



## Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



**School Name:** Durham Lane Primary School

**School Address:** Amberley Way  
Eaglescliffe  
Stockton-On-Tees  
TS16 0NG

**Head/Principal** Ms Helen Gregory

**IQM Lead** Ms Helen Gregory

**Assessment Date** 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026

**Assessor** Ms Joanne Smith

### Sources of Evidence:

- Documentation detailed in the IQM School Evaluation Report
- School Website
- Ofsted Inspection Report
- SEND and Inclusion Overview
- SEND Policy
- SEND Report
- Curriculum Overviews
- Children's workbooks
- Learning Walks

### Meetings Held with:

- Headteacher
- SENDCo
- Teachers
- Teaching Assistants
- Governors
- Pupils
- Parents



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### Overall Evaluation

Durham Lane is a school that lives their vision, it truly is a school 'where children and families come first. 'Leaders, including Governors, believe that authentic relationships are key to their excellent practice. The inclusive ethos where every child is welcomed and belongs is evidenced in all they do. Durham Lane Primary sees its purpose as that of being a community school that serves all pupils and their families. Children are at the centre of every decision that is made, their well-being and learning is paramount, they know that with a strong offer to support pupils socially and emotionally, strong academic outcomes follow. The Headteacher and senior leaders have a moral compass that drives continual improvement, they take every opportunity to make certain every pupil enjoys their school days that are filled with success which in turn can be celebrated at every opportunity. The drive, energy and passion of the staff team can be felt across school.

The day starts with a busy breakfast club; pupils talked about school enthusiastically with English and Maths lessons being particular favourites. Bespoke adaptations for pupils, where needed, are visible in classes across school. The school offers of a range of after school clubs and provides wraparound care to support working parents. Nothing is too much trouble for the team that is Durham Lane. One parent summed up the school's offer, 'there is no problem too big or too small,' for the staff of Durham Lane to help with.

All staff see every pupil as unique and look to ensure every pupil receives the support they may need to enjoy school, learning and life. Children are listened to and adaptations to support them with social, emotional and academic learning are often made with pupil voice, this is a significant contributing factor as to why they have the success they do.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the excellent work of the school and in recent years the school has reached capacity with pupils coming from beyond the usual catchment. Durham Lane is a school of choice for many families due to its inclusive nature, its high expectations and its core values centred around respect. Staff and pupils share an understanding of equity and across the school, adaptations are visible to ensure pupils access learning alongside their peers. The curriculum is adapted; however, expectations are not. Adults are skilled in making sure tasks are tailored to individual needs so success for all is the norm.

Leaders and staff across school hold a wealth of knowledge and skills and whilst they often have innovative solutions e.g. the development of spaces and classrooms, they seek the support of experts and teams beyond school where needed. They are open to change and are forward thinking in their own practice. They place professional development and training for staff at the centre of their work and look to make sure the most vulnerable pupils have a team of people around them to support. This makes for a well-trained staff with the correct skills who take a consistent approach to support their pupils.



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The school's strong staff–parent partnerships and deep commitment to community engagement significantly enhance pupils' wellbeing, inclusion and success. Families feel listened to, valued and confident in the school's ability to meet the needs of all learners, contributing to a positive, supportive and aspirational school community.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. I recommend that the school be awarded the Inclusive School Award and be reassessed in 3 years' time.

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

**Assessor: Ms Joanne Smith**

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. McCann".

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



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### Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

The school is a forward-thinking school where every pupil is known, cared for and challenged to achieve their very best at every stage of their school life; this enables them to transition to their next phase of education confidently. Staff work to ensure pupils are play a part in the world around them and they leave Durham Lane knowing there are many exciting opportunities waiting for them. Opportunities for pupils to take leadership roles and responsibilities such as becoming school councillors, allow for pupils to share their views and opinions and affect positive change. Pupils can talk about the impact they have had with charity fundraising ideas and playtime improvements.

School staff look to make sure pupils build skills of compassion and respect a curriculum centred around their core values, each week a value is explored in an assembly and classes take this theme to continue to work on in their classes through the week. There is a culture of collaboration, appreciation and celebration of pupils' efforts, progress and achievement which ensures pupils reflect positively on their achievements. Leaders not only aspire for strong academic outcomes but aim to build character and a lifelong love of learning. Pupils talk about learning through visits and visitors. Visits to Hopetown, the Robinwood residential in Y6 and recent visitors such as Steph McGovern, are spoken about with such enthusiasm.

