



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



**School Name** Church Hill Nursery School  
47 Woodbury Road  
Walthamstow  
London  
E17 9SB

**Head/Principal** Helen Currie

**IQM Lead** Ms Pat English

**Date of Review** 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026

**Assessor** Ms Lucy Ciantanni

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

**Cluster Group** Drive to Thrive

**Ambassador** Dr Kenny Frederick

**Next Meeting** TBC

### **Cluster Attendance**

| <b>Term</b>        | <b>Date</b>               | <b>Attendance</b> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Autumn 2025</b> | 8 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2025  | No                |
| <b>Spring 2025</b> | 20 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2025 | No                |
| <b>Summer 2026</b> | 22 <sup>nd</sup> Apr 2026 | No                |

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

The SENDCo attended the Cluster Meeting at Oasis Pinewood in March of 2025 but has not attended any since then. However, the SENDCo recognises the need to work with other settings and has contacted some other IQM schools which have been rated “outstanding” by Ofsted and has visited them and shared good practice with them.

The importance of participation in the Cluster group meetings was discussed with both the SENDCo and the Executive Headteacher who agreed that attendance would be prioritised going forward.



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### **Evidence**

- IQM Centre of Excellence Review and Action Plan documentation
- School Website and policies
- Ofsted Report – May 2022
- School Development Plan
- Curricular Goals
- Curricular Aspirations
- Calendar of Artists
- FANS\* Learning Library (online)
- Book Looks (Special Books)

\*Forest Alliance of Nursery Schools

### **Additional Activities**

- Curriculum discussion with Assistant Headteacher & Executive Headteacher (EHT)
- Learning Walk
- Observation of work in sensory room
- Meeting with SENDCo
- Meeting with LSA
- Coffee Morning for parents of children with SEND
- Meeting with class teacher
- Assessment discussion with Assistant Headteacher & Executive Headteacher
- Meeting with local partner in the community
- Meeting with parents of children with and without SEND (individually and as a group)



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### Evaluation of Targets for last 12 Months

#### **Target 1: To develop our SEND practice in partnership with Waltham Forest LA.**

The SEND practice at Church Hill does not just encompass the way children are taught, but a plethora of support both from the dedicated team here and services provided by the LA. Children with the most complex needs are not only supported in school but referred on to other services within the borough such as speech and language, Early Help and the local MASH team as well as applying to the local special school as necessary. SEND practice also focuses around applying for EHCPs for all children who need one.

Parents speak highly of the support available and how they are helped to navigate, sometimes difficult, bureaucracy, with one parent saying, "my life has changed and I feel like whatever comes that can be difficult -the support will be there."

The SENDCo expressed that the use of the local speech and language therapy service, autism assessments and hearing tests all mean that, "children with limited language have a voice and the ability to communicate with others." This is something that is greatly appreciated by parents who say that, "all kids get equal quality of education" noting the support that is in place for all.

The assessor attended one of the regular coffee mornings organised at Church Hill for parents of children with SEND and was delighted to hear from parents there that there are always representatives from different organisations such as the Waltham Forest Parent Partnership, SENDiss and The Oak Foundation who advise families on respite and other services available to them. It is very pleasing to see how well the school works in partnership with Waltham Forest LA in order to take advantage of everything on offer for vulnerable pupils and their families and truly develop their SEND practice.

#### **Next Steps:**

Sadly, the funding for supporting the children with the most complex needs will be stopped however, as the SENDCo stated, "I see it as my duty to make sure the children have an EHCP if that is what they need in order to succeed." In practice, this will mean that the work developed as part of this target will continue as appropriate. The aim of this target is to ensure that all vulnerable children have an "individual package of care" and this will continue on into the future.

#### **Target 2: To share our curriculum with other settings.**

The Ofsted report of May 2022 describes the curriculum as; "broad, rich and exciting" and the school has continued to build on this and share it with other local settings. Church Hill works closely with two different settings in the West Walthamstow partnership, creating bespoke curriculum models for them and helping them to develop their learning environments. Church Hill has generously shared their own curricular goals and aspirations to help them, and whilst doing so, has taken the opportunity to re-assess and update them, as necessary.



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### Next Steps:

Support for at least two other schools in the West Walthamstow Partnership will be ongoing for a number of years to come.

