



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: Abercromby Nursery School

School Address: Falkner Street
Liverpool
Merseyside
L8 7QA

Head/Principal Mrs Tamara Bennett

IQM Lead Mrs Tamara Bennett

Assessment Date 26th March 2024

Assessor Ms Siona Robson

Sources of Evidence:

- Curriculum Plans
- Window of Tolerance documents
- Learning Plans
- Safeguarding Curriculum
- Learning Journal
- Website
- IQM Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)
- Observation of Carpet Time, Together Time and Forest School session

Meetings Held with:

- Headteacher (HT)
- Class Teachers
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) one-to-one staff
- Nursery Officers
- Governors
- Parents



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Overall Evaluation

What can I say, I was blown away by my visit to Abercromby Nursery. It's a truly magical place for children to start their educational journey. They love it. The nursery is a school of choice for many parents, some of whom travel significant distances. All families are welcome. The nursery school has a fantastic reputation in the local and global community. I was told it was discussed and recommended by families on the other side of the world. The school was awarded an 'Outstanding' Ofsted grading last March, an accolade that is very much deserved. "Teamwork makes the dream work." This statement is the heading for a photo of the Abercromby staff in the Headteacher's (HT) office. This encapsulates her approach to leading and inspiring the small and highly successful team of committed and motivated colleagues. The school has two classes, Oak Tree, for 3-5 year-olds and Willow Tree, for 2-3 year-olds. Each class has a teacher, nursery officer and SEND one-to-one officers. This year to increase capacity, the school took on two apprentices who support in class and provide invaluable additional one-to-one support for some children. The bonds which staff make with the children are truly amazing. The enthusiasm of the staff is overwhelming. The result is a calm, happy, safe space for every child to flourish and grow. Children make rapid progress.

The school fulfils its aim to welcome all children and has a number of children who haven't thrived in other settings. At Abercromby, they blossom and become real success stories which the staff are so proud to share. When the April cohort starts the school will be at capacity. 70% of the children in Oaktree class are English as an Additional Language (EAL), ranging from new to the country to completely bilingual. In the Willow Tree class, 53% are EAL. One of the experienced members of staff and both apprentices speak Arabic which is the main additional language in the school with Somali coming next. When needed the school will buy in the support of an interpreter to support parents with Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) applications for example.

Office staff are the parents' first port of call and assist parents throughout their time at Abercromby, starting with admissions; claiming funding, arranging home visits and supporting families through the settling-in process. At the end of their time at Abercromby, they will support applications for primary schools. In between, the school will support families in any way they can. They have helped families with applications for housing, adding the school's views on the impact that inadequate housing could and is having on the child's education and will use local knowledge to signpost families to services to access support or find provision for health care or schools for siblings.

Attendance is followed up robustly at Abercromby as part of their diligent approach to safeguarding. The office will make welfare calls and send texts to follow up non-attenders. They will use their links with local schools to see if siblings are present and if it gets to the end of the day, they will alert the HT so that a member of staff can make a home visit. An absence and holiday book is used to spot patterns and check that children have returned to nursery following holidays. They know where all of their families are all of the time. Office staff do a gate duty once a week which further helps them build relationships with families. The office staff are included in whole staff training; safeguarding, health and safety and sign-along training.



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The office manager attends a conference with colleagues 3 times a year to network with staff from other schools. The wellbeing of all staff is given high priority; there is a display in the staffroom and the senior team discusses this as part of their regular meetings.

Abercromby goes above and beyond to ensure every child is noticed and cared for every day. Their individual needs are identified and a bespoke approach to supporting these is devised. A new SEND resource base is used to support a number of children with high needs. The relationships these children have with their key workers are magical to witness. What really struck me was how every sign of communication, all body language, however small is noticed by staff and used to inform their interactions with the child. Every progress step, however small is picked up, celebrated and shared. Staff celebrate the smallest things, as small as a few moments of eye contact. The little things are big at Abercromby. Visuals are used to support communication. Even these are adapted if necessary; one child had photos of their beaker, not a generic one, and a photo of them with their snack. A teacher summed this approach up perfectly. "We follow the child's need; we observe them all the time and will adapt our approach immediately if we need to." The children quickly learn how to support their own needs; this might be taking their key worker by the hand and walking them to the door if they need a break from the class. All situations at Abercromby are responded to by children and staff in a calm way, without fuss or drama. A key worker explained how they know the sound the child they work with makes prior to a behaviour outburst so they can respond immediately. On the day of my visit, a child who is non-verbal and struggles to communicate their needs said the name of the school dog to the HT in the outside learning area. She described this as a miraculous moment and immediately went and fetched the dog for the child. This brought so much pleasure to the child.

