Report on IQM Inclusive School Award

School Name	The Gates Primary School
School Address	Bristle Hall Way Westhoughton Bolton United Kingdom BL5 3QA
Head/Principal	Sean Doherty
Assessment Date	9th November 2026
Assessor	Jenny McGarry

Sources of Evidence:

- Pupil tracking
- Pupil records
- Pupil books
- Lessons
- Displays and environment
- Parent surveys
- Pupil surveys
- Data analysis and outcomes
- Attendance data
- Intervention resources
- Intervention observation
- Lunchtime provision
- EYFS tour and external training given
- Quotes from discussion with QA and Head before visit
- Multi-agency work in the Family Hub
- Forest School walkabout
- School website
- Ofsted report

Meetings Held with:

- Senior Leadership Team
- Pupil Champions
- Staff with a range of roles and responsibilities - teachers, DHT, Assistant Teacher (also intervention)
- Parents, including those with children with SEND
- Governors
- Forest School Lead

Overall Evaluation

The Gates Primary School is a highly inclusive school where a clear moral purpose underpins every aspect of provision. During the assessment, it became evident that inclusion is not viewed as a discrete area of school improvement but as the foundation upon which leadership, curriculum development, pastoral support and community engagement are built. Across all stakeholder groups, there was exceptional consistency in how the school's values and vision were understood, articulated and experienced. Conversations with pupils, staff, parents, governors and leaders repeatedly reflected a shared commitment to ensuring that every child is known, valued and supported to achieve success. This level of coherence is indicative of a culture that has been carefully developed over time and is now deeply embedded throughout the organisation.

A significant strength of the school is its ability to combine high expectations with highly personalised support. Leaders have successfully created a learning community where academic achievement, wellbeing and personal development are viewed as complementary rather than competing priorities. Evidence from observations, documentation and stakeholder discussions demonstrates that pupils are supported to overcome barriers without limiting aspiration or opportunity. The school's systems for identifying and responding to need are proactive and effective, enabling vulnerable pupils and those requiring additional support to access the full life of the school. Importantly, these adaptations are implemented seamlessly, ensuring that pupils receive the support they require whilst maintaining a strong sense of belonging within their classes and wider peer groups. This was evident throughout the assessment, where adaptations were observed as an accepted and unremarkable feature of daily school life.

Leadership is a considerable strength. Senior leaders have established a culture characterised by trust, collaboration and a relentless commitment to continuous improvement. The distributed model of leadership has successfully developed capacity across the school, resulting in a staff team that demonstrates collective ownership of outcomes for pupils. Staff spoke positively about the support they receive, the opportunities available for professional development and the strong culture of collaboration that exists across all phases and roles. Equally, governors demonstrated a detailed understanding of the school's vision and priorities, combining effective support with rigorous challenge. Their visibility within school and engagement with pupils, staff and families enables them to maintain a clear understanding of the impact of leadership decisions on the lived experiences of the school community.

The quality of relationships throughout the school is exceptional and underpins the positive experiences reported by stakeholders. Parents describe the school as an extension of family life, highlighting the accessibility of leaders, the responsiveness of staff and the confidence they have that their children are safe, supported and valued. Staff similarly describe a culture where wellbeing is prioritised and professional relationships are characterised by openness, trust and mutual respect. This strong relational culture is reflected in pupils' confidence when discussing their school and in the overwhelmingly positive attitudes observed during lessons, social times and wider school activities. Stakeholders consistently identified these relationships as central to the school's success and as a key factor in creating an environment where children are able to thrive.

Pupils are impressive ambassadors for the school and provide compelling evidence of its impact. Throughout discussions, they spoke with confidence and pride about their experiences and demonstrated a mature understanding of the school's values. Pupils consistently referred to the wide range of opportunities available to them, particularly through leadership roles, enrichment activities and wider experiences that enable them to contribute meaningfully to the school community. Their understanding of concepts such as inclusion, respect, resilience and responsibility was authentic rather than

rehearsed, reflecting the extent to which these values are embedded within everyday practice. The breadth of leadership opportunities available is particularly noteworthy and ensures that pupils with different interests, strengths and talents are able to participate and make a meaningful contribution to school life.