There is no doubt that the whole staff team believe that every child is capable of excellence. They set high expectations for learning which is evidenced in their year-on-year strong academic outcomes. Behaviour and attitudes are positive around school. Staff encourage pupils to aim high, persevere and take pride in their achievements at every opportunity.

The school fosters ambition and self-belief, helping children to recognise their strengths, embrace new opportunities and develop resilience. Leaders know that to achieve excellence academically, a strong package of wellbeing is key and are committed to supporting the emotional, social and mental wellbeing of every child.

The leaders in school are of the firm belief that working in partnership with families ensures the very best outcomes for pupils. Leaders value parents and carers input; they take time to listen to parents and carers so that children flourish and thrive.

Working closely with families, the team ensure that children feel safe, supported and confident to express themselves. They value the support of the PTA and appreciate their efforts in organising events for pupils which bring pupils, parents and staff together. Leaders value the parents time they give to supporting school life and feel it has provided opportunity to come together and strengthen their school family ethos of partnership.

### Next Steps:

Further develop staff knowledge across school with the Thrive approach to supporting pupils socially emotionally.



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### Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

Leaders have high expectations of themselves and their work, they are uncompromising in their commitment to making sure all pupils, including pupils with a special need or disadvantage, achieve positive outcomes. Senior leaders communicate their vision focussed on high attainment, inclusion and continuous improvement. They set ambitious targets and want the very best for their pupils. They are outward looking and seek to continue to develop their practice with evidence-based research. Leaders seek the views of parents and carers through feedback and questionnaires and respond to their views and suggestions.

The SENDCo is knowledgeable and works with quiet determination to ensure pupils with a special need are identified and supported not just in school but with wider services too. Parents are extremely grateful for her hard work and her quick responses to any worries they may have, they feel she sincerely understands and appreciates their viewpoint and appreciates that she always takes time to listen to them. The Headteacher and SENDCo knows that relationships with families are key to making for the best outcomes for pupils. This positive outlook filters to all staff with one parent talking about the class teacher welcoming her child into school with warmth, allaying worries and concerns. Parents have full confidence in the staff team.

The distributive leadership model across the school, gives opportunity for staff to further develop leadership skills, encourage expertise and build trust. There is shared accountability and connections between colleagues are strong due to secure systems and processes in place to ensure everyone is clear about the ongoing good work across school. There is strong staff voice which is much valued by leaders and this supports improvement.

Staff appreciate the continued professional development and training offer. The staff team talk about feeling supported, trusted and motivated. They appreciate that leaders consider their wellbeing and know that they can talk to one another or the headteacher should they need to.

Leaders prioritise inclusion and their forward thinking and solution-based approach ensures inclusion is prioritised and a strength of the school. As a result of their good work, which includes a collaborative team approach to monitor the progress of pupils with a special need, pupils achieve well from their starting points. The SENDCo ensures that plans are pertinent and follow recommendations from EHCPs or from assessments and advice from outside agencies such as the Speech and Language team, Educational Psychologist and the Occupational Therapist. The staff team are skilled at ensuring adjustments are made so that pupils can access learning and enjoy attending their local primary school.

The school development plan includes their response to national developments such as the writing framework. The plan supports staff in developing their own skills to make certain best practice is consistent across school. Appraisal is key to their work and leaders give space and time for staff to for this process ensuring staff also celebrate their achievements.



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Governors know and understand the school well. They hold school leaders to account and follow up information provided by leaders with visits, published data and reports. They are proud of the work of the school and are confident that the work of leaders continues to be shaped by the needs of the pupils they serve. Governors have longstanding relationships with the school, many being past parents and teachers at the school. They said Durham Lane is a school that they feel has given them excellent support over the years and they are keen to give back; Their knowledge and expertise is well-balanced with a range of skills to support the headteacher.

The school maintains strong relationships with the local authority and works with school improvement leads to support validation about the school's priorities.

### **Next Steps:**

This year the leadership team are reviewing school's inclusive practices by undertaking a comprehensive review of current inclusion procedures and processes.