Staff actively teach the children to develop a growth mindset. For example, a child may say "I can't do it!", but staff will respond that they may not be able to do it yet, but with practice and perseverance, they will. Behaviour and social skills are taught and modelled. A teacher said, "You could have said, I had that first then he will understand," which helped a child communicate how they felt when a toy was taken by another child.

Final words from members of the Abercromby community.

Parents

- "The children are the centre of everything."
- "The values at Abercromby are evident in the children. Children really help each other; they pick my child up when he falls and help him downstairs."
- "I can't sing their praises any higher."
- "I love that it is child-centric, play centred, outside centred. They acknowledge that childhood is fleeting and let the children be children."
- "It is a very safe, supportive, happy and loving environment, not just for the child but for families too. I can be honest; staff are never judgemental."



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Governors

- “As a Governor and a parent, the fact that the Head gave up her office to provide classes with a sensory breakout space is testament to the importance of the children at the school.”
- “I find Abercromby to be such an inclusive environment; one in which everyone feels welcome and is treated equally. As a parent, I get to see how hard the staff work with their limited resources, to give my child all the help they possibly can. He is happy. Other children have accepted and loved him for who he is and completely live up to the Abercromby values.”
- “Inclusivity at Abercromby includes all staff, children, Governors and parents in a common goal of life-long learning and achievement for all”
- “We promote a welcoming environment for all, working together to build trust and understanding and we celebrate our diverse and vibrant school.”
- “As a Governor I can see inclusion is at the forefront of the strategy in the school. We discuss this every time we meet and in particular how to meet the needs of the children with SEND.”

Staff

- “We are very inclusive, but we are always thinking about how we can be more inclusive.”
- “As support staff you are listened to. We have all got different strengths and these are recognised.”
- “As difficult as it can be, everyone is glad the children are here as we do a fabulous job and the progress however big or little is our reward.”
- “The school understands the community and respects it.”
- “The parents want to bring things in to show us, to share their celebrations and feel comfortable and welcome to do so.”
- “If we get relationships right and the attachments children form with adults are strong and positive, everything else falls into place.”

I am of the opinion that Abercromby Nursery School fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. 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.

Assessor: Ms Siona Robson

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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



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Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

The ethos of the school is to incorporate all and provide all children with the same opportunities. The school has a rainbow of families, from many different countries, with a variety of family structures and with many different cultures. They are all part of the Abercromby family; families feel special, they are known. Staff care deeply for the children in the school and this extends beyond the school gates. Everyone is a 'friend' at Abercromby - staff, children and families.

Children are taught the Abercromby Values through weekly Together Times. They know the key phrases such as "all friends at Abercromby" and "Everybody is important". Together time is also used to reinforce wanted behaviours and discuss behaviours that might have been brought up as a concern by staff. I had the privilege to observe the HT leading a Together Time, her guitar and cuddly toy props at hand. They began by singing the hello song in some of the Abercromby languages, Arabic and Vietnamese. Oscar the orangutan and Karl crocodile were not kind to a new friend at nursery and the impact of this was told through the story. She then modelled how the animals could have behaved to model the values of kindness, how to respond to unkind behaviour and went on to reinforce how, 'we all need to be friends at Abercromby.' There is a big emphasis on constantly reassuring the children that their voice counts. The session ended with the star of the week receiving a prize from the treasure chest and being warmly congratulated by all the other children, so lovely to see. Being happy for friends is a key part of life at Abercromby.

As the children are so young, communication with children and families is essential. This is outstanding at Abercromby. The key person system ensures that each child is noticed and feels special. Families say that their children are known and loved. New families attend a welcome meeting and get an information book all about the school (translated into Arabic). All new starters are offered a home visit, where the child's key person gets to know all about the child and their family context. The settling-in process is tailored to the needs of the child and will take as long as it needs to in order to ensure every child is happy, settled and confident.