The school's learning environment makes a significant contribution to pupils' experiences and reflects leaders' ambition to provide the highest quality provision. Indoor and outdoor spaces are exceptionally well developed, creating a stimulating, purposeful and nurturing environment that supports both academic learning and personal development. Reading, pupil leadership, environmental sustainability, creativity and community engagement are highly visible features of the school's provision. The extensive use of outdoor learning, community projects and partnerships enriches the curriculum and provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop confidence, independence and wider life skills. These experiences are not viewed as additional enhancements but as integral elements of the school's commitment to developing well-rounded, successful young people.

Perhaps most striking is the authenticity of the school's inclusive culture. During the assessment, there was no evidence of stakeholders focusing solely on programmes, initiatives or interventions. Instead, discussions centred on children, relationships and opportunities. Whether speaking to governors about strategic decisions, parents about their children's experiences, staff about professional practice or pupils about daily life, the same message emerged consistently: The Gates is a school where everyone matters, where differences are valued and where barriers are removed so that all pupils can participate fully. This consistency across all stakeholder groups provides powerful evidence that the school's vision is not only understood but lived on a daily basis. Overall, The Gates Primary School exemplifies highly effective inclusive practice. Strong leadership, ambitious provision, meaningful stakeholder engagement and a relentless focus on ensuring positive outcomes for all pupils have created a school where children are happy, confident and successful. High-quality relationships, extensive opportunities for participation and leadership, strong academic outcomes and a commitment to continual improvement combine to create a learning community that is both aspirational and nurturing. The evidence gathered throughout the assessment demonstrates a school that not only meets the requirements of the Inclusive School Award but provides a compelling example of inclusive excellence in practice.

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 three 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: Jenny McGarry

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:



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

Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

Leadership at all levels is highly effective and characterised by a strong moral purpose. Leaders have developed a distributed leadership model that promotes ownership, accountability and professional growth across the organisation. Staff describe feeling empowered to contribute to school improvement and demonstrate a shared commitment to achieving the very best outcomes for pupils. Investment in professional development, succession planning and collaborative working has created a skilled and reflective workforce capable of sustaining the school's vision. Furthermore, leaders actively engage with external partners, schools and community organisations to enhance provision and contribute to wider educational improvement. This outward-facing approach reflects both confidence in the school's practice and a desire to continue learning and developing.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of the school's work is that inclusion is experienced as a natural and seamless part of daily life. Adaptations are purposeful and discreet, ensuring that pupils receive the support they need without stigma or separation from their peers. Children demonstrate acceptance of difference, respect for others and an understanding that everyone learns and succeeds in different ways. This culture has been established through consistent leadership, strong relationships and a persistent focus on belonging. The result is a community where pupils feel safe to be themselves, families feel welcomed and respected, and staff feel trusted to make decisions in the best interests of children.

Overall, the evidence gathered during the assessment presents a compelling picture of a school that successfully combines inclusion, ambition and excellence. High-quality teaching, strong pastoral support, meaningful leadership opportunities, positive stakeholder relationships and a relentless focus on removing barriers to success have created a learning community where children thrive. The consistency of evidence gathered from all stakeholder groups demonstrates that the school's values are deeply embedded and experienced by the whole community.

Pupils are happy, confident and engaged; staff are committed and motivated; parents are highly supportive; governors are knowledgeable and effective; and leaders continue to drive improvement with clarity and purpose. Collectively, these strengths provide strong evidence of a school that exemplifies inclusive practice and is exceptionally well placed to continue influencing and supporting others through its work.

