

Basic Skills Quality Mark (BSQM) – Visit Feedback Report

School name	Cherry Oak School, Frederick Road, Birmingham B29 6PB	
Headteacher	Executive HT, Julie Fardell Head of school, Amanda Jenkins	
School and/or HT email	a.jenkins@victoria.bham.sch.uk	Tel no 0121 464 2037
Alliance BSQM Assessor	Lesley Mycroft	Visit date 17/03/2017

Purpose of Visit	RENEWAL ASSESSMENT
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The Assessor spoke with the following people

Headteacher and Senior Leaders YES	Literacy Subject Leader YES	Numeracy Subject Leader YES	Assessment Manager YES
SENCo N/A	Pupils in class and groups YES	Governor rep NO	Parent representative YES

Learning Walk' completed? YES	Relevant evidence-base reviewed? YES
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The previous development points as identified at the ISAR visit have been implemented

Background to these visits with Renewal at Cherry Oak School and Victoria taking place on the same day:

The two federated schools continue to move forward effectively together and in their distinct and separate development areas. The interim period, since the ISAR visit and therefore since I was last in the schools for Renewal 2014, have seen a change of executive head teacher. The new appointment was effective from January 2017 and I appreciated meeting the new executive head in the course of this visit. The day concluded with feedback and discussion with the HT and with the two Heads of School who I had worked with closely throughout the day. Discussion included setting next development points with the idea (as previously) of there being some points common to both Cherry Oak and Victoria and then some points distinct to each school.

It is noted that both schools have increasing numbers of pupils on roll and that Cherry Oak

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will continue to grow in September 2017. Cherry Oak has seen completion of new classrooms and other facilities since the last QM visit and these are clearly making a difference to the learning environment of the school.

I enjoyed becoming reacquainted with the schools and finding abundant evidence of the way in which each has continued to move forward. Over a period of two terms after the previous executive HT left, the two Heads of School continued to lead, with Caroline (of Victoria) acting as interim HT. It is a credit to both schools that this appears to have taken place without loss of impetus in terms of their quest for continuing improvement. Both schools continue to meet all ten Elements of the Quality Mark award with Cherry Oak able to demonstrate that PQM standards are being maintained.

The suggested areas for development at Cherry Oak School and Victoria School are:

- To continue to develop the use of Solar as the preferred purpose-made assessment system suited to charting the progress of pupils with special needs; both schools anticipate adapting to a new version due in the near future and intend that separate use in each school gains in strength from staff within the federation being able to share experiences. PQM Elements 2, 1 & 3; SQM Elements 2, 1 & 3
- To continue to develop procedures for moderation of pupil work within each school; to promote collaboration within the federation and with other external partners so that each staff group continues to secure assessment judgements for the benefit of their pupils. PQM & SQM Element 10

The suggested areas for development specific to Cherry Oak School are:

- To progress the development and work of the new curriculum teams which it is anticipated will strengthen the school's curriculum and teaching. PQM Element 1, 10, 7 & 8
- To embed the use of ICT as support for basic skills progression; particularly, to draw on opportunities provided by a new ICT suite which is about to be equipped. PQM Elements 8, 7, 10 & 1

Noted areas of strength at Cherry Oak School from this visit include the following:

- The school provides extensive evidence of continuing development with a clear leadership in all key aspects of school provision for pupils whose special needs require careful planning, staffing, teaching and assessment. There is an effective team approach which is continually being strengthened. Elements 1, 6 & 10
- The School Improvement Plan is reviewed and updated annually. Subject-specific plans are in place and are reviewed frequently. The leadership team keeps track of progression and the meeting of school targets. Membership of the team has been broadened and, within the staff team as a whole, Cherry Oak is good at growing skills

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and promoting personal advancement as well as working for the essential benefit of pupils. Elements 3, 6 & 10

