



Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

3rd August 2017

Mr Nic Brindle
Principal
The Fermain Academy
Beswick Street
Macclesfield SK11 8JG

Assessment Date: 7th July 2017

Summary

The Fermain Academy is a free school in Macclesfield, that supports schools from across Cheshire East and Cheshire West. It opened its doors to its first students in September 2015 and underwent a £1.6m building project to extend and refurbish the entire building. With facilities to cater for up to 40 students aged 13-16 at any given time, to provide education for students who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion, and who may be experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties. Although the school continues to be oversubscribed and intends to increase its PAN to closer to 60 as they work with the LA to plan their growth. SEN students make up approximately 11% with FSM closer to 50% and attendance at the end of June 2017 at 91.3% a fantastic accolade for the Academy. The progress that students attending the Academy make from their low starting point, is fantastic often with little or no attendance; the average attendance for the cohort is around 63-64%. Every student has increased their attendance and on average students improve by 26% or more. In fact, the student who showed me around had an attendance of 45% before he came to the Academy and now is very proud of his 100% attendance record here. The Academy should be commended for their efforts and justifiably proud of what they do in this arena.

The Academy is a safe place of learning for those who, for whatever reason, have become disengaged from mainstream education. Students often arrive with a range of social differences meaning they all start from a variety of developmental points that need to be addressed through the Academy's strong emphasis on SMSC and British Values. The Academy was set up with a vision to re-engage those students who have become disconnected with not only mainstream education but with their own dreams and aspirations. The Academy's ethos is to, ***'re-engage the disengaged by raising their aspirations, realising their potential and recognising their achievements through an individualised whole-education approach facilitated in small working groups by trusted adult role models'***. Aiming to help students to recognise their achievements, and by delivering a personalised curriculum that will allow them to sit a minimum of five GCSEs or the equivalent, prepare them for a world where they can truly realise their full potential. Attainment predictions for the summer 2017 are – 100% A* - G in English and Maths, 100% predicted to get 5 or more A* - G and 100% predicted to get at least 1A* - G a great set of results if the predictions are borne out considering where the students were when they started at the Academy. The curriculum is designed to encourage all students to be



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respectful of, and generate their own alternative viewpoints and ideas, the Academy delivers a complete academic, social and emotional learning experience by placing students in smaller working groups led by adult role models that the students trust. The safety and well-being, both emotional and physical of all students and staff is paramount, something they ensure by maintaining safe and stimulating learning environments and implementing robust systems of behaviour, as well as social and emotional support. They try to provide the best possible standards of care, support and learning for all students and staff by promoting an environment in which staff can develop and share their skills, knowledge and experience.

By focusing on academic achievements through focused personal and social development programmes staff can establish the foundations on which to build trust and re-engagement in learning. The Academy supports the 'whole student' by concentrating on focused personal and social development programmes, which in turn helps to establish solid foundations on which to build. Provision is put in place that helps them to overcome the range of challenges they often face. All student successes are celebrated and praised in order, to raise the students' self-confidence and self-esteem. Staff understand that by raising the self-worth of the 'whole student' they are much more likely to re-engage with, and establish a love of, learning, which will ultimately allow each student to meet and exceed their academic targets.

Please thank the staff, students, parents and the Governors who took the time to talk to me and celebrate what you do as a community during the assessment. The Academy has an extremely welcoming and vibrant atmosphere. The building is bright dynamic and airy providing suitable accommodation for 21st century teaching and learning and beyond with an impressive teaching environment. It is clear to see that the dedication of the staff at all levels is paying dividends here and is turning students' lives around and ensuring their success as they move forward with their lives. This dedication is apparent in the way that the Principal and Deputy Principal have worked to build an extensive network of external partners and agencies, collaborating with them and ensuring that trust is paramount to keep the students safe and improving their well-being. The Academy is part of a quality assurance group with three other good or outstanding schools where SLT from each school moderate their judgements on teaching and learning as well as school SEFs. The Academy has rightly judged the quality of teaching and learning to be 'Good to Outstanding and this continues to be the number one priority. This is a fact I can attest to from the teaching and lessons I observed during the assessment.

Everybody I met over the one day assessment was very helpful and spoke in a highly positive manner about the Academy, their involvement and their experience of the Academy often at great length, not only students and staff but also the parents and governors I spoke to. The students I spoke to were very mature polite and courteous and spoke about their time at the Academy and offered their honest opinions on a range of topics concerning their education. In fact, the behaviour of the students and ex-students I spoke to on the day was exemplary.

Students have clearly bought into the culture of the school and take responsibility for their behaviour. Students spoken to were quite open in telling their stories and how the Academy had transformed their lives. Prior to attending the Academy many of them were non-attenders at risk of permanent exclusion and disengaged from their education. At the



Academy, they show excellent attitudes to learning and clearly thrive in a totally inclusive culture where there are the highest expectations coupled with exceptional nurture and care.