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### Element 3 - Curriculum – Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

The school has worked to build an ambitious and exciting curriculum that is well sequenced and progressively builds knowledge and skills from the early years onwards and whilst relevant to their locality and experiences also allows pupils to understand the world beyond their immediate locality. This makes for a coherent, challenging and meaningful curriculum that goes well beyond statutory requirements through enrichment opportunities and high-quality experiences that deepen pupils' understanding and enjoyment of learning. Pupils shared their recent win of a Poetry Slam competition where they came first out of twenty schools. They have also enjoyed a recent visit from Steph McGovern who shared her story echoing the school ethos of being proud of where we live and aspiration.

The Headteacher ensures funding to support disadvantaged pupils are well supported. The barriers to pupils joining in the full school life are removed at every opportunity. She engages with families to make sure the funds directly support where needed the most. This bespoke offer for families alongside wider strategies is much appreciated and makes for meaningful impact.

The curriculum is designed to broaden pupils' horizons and enable a strong understanding of the world. They are given opportunities to learn about and appreciate different cultures. This enables pupils to gain new perspectives and encourage curiosity and a love of learning.

Fundamental British values, protected characteristics, diversity are carefully planned into their work and the thoughtful approach to addressing equality, respect, and inclusion ensure pupils are well-equipped for life in modern Britain. Leaders have taken time to ensure the curriculum is accessible to all pupils and adaptations and support are planned so that everyone can enjoy and achieve. Pupils understand the importance of celebrating diversity and inclusion with one child saying, "we are treated fairly in our school". Celebrating success is important to everyone at school.

The school website allows for parents and carers to gain a comprehensive overview of the curriculum which enables families to understand what pupils are learning and how knowledge builds over time. This supports families to help their child learn at home. The strong partnership between home and school, which leaders and all staff greatly value, strengthens pupils' engagement, confidence and progress.

#### Next Steps:

The leaders and key staff are to review the existing RSE/PSHE policy to ensure full alignment with the updated DfE guidance. They plan a full evaluation of the curriculum content, its progression as well as age-appropriateness to ensure alignment with statutory requirements. They are very clear that they must give particular attention to safeguarding, especially online safety.



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

The learning environment is well-thought out. There is rational and purpose in their approach. Classrooms are calm and well-organised. Displays reflect current learning that allows pupils to retrieve and remember learning with consideration given to ensuring the environment does not overwhelm pupils. Durham Lane posters display key learning in classes.

Resources are used to enhance and support learning. Interventions such as ‘Talk Boost’ are targeted to pupils needing additional support. Practical resources are part of their ordinarily available offer and are available for all pupils to use to support their learning. The school uses recognised schemes that encourage concrete apparatus in Maths and the teachers encourage pupils to use resources to support until they no longer need to. The teachers make sure that pupils know how to grow in independence with their learning and gradually remove the scaffolds they provide as pupils become confident and fluent in their work. Pre-teaching is a strategy that is sometimes used for pupils who may become anxious when faced with new challenges. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and look to minimise any worries so pupils look forward to learning. The whole staff team reflect on their own teaching to remove barriers to pupils learning, nothing is too much trouble for them and they look to see situations from the child’s eyes.

Leaders plan their CPD to improve teaching and learning around the needs of the whole school which is planned using a combination of data analysis and leaders’ response to national change, for example the recent work around oracy and handwriting ensures that the school is aligned with the research to ensure foundational skills are prioritised. They use the recommendations from the EEF and ensure that staff at every career stage are given a training offer that ensures best practice. Evidence based research remains at the forefront of their work.

There are high levels of trust and staff know they can ask for help to reflect honestly on their work and make adjustments. Staff workload is considered carefully and managing change is something leaders plan so that staff are able to embed new ways of working.

#### **Next Steps:**

Continue to develop the outdoor classroom provision, including forest school. Leaders will continue to review and refine the existing CPD programme to ensure it remains well structured and aligned with school priorities and pupil outcomes.



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### Element 5 - Assessment

The school values the assessment process as a means of identifying gaps in learning, enabling teachers to respond quickly and effectively and also to measure and celebrate success. Targets are personalised for each child following assessments. Leaders and all staff encourage pupils to recognise and celebrate their personal achievements.