- The school has a newly initiated system of staff teams working on revising curriculum statements within the prime and specific areas of learning in Development Matters, which as an integrated curriculum is best suited to meet child needs at Cherry Oak. It is anticipated the move to designated staff teams will generate improvement planning. Basic skills provision is always to the fore in Cherry Oak provision with communication being an essential part of teaching/learning/assessment within Literacy and Maths planning but also across the curriculum. The S & L therapist has a key role. There is a subject lead for Communication as well as leaders for Literacy and Maths and all are part of the SLT. Cherry Oak now has a greater number of children with autism difficulties and there is a lead member of staff for Behaviour and Autism coordinating appropriate approaches. The school recognises the vital importance of building and extending physical skills and a HLTA is dedicated to providing support in and out of class. Also, the Strategic Pastoral Manager provides for and extends the use of Makaton signing across the school. This includes work with wider groups such as transport guides and dinner staff and also provision for parents so that there is continuity at home. Elements 1, 2, 10, 6 & 9
- Communication is assessed through a special package (CELF) which enables initial planning for individual pupils and also gives a mark of progress. Leaders and staff demonstrate a strategic awareness of enabling children to rehearse the development of skills within the school environment and then being able to adapt to external locations. This includes promotion of independence, such as that evidenced in photographs of one child being able to walk independently (without hands) in a local park for the first time. The high staff/pupil ratio is in recognition of the complex problems of many pupils entering the school. For the first time with increased numbers on roll, it has been possible to be more flexible in class groupings to suit the difficulties of individuals in different age bands. Elements 1, 3, 4, 5 & 7
- The school's Assessment leader tracks pupil targets termly and is able to identify any necessary interventions. This includes communication targets supported and reviewed by the S & L therapist and shared with classroom staff to provide a cohesive approach. The adoption of SOLAR as an assessment tool has proved positive in the monitoring of pupil progress in small measureable steps, particularly with in-school adaptations. Staff are pleased that SOLAR enables them to gather and display evidence which can be uploaded to the system and which can be shared with parents in a way not accessible through the previous recording method. In-school moderation of pupil work occurs regularly and there is shared moderation within the federation and with other schools across the city. Elements 2, 3, 5 and 10
- There is consistent monitoring of attainment and standards within the school including termly scrutiny of planning and a regular cycle of observations. The 'My Appraisal' programme of monitoring with TAs recognises the key role of these members of the

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staff team and the way in which they enhance provision for groups and individual learners. There is a coherent programme of CPD for all staff linked to the SIP and related to core school provision (e.g. Communicate in Print, COPE and Go Talk training). Many sessions are in-school provision and some are shared with Victoria. Some input includes regular refreshers and also ensures that members of staff in the wider school community (e.g. dinner staff and guides) are upskilled. The joint governing body across the Federation receives and discusses reports on provision, target setting and achievement. Elements 10 & 6

- The school environment has been considerably enhanced by the new-build accommodation providing additional classrooms to meet the increase in pupil numbers and other facilities such as a new library. The outdoor environment was previously improved with the addition of the 'back area' which gives a grassy space and now houses an outdoor classroom (the Hub). Staff training has been provided so that these facilities and those accessed on visits to Victoria can be used well as part of a forest school approach. Other playground development is in planning now that the building work is complete. CPD in the use of ICT means that it is now in wide use throughout the school; it is being progressed in the use of i-pads (as a key aid to communication) and the recent incorporation of SMART boards and now two Alpha boards. Development of the ICT suite will occur shortly. Elements 8, 7 & 6
- Parents/carers are encouraged to fully engage with everything the school provides for children in its care. The 'Stay and Play' provision continues and there are regular opportunities for parents to visit school for both informal and formal meetings. There is a clear partnership between home and school. Sharing of information with parents is enabled with extensive records of pupil achievement; there is support for families, including through training and educational provision for them such as Makaton and behaviour approaches. All of this was exemplified within a case study presented during the QM visit. This included a pre-arranged telephone conversation with the foster carer of the child who spoke highly of all the help she and the boy had received from Cherry Oak as a school and through individual members of staff. The conversation with me was ideally suited to the situation of a family living at some distance from the school and it was a notable part of my Renewal assessment. Element 9

**Thank you for this and all other arrangements for the visit. It was good to be warmly welcomed to the school again and to share detail of your many successes.
Best wishes.**

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