Next Steps

- As the school continues to build on its considerable strengths, leaders may consider focusing on further strengthening the evaluation and articulation of the impact of their inclusive practice. There is an opportunity to develop an even clearer evidence base that demonstrates how initiatives relating to inclusion, pupil leadership, community engagement and staff development contribute to long-term outcomes for different groups of pupils.
- Leaders may also wish to continue expanding opportunities for pupil voice and leadership, ensuring that all pupils can contribute to school improvement and shape future developments. Building on the school's strong partnerships with families, businesses and other schools, leaders are well placed to further position the school as a "centre of excellence" for inclusive practice, whilst maintaining the high levels of wellbeing, ambition and professional growth that are clearly embedded across the organisation.

Element 2 - Leadership, Management and Accountability

Leaders have established a highly inclusive and values-driven culture that is evident across all aspects of the school's work. A strong emphasis on trust, relationships, kindness, curiosity and responsiveness to need underpins decision-making and creates a nurturing environment where pupils and families feel supported. The school's developing trauma-informed approach, effective SEND provision and focus on mental health demonstrate a deep understanding of barriers to learning and a commitment to securing positive outcomes for vulnerable pupils.

Staff wellbeing is a notable strength, with leaders actively reducing workload, seeking feedback and promoting a positive work-life balance. Distributed leadership is well embedded, resulting in a dynamic team where leadership capacity is growing through the development of emerging talent and investment in professional development. Partnerships are developing well with other schools, external agencies and the local community. This further enhances the school's provision and reflects strategic leadership that extends beyond the school itself. These approaches have contributed to a strong reputation amongst stakeholders, with parental engagement, parent forums and survey feedback providing evidence of confidence in the school's leadership and direction.

Leaders’ commitment to the inclusive vision is evident in the way they oversee provision and check how it translates into pupils’ daily experiences. Pupil progress meetings, provision reviews, learning walks and scrutiny of pupils’ books give leaders complementary evidence about how consistently agreed approaches are used and what difference they make. For example, staff assess pupils before and after an intervention block, and the SENCo works with colleagues to agree further action where progress is limited. The simple use of stickers in books also helps staff follow vulnerable pupils’ work from day to day and consider it alongside formal tracking records. Inclusion is reflected in curriculum and provision planning through pupil passports, individual provision maps and plans to refine assessment in the foundation subjects. These arrangements connect strategic priorities for access and achievement with decisions about teaching, support and challenge for individual pupils.

Leaders model inclusive practice through their approachability, their willingness to listen and the way they respond to concerns. Parents’ accounts of being heard and receiving prompt support illustrate how leaders put the school’s values into practice. The same responsiveness is evident in the way leaders seek staff feedback and act on workload concerns. Teachers and Assistant Teachers reflect on pupils’ responses to feedback, scaffolding and guided practice, using this information to decide what to revisit, adapt or extend. The school’s investment in focused professional development supports this work by giving staff opportunities to develop their understanding of SEND, adaptive teaching and pupils’ emotional needs. Distributed leadership enables colleagues to bring what they learn into team discussions and share approaches that are working, strengthening responsibility for inclusion across the school.

Next Steps

- Leaders are well placed to build on these strengths by developing clearer measures of the impact of their inclusive and community-focused initiatives on pupil outcomes over time. As leadership capacity continues to grow, there would be value in further strengthening succession planning and providing structured opportunities for aspiring leaders to lead improvement projects across the school and wider partnership networks.

- Leaders could also enhance their strategic evaluation of key priorities, such as oracy, attendance, mental health provision and SEND inclusion, through the use of increasingly robust impact measures that demonstrate the difference these initiatives make for pupils. Building on the success of community partnerships and environmental projects, leaders may wish to further articulate how these experiences contribute to curriculum ambition, personal development and preparation for life beyond school. This would help strengthen the narrative around the school's wider impact while ensuring that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of how leadership actions translate into improved outcomes for pupils.

Element 3 - Curriculum (Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaptation)

Central to the school's success is an unwavering commitment to ensuring that inclusion and academic excellence work in partnership. Leaders have established a culture where children access a highly ambitious curriculum whilst receiving personalised support that responds effectively to individual need. Vulnerable pupils, those with SEND and pupils experiencing social, emotional or mental health challenges are fully included within the life of the school and benefit from carefully considered systems that identify barriers early and provide appropriate support. This commitment to equity does not result in reduced expectations. Instead, leaders have created an environment where attainment, wellbeing and personal development are viewed as equally important components of success. Strong outcomes, high levels of engagement and the confidence demonstrated by pupils provide clear evidence of the effectiveness of this approach.

