

3rd August 2010

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Summary

The field of education faces deep changes in relation to its thinking and practices. As a result there are new opportunities for continuing its historical purpose of addressing the needs of those learners who remain marginalised by existing educational arrangements. This is what the Heath Technology College does in such an outstanding way.

A definition of inclusive education is one which involves removing barriers. The four Ps of Protection, Presence, Participation and Progress are evident in policy and practice at The Heath.

The Heath is an outstanding example of an inclusive school. It is a true community school. It is not only very well integrated into the local community but is particularly successful at providing continuity and care in the context of levels of deprivation and local context. The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination is outstanding as is the effectiveness of its safeguarding procedures. The Heath has an excellent and successful pastoral system in place with the clear aim of embedding inclusive practice in all elements of school life. The range of interventions available to the school is outstanding and as a result this has had a real impact on the quality of education provided. The Heath is a model of inclusive practice which needs to be disseminated at both a local and national level.

The curriculum is both personalised and individualised – the inclusion agenda is a reality – as clearly evidenced by many aspects of school life including the Nurture unit and the CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health) provision.

The headteacher and senior management team are clearly focused on raising standards. This is based on appropriate use of accurate and up to date data for all groups of pupils. The “Within School Variation” analysis plays a significant role in this. Where students experience difficulties and face some barriers to learning, The Heath seeks to provide suitable strategies to help overcome these hurdles. For example with pupils who are young carers or children who are in public care. The school recognizes the importance of early intervention and identification and individual needs are identified quickly.

Though focusing on individual provision and by raising expectations for all students, many of the barriers to achievement are removed. Student behavior is good and often exemplary – this is as a direct result of the quality of relationships that exist between staff and students and

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between the students themselves. The atmosphere within the classrooms and around school is calm and respectful. In supporting the personal development of all the students the pastoral team ensure that progress is being made by the students in all subjects. This is carefully tracked so that any who are underachieving can be given additional support. Staff, teaching assistants (one of whom has been awarded “TA of the year”) and the wide range of support staff work as an integrated part of the whole team.

Teachers see themselves as leaders of learning and the leadership and management of inclusion and inclusion issues is outstanding. The whole inclusion team is very well trained and qualified. Together they provide a wide array of expertise and experience which gives the school an excellent capacity to meet the needs of all pupils but especially those who are at risk, marginalised or at risk of exclusion. The school believes that this commitment also places a particular emphasis on learners who are vulnerable to under-achievement.

The headteacher and SMT have a very clear vision for the future as demonstrated by the quality of the School’s Framework for Learning. The leadership team enjoy the support of the staff in a wide range of initiatives and developments.

Good and outstanding progress has been made on all issues identified from the previous IQM assessment.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in 3 years’ time.

Assessor: Roger Yates

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark Ltd:



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Joe McCann MBA NPQH
Director of Inclusion Quality Mark Ltd

Name of School:	The Heath Specialist Technology College
Headteacher:	Heather Mullaney
Date of assessment:	14 th -15 th July 2010
Final assessor/s:	Roger Yates
Successful:	Yes

Context of the School and Sources of Data. e.g. SEF, Ofsted report

Specific Issues Known

The Heath is a Specialist School for Technology and a Leadership Partner School. The Heath is situated in West Runcorn, which is comprised of 3 wards although students travel to The Heath from all wards in Runcorn. The industry in the Runcorn area is based upon the traditional heavy chemical industry and manufacturing. The major employer was ICI but the local chemical works have been taken over or established as companies in their own right e.g. Zeneca, Ineos Chlor and Fluor, which has resulted in a downsizing of the work force. The area has high unemployment and is short of skills in new technologies. Halton is amongst the 30 most deprived areas of England and Wales. Halton Borough is a predominantly urban area containing the Towns of Widnes and Runcorn. Although it is situated in North Cheshire, it shares many of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of its neighbours, Merseyside. The school places a particular emphasis on student welfare and well-being and has at the time of writing 1059 pupils on roll.

Portfolio and Other Supporting Evidence

Documentation analysed included the SEF, assessment data, evidence for all ten elements of the IQM process, lesson observation records, policies, minutes, quality mark reports, booklets and materials, programmes, schemes, incidents reports, tracking and monitoring data, pastoral information, prospectus, SEN records and ILPs and IBPs. Other documents included the Ofsted (HMI) subject survey: good practice in promoting equality (23 January 2009) and the school's own "Framework for Leadership and Learning."

