



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name On Track Mildenhall

School Address 82E&F Fred Dannatt Road
Mildenhall
Suffolk
IP28 7RD

Head/Principal Mandy Taylor

Assessment Date 2nd October 2026

Assessor Julia Ridley

Sources of Evidence:

- Tour of the school premises
- Tour of the school lesson drop-ins
- School website

Meetings Held with:

- Headteacher
- IQM coordinator/ Family Liaison
- Deputy Head
- Deputy Head/Curriculum Lead
- Deputy Head/Health and Safety officer/ Vocational teacher
- PSHE/Senior Thrive Practitioner
- Behaviour Project Lead
- Solution Focused Brief Therapy coach
- Class teacher/English teacher
- SENCO
- Director
- Parents
- Group C pupils and staff
- Assistant Deputy Head/ Careers Adviser/Coordinator
- School Admin Manager/attendance officer
- 2 Nurture leads
- Science teacher
- ICT teacher and safety lead



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Overall Evaluation

"We aim to restore young people's self-confidence, self-esteem, self-control, and self-motivation through a flexible, personalised, needs-led programme delivered with unconditional care, nurture, and support."

This mission statement sums up the school's excellent inclusive practices perfectly. The care, nurture and support is evident in all interactions and learning opportunities. The school is a shining example of how inclusion should be for all children. As one parent said to me, "I am such a happy parent. I would be completely lost without this school."

Due to time constraints, I was only able to have a tour of the Mildenhall site though many staff work on both sites with this report relevant to the provision at the Swift House site too. The tour was conducted by a Year 11 pupil who has been at the school for three years, which he proudly told me was the longest he has been able to stay in any setting throughout his educational career. His area of responsibility is to show visitors around the school. He was very engaging and was able to tell me about the rationale for things and explain the excellent support he gets. I was seeing the school's flexible approach in action with pupils having areas of responsibility that match their strengths.

Each day starts with pupils eating breakfast together and socialising in their class with their peers in one of the five classroom bases. This soft start before the first lesson of the day gives everyone the opportunity to talk about what has happened in their lives since they were last at school and have a smooth transition from home to school.

There is a maximum of six pupils in each classroom. The class composition is flexible; it is based on children's needs and who will work best together. This is a very inclusive approach to meet all pupils' needs. Pupils also have their lunches in their own classrooms, seen as a safe place. There is a library and an outdoor sports area. Pupils also access a local gym for some PE lessons.

Each classroom is fitted out with a dining table and chairs, a kitchen and comfortable sofas. All displays have been made dyslexia friendly. There is minimal visual stimulation on the walls. At the back of each classroom, is a door into an additional smaller room which can be accessed by a pupil if they need a quiet re-set from the classroom or they are struggling to do work in the main room. The back rooms are kitted out with sofas, books, games and space to work. The younger pupils also have bean bags.

The cooking room/kitchen is well-stocked, and all pupils have a double lesson there weekly. They are rewarded with more cooking slots if all English and Maths work has been completed. There is a road map for each term, so pupils know what they will be cooking each week ahead of time. There was much anticipation about two weeks' time when it would be scones week!

The vocational workshop is a very impressive space with all the practical resources in place for the specialist staff member to offer courses in woodwork, plumbing, electrics, mechanics, bricklaying or plastering. He likes to expose interested pupils to all the options initially and then they can choose their particular area of interest. Pupils from the Swift house site use the workshop on a Friday so they can take advantage of this provision themselves. A good example came from one pupil who loves the idea of being a welder. He has done a welding course at school and was accompanied to visit a welding college in Norwich where he will be able to do his post-16 training.

The Swift house site is in the grounds of a stately home which has a therapeutic feel with pupils able to access the grounds and go for walks in a peaceful, tranquil setting. They access a village hall for PE sessions in the winter and enjoy PE in a couple of good parks in the locality. Careers education is thorough and starts when the pupil starts at



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the school. It was identified as a strength of the school in the recent Ofsted report. A flexible five-year plan is developed. Pupils know that they can meet on a one-to-one basis with the careers adviser at any time to discuss their ideas about a career. The school follows the Gatsby benchmarks and welcomes visitors to the school to talk about their careers. Pupils can suggest a career that they would like to be represented and the school work hard to make this happen. Pupils regularly go to job fairs, visit employers in different settings.