The physical environment reinforces the school's ethos and makes an important contribution to pupils' experiences. Learning spaces are calm, purposeful and highly engaging, whilst the extensive outdoor provision offers rich opportunities for exploration, leadership, regulation and personal development. Community partnerships, environmental projects, reading initiatives and enrichment opportunities enhance the curriculum and reflect leaders' determination to provide meaningful experiences that broaden pupils' horizons. The environment combines nurture with aspiration, ensuring that children learn within surroundings that communicate value, respect and high expectations. During the assessment, the quality of provision observed both inside and outside the classroom reflected careful planning and a clear belief that every child deserves access to exceptional learning experiences.

Staff discussions during the visit reflected a shared understanding of the curriculum’s purpose. Staff spoke about helping pupils build secure subject knowledge while developing the confidence, curiosity and independence to use it. In lessons, teachers and Assistant Teachers use questioning, modelling, visual resources and guided practice to help pupils with additional needs engage with the intended learning. Pupil passports and individual provision maps help staff match adaptations to specific barriers and review their impact as pupils become more independent.

The wider curriculum gives pupils purposeful opportunities to apply and extend core skills. Environmental projects provide contexts for deepening learning. Broadcasting gives pupils an audience for planning what to say, asking questions and communicating clearly, while reading initiatives and performing arts offer further opportunities to interpret texts and develop confidence in expression. Through these experiences, pupils also practise collaborating, taking responsibility and making decisions. The curriculum’s links with Bolton give pupils familiar places, people and experiences to draw on. Leaders also consider whose lives and perspectives pupils encounter through assemblies, celebrations and the school’s house identities. The inclusion of figures such as Malala Yousafzai broadens the perspectives pupils encounter and gives them a concrete starting point for exploring how access to education varies across communities.

Next Steps

- Leaders could consider how to use the school’s wide professional development offer and strong investment in staff to share effective practice. For example, teachers and support staff could review how they use modelling, visual prompts and scaffolds to help pupils work towards the same ambitious curriculum goals, and consider when to maintain, adjust or gradually reduce those supports. Staff could support and lead school networks.

- Leaders should also consider how to make the impact of outdoor learning, enrichment and community partnerships more visible. For selected activities, staff could identify in advance what they want pupils to learn or develop and revisit this afterwards through pupil discussion, observation or follow-up work. For example, an environmental project could show how well pupils apply their scientific knowledge, while an outdoor leadership activity could give staff insight into how pupils take responsibility and work with others.
- Leaders could think about who makes decisions, takes on leadership roles and contributes to group work. Pupils' views could help identify what enables them to take part more fully and inform how future opportunities are planned, particularly for pupils who take on these roles less often.

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

The school’s curriculum is exciting and draws on local links to make learning relevant to pupils. Curriculum planning connects subject knowledge with familiar places, local people and experiences in the Bolton community, giving pupils concrete examples to explore and discuss. These links help pupils see their community reflected in what they learn and supports their sense of belonging. During the visit, discussions highlighted how teachers and the SENDCo identified what pupils were expected to learn and considered what might prevent individual pupils from taking part. The discussions also showed how decisions about staff deployment, training, accessible materials and opportunities for regulation follow from the learning goals and the support pupils needed to participate. This approach provides a foundation for the proposed primary SEMH resourced provision, which is due to open in 2027. Joint planning between mainstream and specialist staff was discussed as a way to help pupils build on what they learnt in both settings and take part in the practical, locally rooted experiences that made the curriculum engaging.