The Academy's superb inclusive culture as the principal states is, ***'driven by a strong set of values which focus on securing the best possible educational and social outcomes for young people who need to be re-engaged with learning'***, and in his welcome on their excellent easily navigable website, ***'Fermain Academy supports individuals that struggle with conventional education and we work hard to support, engage and raise the aspirations of every student.'*** Statements that I agree with and I can attest to from discussions, conversations and observation during the rigorous and comprehensive assessment process. A truly inclusive approach based on the vision and belief that, this is an exciting learning community where all students make progress irrespective of their starting point. Learning is challenging, engaging, purposeful and innovative allowing for creativity, a sense of fulfilment and a desire to succeed. There is an open and honest culture where celebration of achievement is the norm and accountability is clear. Students and staff are given opportunities to discover and develop skills and talents. It was obvious during the assessment that students felt that the teachers and staff know them very well fostering excellent positive relationships and an environment in which as individuals they can flourish and grow.

During the IQM assessment I saw the Academy at work and experienced the unique culture and ethos of inclusion that is clearly visible in every area of the school. Inclusion is at the heart of everything it does. permeating every nook and cranny and is ingrained in the structure at all levels. It is apparent from the moment you enter reception where I was warmly greeted by, the receptionist who is an apprentice who has worked at the Academy since December 2016 and who is completing a Business Administration Course at Level 2 and during a conversation she explained that she loves working in the school, and has an excellent rapport with students and staff alike and feels part of the school community. A great accolade from a new member of staff. Everyone I met in meetings, in classes and during social times was keen to share ***their*** Academy and celebrate their vision for inclusion and success. Every student is valued for who they are and staff often go the extra mile as a matter of course to ensure that students' needs are met and exceeded, as I was told on numerous occasions by students I met and talked with. The hard working, dedicated and thoroughly professional staff employed by the school are proud of their students and of the work that they do to promote successful outcomes from low starting points and of the outstanding level of care that they provide for all students! There is an outstanding sense of care and nurture within the Academy ensuring that students are given the best opportunities to succeed from the time they arrive. It was a pleasure to meet such enthusiastic, professional members of staff and to see the pride they felt when telling me about their roles and what they do daily, supporting each other, their students and as often the case their families as well, often without realising how much they do to ensure their students are successfully supported. Everyone I met was proud of ***their*** Academy and the outstanding efforts that are made to ensure everyone is cared for and achieves success. They should be exceptionally proud of their achievements in such a short time, having only being open for two years, such is the success of the Academy.

The Fermain Academy makes every effort to ensure that all students succeed, knowing and feeling that they matter. They provide the excellent care, guidance and support where the



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ethos of providing an environment supportive of all associated with it is intangible and infectious. Their commitment is reflected in high quality planning with owned and outcomes led actions. There is a culture of widespread reflection and review focussed on sustaining continuous improvement cycles. The importance of treating everyone associated with the school as an individual is deeply held and based on mutual respect, care and trust. The right for all to make progress is inherent and expected.

Leadership within the school and governance are rigorously focussed on ensuring the quality of the learning experience continues to produce improving and excellent results for all students. There is an equivalent emphasis on the provision of a broad array of enrichment opportunities to support individual's personal growth. Celebrations are a positive and regular feature of life at the school. A broad and innovative array of approaches to recognising and celebrating achievement, in its widest form, are evident. The inclusive ethos is reflected through the operational systems and practice that the staff employ to deliver the clearly articulated vision. Data capture, tracking, monitoring and analyses are of a very high standard. It is very clear that relationships count, inclusion at the school is not about paperwork as such but about the everyday practice and this was very clearly demonstrated and seen by myself on numerous occasions during the IQM assessment.

The Academy has a relentless focus on driving improvement forward and on objectively evaluating their work on inclusion. Inclusion underpins their philosophy and approach, and is shared effectively through whole school meetings, briefings, Academy improvement and development planning, learning walks, through communication with parents, carers and students and in discussion with the governing body. It is committed to meeting the needs, ambitions and aspirations of **ALL** students, staff and other members of the learning community and by investing in specialist staffing to fully facilitate access to the curriculum for all and to work with staff to ensure that they have the knowledge, skills, ability and capacity to support the inclusion agenda.

The parents I met with and talked to spoke candidly about their experiences of the Academy. The parents I spoke to during the assessment were positive about the school and that it is an open and honest place, where they feel comfortable, listened to and valued and where not only will their children be supported but they know they will be supported as a family. Parents said that they always felt welcomed and that staff willingly discuss any issues and support their children. School communication with them is very good and the school is proactive in letting them know how well their child is doing, through the effective use of Class Dojo a classroom tool that helps teachers save time, boost classroom engagement, and improve student behaviour quickly and easily, with no painful data entry. It also supports quick and effective communication of student progress with parents and students, breaking down barriers to learning. a tool that parents felt was excellent in allowing them to see how their child was performing while still at school. Overall, they felt highly of the school and felt that they went above and beyond what was normally expected of school staff and particularly wanted to point out, that the school recognises each student as an individual and puts in place appropriate support where needed and that they are given many opportunities to succeed and be the best that they can be. They were keen to say that they felt that this was a true 'community school' and that where issues occurred they were dealt with swiftly and successfully. They were also keen to continue to forge even closer links with the school and explore further opportunities to be involved both as



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individuals and as a group.