The nursery is a School of Sanctuary. They are aware of the varied needs of the children and families which they welcome. The school has children from war-torn countries who need staff to use their trauma-informed practice to consider why children react and behave in certain ways. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) training was really helpful as it raised awareness of how important these early years are for a child and what factors can impact on their development. Staff are more able now to join the dots. As a result of the training, the school introduced Window of Tolerance documents which have been written for some key children. If a child has experienced trauma their window of tolerance will be triggered more easily and they have less tolerance to cope in the classroom environment. Using these has helped with a consistent approach across all staff who work with the child. This consistency is part of the established ethos in both classes.



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Next Steps:

- Further training on trauma and attachment.
- Review and re-write behaviour policy to become behaviour and relationships policy
- Convert the current HT office into a SEND/breakout space
- Introduce WellComm language screening
- Introduce a Social Communication and Play journal to track progress for children with SEND
- Develop the role of the school dog
- Explore working towards the Attachment Friendly Award



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Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

Each year every member of staff completes an evaluation of the year. The in-depth questions support staff reflection. Staff are very honest and open as everyone wants the best for the children. A parent evaluation is sent out and children are asked for their feedback. Sometimes children will really reflect on this. One child said last year, “more time with the dog.” Another said, “we would like more small-world figures.” At Abercromby, all voices are heard. The key features from these evaluations, together with progress data are used to celebrate success and help identify the next steps for action. The HT leads a growth mindset culture. Staff are constantly reflecting on and evaluating what they do, looking for ways to improve. “We are always looking for ways we can do things differently to support our children and families,” a member of staff told me.

The HT told me in detail of a safeguarding situation which became apparent as a result of a noticing culture and the vigilance of staff to follow up concerns a staff. A child in need was identified and as a consequence protected. Staff are regularly trained and updated in safeguarding. A pre-existing injuries form is used to record any marks or injuries children come in with, signed by parents. Safeguarding is at the forefront of practice and conversations. Staff are vigilant and observe the smallest changes. Follow-up actions are robust. This culture ensures children are kept safe at Abercromby. There is a comprehensive safeguarding curriculum which clearly outlines the learning for the children around this important area.

The well-being of staff is high on the agenda of leaders. Staff love working at Abercromby Nursery. A member of staff told me, “no one ever leaves.” The staff are friends as well as colleagues, they are mutually supportive. The member of staff went on to tell me that, “I ensure all of our team are all ok all of the time.” If staff can hear that a colleague needs support with a particular child, they will drop everything and help. They work so closely together and are so wedded to the same approach that they are almost at the point of finishing each other’s sentences.

The Governing body is small with just one committee for staffing and performance management. The remainder of business is conducted at full Governors’ meetings. Governors each have responsibilities for areas of the school including attendance, SEND and safeguarding. Papers are shared prior to the meeting and the chair has clear expectations of these being pre-read. The HT’s report includes all the activities organised for the children, new projects, visits, trips and all the developmental progress data for each child, each term. Governors see case studies of learning journeys and can use these to ask questions about provision. Recently a member of staff came to a Governors meeting and presented how they have been working with a specific child and their family as their key worker. Governors were able to see the evidence of this and the progress the child made as a consequence.

Governors get excellent feedback from the HT about the needs of the school and any staff training required. Governors are part of and question the school improvement journey, the planning, implementation, and the impact of initiatives. The information provided for Governors is written in such a way that it is accessible to those from non-



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educational backgrounds. This inclusive approach ensures all Governors can be effective in their role. Governors visit the school as part of their monitoring role. The attendance link visits to observe first response in action and interactions with parents and children. This monitoring role is robust and quality assures the process of following up on attendance and ensures that parents understand how important attendance is. The need for attendance home visits is rare due to the strong relationships with families. The Chair will do safeguarding visits, checking health and safety. An impressive attention to detail and care goes into checking every piece of fence, every piece of equipment and every tree! Holding Safeguarding conversations with staff ensures this is robustly monitored by Governors. Two of the Governors are serving Headteachers and will check in with the HT to provide support and a listening ear. The HT will be proactive and will seek support when needed.