The school's highly effective use of its indoor and outdoor environment represents another area of exceptional practice. Learning spaces have been thoughtfully developed to support wellbeing, engagement, independence and inclusion, while extensive outdoor provision, environmental projects and community partnerships enrich pupils' experiences. The environment is not simply attractive; it is deliberately designed to remove barriers, support regulation and create opportunities for all learners to thrive. The impact of this approach is evident in pupils' engagement, sense of belonging and enthusiasm for learning. Community gardens, outdoor learning, enrichment opportunities and flexible spaces enable children to develop confidence, responsibility and wider life skills whilst remaining connected to the school's inclusive ethos. The environment reflects the school's ambition that every child should experience success, opportunity and wellbeing, making it a powerful contributor to the exceptional culture observed throughout the assessment.

Pupil voice helps staff judge how well these approaches work for individual learners. In conversations during lessons, pupils can explain what they have understood, where they are finding a task difficult and which prompts help them move forward. For pupils with SEND, their views also inform pupil passports and individual provision maps, giving teachers and Assistant Teachers a shared understanding of what helps each child participate. This feedback gives staff a basis for adjusting explanations, resources and adult support, and for noticing when pupils are ready to take greater responsibility for their learning.

Next Steps

- The school’s wide-ranging professional development offer and investment in staff provide a strong foundation for further improving teaching and learning. A useful next step would be to focus this investment on a small number of shared priorities, such as adaptive teaching and oracy, while continuing to offer development tailored to individual staff roles and needs.
- Subject leaders and the SENDCo could work with teachers and support staff to translate professional learning into classroom practice through joint planning, modelling and coaching. For example, staff could explore how to scaffold classroom discussion so that more pupils, including those with SEND, can contribute and explain their thinking, then review when those scaffolds can be reduced to build independence.

- Leaders could use lesson visits, pupil conversations and work samples to check how consistently the approaches are used and what difference they make to pupils' participation, understanding and progress. This evidence would help the school decide which approaches to share more widely and where further training, coaching or resources would have the greatest benefit.

Element 5 - Assessment

Assessment at The Gates helps staff decide what pupils need next and how best to teach it. During lessons, teachers and Assistant Teachers use questioning, discussion and retrieval tasks to check what pupils remember, identify misconceptions and judge who is ready for greater challenge. They respond through verbal feedback, further modelling, guided practice or visual prompts, giving pupils opportunities to improve their work. Evidence in pupils' books and in the school's tracking documentation showed how staff follow progress from day to day as well as over longer periods. By looking back across successive pieces of work, staff can see how pupils are responding to teaching and identify where they may need further practice or support. Pupil progress meetings add to this picture, while assessments before and after each intervention block help staff judge its impact. Where a pupil makes limited progress, the SENCo reviews the next steps with staff. For pupils with SEND, pupil passports and individual provision maps also bring together assessment evidence and the views of pupils and families, helping staff match support to individual needs while maintaining ambitious expectations.

Pupils' books and the school's tracking documentation showed how staff follow progress from individual starting points. The use of stickers in books is a simple, effective way to keep vulnerable pupils' day-to-day work in view between formal reviews. At pupil progress meetings, staff consider how individual pupils are responding to teaching and additional support. Assessments before and after intervention blocks help the SENCo and teachers agree a specific next step where progress is limited. In lessons, teachers and Assistant Teachers use questioning, retrieval activities and dialogue to check understanding and address misconceptions as they arise. Staff use what they find to adapt subsequent planning, whether that means revisiting a concept with the whole class, providing guided practice for a small group or adjusting a visual prompt for an individual pupil. This connection between classroom checks and longer-term tracking helps staff respond early and review whether their adaptations are helping each pupil learn.

Pupils also play an active part in checking and improving their learning. Clear success criteria and worked examples help them judge the quality of their work, while talk partners and structured discussion give them opportunities to explain their reasoning and respond to others' ideas. In 2025, 84% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined, well above the national figure. Leaders plan to build on this work by refining assessment in foundation subjects so that teachers can see more clearly what pupils retain and apply as they move through the curriculum. Planned assessment checkpoints and retrieval activities will help subject leaders evaluate whether pupils can explain key concepts and use their knowledge independently over time.