The school is very well led by the Principal and the Senior Leadership team who are committed to securing the best not only for their students, but for all staff who work in the Academy. They have a clear vision of what they want to achieve and what they want for the school going forward that is fully supported by all staff, the students the parents and the governors. Morale is extremely high for both staff and students, with staff clearly committed to ensure every possible success for the students entrusted to their care, academically, emotionally and socially.

The vision for the school is supported by the Leadership team in the way they manage, lead from the front, establish the vision by implementing school policy and innovation and ensure excellence in inclusion is secured across the board for students, staff and families. There are clear leadership roles identified and everyone works hard to provide a learning environment that excites, stimulates and challenges students within a secure and caring community. A team approach pervades the whole school, where SEN support, pastoral care, student intervention together with excellent guidance and true inclusive practice combine to great effect. Having spent time in The Fermain Academy during the assessment discussing and having varied and interesting conversations about inclusion with numerous stakeholders, the *'team'* are and should be rightfully proud of their hard-won achievements so far, but are committed and have the vision to continue to ensure outstanding outcomes for all who attend or work here. It has been a real privilege to spend time in such a fantastic inclusive school environment. They consistently go above and beyond what is expected in every area of school life. Such expertise may well lead to other opportunities for the Academy to roll out their highly successful model to other areas at KS3 and 4 as well as Key Stage 2 and develop models of short term intervention. It will be interesting to see if this has developed any further at the next assessment or review point.

I, after a thorough and rigorous assessment process, am of the clear opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in 3 years' time.

I also recommend that the school consider applying for Centre of Excellence status, which I would fully endorse. This would be 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: Steve Gill

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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



The key strengths of the school:-

- Leadership is aspirational, extremely positive and optimistic and pervades the whole school community. The forward thinking and supportive Principal, Senior Leadership team and Governors have a clear vision for inclusion and a clear picture of where the Academy is going and how to get there which is supported by the staff, students and parents.
- All personnel working in the school go the extra mile to meet the needs of all the students in their care. It is the welfare and achievement of the students that is the key driver and what matters and this was clearly celebrated in the wider community in conversations with parents and with governors.
- Students come first and they are encouraged to do their best, irrespective of ability, disability, social background, ethnicity or gender, consequently they achieve well or better.
- High quality teaching is a continuing priority for the school. There is an emphasis on high quality teaching and a drive to continue to improve teaching and learning, so that good or outstanding teaching is at 100% as soon as possible. This is supported by an excellent learning culture across the staff and excellent systems put in place to share good practice and support teachers to improve.
- A real strength of the school is its highly motivated, professional and enthusiastic staff. They feel supported, valued and listened to by the Principal and SLT. There is a culture and ethos of support for all.
- Staff at all levels feel included in decision making processes, feel supported, included and feel valued and part of the success of the Academy.
- There is superb inclusive practice in the Academy that provides fantastic care, nurture and support for all, in a carefully considered and nurturing environment. Everyone involved in inclusion here should be highly commended for their relentless focus on inclusion and the needs of individual students and groups of students. This is evident in the support that students have access to and receive on a continuing daily basis.
- The Governors have a very clear focus on inclusion, they know the Academy exceptionally well, working exceedingly hard to ensure it continues to move forward and with a very apparent drive to ensure it is an outstanding Academy. They can challenge and support in equal measure, they know their strengths and weaknesses and are committed to drive the Academy forward.
- The school works very hard to ensure it listens to students, staff and parents. Student Voice is valued. Students are extremely positive about the Academy and spoke confidently and at length about the help and support available. They appreciate the efforts of the staff and they are proud of their school.



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- Parents feel very positive about the school and everything it does to support their children and feel that their voice is heard and communication is a two-way process and issues are dealt with swiftly and successfully and have a very strong voice.
- Performance Management Structure and Line Management Structures are both supportive and challenging. Self-review is thorough and robust and accountability is high but is not oppressive.



Element 1 - The Inclusion Values and Practice of the School

The Fermain Academy supports individuals that struggle with conventional education and they work extremely hard to support, engage and raise the aspirations of every student. Through a bespoke programme of study and varied approaches to a challenging curriculum they hope to constantly promote a 'love of learning', and proactively support every student in the Academy community.

They endeavour to make effort to achieve maximum inclusion of all students whilst meeting their individual needs. They recognise the entitlement of all students to a balanced, broadly based curriculum and their SEN procedures and policies reinforce the need for quality first teaching that is fully inclusive. The School Evaluation Form clearly communicates their detailed future planning in this area and effective delegation for further positive outcomes. Inclusive practices are supported by an effective staffing structure which clearly identifies roles and responsibilities to ensure full engagement with the inclusion agenda. All staff employed by the school actively promote high standards, ensuring they adapt and approach teaching at a multi-sensory level to support students' individual needs.