### Target 3: To develop our professional development options for our staff team.

Staff at the school speak really highly of the CPD provided and all are confident in the way they work and plan for the children. Some of actions planned for under this target involve trips to other outstanding settings and the creation of a library of “read, watch and listen” articles arising out of suggestions given by the team. The “FANS Learning Library” was shown as evidence and there are many different topics included to support staff CPD – these included neurodiversity and autism, as well as information around further training opportunities across the borough. The Learning Library is online, and staff are able to access it directly from their iPads.

The SEND team has recently completed training in topics such as Sensory Awareness and Nurturing Relationships.

Leaders at Church Hill have felt it important to allow staff to have more ownership in what they learn in order to help them have a greater impact on the development and support of all pupils. Training is, therefore, based on a survey of their learning needs and then planned accordingly – for example, this year there is an emphasis on Colourful Semantics and ShREC.

The SENDCo has also visited two other outstanding nursery settings in the borough to share ideas and good practice.

### Next Steps:

Leaders at the school are planning to continue work on further developing quality CPD for all staff and will continue to ensure quality material in the Learning Library.



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### Agreed Targets for next 12 Months

#### **Target 1: To extend the knowledge and skills of the whole staff team regarding SEND.**

The SDP has a series of “Big Questions” for leaders to work towards and this target links to the Big Question “What specialisms will we offer children and families?” Leaders at the school are acutely aware that things change all the time and so constantly strive to find accurate, up to date information, supported by research. This will then be personalised to the school and shared with staff at INSET.

As previously mentioned, it is felt important that staff have ownership of their personal development and it will be an ongoing action for staff to conduct self-monitoring exercises in order to identify areas of strength and weakness in working with children with SEND.

#### **Target 2: To raise the aspirations and life opportunities of our poorest families.**

This target links to the Big Question; “How do we embed our partnerships with parents, local communities and other organisations?” and one of the stated school values of “all families matter.”

During discussions the SENDCo stated that the school was determined that “they did not want a lack of resources to be a barrier.” Consequently, the school will work with the LA to identify any parents who were looked after children themselves (PLAC) or children classed as EYPP. Experience has shown that PLAC parents are often amongst the poorest families and this target was chosen to ensure this is kept at the forefront when planning to support families.

There is a real drive on cultural capital and raising aspirations at Church Hall and EYPP families are targeted for more additional trips as well as being encouraged to join the local library or being given information about places to visit with little or no cost.

#### **Target 3: To identify early any support the family might need.**

This target again links to the Big Question; “How do we embed our partnerships with parents, local communities and other organisations?” and one of the stated school values of “all families matter.”

The SENDCo and LSA for SEND at the school offer home visits for children with complex needs to see what additional help they can offer. This kind of support ranges from the simple loan of nursery books or toys to more unusual forms of support, for example parents may need support with after school care if they are dealing with extenuating personal circumstances and need some extra time to take care of various responsibilities. At times such as these, the nursery will offer after school hours free of charge in order to support the family. This is just one way in which Church Hall ensures all children are included in school life, whatever the need.



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### **Target 4: To build on carers and parents wellbeing and developing their confidence to return to the workplace.**

Once again, this target links to the Big Question; “ How do we embed our partnerships with parents, local communities and other organisations?” and one of the stated school values of “all families matter.”

Church Hall believes that it is important to help support parents back into work as much as possible. Lots of the parents have the opportunity to volunteer at the school and this helps them develop their confidence and skills. Some parents can feel very socially isolated, especially if they are parents of children with SEND, so supporting them back into work will be excellent for them and their personal development, which in turn, will be a positive outcome for their children.



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### Overview

Walking into Church Hill Nursery School is to immediately feel welcomed into a lovely, friendly happy atmosphere. On arrival to the staffroom, a noticeboard covered with thank you cards from grateful parents was observed and accompanied with a warm greeting by everyone who entered.

Moving into the EHT's office there is framed picture on the wall with the phrase "Educate every child as if he were your own" – this mantra is clearly the lived experience of all children at the school as became clear when speaking with parents/carers, leaders and staff, and observing the children. There is an overwhelming sense that every single child is seen, understood, and included at this school.

The school's inclusive values are advertised widely, with "a warm welcome for every child" assured and all children being treated with "kindness, respect, and equity. This value was clearly displayed in a curriculum and assessment discussion the EHT and AHT when they explained that the curriculum in place previously had been very linear and therefore felt very "ablest" as not all children could move up the assessment levels in a linear way and, as such, not all children could be included in the assessment that was in place.