In years 10 and 11 college visits are introduced to the careers programme and added to the EHCP. The school liaise with all the relevant colleges and arrange visits for the pupils to see whether it is the appropriate setting for them. The careers adviser works closely with the post 16 transition workers from each of the three local counties.

Communication with parents takes place throughout the process. Some of them were unaware that pupils are expected to be still in an education provision until they are 18. They have also been informed that they can still claim child benefit whilst their child is still in education. All pupils have an offer before they leave the school.

I read comments from parents that the school had received saying they found the school safe, their child is thriving, the teachers are full of kindness which radiates throughout the school, and nothing is too much trouble. These results from parent surveys are shared with all staff.

A new family liaison role was created about a year ago as this was identified as an area of need for the school. The role holder also teaches cookery on both sites so has a good knowledge of all the pupils making her better equipped when talking to parents about support that is needed. She is always available for advice for parents and regularly does home visits as welfare checks.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. I recommend that the school be awarded the Inclusive School Award and be reassessed in three years' time.

I also recommend that the school should consider applying for Centre of Excellence status subject to the inclusion within its plans of the appropriate areas for development and the completion of the Centre of Excellence documentation. If the school chooses to pursue this status and it were to be awarded the school would be subject to annual review from this point forwards.

Assessor: Julia Ridley

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:


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Joe McCann MBA NPQH
Chief Executive Officer
Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd



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Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

Most of the pupils at the school come to the school with negative experiences of mainstream school with a sense of failure and probably poor self-esteem. The school works very hard to remove these feelings and give each pupil a fresh start to their education where they can grow in confidence and learn to form positive relationships with their peers and the staff.

The school is a very reflective school. At the end of each day, they talk, debrief and take actions to improve the situation the next day. Teachers' meetings, nurture lead meetings and LSAs meet regularly with all meetings being minuted.

All pupils told me that they like school which is a testimony to the inclusive values that the school holds. Each situation/ subject/ experience is carefully considered to make it accessible to learners.

The bespoke curriculum, high support for families and a strong team spirit from all the staff are factors towards this success in inclusion. The values of the school are all pervasive and were evident in every classroom and every discussion that took place on my visit. Staff speak to the pupils with kindness and humour; there is a sense of calm and structure around the school.

Morale of staff is high, with people talking to me about a great sense of job satisfaction and purpose, working at the school. Staff feel well supported in their roles, with access to weekly in-house training sessions delivered by the Deputy head and SENCO. All training is linked to evidence-based research. Induction is thorough with new staff doing mandatory training over the first month at the school. This is done in school time which sets a good initial tone for work/life balance. Continuous professional development is encouraged by the senior leadership team, and career progression is encouraged. The school follow a therapeutic approach throughout the school, following the Thrive approach.

They have a designated Thrive room which is used for 1:1 sessions or group work sessions. The one-to-one sessions are pupil-led, e.g. cooking or games used as a vehicle for conversations. An outdoor area has been planted up with lots of flowers and cleared, to add an attractive garden to the offer. It has formed part of the eco-school curriculum work.

Each class has a Nurture lead who remains with them for all of their lessons and is a key communication link between home and school. The school describe their work as "fitting the school around the child" with the personal development of the child being paramount.

On the visit, it was great to see pupils learning how to support and help each other to develop their social interaction skills. Older pupils opted to visit the younger pupils' classroom at lunchtime, which was testament to them seeing this as a safe and nurturing place to return to. Pupils were delighted to present a member of staff with a birthday cake with candles to celebrate this special time. There was a sense of joy and community spirit as everyone sang the 'Happy Birthday' song.

Next Steps

- Exclusions and suspensions have significantly reduced.
- The school would like to reduce this number even further by changing a newly acquired building into a new well-being provision to support pupils at risk of exclusion.