Next Steps:

- Review and amend behaviour policy after recent ACES and Attachment and Positive Handling training
- Support recent newer Governors to take on a specific role and become involved in school life.



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Element 3 - Curriculum – Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

The curriculum is research-informed and designed around 8 wonderfully inclusive goals; settle in and belong, becoming a happy independent learner, learn how to be a good friend, retell a favourite story, make up your own experience, learn about the changing seasons, light a fire and cook on it, enjoy singing, music and dancing, draw your family, write some letters of your name and play a skittles game keeping score. The curriculum maps are detailed, they draw on the multi-cultural make-up of the pupils; no festival is missed or any opportunity to enhance the curriculum. The curriculum plans are high quality and clearly show how Together Time supports the pupils' personal, social and emotional development, how their communication and language are developed and how the weekly Physical Education (PE) sessions support the children's physical development.

The play support plans for individual children designed by a member of staff are excellent, positive and child centric. This approach was shared as best practice with School Improvement Liverpool at the annual SEND conference. The plan starts with blank boxes and is bespoke to each child. The long-term outcomes are personalised to the individual child. It records what the child enjoys and what they need help with. The Plan, Do, Review sheets are updated termly. If significant progress has been made then the Plan and Do sections will be updated. Sections from the communication and play journal written for the child are included in the play support plan to give the key worker an indication of the targets for the child.

The curriculum plan is flexible and themes will be adapted to follow the children's interests. A teacher explained how this approach works in practice. "This week in Oak Tree we are themed around builders as a result of the new building blocks we purchased. This generated lots of new language. From a child's interest in the Police, the class created badges and tickets and have generated police role play." The school is part of an Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) project, Using Research Tools to Improve Language in the Early Years (URLEY), which helped them to design a robust approach to supporting children's language and early reading skills. Reading to children and helping children learn to enjoy books for themselves is a cornerstone of their practice and the children clearly love books. Adaptations to the curriculum are made to meet individual needs. One-to-one sessions for speech and language are bespoke and designed around the child's play plan and informed by conversations with the teacher. Sensory breaks are used to help children self-regulate and to be able to re-engage with the class learning session. One parent shared, that as a result of sensory play, her child having previously hated bath time is now enjoying it. Another spoke of how quickly the school made adaptations to the learning plan for her child based on feedback from a physiotherapist. No advice is ever sat on at Abercromby.

Next Steps:

- Introduce WellComm screening
- All staff to be trained in Signalong
- Use of Social Communication and Play journal for children with SEND
- Develop Willow Tree room provision and routines
- Use of rating scales to improve Provision



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

The school regards the environment as ‘the third teacher.’ The school has put time and care into creating a stimulating, supportive and creative learning environment. The classrooms have carefully designed areas with resources which challenge the children and the outside area is simply wonderful. It is an oasis of nature and exploration within an urban area. The school has a very well-developed Forest School and all staff have received training. I was fortunate to be able to sit in on a session. A child showed me how they create a spark to light the fire. After one of the children had lit the fire, they went over the safety rules and enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate. While they were waiting for the fire to get hot enough for them to cook their pancakes they were introduced to a monster on a stick. Soon the children were exploring the area to find the materials to make their own stick monsters. The vocabulary they used to describe their monsters to me was sophisticated and their level of confidence and independence was a joy to behold.

The continuous provision in both rooms is meticulously planned for, everything is by purpose. Both rooms use environmental rating scales to reflect on the provision and staff interactions in their rooms. This lengthy document covers each area of the room and the activities running. The class teacher alongside the HT observes their class for a day to rate each area in terms of the pupils and staff interactions and the interactions of pupils with the environment and learning resources. For Oak Tree, this resulted in the teacher identifying a weakness in her construction area and resources were purchased to widen the experiences and interactions in this space. In Willow Tree, it identified that there was a need to have more diverse representations of gender and diversity in the figures the children played with. As a result, the teacher sourced these and also looked at the images displayed around the room and how genders are portrayed. Each week the environment is enhanced to elicit new vocabulary and experience. This week to celebrate Easter, yellow water has been enhanced with plastic numbered eggs and the playdough is yellow and enhanced with googly eyes, feathers, flowers and images of Easter themes. After Easter to celebrate EID the classroom will have prayer mats, traditional tea sets and herbs and spices in the water to make Arabic coffee; stars and moons will be used in creative activities. Lots of families will bring in food for the children to share.