It is believed wholeheartedly at the school that SEND children can have success, but this was not being represented in the curriculum goals previously in place. As a result of a lot of hard work the school now has a more inclusive curriculum and assessment system in place with children being assessed against "I can" statements.

The language of assessment has also changed from goals to aspirations and from milestones to insights. In this way both school and parents can see exactly how a child is developing and what they can do – it is an excellent way to value what all children for their individual development and progress.

Curricular aspirations are the specific things which are assessed but they also teach many other things as well, for example work on recipes is not just about cooking, it feeds into maths and science development, with all children having the opportunity to learn about measuring out ingredients and seeing how they change from one state to another. Inclusion is considered here too, and recipe bags are sent home with children so families who may not necessarily have the resources to do so are able to cook (and learn) together

There is a Creative Curriculum in place at the school which has been developed over two years and ensures inclusion for all. This includes a calendar of artists with careful consideration being given as to which artists are featured – leaders wanting, for example, to ensure at least half of the artists are women who are still alive and/or of different ethnicities, with artists also being a mixture of able bodied/disabled, so that all children in the school can see themselves represented somewhere. Children see videos of the featured artists talking about their work and art activities have been adapted to give children the opportunity to create their own artwork in the same style. There are currently plans to duplicate this calendar for musicians in the future.



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Each child has a “special book” which includes formal observations, assessments against the curricular goals and examples of their work, including artwork, number work, pictures of them on World Book Day and so on. This type of practise is typical of such an inclusive school that it was difficult to see any differences in expectations of each child, whether a child with SEND or not.

The learning environments in the school include a large playground with a fire pit, space for pets and forest school. It was pleasing to note that forest school space is specially designed as to be easily accessible for disabled children, ensuring all children are able to part in the activities.

Resources in the school are all of a high quality and stories are chosen carefully to try to ensure all children can see themselves somewhere in them. Staff at the school all wear lanyards with visual cues on them in order to help all children understand the plans for the day, but these are particularly helpful for some children with SEND.

The school website states that “play is a right not a privilege” and “all play is valid,” this is borne out by the agreed pedagogy of the school which is child-initiated and play based, with high quality interactions with adults. Such high-quality interactions are leading to confident children who choose to play as they will, and this child-directed play is not interrupted by adults, but rather supported and nurtured. The adults in the school also provide a continuous provision of play and focussed activities. It is testament to the ethos, values, and expertise of the team at Church Hall that it was difficult to pick out any but the most complex of SEND children, as all were engrossed in their various activities.

The Ofsted report of May 2022 noted “staff teach children to communicate their feelings and solve conflicts positively” this was clearly demonstrated when a with staff member was observed asking a child complaining about another child to stop and consider how it made him feel so they could think about the way forward to solve the issue. He then went away quite happily to solve the situation without the help of the adult.

All parents/carers that seen, whether that was individually, as a group or at the coffee morning were effusive in their praise of the school's ethos of inclusion and speak especially highly of the SENDCo, talking about all the strategies she shares with them to help support their children with one telling me quite simply; “We need more teachers like Pat.”

Parents/carers at the school are supported in whatever way necessary, for example to apply for EHCPs or to apply for places in special school, but more than that is the how appreciative parents/carers are of the way the school looks after their children as well as ensuring their development as learners, as one parent told me, “the whole team has really nurtured him here.” The parents appreciate being told the truth and given good advice and the school will also help children who do not even attend the school. Church Hill comes so highly recommended that one parent told me she “burst into tears of happiness” when she knew her child had been given a place at Church Hill. There was also an opportunity to meet with a foster carer who is delighted with the progress of her foster child who has suspected autism, telling me that he only had three words when he



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started school and is now developing other language, as well as learning how to behave in a calmer way.

Another of the school values is “experts working together” and a local partner in the community came into school to share her thoughts about the inclusive nature of the school. This colleague runs an organisation called “Care to Share” – a residential space for parents and their children when they are at risk of being removed from their families by social services. She shared that whenever she has a child at the centre who needs nursery provision she immediately turns to Church Hill, knowing the quality of the nursery education provided for all children and how accommodating leaders here always try to be. She also talked highly of the excellent partnership and communication in place between Care to Share and the school. This is just one example of the way the school's inclusive values reach out and impact on the community.

I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Centre of Excellence. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence status and is reviewed again in 12 months. The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Centre of Excellence status.

**Assessor: Ms Lucy Ciantanni**

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

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