The Academy is fully committed to making sure that all students are included in everything that they deliver. All individuals both students and staff are valued and there is an effective structure to make sure this is managed effectively. Safeguarding is at the centre of everything in the school and every adult working at Fermain is very aware of policy and procedure, they are to be commended for their work in this area. Staff model expectations and are very strong role models across the Academy. There are strong relationships between staff and students and this is reflected in the vibrant learning environment that has been created by the staff team. The Academy has high expectations for all students and expects them to participate in all aspects of Academy life, this was clearly seen as I had a tour with a student and spoke to staff, students and parents and in the discussions held during the assessment. Fermain is an academy with a staff that is committed to inclusion and ensuring success for all students. This is an outstanding school where everyone is given the opportunity to succeed. Every adult working here shares the responsibility to identify and remove barriers to learning for all students, through early identification of need.

The inclusive ethos of the Academy is based on mutual respect and collaboration. This happens due to the hard work of all staff in the school and by their efforts in providing a nurturing, supportive and safe learning environment in which students feel secure, and where self-esteem, confidence, integrity and respect can be promoted. Students are rewarded for making the right choices and fulfilling their responsibilities in the same way that sanctions are applied when incorrect choices are made. There is a commitment to ensure that students feel that staff appreciate their co-operation and determination to meet the Academy's high standards. Staff are encouraged to use praise and positive language to build self-esteem and to reinforce the consequences of making good choices.

It is clear from the time I spent at the Academy during the assessment that everyone connected to it wants each student to succeed, knowing and feeling that they matter. The very best care, guidance and support is provided by staff at all levels both internally



and externally to ensure that they feel safe and can grow and become successful learners and caring citizens. The Academy provides a very safe and highly organised environment which both stimulates and challenges the students. Students are supported by highly skilled staff, areas of need are quickly identified and solutions put into practice. Their inclusive approach to teaching and learning ensures that good practice is demonstrated and shared with all stakeholders and partners.

Strengths:-

- The Academy has a clear view of its purpose and is a school in which inclusion lives and breathes and is ingrained in the structure and ethos of the school. There is a very clear vision for the school, that begins with the Principal, SLT and Governors central to which is inclusive practice, which every single member of staff willingly buys into.
- Every member of staff is committed to inclusion in its broadest sense. Inclusion is at the forefront of planning and delivery of lessons and in the implementation of policy. There is an expectation that learning is personalised to meet the needs of all students and that teaching will challenge learners of all ages and abilities.
- The tangible culture of praise and rewards leads to motivated students who want to learn and achieve to the highest standards.
- Safeguarding and child protection have a very high profile and are extremely effective, the welfare of students is actively promoted, students feel safe and are listened to.
- The whole school focus on teaching and learning matches provision to need. Subject areas have identified strategies to implement, monitor and evaluate teaching and learning throughout the year that will ensure that the needs of all students are met in lessons, leading to progress that is good or better across the Academy. High quality teaching is a key priority for the school.
- Inclusion is central to the work of the school, the staff effectively manage and organise the inclusive practice in the school. The staff team in the school is highly skilled and dedicated. Support and mentoring provided by staff to pupils is excellent. Inclusive practice in the school is superb with a relentless focus on the needs of each individual student.
- The Inclusion values of the Academy embrace the needs of parents, carers and all staff members as strongly as students. Parents and staff spoken to felt their ideas and suggestions were taken seriously.
- There is rigorous and thorough analysis of data at the Academy so that no student is left behind.
- The school is continuing to maintain a sharp focus on the development and continuous improvement of effective classroom practice, creating environments where good and outstanding teaching will be a constant.



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Areas for development:

- Continue to develop actions identified by the school as '**Future Plans**' for this element.
- Continue to develop and expand links with other schools both locally, nationally and possibly internationally in the arena of Inclusion.



Element 2 - The Learning Environment, Resources and ICT

The Academy works extremely hard to provide an educational environment which is conducive to learning and that students feel safe and nurtured. They have worked very hard to create a friendly, homely atmosphere where students feel relaxed and settled, both in learning and social times. Colourful display boards adorn the school, providing both visitors and students an insight into the school, and what students have been up to in their learning and extracurricular activities. Classrooms are set up to be welcoming to students, creating an unpretentious atmosphere where they feel protected and not at all threatened by the subject. Teachers and support staff have a friendly relationship with students, and although boundaries are put in place and indeed enforced, students feel their teachers are more relaxed and informal, creating a tranquil atmosphere conducive to meaningful learning. A variety of resources are used by staff members to engage students fully and to maximise their learning.