Teaching input in Oak Tree was a pleasure to experience. Children sat quietly on the carpet and discussed and created the visual class timetable for the day. The children discussed the weather, the teacher asked questions. The attention and listening skills were phenomenal. The class then quietly split into 2 groups. One group was having a phonics session and was talking about items in a box, called Mr Muncher. The confidence and language skills were amazing and children added their own comments on each object. “You have to be very careful with scissors.” “I don’t like snakes.”

Co-operative working is encouraged, the teacher would say, “Can anyone help him.” And “Listen, she is helping you.” Children were given a number of objects and asked to think about the 2 objects they had in their hand, quiet thinking time. Mr Muncher then needed to munch all the objects starting with the sound, S. The attention of the children



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and their engagement was incredible. The member of staff, quite literally, had them in her hands, they hung on every word. The session was varied, fun, packed with learning and provided lots of opportunities for the children to think. They were encouraged to communicate and provide reasons for why Mr Muncher ate some objects and not others. At the end of the carpet session, the teacher thanked them for their attention and they thanked her. What a magical session to observe.

The teacher of the other group, mainly EAL children, focused on eliciting vocabulary with questions and answers. Lots of exciting objects are used to develop new vocabulary. Every week carpet time has a theme. This week it has been teamwork and the children have taken this idea into their wider learning activities. One child told a member of staff in a Forest School session, "We worked as a team to climb the tree; because I couldn't do it on my own."

Tidy and clean-up time in Willow Tree has its own song so children know what they are doing. This came before carpet time, another wonderful learning episode to observe. The teacher used a whiteboard with visuals to show that bucket time would be followed by singing and then home time. The teacher was focusing on the number 3, what it looks like and how to count to 3. Another song was repeatedly used to; introduce each element of bucket time, to refocus them on the next activity and to bring them all together. In the bucket were objects linked to action words and the children were asked to tell the teacher what she should do, blow or squeeze. Squeals of excitement followed when she blew or squeezed the object. Singing came next with the song of the week used to reinforce key language. This song is shared with parents so it can be practiced at home. As parents came to collect their offspring more singing videos got all the children jumping and sleeping along with the Easter bunnies. They were all absolutely loving it. Even the parents joined in!

Next Steps:

- Develop the use of rating scales
- Use of WellComm screening
- Use of Social, Communication and Play Journal for children with SEND
- Develop Signalong
- Developing Willow Tree provision after change of session times



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Element 5 - Assessment

Before children start at the nursery an All About Me booklet is completed by the parents with a range of really important information to help inform the provision; information about the child's family and other special people in their life, the child's favourite things and the things they don't like or make them feel frightened.

When they start a brief baseline is completed, a snapshot with the next steps. There are simple, clear, achievable targets based on social and emotional skills. Every day staff will take observations and information is uploaded and shared with parents. Each child has a key person and they will share progress with parents.

An in-depth knowledge of each child enables accurate summative assessments. Half-yearly Spotlight assessments are completed. This includes photos, a narrative written by the key worker and assessments against milestones for the child's age. If necessary targeted support will be put in place in order to support the child in meeting these milestones. This support is reviewed after 2 months for impact. The parents can add a comment to the Spotlight assessment making this a shared, transparent collaborative document. This celebratory approach is inclusive and positive. The teacher will share the spotlight successes for children gathered from school and from home with the rest of the class. The children love sharing these and the timing of these is linked with their birthday or half birthday which makes it even more special.

The children's mental health and wellbeing and involvement are tracked at 3 points in the year using the Leuven Scales of Well-being and Involvement. Children are given a 1-5 score linked to their general involvement in nursery life. This data is correlated to ensure that no child is missed and to heighten the awareness of the key worker. A particular child would arrive in tears, not wanting to leave his mum so was given a low score. By strengthening the key person relationship, he is now scoring a 5. This approach to ensuring the children form strong bonds with staff and that the key workers really know their allocated children works magically.