The Headteacher and teachers regularly review assessment processes and systems and are accountable for ensuring they are purposeful, manageable and easy to interrogate. Assessment information is used as the basis for discussion during pupil progress meetings.

In addition, a 'prior performance' document is used to track pupil groups such as Pupil Premium, SEND, service children and pupils working at greater depth. This provides a broad overview of the context and needs of pupils across the school.

The school uses a range of systems in school to track pupil progress for example, Insight, an online pupil tracking system for primary schools. Their phonics progress is tracked using the phonics tracking portal within the school's Little Wandle phonics programme. Assessment in Maths and writing is broken down into smaller objectives and recorded through 'Insight.' Thrive assessments are also to be used to track pupils' social and emotional development.

Attendance reports are shared three times a year through Insight tracking and new attendance data is shared with governors.

Education, Health and Care Plan reviews are completed annually, or sooner where an interim review is required. Special Educational Needs reviews are held on a termly basis. SEN support plans are reviewed and updated termly and are shared with parents during parent consultation evenings.

A continual focus on metacognition and developing independent learners supports pupils' self-awareness and motivation to make progress. Pupils are proud of their learning; they demonstrate positive attitudes and show resilience in addressing areas for improvement. Pupils say that making mistakes is an important part of learning, they could talk about how well they are doing in school.

### Next Steps:

Develop assessment criteria for oracy in line with national guidance and support.  
Embed practices with teaching staff new to school.



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### Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

Pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour and attitudes towards school life and learning. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. There are well-established routines in school and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. They are respectful to their teachers and adults in school and to each other. They talk about the importance of being kind. Adults look for the good in every pupil and appreciate the uniqueness of each child. They celebrate positive behaviour and look to build character and core values through recognition and celebration.

The school's rules underpin the behaviour policy and are embedded securely; pupils regularly reference them and articulate their meaning with clarity and confidence. The schools' behaviour policy is regularly reviewed and adapted. Leaders continue to review their practice and whilst the behaviour policy sets out clear rewards and sanctions, they understand that all behaviour is a form of communication and are taking a more trauma informed based approach to supporting pupils manage their emotions. This is very visible in classrooms where pupils are encouraged to identify their feelings and talk about them using the Zones of Regulation, the calming spaces in each room also give support for pupils to self-regulate. Pupils talk about some children needing time to manage their feelings, there is a supportive ethos where pupils want their peers to do well not just academically but socially and emotionally.

A clear 'let's all join in' ethos encourages pupils to take responsibility for their learning. The staff use many opportunities to give feedback to pupils support them in aiming for excellence. The current focus on oracy is having a positive impact, strengthening pupils' ability to express themselves confidently and preparing them well to be articulate, thoughtful and responsible citizens.

Pupils were able to talk about the importance of feeling safe. They said if they aren't safe and happy then it would be hard to learn. They know they need to take responsibility for their own behaviour and through talking about their feelings in PHSE and the use on the Zones of Regulation in school, they understand a range of feelings including anger and know that they need to give themselves space to let emotions pass and then use their words to talk about how they are feeling. Pupils know that they can go to any adult in school if they are worried about themselves or a friend and talked about how they learn to keep themselves safe online. When asked about what they like about school more than one shared, "the people are kind," Whilst they talked about the great opportunities and lessons, they all said that the kindness of others is what makes their school such a happy one. One pupil who had joined school said she was welcomed straight away and she had made lots of new friends quickly.

#### Next Steps:

The school has recently trained their pastoral lead to become a Team Teach Trainer which will support more staff to be trained alongside the SEN team.



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### Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

Parental engagement is a notable strength of the school. Leaders work to ensure parents and carers feel welcome and valued through genuine authentic engagement. Parents are invited into school to share their professional experiences which enriches the curriculum. The team believe that their successful strong partnership with families is built on a spirit of openness, honesty and mutual respect. They seek to engage parents as partners in learning, valuing their insights and feedback on the work of the school. Through clear communication, regular opportunities for involvement and shared decision-making, leaders ensure that parents feel informed, welcomed and confident in the school's work. Feedback from questionnaires is overwhelmingly positive and without a doubt families of pupils attending Durham Lane Primary School feel part of school life.