The Academy provides an inclusive learning environment that is safe and stimulating for all students. All students are given the opportunities to achieve and learn within the school. Excellent facilities and resources increase student engagement in lessons and create a positive learning environment. ICT is used effectively to support learning in lessons and provide extended learning opportunities, such as the use of HOOKED, an innovative app that lets students read amazing chat stories for free, gripping, edge-of-your-seat thrillers that keep you reading for hours or, write supporting the ability of students to write their own story, using the app. Every HOOKED story is told as a bite-sized text message conversation, just as if you were reading someone else's chat history. The Academy has begun to use this to instil in students a desire to read and engage them in a way of reading that fits in with their tech savvy way of life. It will be interesting to see how this has evolved at the next assessment or review.

Assessment is used effectively to identify individual students' needs and provide appropriate support. The school takes real pride in their learning environment and makes sure that the displays and resources support the learning and teaching of all students. The Academy has invested in ICT technology which is accessible by all. For example, the use of coloured overlays, kinaesthetic activities, use of personal white boards, use of interactive white boards, learning and literacy aids. ICT is used in all subject areas as a tool to assist the learning and delivery of the subject and give the students a variety of learning styles. There are PCs in most classrooms, and students are encouraged to use them where appropriate.

Strengths:-

- The learning environment is superb and provides enhanced teaching and learning opportunities in a state of the art building superbly maintained environment. The internal environment of the school is bright and welcoming. Careful consideration of the needs of learners has been taken to develop and provide a calm and attractive place where adults and students feel comfortable and valued. The displays reflect the inclusive ethos by celebrating the achievements of all.
- The school is very welcoming and its inclusive ethos is apparent immediately a visitor enters reception.



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- Inclusive practice in the Academy provides outstanding care, nurture and support, in a carefully considered, safe and nurturing environment. Everyone involved at Fermain, including external professionals should be highly commended for their relentless focus on inclusion and the needs of individual students and groups of students. This is evident in the support that students have access to through a variety of differing provisions both internally and externally. The school also engages extremely successfully and works closely with numerous external agencies to support their students.
- Appropriate learning environments in different areas have been created to offer nurture and support for vulnerable students.
- Good use is made of the relatively small outside areas, both for outdoor learning opportunities and for extra-curricular activities and at unstructured times during breaks and lunch.
- An excellent capacity to improve even further, due to the excellent professional skills, trust and commitment of all staff.

Areas for development:-

- There are no areas for development other than those already identified by the school as '**Future Plans**' for this element.



Element 3 - Learner Attitudes, Values and Personal Development

The Fermain Academy re-engage the disengaged. This is achieved by raising expectations and aspirations, recognising achievements, and acknowledging potential. This demands an individualised whole-education approach, facilitated in small working groups, under trusted adult role models. They guide students to recognise their own achievements, by delivering a personalised curriculum that raises attainment, to allow students to sit a minimum of five GCSEs or equivalent wherever possible. In this way, students are prepared for a world where they can truly realise their full potential. The Fermain Academy is specifically designed to encourage all students to generate their own alternative viewpoints and ideas, and to be respectful of, and consider, the views of others. To achieve this result, they deliver a complete academic, social, and emotional learning experience through multiple curriculum pathways, reinforced by creating and maintaining safe and stimulating learning environments and by implementing robust systems of behaviour.

All students and staff are supported regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and every student has equality of access to a high quality educational experience and is given the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. There is a real culture of mutual respect amongst staff and students across the Academy, which was clearly evidenced on numerous occasions during the assessment. They are clearly seen as individuals and have close relationships with staff and could articulate how they can access support to meet their needs, even if those needs are just temporary. The Academy helps students become more resilient and to deal with anxiety in a positive way.

The Academy supports inclusion by promoting positive behaviour in all classrooms and ensures that students achieve because they feel happy and safe. It is very clear that all students have the right to feel happy and secure when they are at the school and they should not be bullied or frightened by others. The ethos is to treat others how they would like to be treated themselves. During the assessment, all students I saw or spoke to in meetings, in classrooms and around the Academy behaved impeccably, their behaviour was exemplary. They displayed positive attitudes. There was a friendly buzz and vibrancy during breaks and lunchtime. The behaviour of students is well managed and supported so that they can access the curriculum and the environment safely.

Strengths:-

- Students are exceptionally positive about their experience at the Academy. They appreciate the ethos of inclusion. They are friendly and open and proud to welcome visitors.
- Due to the outstanding care and guidance offered, students are able at times to overcome significant difficulties and enjoy school life, support is fully integrated and offers “wrap around care”. The care and nurture of students is, in my opinion, superb. Adults working in the school provide an emotionally literate environment with communication high on the agenda. The individual needs of students are the primary concern of all staff.



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- The excellent relationship between staff and students is pervasive and secure ensuring that students are happy to ask for help when necessary or needed.
- Achievement is appreciated and celebrated with students effectively involved in reviewing their own performance at key points.
- The Academy works very hard to listen to students, staff and parents. Students are very positive about their experiences there and speak confidently about the help available. They appreciate the efforts of the staff. Students are very happy with the range of opportunities and they participate enthusiastically.