WellComm is an assessment tool for communication and language which the school uses to screen all children. The Willow Tree team saw from the data that a number of children had a gap with prepositions and this led to planned activities to develop understanding. So, during tidying up time, staff have been using the prepositions of, under, over and next to. In Oak Tree, the outcomes for a child were used to support a speech and language referral. A small group of EAL children who had low scores as a result of a vocabulary deficit are now working on identifying objects and learning new vocabulary during breakout activities.

Some of the children with SEND may not be meeting some or any of their developmental milestones, so for these children, the school uses the Social Communication and Play journal developed by the Liverpool Educational Psychology service. This breaks down the learning into very small steps and helps to identify SMART targets as well as showing the progress made

Every year the school runs "Meet the Teacher" days. These provide the opportunity for families to meet with their child's key person to discuss their learning and progress.



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Next Steps:

- Develop the use of the Social Communication and Play journal for children with SEND, to identify SMART targets and small steps of progress.
- Develop termly WellComm screening for all children.



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Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

The behaviour of the children is exemplary. It's a calm, wonderfully nurturing environment. Any child who needs support gets exactly what they need and is helped to learn how to articulate this to staff in a verbal or non-verbal way.

A Window of Tolerance document is created for children who present challenging physical behaviour. Inside the picture of the window are things a child can tolerate and outside it are behaviours they may exhibit when specific things happen. It is written collaboratively with the room team as a result of observations of the child's behaviour in different circumstances. This is shared with all staff and with supply staff who may come and work in the room.

Zones of Regulation are used in an age-appropriate way to help children learn about their big emotions and how to manage them. In Oak Tree class, there are toys which help them self-regulate and children can trace a pattern to refocus and calm down whilst talking about their breathing. Children trace around their hands in the air when outside to help them to self-regulate and calm their breathing. In Willow Tree, there are emotion pebbles with faces representing different emotions to support the children's understanding and help them to be able to name their emotions. The children also have access to emotional mirrors which are used to discuss emotions, put names to feelings and practice 'the face'. 'Dens' are set up in the classroom book areas providing a safe space for children. The Colour Monster and Mr Big Shouting Days are among the books which focus on emotions. They are read to an individual child, a small group or to the whole class. The main message for the child is that it is ok for them to have the emotions and to reassure them that the staff are there to help. The role of the adult is to support them to understand and name their emotions.

Home visits are arranged for all new to nursery children before they start. The child's key worker and another member of staff visit the family; one will play with the child and one will talk to the parent/carer. The home visit form is used to record concerns, health checks, favourite things, what they might be fearful of and any issues with eating, sleeping and toileting. Staff will look for eye contact, play stages and language skills. No firm judgements are made, it's just used as a starting point. Parents have the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns to get the reassurance they need. This visit is the beginning of a safe, secure relationship with the child and family. A nursery visit is arranged for a stay and play with the freedom for parents/ carers and their child to explore as they wish. The amount of time the child has in the nursery on their own at the start is bespoke to the child. This can take anything from 1 day to 4 weeks. It will depend on the child; whatever they need.

Next Steps:

- Deepen understanding of attachment and adverse childhood experiences
- Review the Behaviour policy and amend it to a "Behaviour and Relationships Policy"
- Continue to support children's regulation using the Zones of Regulation



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Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

Parents were effusive in their praise for the nursery. Parents have a deep trust in the school and are able to leave their children knowing they will be cared for, nurtured and safe. Parents value the help they get with language barriers as starting school is a big step but in a new country, it's more of a leap. A new to-the-country parent told me how as a result of the care and attention of the teachers, their child adapted really quickly and in 2 months has gone from a shy child to being confident and comfortable. "The school was very confident and reassuring." Teachers use tools like Google Translate and animations in the child's home language as a reassuring activity.