Element 2 - Leadership, Management and Accountability

I was interested to find out whether staff felt equally supported in their roles as families did and gather their opinions about the leadership and management of the school. Responses were resoundingly positive with many examples, some of which are described below.

All staff members have access to mental health counselling as part of the BUPA package that the school uses. In addition, support from the solution focused coach is also available, whether in groups or in an individual basis. A free staff lunch and teas or coffees each day were mentioned as helping with time management in that there was no need for staff to prepare their own lunch. It is a simple gesture by the Leadership team but it goes a long way to support staff morale. There is an understanding from the Leadership team on challenges that staff face in the role and they have carefully considered ways to mitigate against these challenges. In the same vein, work/ life balance is good with senior leaders always available to cover lessons if there is a particular workload issue at a certain time.

I feel that the work/life balance has been considered in the structure of the day for both the pupils and the staff. Pupils leave the school at 2.30 pm each day. This is an acceptable time for them to have been at school, many travel quite a distance each day and concentration levels diminish after this. Staff are on-site until 4.30 pm so this additional time is used for curriculum planning, meetings or holding annual EHCP review meetings. This significantly reduces the amount of work that needs to be taken home by teachers.

Each member of staff has the opportunity to meet termly with the Headteacher on an individual basis to keep her updated and to discuss anything that is on their mind. This check in makes staff feel that their views are respected, and they feel fully included in school life. One person mentioned that the Headteacher at Mildenhall as well as the Deputy Head based at Swift house, as the leaders on each site, are very welcoming and approachable to all staff. There is no feeling of a hierarchical structure at the school.

Teachers have regular subject meetings with colleagues from other schools in the OnTrack family of 10 schools and are always invited to visit the other schools to see how similar schools deliver the curriculum. This collaborative style of working promotes inclusion and prevents isolation where they may be the only person who teaches a particular subject in such a small setting.

CPD opportunities are encouraged with a full catalogue of training delivered in school as well as staff members able to source their own external courses that will add value to the school's offer.

It is important to have the right staff in place to support and teach the children so I agree with the school's process of only giving permanent contracts to staff after a successful probation period. Through discussions, it was very clear that school staff hold themselves to a high standard of professional competence and are always keen to learn from each other.

Learning walks are used effectively and have a wide scope. They are always linked to evidence-based themes that have been proven to have an impact on pupils' progress in their learning. Staff value the focused feedback that they receive. There are termly appraisal meetings for all staff where targets are set and reviewed.



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Next Steps

- To respond to the recommendations from the latest Ofsted report; to be more consistent in the teaching of oracy and spelling.



Element 3 - Curriculum (Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaptation)

"Leaders have constructed a coherent and ambitious curriculum. It is personalised and reflects pupils' complex needs. The curriculum has been well designed to ensure pupils are ready for their next stage." Ofsted report March 2026.

This comment from the latest Ofsted inspection shows that the curriculum has been developed to be as inclusive as it is possible to be. A bespoke plan is developed for each child on entry to the school, built on assessments and teacher observations. These inclusive plans are the key to the success of the school. The flexibility of continually monitoring and adapting this plan, which includes a summary of new learning as well as the revisiting of prior learning are refined through discussions with the child and their parents, leading to a very collaborative experience.

High pupil engagement has to take place to change the pattern of previous unsuccessful educational experiences for the pupils at previous settings. The curriculum is built around each child's personal interests and drivers, with teachers using their skill and expertise to engage pupils and help motivate them towards success.

The scale and range of accredited courses offered by the school is note-worthy with pupils able to take AQA units, ASDAN independent living awards, BTECs, and GCSEs in any subject of their choice. If a pupil shows an interest in learning a particular subject, teachers will action the request and adapt the curriculum offer. A good example of this involved two pupils who are very talented in STEM subjects. They are now accessing physics and higher Maths on the Swift house site. One teacher taught himself the computer science GCSE syllabus so that the two pupils could be successful at this subject. The vocational skills teacher, based in the workshop, spoke to me about giving the pupils a wide range of learning opportunities in different trades, before concentrating on their particular interest. Pupils who are at an earlier stage of development are accessing a 'learning through play' curriculum offer which meets their current needs perfectly.