Following feedback from parents, leaders introduced termly questionnaires to further strengthen engagement and enable parents to help shape school improvement. The school's excellent reputation within the community has resulted in the pupil numbers increasing. The school successfully supports a growing number of pupils with additional needs, including 13 pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans, demonstrating their commitment to inclusion.

Regular parent consultations, invitations to assemblies and performances and a vibrant programme of fundraising events across the year including discos, the popular Santa Sleepover, school fairs and the Mud Run create a strong sense of belonging and shared purpose.

Leaders have introduced platforms such as Seesaw and ClassDojo to enable communication between home and school, social media is used effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements and experiences. Termly newsletters keep families well informed. Parents are further engaged through curriculum-based workshops, including mathematics and handwriting sessions, which help them to support their children's learning at home.

Support for pupils with additional needs is a clear strength of the school and reflects a deeply inclusive ethos. Termly SEND support meetings are well attended by parents, ensuring strong collaboration and shared understanding of pupils. Thoughtful transition arrangements are in place e.g. early visits for pupils with SEND prior to the September start, alternative starts to the school day for pupils with anxiety around separation and detailed transition documents for pupils with EHCPs.

#### Next Steps:

The Headteacher plans to expand opportunities for parents to contribute to learning through the school's developing work around pupils understanding the world of work and careers.



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### Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

The school places significant emphasis on the importance of community. Pupils know they have an important part to play in the world around them. This is reflected across the curriculum with opportunities for pupils to engage in events such as visits e.g. local places of worship and further visits further afield such as the 'RobinWood' residential opportunity for older pupils. Pupils talk very enthusiastically about these visits and said they always help them to remember their learning and that they were fun.

Leaders have developed their curriculum to ensure their pupils gain an understanding of local, national and global events. This thoughtful approach enables pupils to develop a strong sense of identity, belonging and social responsibility. Pupils particularly enjoyed the visit to Hopetown Museum.

Learning is enriched through partnerships with local organisations and services. Regular visits to the local church support pupils' opportunities to strengthen links with the community, while activities such as local history walks enable pupils to develop a strong understanding of their immediate environment. Engagement with local businesses, such as the such as the local pottery shop, provides authentic, hands-on learning opportunities that enhance pupils' creative skills. These experiences bring learning to life and ensure pupils can make meaningful connections between classroom learning and the real world. One pupil said that they enjoyed seeing people they meet when they are out and about with their families through their work with the community, they said it makes them feel like they belong.

The school builds strong relationships with community partners. Partnership with the Oakwood Centre and visits from local church leaders offer pupils regular opportunities to learn about faith and religious beliefs. The Key Stage 2 Christmas performance hosted at the Oakwood Centre is a highlight of the school year. This kind of event fosters confidence, teamwork and a strong sense of community pride. The school's commitment to community partnership is also evident in its successful engagement with local businesses and charities. Collaboration with the local Tesco store has enabled the school to raise funds to enhance its outdoor learning provision and charitable support has transformed the forest school provision. The high-quality outdoor environments further enrich the curriculum, promote wellbeing and support pupils' physical, social and emotional development.

Charity fundraising events are well supported and pupils enjoy responding to local and national events such as Children in Need, with the leaders having decided to adopt a charity working to support children living in poverty into education. They aim for their work in school to support pupils in understanding how they can make a difference through awareness, social action and fundraising. By making authentic links, they hope for their pupils to see the impact of their work and develop a strong moral purpose that has a lasting impact on their own personal values.

Staff know that transition is important at every stage of a pupil's life. By securing pupils' emotional wellbeing and academic success, they hope to make sure transition from their Durham Lane school family into the larger secondary school setting is a smooth one. Supported by the Stockton Transition Guarantee this ensures that transitions are effective. Where pupils require enhanced transition, support and bespoke arrangements are



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thoughtfully designed to meet individual needs. Parents appreciate the forward planning that goes into this work to support their children.

The Year 6 residential visits give opportunities to broaden pupils' horizons and develop independence, resilience and confidence by experiencing life beyond their immediate locality. These experiences play a key role in preparing pupils for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.

Overall, the school's strong community focus significantly enhances pupils' learning experiences, personal development and aspirations, ensuring they are well prepared to contribute positively to both their local community and the wider world.

### **Next Steps:**

To further develop work around supporting pupils in developing pupils' social conscience through developing an awareness of the work of international organisations.