners. This is evident in the belief that “we know the children” and that “we should be reactive to the cohorts we have”, which demonstrates a responsive and pupil centred approach. The Headteacher’s emphasis on being “supple to support the children with the most learning need” reflects a flexible leadership approach that prioritises access to learning for all pupils. This is further reinforced by the principle that “in theory everyone should be able to access learning”.

A key strength is the breadth of adaptations already embedded within practice, including what is described as “10 adaptations for all subjects”, with a clear intention of “adapting so that all children should be able to access the curriculum”. This reflects a strong commitment to universal design principles and ensures that provision is not dependent on individualised intervention alone. The notion of “building in the structure for all children to progress” further supports this inclusive intent.

Ongoing staff development will be key in ensuring that all practitioners are confident in using adaptive strategies as part of everyday classroom practice rather than as an additional layer of support. Staff report that such approaches “increase the teacher’s



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tool kit”, indicating that professional learning is being positively received and integrated into practice. The evolving nature of staff roles, including changes to previous administrative responsibilities, reflects a broader system shift in how support for inclusion is delivered.

Monitoring the use and impact of interventions will be important in ensuring that these remain targeted, purposeful and time limited, with a clear focus on increasing pupil independence over time. The school already demonstrates a strong commitment to responsiveness, with an emphasis on being “reactive to the cohorts we have”, which supports timely intervention. However, it will be important to ensure that this does not inadvertently lead to over reliance on adult led support where high quality classroom provision could meet need effectively.

The role of SENCO and SLT in ongoing monitoring is appropriate, particularly in ensuring consistency across all classes. Regular learning walks and monitoring activity should help to identify variation in practice and support further refinement. The key challenge will be ensuring that adaptive teaching is consistently understood and enacted as the first response to need across all staff and settings, including within more complex provision areas.

Overall, the school demonstrates a strong culture of inclusion and responsiveness, supported by shared language, reflective practice and a clear commitment to meeting need in the moment while maintaining high expectations for access and progress.

Target 2: Develop and implement a whole-school, neuro-affirming communication and self-regulation approach that enables all pupils to increasingly self-regulate and access learning independently. (Behaviour + Inclusion + Curriculum).

This target is a logical continuation of the school’s established strengths in behaviour, inclusion and relational practice, and aligns well with the current emphasis on developing pupil independence in regulation and communication. The intention to develop a whole school neuro affirming approach is appropriate and timely, particularly given the needs of the current cohort profile and the consistent focus on meeting holistic need, reflected in the question “how can we support the holistic child and family.”

The continued use of Zones of Regulation language provides a strong foundation for shared understanding across staff and pupils. The emphasis on consistency is clearly embedded in practice, with a strong belief that “language and communication in the school is as consistent as possible.” This shared approach supports clarity for pupils and staff and contributes to reducing cognitive load, as reflected in the view that “we want to support everyone’s cognitive load and also their well-being.”

A key strength is the school’s commitment to ensuring that “any objective or strategic aim has to be part of practice”, which demonstrates strong alignment between intention and implementation. This is further reinforced by the belief that “you then have consistency of approach which has a much greater impact”, indicating a well-developed understanding of how consistency supports impact across the system.



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Ongoing staff development in Therapeutic Thinking, neurodiversity, anxiety and communication is well placed to deepen staff understanding and support a more consistent whole school approach. Staff are actively engaged in identifying need and developing strategies, with one member of staff noting they “work on identifying their need and build up strategies”. The use of external expertise, including work with SPELT and occupational therapists, demonstrates a proactive approach to professional learning and practice development.

There is strong evidence of reflective practice across the school, with staff describing “a lot of fact finding this year for our children” and “a lot of feedback happening”. This indicates an ongoing cycle of review and refinement, supported by case examples where appropriate support has directly enhanced learning outcomes.

The key area of focus moving forward will be ensuring that this shared language and approach is consistently embedded in everyday classroom interactions, not only in targeted or higher need contexts. The use of interventions is described as purposeful and efficient, with staff using assessments to identify “the gaps in the learning” and interventions being “based on how they have been achieving so far”. This demonstrates a considered approach to targeted support.

There is also evidence of effective collaboration, including shared use of teaching assistants to “increase access to learning” and ongoing gap analysis within sessions. These approaches support timely intervention and targeted support. However, the next step will be ensuring that regulation and communication strategies are consistently embedded so that pupils are increasingly able to recognise, articulate and regulate their own needs with reduced adult prompting over time.

Target 3: Systematically evaluate and demonstrate the impact of outreach, partnership, and cluster work on both internal practice and pupil outcomes. (Leadership / COE expectation).

This target appropriately strengthens the school's leadership focus on evidencing the impact of its increasingly extensive partnership and outreach work. The school demonstrates a strong culture of collaboration, described by staff as “we communicate as group”, with structured opportunities for information sharing that support consistency and shared understanding across teams.

There is a clearly articulated open and reflective culture, with reference to a “very clear open door policy here” and recognition that “people talk whether informally or formally”. This contributes to a highly communicative environment where practice is openly discussed and refined. The Headteacher's emphasis that “early intervention is key” further reinforces a preventative and responsive ethos across the school.

A notable strength is the clarity of leadership in evaluating impact through visible practice. The Headteacher describes evaluation as “you walk around the school” and identifies impact when “you see the practice being reaffirmed or introduced”. This highlights a strong reliance on lived experience of practice and observation within classrooms as a means of assessing effectiveness.