Teachers value the autonomy that they are given from the senior leadership team to be trusted as experts in their specialist subjects. The English teacher spoke about this trust in her subject. Reading is a high priority in the curriculum and all pupils know why it is so important to be as literate as possible. The curriculum offers support at all levels on pupils' reading journeys from the "Fresh start" intervention for pupils who are consolidating their phonic understanding up to some pupils at KS4 who want to dissect complicated literature texts. All staff attended training in how to deliver phonics in the summer term.

Adaptations are made as needed, physical resources cover such reasonable adjustments as fidgets, rocker chairs and dual-coding through symbol use. I saw some pupils exercising using a pull up bar to use some excess energy as a calming strategy. These strategies can be accessed by pupils who need them at any time.

Next Steps

- To introduce the Duke of Edinburgh award to the school's range of courses on offer.



Element 4 - Teaching and Learning, Learning Environment, Planning Resources and Pedagogy

The six principles of nurture form the foundation for the school's teaching and learning model and were apparent in all interactions throughout the visit. These principles of nurture are embedded in the Thrive framework and the school is recognised as a Thrive school.

Children's learning is understood developmentally, with clear references within teachers' planning as to where this developmental level differs from chronological age with teaching adapted appropriately.

The classroom and school offer a safe base in nurture-rich settings. This was apparent in the very positive relationships I witnessed between staff and pupils with a strong sense of mutual respect. Pupils are taught how to reflect and problem -solve in this safe environment. I like the phrase from the school's self-evaluation when they talk about the value of "controlled chaos" where pupils are exploring, communicating and regulating in the safe base of the classroom. Social and emotional well-being are given equal importance as academic success by the school. Staff know that teaching and learning happen when the pupil feels respected with unconditional regard directed to them.

All behaviour is seen as communication with language as a vital means of communication. An important part of the teaching and learning programme is for pupils to develop the skills to help them regulate their emotions more effectively, learn with peers and talk about how they are feeling. Pupils are all at different stages on this journey.

Staff are very aware of the importance of transitions at all levels. Most teachers move to the classrooms, rather than the pupils having to transition around the school which is very beneficial to the children as it reduces barriers to learning by keeping them focused and less distracted by movement around the school. Each class has a nurture lead who stays with the pupils and several additional support staff, depending on need. This model gives the pupils consistency and a security that they may have lacked in previous settings. The big transitions of joining and leaving the school are handled very well. Home visits on entry and strong careers advice and support as the preparing for adulthood package are effective.

All practitioners are highly skilled in how to get the best out of the pupils in terms of teaching and learning. They understand that learning takes place in all situations and pupils don't have to sit on a chair at a table to be successful. Teachers have expert knowledge of the subjects that they teach.

High-quality CPD is delivered on evidence-based research on pedagogy with the intention that this knowledge is transferred to the classroom. Recent topics include metacognition, long term memory and working memory strategies and the importance of understanding cognitive load.

It was clear on my visit and tour of the school that teachers and support staff work very well together to ensure that pupils' get the most effective teaching and learning offer.

The learning environment is conducive to the needs of the pupils. The small library, outdoor spaces, IT suite, cookery room and vocational workshops have all been designed to optimise learning. The Thrive room is welcoming, and a calm setting. Each classroom has a separate room for reflection or a space to access when one is overwhelmed by the main classroom. This is very supportive of pupils needs.



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Next Steps

- To begin to use the British Dyslexia Association Checklists, develop dyslexia-friendly environments and subsequently complete the Dyslexia Quality Mark



Element 5 - Assessment

Pupils come to the school at different ages, with a variety of learning profiles as well as varying lengths of absences from education. The school have a good understanding of the role of assessment as a tool to pitch learning at the correct level, to promote deep levels of understanding and development of skills. The recent Ofsted report confirmed that the school successfully combines the need for progress in the academic curriculum with achieving the individual outcomes of the education, health and care plans of each pupil.