Areas for development:-

- Continue to develop actions identified by the school as '**Future Plans**' for this element.
- To consider becoming a Stonewall Champion School.
- Consider using the 3m cloud Library App for electronic devices or similar app linked to the school's local Libraries to enhance reading opportunities for students.

The 3M™ Cloud Library allows the borrowing and reading of eBooks and eAudio-books from the local public library for free. The library needs to subscribe to the service and a library card and PIN will be needed to access the content. Navigation and personalisation on the app makes it easier than ever to find eBooks or Audiobooks from local public libraries. The app includes a fully functional reader allowing the user to read their eBook directly in the app, as well as bookmark and save the position of their book across devices. It also includes an Audiobook player, allowing the user to download, play and listen to their books offline. This would be a useful addition to the school and support pupils reading both in school and at home. I would thoroughly recommend the use of the app.



Element 4 - Learner Progress and the Impact on Learning

Throughout each year group the Academy drives accelerated progress particularly in English and Maths. Current pupils that are below their peers make substantial and sustained progress, considering their different starting points. 81% of students in English, 87% in Maths are making more than 1 GCSE level's progress. Attendance is a major factor and taking students who record over 85% attendance, the school saw 90% in English and 96% in Maths achieve at least 1 level's progress with 81% and 78% making over 1 level's progress respectively (15-16 progress data). All learners are classed as disadvantaged or vulnerable learners but further support is given to subsidiary groups such as LAC, SEN, or Disabled students to make sure they have the potential and are pushed to make outstanding progress, no matter their background. Students in these groups whose attendance was over 85% all made at least 1 GCSE's level's progress or equivalent (15-16 progress data). Students are encouraged to hold respectful conversations and are motivated to articulate to both students and staff with all students currently registering over 90% positive behaviour. A fantastic accolade for both staff and students considering the students starting point in this respect.

All subject areas encourage Reading in their learning whenever possible, most students find this a challenge but are helped and supported to become active readers. Students specifically from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special educational needs are supported and given specific learning sessions to raise attainment to help achieve accelerated progress. All SEN students have a single page profile constructed and circulated to all staff. English and Maths is a focus of the school and though the majority, of students are below with some vastly below their expected level on starting at The Fermain Academy, students are driven to make, and exceed wherever possible, expected progress in line with the stretch target of 1 GCSE level's progress. The Academy curriculum is specifically tailored to offer qualifications that lead to the next steps in education. Currently all subjects offer Progress 8 qualifications in the form of GCSE and approved equivalent qualifications including careers, PSHE and SRE. This is also supported by work placements and careers advice from their commission school.

The Academy is building strong links with FE providers to support their learners moving onto the next stage of their education. All Year 11 students have moved onto a place at college, the forces or an apprenticeship. They track their progress in these settings after 3 months, 6 months and 12 months.

Strengths:-

- Students make good progress in relation to individual targets. Progress is rigorously monitored and individual plans are fine tuned to ensure success. A culture of praise leads to students being more motivated with interventions targeted effectively to ensure that targets are not just met but in some cases exceeded.
- All staff are very passionate about their work and are extremely effective, they should be commended for the excellent work that they do in supporting students. Adults working in the school are well trained and use a range of strategies to engage students in their learning.



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- Excellent practice in transition work at all points ensures that individual needs are identified early and intervention is effective.
- Students are actively involved in the learning process and are well motivated and enthusiastic. They are keen to succeed and all achievements are valued.

Areas for development:-

- Continue to develop actions identified by the school as '**Future Plans**' for this element.



Element 5 - Learning and Teaching (Monitoring)

Staff are committed to delivering quality first teaching to all students. Staff have established their knowledge and understanding of the subjects through the new curriculum they teach and motivate students to want to learn in lessons. Staff use a range of techniques to evaluate understanding and make students think about real life contexts to the subject matter. They plan lessons very effectively with planning submitted weekly to SLT to monitor. Staff plan to use lesson time effectively and work with the SBM to make sure resources are used well. These two points mean staff know each student's needs and they are addressed allowing them to make excellent rates of progress in almost all subjects supported by Progress data. Staff work hard to embed knowledge, understanding and skills securely. Curriculum progress is systematic and students know where they are and what they are working toward. Almost all students that attend the Academy are behind or vastly behind their peers and staff consistently strive to raise aspirations to accelerate student progress to bring it in line with their peers wherever possible. Those students whose attendance is over 85% see at least a full GCSE level progress per year in most subjects. Again, borne out by the Academy's Progress data.

Workbooks are now standardised across subjects. These are marked providing success and next steps for improvement. Feedback is in a student friendly form so that they understand what is being asked of them and what to change or adapt to improve their progress. This is monitored through workbook scrutiny. Academy staff work hard to progress students' Literacy and Numeracy in their subject areas. Core subject leaders provide guidance on specific areas for development for each student, which is highlighted to every staff member so all can drive core learning; this is currently being highlighted in form periods. Staff are motivated to ensure every student achieves and raises their self-esteem through learning. The Academy encourages students to take pride in their work and pursue their personal interests, celebrating this work in whole school assemblies and displays both electronically and paper based.