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There is also a clear focus on implementation and consistency, with the belief that “we share, then apply then you can see it being done”. This reflects a well embedded cycle of knowledge sharing and practical application. Staff also describe the culture as highly committed, noting “the team work so hard” and that “everyone is so reflective on their practice”, which indicates strong professional engagement.

The intention to move towards more systematic evaluation of outreach and partnership work is appropriate given the breadth of activity already in place. The school is engaged in a range of external collaborations, and there is a clear opportunity to ensure that impact is consistently captured, triangulated and used to inform ongoing school improvement.

The development of case studies is a positive and practical approach, particularly where these explicitly link input, implementation and outcomes. There is also potential to strengthen alignment between external engagement and internal professional development planning, ensuring that learning from partnerships is systematically embedded into whole school practice.

The key development area will be ensuring that evidence of impact moves beyond observation and anecdotal confirmation towards more structured and triangulated systems. This will support clearer articulation of how outreach work influences classroom practice, staff development and pupil outcomes over time.

Overall, the school is strongly positioned with a highly reflective culture and clear commitment to collaboration. The next stage is to formalise impact evaluation processes so that the full value of outreach and partnership work is consistently evidenced and embedded across the organisation.



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Overview

The school is very well laid out and presents as a warm, welcoming environment that is highly conducive to nurturing young learners. There is a clear sense that the physical environment has been carefully considered to support both emotional wellbeing and learning. A particular strength is the way in which every available space has been intentionally designed and used to benefit pupils, reflected in the staff view that “we utilise every space”. This intentionality is evident across the site, where spaces are not static but adapted to meet changing pupil needs throughout the day.

One of the most striking aspects of the visit was the school's flexibility in how spaces are used. The library, for example, has been transformed into a multi-use sensory space, demonstrating a creative and inclusive approach to resource management. Similarly, outdoor areas are well equipped and in some cases are being further improved, ensuring that pupils have access to rich, varied and stimulating environments. Display areas across the school celebrate pupils' work and reinforce a strong culture of achievement and recognition.

The early years provision is particularly strong, with nursery and reception areas offering large, open and highly engaging environments. Children were observed to be deeply engaged in learning, with clear elements of Montessori inspired practice supporting independence, exploration and curiosity. This early years foundation sets a strong tone for the rest of the school experience.

A key strength of the school is its clear commitment to partnership working and early intervention. During the visit, an outreach intervention session was observed in practice, demonstrating how external expertise is being used effectively to support pupils. There are also plans for further development, including potential funding for art therapy, which links closely to the school's wider aim of valuing professional expertise for the benefit of children. In addition, a Speech and Language professional is employed by the school and works every Wednesday morning, also attending nursery settling in sessions to support parents. This reflects a highly proactive and preventative approach, with a clear emphasis on early support and engagement.

The Headteacher was observed delivering a reading intervention and was described as “a really hands on headteacher”, reflecting visible and active leadership within the classroom. This presence reinforces the school's culture of shared responsibility for learning and inclusion. The Headteacher's pride in the staff was evident when asked what he was most proud of, responding without hesitation “the staff”, and adding “we couldn't do it without them”.

The school is clearly embedded within its community and holds a strong local reputation, with comments such as “always full with a waiting list” reflecting high levels of demand and trust. Parents spoke very positively about their experiences, highlighting that they value “understanding my child as an individual”, “there is never any judgement” and “they create an environment which is very nurturing”. When asked the best thing about the school, one parent simply responded “everything” and another stated “I couldn't do it without them”, reflecting deep trust and partnership between home and school.



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The school council structure is particularly impressive, with subject leaders bidding for funding in a democratic and pupil informed process. This has included areas such as mathematics successfully securing funding, demonstrating that pupil voice is both meaningful and influential. This reinforces a culture where all stakeholders have a voice and power is not solely top down, but distributed across the community.

Staff also describe a highly connected culture, noting “so many opportunities to have a conversation” and that “everyone is invested in the school and connected”. Communication with parents is supported through surveys, an inclusion newsletter and regular coffee mornings, which also help to build relationships between families.

A significant highlight of the visit was time spent in the “Nest”, an onsite alternative provision for four pupils. This provision is a standout feature of the school and exemplifies its commitment to inclusion in practice. The environment is carefully structured to meet individual needs, with total communication approaches including Makaton signing, objects of reference and visual timetables. Although each child presents with very different needs, all are being effectively supported within a highly responsive and personalised setting. The emphasis on “inclusion in the moment” is clearly evident here, and the provision represents a powerful example of meeting need through flexibility, expertise and care.

The school also promotes innovative initiatives such as the “secret reader” programme, where parents come into classrooms to read to pupils as a surprise, further strengthening home school connections and fostering a love of reading.

Overall, the school presents as a highly inclusive, community driven and child centred environment, where leadership, staff and families work in close partnership. The culture is one of warmth, ambition and deep commitment to ensuring that every child is known, supported and able to thrive, underpinned by a strong sense of shared purpose and care, captured in the Headteacher’s reflection that “we couldn’t do it without them”.

It was a pleasure to visit **Fawbert and Barnard Infants’ School** to conduct their Year 3 COE review. The school continues to move from strength to strength in terms of its inclusive practice and I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark’s Inclusive School Award in all eight elements. I recommend that the school be re-awarded the Inclusive School Award and be re-assessed in 3 years’ time.

Assessor: Ms Jo Jo Morrall

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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