Next Steps

- Through the school's established professional development programme, staff may want to consider using examples from pupils' books, practical work and discussion to agree what it looks like when pupils can recall a key idea, explain it in their own words and apply it independently. Revisiting a small number of important concepts after a gap would give teachers a clearer picture of what has lasted. The school's effective use of visual prompts, partner rehearsal and practical demonstrations gives staff several ways to help pupils, including those with SEND, show the depth of their understanding.
- Leaders could extend the value of the school's simple and effective use of stickers in books by bringing selected examples into existing pupil progress discussions. Looking at a sequence of work alongside the tracking documentation would help staff pinpoint what has made a difference for individual pupils. For example, teachers and the

SENCo could look for evidence that a pupil who previously needed modelling now starts a similar task independently or uses a skill learnt in an intervention during everyday lessons. Sharing these examples through professional development would allow staff to learn from successful adaptations already in use and make more precise decisions about when pupils are ready for further challenge or greater independence.

Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

Pupils speak with genuine pride about their school and demonstrate a strong understanding of the inclusive culture that leaders have established. Throughout discussions, pupils consistently referred to values such as kindness, respect, curiosity, resilience and inclusion, showing that these are not simply displayed around the school but are deeply embedded in daily practice. Pupils value the wide range of leadership opportunities available, including roles such as Inclusion Champions, Maths Champions, broadcasters and prefects, and can clearly articulate how these responsibilities contribute to supporting others. Importantly, pupils recognise that inclusion is everyone's responsibility, describing how they look out for one another, support peers who may be struggling and help to ensure that everyone feels welcome and valued. The pride pupils take in their roles, alongside their belief that all children have opportunities to contribute and belong, provides strong evidence of a positive school culture where pupil voice is influential and leadership opportunities are accessible to a wide range of learners.

This culture contributes positively to behaviour by giving pupils practical ways to show kindness, respect and responsibility. When pupils describe looking out for someone who is struggling or helping others feel welcome, they show how the school’s values guide their choices in everyday situations. Leadership roles give pupils opportunities to model cooperative behaviour, encourage others to join in and offer help when a peer is finding something difficult. These everyday actions help pupils feel more confident asking for support and give them examples of how to respond thoughtfully to others, both in lessons and during less structured times of the school day.

Behaviour at lunchtime was exemplary during the assessment. The lunchtime provision was well matched to the needs of all pupils, offering ways to join in, spend time with friends or choose a quieter activity. This range of provision supported positive interactions and helped pupils manage the less structured part of the day successfully. The high standard of behaviour observed at lunchtime reflected how effectively the school’s inclusive ethos and expectations carry through beyond the classroom.

Next Steps

- Leaders should consider how to build on the confidence pupils show when talking about their school and their leadership roles as they begin to explain curriculum concepts. Teachers could identify the key ideas they want pupils to explain at different points in a unit and plan regular opportunities for them to rehearse their thinking with a partner before sharing it more widely. Leaders could think about how modelling, visual prompts, talk frames and rehearsal time can support pupils with SEND, EAL and those who are less confident speaking. Listening to pupils explain the same concept at different points in a unit would help teachers see where their understanding is becoming clearer and where further teaching or practice is needed.
- Leaders could also think about how to use the school’s strong personal development provision to extend these skills. Maths Champions could practise explaining why a method works, broadcasters could prepare questions that invite others to elaborate, and Inclusion Champions could explain why a proposed change might help more pupils join in at lunchtime.

Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

Parents who spoke during the IQM visit described The Gates as a welcoming school where they felt comfortable approaching staff and confident that their concerns would be taken seriously. They valued the headteacher's approachability and the way staff knew children and families individually. Parents gave examples of being listened to, receiving a prompt response and seeing their concerns resolved. Their confidence in approaching staff was grounded in these experiences. This matters because families who feel comfortable sharing concerns can help staff recognise emerging difficulties and understand what a child needs to settle and engage. One parent described how staff supported their child during the first term. Over time, the child became so eager to attend that they began skipping to school. The parent's account gave a concrete example of the difference that support made to how their child felt about coming to school and how readily they approached the school day.