A parent of a child with Down's Syndrome said how happy the staff were to have their child. "All children really do matter." "The teachers are amazing; my child is loved and they love them all." "My child's progress has been fantastic as a result of attending Abercromby." Another parent of a previously non-verbal child was keen to tell me how, as a result of the relationships at Abercromby, the initial use of Signalong, the nurturing environment and interactive activities they now can't get their child to be quiet! A third parent shared their emotional story with me. Their child needs a lot of support, is on the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) pathway and has significant mobility needs. She told me that this was the only nursery from a long list that would offer a place to her child. She went on to say how the nursery had changed her life and that of her son; that he has achieved more than she could ever have imagined and made friends for the first time. "I need pom poms for this nursery, I could stand outside and dance." "I'm thinking of doing an Artificial Intelligence (AI) of his key worker. He is the happiest boy in the world, it's like a dream."

Parents really value the home visit and the opportunity to have a private conversation in their space to share with staff the needs of their child. They talked of the importance of seeing a child in their own home, where they are more confident and comfortable and how it was helpful that the children were introduced to the faces of the staff before starting at the nursery. One parent said, "It's a sign of friendship that they come." "Staff knew a lot about my child before they started at the nursery." The settling-in process meets the needs of children and parents. Parents commented on the flexible, child-centric approach and the adaptations which are made for an individual child. Parents feel listened to, they feel the staff are 'in their corner'. The result is that all children settle and blossom and parents are reassured and confident that their children are happy and safe. Parents have the opportunity to talk through the personal plan for their child. "There is an ethos of co-production with the parents so that strategies used at school can be used at home." Communication with parents is outstanding. There are opportunities for personal contact and the parent hub keeps parents updated with notices. The key person attached to a child will speak to the parents/carers regularly but parents know that they can talk to any member of staff if they need a one-to-one chat.

Parents love the weekly learning blog, providing information on what the children will be doing for the week and then this is updated with photos as the week progresses. Parents appreciate that every time a new post is put on they get a notification with a link.



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Next Steps:

- Zones of Regulation workshops for families to support their understanding of their children's behaviour
- Recruit a new Parent Governor



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

The main link is the Dingle, Granby and Toxteth (DGT) collaborative of schools. Staff access training through the DGT network and through School Improvement Liverpool. In January DGT organised a joint inset of all Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) staff on ACES and attachment. DGT was on the One Show yesterday as a local benefactor wanted to donate money to a local organisation and the DGT partnership, as such a well-regarded group in the area is the happy recipient. This partnership also provides a platform for sharing best practices, supports the well-being of the group of Headteachers through mutual support and advice and creates opportunities for joint moderation. Half of these schools form a local SEND consortium which facilitates access to educational psychologist services, extra Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) sessions and autism outreach support. The Liverpool Primary Heads' Association meets 6-weekly for training and Local Authority (LA) updates and is another sharing best practice platform. The school also works with the four other Maintained Nursery Schools in Liverpool and the newly formed Stronger Practice Hub.

NHS Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy (OT) and physio services are used to support needs. Online platforms such as the SEND platform, Creative Education, have led to staff completing modules on Down's Syndrome so the staff is fully aware of the types of challenges they might have and how to support them. Other staff have accessed learning around ASD. A consultant from Autism Initiatives provides specialist support for individual children and provides advice for staff which is then shared with parents.

The staff accesses the EYFS online platform, "Place to Learn" facilitated by Kym Scott. The school is committed to research-informed practice. The school took part in a URLEY project on using specific strategies to support language acquisition. Research around early years pedagogy has come from other parts of the world; Te Whariki from New Zealand has informed the school's work on relationships and the importance of forming secure attachments with adults in the setting and also the importance of exploratory learning. Reggio Emilia from Italy has informed the use of the learning environment as a 3rd teacher so that the room is set up to facilitate open-ended enquiry-based learning to meet pupils' interests.

The school is a global community. The wide range of cultures and faiths represented in the families associated with the school are used as a resource. One parent brought in a Haft-Seen plate to show how the Persian New Year is celebrated. Symbolic objects surrounded a goldfish bowl full of goldfish representing new life. These moments help children to learn about the lives of their friends and encourage the sharing of food or customs from different faiths.

Next Steps:

- Ensure all staff are trained in Signalong to support language development.
- Increase the number of staff trained to lead Forest School
- Continue to explore people and organisations that can enhance the curriculum.
- Develop the role of School Dog
- Re-establish the local community links that used to support the school with Open Day events