"Assessment is used thoughtfully to identify pupils' knowledge gaps. Staff use information from the checks they make to shape pupils' individualised curriculum plans. This ensures that learning closely aligns with pupils' education, health and care plan outcomes."

Teachers spoke to me about how important it is that assessments are accurate when the pupil starts at the school to set a secure baseline. The school SENCO examines the EHCPs and makes sure that the provision section is accessible for teaching and support staff so they know how to begin to assemble their bespoke plans. Pupils are assessed in all curricular areas, with a strong focus on their literacy and numeracy abilities. If pupils are not yet fluent readers they undertake a phonics assessment which is subsequently used as a baseline. Subsequently six-monthly assessments of spelling, Maths and reading progress take place.

Progress towards achieving EHCP outcomes are continually monitored. This progress is discussed with parents on a weekly basis by each nurture lead. Annual reviews of EHCPs are held at the school or online if this is parental preference. This is a very supportive, inclusive practice for parents who live far from the school or prefer not to attend in person. These reviews are person-centred with a strong pupil voice element.

Thrive online has an assessment tool that is used for all pupils where progress is regularly measured as part of the personal development programme.

Most formative assessment takes place 'in the moment' and happens during the teaching and learning sessions. Lessons are adjusted in response to misconceptions, which are identified by targeted questioning from the staff. Quizzes are a fun way to assess progress in a non-threatening way.

A personalised learning plan is then developed, with termly smart targets. All pupils know what their individual learning targets are, and how they can make progress in these areas. I like the idea that pupils are seen as "experts in their own experiences" and that their views of their own progress and self-assessment are valued.

As pupils move into Key Stage 4, assessments may be past papers for exams or entry level assessments.

Next Steps

- Leaders should continue to refine the precision of their monitoring and analysis, so that they draw consistently on clear insights to inform decision-making and accelerate improvement across the school.



Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

During their recent Ofsted inspection, the school was graded as Strong for personal development. Behaviour around the school was exemplary on my visit. Pupils are treated with a lot of respect, and it was clear that they have very strong relationships with all the staff. There has been a transformation in the school, with very few incidents of violence now and nobody can remember the last time that restraint had to be used.

The majority of pupils come to the school after unsuccessful placements in mainstream schools which has caused them to lack motivation or be afraid to try new things. This attitude to learning changes as soon as they start at the school and begin to respond to the therapeutic approach and the unconditional support that they get from all staff members at the school.

The pupils value that the school says, “every day is a fresh start”, with no repercussions or reminders about previous incidents that have been dealt with already. The Thrive team has been strengthened from having one practitioner last year, to having five trained and working Thrive practitioners now. The Family Liaison officer has completed her training and is ready to start working with parents on the Thrive family programme.

Solutions focused coaching is a very successful intervention that takes place on both sites for pupils. It is strength-based work that sees each participant as Hopeful-Successful and Resourceful. The child is seen as the expert on themselves. It has a very clear structure that can be understood by all pupils. Pupils are always asked if they want to meet again. It can be used side-by-side with any other approach at the same time.

The solutions focused coach gave me examples of pupils whose attitude to learning and happiness had improved due to the work that they had done on themselves. He usually has a caseload of six pupils on a six-week programme, which can be continued if the child asks for more sessions.

The school have strong systems in place to improve attendance. If a child is absent, the parents are immediately contacted to see if they need any support to help get their child into school. Pupils get a half-termly reward for improved/good attendance.

The school rewards pupils who have reached 95% attendance. The school are constantly asking themselves the question of how they can incentivise parents too. The attendance officer does a detailed analysis of each absence which is discussed with the senior leadership team.

Next Steps

- To gain the Thrive school of Excellence award.



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Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

“Leaders work closely with families and external professionals to craft the individualised provision in place. Families are regularly and meaningfully involved in the review of their child’s education, health and care plan outcomes through the school year” [Ofsted report].