Parents also described how inclusive practice supported their children's dignity and participation at points of change. One parent explained that, when the move from infants to juniors brought greater academic demands, staff adapted their child's work so that they could continue to participate as a member of the class while receiving the support they needed. The example illustrates how responsive teaching can help a pupil manage increased challenge and maintain their sense of belonging during a transition. Another parent explained that becoming an Inclusion Champion helped their child feel that their opinions were valued and taken seriously. For this pupil, the role provided a purposeful way to contribute to school life and gave them confidence that their views mattered. Parents' accounts were consistent with pupils' descriptions of looking out for one another and helping peers feel welcome. At lunchtime, pupils were observed choosing from a range of activities and their behaviour was exemplary. These observations complemented what families described by showing how provision suited to different needs enabled pupils to participate positively during a less structured part of the school day.

Next Steps

- The school could build further on the trust described by parents by widening the range of families who contribute to its evaluation of inclusion. Brief conversations at key transition points, alongside accessible ways to give feedback, would help leaders hear from families who are less likely to attend meetings or respond to surveys.
- Leaders could use that feedback alongside pupil voice and observations to check which practices make the greatest difference to pupils' sense of belonging, access to learning and participation in wider school life, and where experiences vary. Reporting back to families on what their feedback has shaped would make their influence visible.
- As plans for the primary SEMH resourced provision develop, the school could also involve pupils and families in shaping how children are welcomed, supported through transitions and included in the life of the wider school.

Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

Discussion during the IQM visit showed that leaders at The Gates have a detailed understanding of the families who make up their school community. In talking about Black British and Black African families, leaders recognised that families who may be grouped together in school data can have very different experiences, circumstances and relationships with the local community. This understanding was reflected in the care leaders described taking over whose lives and achievements pupils encounter in assemblies and through the school's house identities. The choice of Malala Yousafzai, for example, gives pupils a concrete way to explore why the right to education matters and why access to it differs around the world. Leaders' discussion of Diwali also showed that they consider how the place given to different celebrations in school life communicates to pupils and families whose traditions are recognised and valued. Taken together, these examples show how leaders use everyday aspects of school life to make the breadth of the community more visible to pupils.

The locally grounded curriculum gives pupils familiar places, people and experiences to draw on when explaining what they learn. The discussion about links with other Bolton schools added a further dimension to this strength. Leaders recognised that children growing up in the same town may have few opportunities to meet peers from other neighbourhoods and hear how they experience the place they share. The example discussed of pupils meeting at a shared venue such as Bolton College illustrated the educational value of those encounters. Working alongside peers from another school would give pupils a reason to ask questions, explain what is familiar to them and hear different accounts of life in Bolton. This discussion showed that leaders see community links as part of pupils' personal development, with value for how confidently pupils engage with unfamiliar perspectives and how well they understand the different communities that make up their town.

Next Steps

- Leaders may want to deepen their understanding of how pupils from minoritised ethnic backgrounds experience belonging at The Gates. Conversations with pupils and families who wish to contribute could explore when children feel their identities are recognised, whose experiences they see reflected in school and how confident they feel raising concerns about race or identity. A review of curriculum materials, book choices, participation in pupil leadership. Where only a few pupils share a particular background, individual accounts can reveal experiences that whole-school surveys may miss. This would help leaders judge how consistently pupils feel represented across the school and where changes would make the greatest difference to their experience.
- Leaders may want to consider where the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF resources linked to the UN Global Goals might enrich existing curriculum work on identity, belonging and global citizenship. Rights relating to identity, participation and education could give pupils a shared language for discussing whose perspectives they hear and what helps children take part.
- As part of that review, teachers could explore how Lyfta's stories might help pupils encounter a wider range of voices from Global Majority communities and recognise differences within and across those communities. For instance, comparing two accounts of children's journeys to school could help pupils explain how geography, transport and local circumstances shape access to education. Pupils' discussions and work over time would give leaders an indication of whether they draw on a wider range of examples, recognise differences within communities and use the language of rights to explain their thinking.