Staff link weekly with parents to inform them of progress and general attitude to learning. This is supported by daily contact when needed through the Academy's behaviour portal Class Dojo. They work very closely with parents to give guidance on how they can help to support their child's learning. They maintain high standards and challenge students to show the same attitude in and around school. This has developed a positive atmosphere in the Academy with all students reporting they feel safe in school and teaching is of a high standard.

Strengths:-

- Planning is rigorous and well-focused on students of all abilities through differentiated tasks that provide stretch and challenge.
- Excellent leadership of teaching and learning is a significant factor in the high quality of provision at the Academy. Rigorous monitoring of all aspects is undertaken by SLT. This ensures that all policies and procedures are effectively implemented and that there is a focus on learning. Performance management procedures effectively support the drive for continuing excellent classroom practice.



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- Teaching seen during the IQM assessment was very good and at times excellent. Teachers have developed their practice through a love of what they do and through rigorous monitoring, evaluation and observations. There is a real pride within the staff to ensure that students experience the best teaching and they are enthusiastic about striving to be the best. Everyone I spoke to felt supported and challenged to be the best they could.
- Self-evaluation and self-review is excellent, the Academy knows itself well and where it is going in the short, medium and long term.
- This is a highly skilled staff group that works tirelessly to improve their students' potential and life chances while, at the same time, being supportive of each other in their drive to be outstanding in their practice.
- Student welfare is both a priority and is a real strength of the Academy. Ensuring everyone feels safe and nurtured and working to achieve their full potential in a happy 21st century learning environment.

Areas for development:-

- Continue to develop actions identified by the school as '**Future Plans**' for this element.



Element 6 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

The Academy is committed to working in close partnership with parents to ensure they are happy with their child's education and progress. It is important that parents are involved in their child's education and parental involvement is actively encouraged wherever possible. The Academy and the staff actively believe that parents are vital in a child's education and therefore they promote and recognise the importance of their involvement in school life. According to recent parental surveys, 100% of parents believe their child is happy at school, 100% of parents believe their child is making good progress, 100% of parents feel their child is taught well, 100% feel their child is well behaved. They report that their child is happier at home and more settled in their life in general, than when they were attending their previous educational establishment.

Parents are completely involved in their child's education at the Academy, and they firmly believe that students must understand that parents and school are united in terms of support and consequences. The Academy operates on a model of transparency, meaning that parental engagement is key to the success of the day to day operations of the school. Through their behaviour management system, parents can see how their child is performing both academically, socially and behaviourally throughout the day. The Academy has very strong relationships with parents as they have recognised that it is important that they are involved in their children's learning and achievements. Communication between the Academy and parents/carers is very good. Parents feel welcome when they visit and are regularly informed about their child's progress or behaviour and to celebrate their achievements. The school website is regularly updated with relevant information which is easily accessible by parents.

Students were proud of what they had achieved and felt they were taught well. They said no adult working in the school tolerates bullying or rudeness and it is dealt with swiftly. Students were very vocal about the support they could expect if there were issues and they knew who to see for support. Parents said the school looks after their children socially, emotionally and academically! Relationships are good and getting stronger. Parents said the school is flexible and adapts to the needs of the child rather than the other way around. The parents I spoke to during the assessment think very highly of the Academy. They are aware that there will be issues at times but they were keen to forge closer links to support their children's education through a variety of different ways in fact one parent I spoke to had just joined the Governing Body.

Strengths:-

- Parents feel very positive about the school and everything it does to support their children and feel that their voice is heard and communication is a two-way process and issues are dealt with swiftly and successfully.
- Parents expressed their appreciation for the support the school offers them. It is a source of strength and help for families when needed.
- Parents appreciate the level of challenge that staff present to their children so that they make good progress. They also value the communication from school enabling parents to understand what they can do to help their children succeed at school.



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- Concerns are dealt with quickly by staff, both students and parents know who to speak to and that incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively and there is always someone available to offer support and advice.
- Students and parents feel that staff are approachable and know families and the community very well.
- Parents are actively being encouraged to be part of the learning experience of their child. Excellent communication is based on transparency and trust between home and the school.
- The school makes every effort to include parents in all aspects of school life and parents feel assured that they are valued and appreciated.

Areas for development:-

- Continue to develop actions identified by the school as '**Future Plans**' for this element.
- To make more use of the numerous highly positive student, staff and parental surveys and questionnaires using social media and the Academy's excellent website to showcase the results.