On the day of the visit, I spoke to parents on the phone to collect their opinions about the support their children were getting from the school. One parent said that she couldn’t speak highly enough about the school. The school sent her a “care” package of a coffee sachet, a biscuit and a note saying well done to her when she was going through a particularly tricky time. She said this made her feel heard and included. The school told me that this was an approach used to show that they care for the whole family.

She spoke very highly of the Headteacher, the Family Liaison worker and the SENCO. She is visited once a week by the Family Liaison worker at home to see how things are going as her child is currently having difficulties in attending the school. She said that the SENCO is amazing, very organised and had helped her with the paperwork.

Another parent’s child has been at the school for a year and instantly loved it, compared to the miserable time he had had in his mainstream setting. The unconditional kindness from staff has given him the confidence to have a go at learning activities for the first time. She values the email support that the school gives during the school holidays with strategies to help the children prepare for their return to school after the break.

The freedom to wear their own comfortable clothes rather than a school uniform at the school was a godsend to her as her son didn’t like wearing traditional shoes or having itchy materials touching his skin. This had been a big problem in mainstream school. Online parents’ evening slots was also mentioned as being very inclusive.

The Family Liaison values doing initial home visits as she sees each child in their “safe place” and can see the child’s context. Talking to the child about their likes and dislikes helps with starting to plan their bespoke curriculum and supports a positive transition. The school uses a staggered start for pupils: two days a week for the first week, then three in the second week and full time in the third week. This will be adapted if needed.

Her role is varied. She helps parents fill in official paperwork, supports them at CAMHS visits, signposts them to local services such as the foodbank and even helped interview for a personal assistant with one family! At the end of each term, she calls all the parents to ask if there is anything else that they can be helped with.

As an attempt to get parents to be mutual support for each other, the school has held their first coffee afternoon. As part of the future steps, this will be continued and further developed.

Next Steps

- To encourage parents to meet each other more often and feel that they can support each other through a programme of regular coffee afternoons, led by the Family Liaison worker.



Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

The school have links with the local and wider communities. There are nine others On Track schools around the country and they all offer each other professional support and work collaboratively. Most of the staff have visited some of these other schools to share ideas and discuss their inclusive practices to see what they can learn from each other.

The school have strong links with the three countries from which children attend the school and the relevant special educational needs teams from Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk. This collaborative working is also evident in links with local colleges and employers.

Pupils regularly visit the local community, and all go on weekly well-being trips, either as a class group or on a one-to-one basis. The deputy Head spoke to me about some of the latest trips. Some pupils had their first visit to Wimbledon to watch the tennis championships this summer. They took part in a litter pick on the beach as part of World Ocean week. Special, individual interests are catered for, an example was given about a boy who likes fishing. He had the chance to spend a day at a fishing lake and learn more about the sport.

The Mildenhall site is situated near to the US Airforce Mildenhall base and strong links have been forged between the two settings. A team of athletes were sent from the school to the base to represent the school in the Joan Mann Inclusive sports day event, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Pupils go on an annual day-long canoeing trip at the end of the summer term.

As well as educational visits, visitors to the school from the local and wider community are welcomed to the classrooms on a regular basis. Staff told me about how much they value the visits from the military personnel at the base. They have had workshops/talks from officers on resilience, leadership and future pathways. Children's authors have been to the school to talk about their writing style and literature as a whole. Lotus visited with a car prototype that the pupils enjoyed seeing in real life.

The local police attend the school on a weekly basis and have forged good relationships with the pupils. They have learned about how to keep themselves safe and peer pressure as well as road safety advice.

One member of staff organised for an animal experience to take place at the school. Pupils had the opportunity to touch the animals and learn how to care for them appropriately and to ask questions. They enjoyed having their photos taken.

Next Steps

- To make sure that the experiences are recorded on all of the school's social media platforms so parents can see what has been happening.
- To continue to work with more of the local businesses to see if a community café would be viable in the industrial park.