Element 7 - Governing Body and Management - External Accountability/Support

Governors know the strengths of the school and continuously challenge the leadership team to raise expectations for pupil progress and behaviour. Governors visit the school regularly, and monitor and scrutinise student data. Governors are aware of the high expectations that staff members have of students and make visits to the school to speak to both staff and students. Governors are also part of the Principal's performance management. Governors regularly attend training courses and are signed up to Class DoJo and regularly check class stories to keep up to date with what is happening at the Academy. The governing body has developed a mentoring and evaluation calendar which incorporates governor meetings, committees, policy review, quality assurance visits and consultation activities. The principal will now build school monitoring and evaluation activity around the governor calendar so that governors are able to add capacity to SLT monitoring. Governors recognise the transition from project management roles into strategic support and challenge roles. Governors are clear about priorities which the school need to work on and are eager to support the development of the next phase of the school development plan and the SEF. Leaders and governors are extremely ambitious for the students and continually focus on improving outcomes and enriching the offer. The team has worked incredibly hard to provide real breadth in the curriculum which gives students choice and inspires them to learn. Facts I can endorse from lengthy conversations during the assessment in person and via the phone with governors.

Strengths:-

- The quality of Leadership and Management, in my opinion, is outstanding with a drive and vision to improve further. The highly effective Senior Leadership team lead by the Principal and supported by Leaders at all levels, has a very clear vision of what makes the Academy successful and inclusive. This is clearly seen in the way they work with their partners to ensure that their students have access to the best opportunities no matter their starting point.
- A highly skilled and close knit teaching team and a very effective Governing Body have enabled leaders to continue to build upon the Academy's performance, as an excellent school in the short time they have been in operation.
- The Governing Body work closely with SLT and provide challenge and support; they know the school very well. Their commitment to inclusion is a real strength. They are committed to the Inclusion ethos of the school.
- The GB feel able to support the Academy and is capable of challenge and being a 'critical friend', when necessary and appropriate. They are fully supportive of the Academy's continuing drive to maintain high standards and improve further. They support high quality monitoring, understand data and support the Principal and SLT in the inclusion of all students, parents and families in their school community.
- They are proactive, skilled, experienced and they serve the school very well. Governors support high quality monitoring, understand school data and support the SLT in the inclusion of all pupils/parents in their school community.



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Areas for development:-

- Continue to develop actions identified by the school as 'Future Plans' for this element.
- Consider applying for and achieving the Governor Quality Mark at an appropriate point in the future.



Element 8 - The School in the Community

The Fermain Academy sees itself as an integral part of the local community. It is positioned adjacent to a housing estate and the staff has worked extremely hard to form links with their neighbour so that they are happy with the Academy and their students. An example of this is placing a member of staff on the gate every morning and every afternoon to ensure students move away from the school quickly as the residents said that they didn't like children hanging about outside their houses. The Academy, through their inclusive approach, has reduced anti-social behaviour and has improved the quality of life for the local community. All students are encouraged to appreciate the community in which the school is in and to value and respect all members of the community. They ensure that students are aware of life outside of school and home and encourage them to be part of and think of their local community. The school recognises how valuable links within the community are and how they can support inclusion. They also recognise the importance of links within school also and how the community can and should be involved in school life. Trips out into the local community occur frequently such as visiting a music studio, participating in a team building workshop, a Duke of Edinburgh taster day where those involved learnt basic survival skills, being involved in Red Nose day and involved in a variety of charity events. 100% of students have attended out of school activities and they have the option of participating in Saturday school which involves a range of vocational activities held twice per term where a range of activities are planned such as horse riding, music studio, football matches etc. Learning outside of the classroom activities are regularly planned that includes rock climbing, boxing, canoeing and kayaking. Pupils can also attend an annual residential trip to include various outdoor activities.

Students are encouraged to reflect on their position in the community and the effects of their behaviour and attitude on the local community. The Academy has developed a link with Hillcrest School in Nigeria that they should be commended for and it will be interesting to see how this has developed at the next assessment or review point. The importance of preparing young people for participation in society as informed citizens, empowered to make changes concerning the issues that affect them and those around them is of paramount importance. The Academy gives students the opportunity to explore other religions and cultures. Alongside this is the development of personal and professional skills, characteristics and attributes as an integral part of the school's curriculum, to ensure students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment with training and has focused on Manga and Japanese art, cooking meals from around the world, and being involved with The Amy Winehouse Foundation to name a few, along with a host of other trips and visits. The Academy makes best use of all available resources if they can to help them support students and families.

Strengths:-

- The Academy sees the community as an important partner in the education of its students and is beginning to make good use of links to enhance the curriculum and support students in achieving their potential.



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- The school listens to the local community and consults on relevant issues, ensuring good relationships are maintained.
- They feel pride in being a true community school and it is committed to building stronger links with the surrounding community and is supportive and respects the differences in terms of people living in the community.
- Students are involved in enrichment activities that lead to a tangible culture of community participation.
- The staff fully understand and provide for the need to prepare students for life beyond the school and being part of the local community.
- The school has good links with other schools, including local secondary schools.

Areas for development:-

- Continue to develop actions identified by the school as '**Future Plans**' for this element.