Interviews with a wide range of professionals were carried out over the two days. These included Governors, the SENCO, the Headteacher and SLT, HLTAs, LSAs, mentors, parents and pupils. A tour of the school was provided out by two senior pupils, observations of four lessons and interviews with the children also helped to support the evidence base.

The school's IQM portfolio is extremely well structured, and covers all elements of the standard. It is supported by extensive documentary evidence, including the school's SEF, SIP reports and the School's Framework for Learning which demonstrates the importance of inclusion to the school's ethos and practice.

The portfolio provides hard evidence of practice closely matching policy and is a very clear indication of the way the school has prepared for the IQM re-assessment. The process of re-assessment started with the premise that IQM would further enhance, challenge and support the work of the school. This has permeated through all subjects, support staff, management and the governing body.

The portfolio also quantifies what the school is committed to and has been putting into practice over the last three years. This is not just over the last few months as part of the IQM re-assessment process but is part of the school's ethos to meet with the increasing range of abilities, skills, talents and individual issues; for example the number of dyslexic pupils and young carers.

Key Areas of Success are:-

- The effectiveness in which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination is a significant feature of the way the school is led and managed. The school places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of all of its work and its aspirations are understood and acted upon consistently at all levels. Consequently, the outcomes for pupils and their experiences are very positive and any unevenness between different groups is minimal or reducing rapidly. Monitoring and evaluation are sophisticated and highly influential in maintaining and improving the school's effectiveness.
- The rigorous and supportive programme of monitoring and observations of learning and teaching ensures that the clear commitment to Inclusion is carried out at all levels
- There is no discrimination and where there has been any evidence of inequality this has been tackled exceptionally well.
- The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures for all pupils is outstanding – both in and around school and in IT where support for both pupils and parents addresses issues such as internet, social networking abuse and cyber bullying.
- The school is a leader of high-quality practice, ensuring, for example, that its procedures are constantly updated to reflect developing practices, succession planning and national and local issues.

Minor Areas for Development:-

- Monitoring Inclusion – consider looking towards an “*Inclusion monitoring group*” a delegated diagonal slice through the staff with a clear remit, research brief and timeline (a KLAD audit). Maintain a “*Rolling IQM 10 Elements*” document, the SLT could delegate this now to the above mentioned team and report to the Governing Body's Inclusion Committee.
- Consider a peer counselling scheme to enhance the already successful peer mentoring scheme.

- The school would benefit from a twinning with a school from a more multi-racial area in order for the pupils to experience a wider range of young people (links work very well in the creative and performing arts, sport and for higher attaining pupils).
 - Look at the "Well-Being Curriculum". This is focused on a personal journey of self-discovery as well as learning about happiness and overall well-being.
 - Arrange a disability awareness course with a local designated Special School for pupils at KS4.
 - For the school to consider itself fully inclusive, the funding of ingredients for all pupils in Food Technology at KS3 needs to be considered.
 - All staff who have access to student profiles and other sensitive data should sign a "confidentiality" (data protection) form.
 - Make explicit the type of differentiation used in lessons as against just the actions to be taken. (*e.g., outcomes, pace, dialogue, support, resource, and task*).
 - Two SEF areas need to be re-considered in the light of the successful re-assessment of IQM and the subsequent report:-
 1. The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well being.
 2. The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers.
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Element 1 - Learner Progress

The student tracking system tracks pupil progress well and provides a valuable teaching, learning and management tool for all staff. This tracking of individuals and groups of students mean that the school has a very clear view of how to target its efforts to raise standards and achievement. Heads of Subject work closely with senior management to analyse the results of this to develop individual and personal teaching and learning strategies. All individuals are set targets based on their prior attainment and national expectations; the school uses a wide range of data to accurately identify early actions.

Strengths:-

- Outstanding CVA scores indicate that all students make outstanding progress.
- Vulnerable students and those with SEN/LDD make very good progress. The Centre for Student Intervention (CSI) is highly effective and ensures that all students are enabled to overcome difficulties. The team of learning mentors and support assistants is well managed and very effective.
- The Nurture/Behaviour Unit is very well funded.
- Assessment for Learning is well established and involves self-assessment and peer review as well as effective marking.
- Target setting and rigorous tracking are embedded. The progress of individuals and of groups of students is monitored closely and intervention is effective. Academic Review Days and regular interviews ensure that students and parents are involved in reviewing targets.
- There is a strong culture of praise and celebration.
- Students are actively involved in reviewing their work and their progress; this leads to bespoke learning and the personalisation of the curriculum.

Areas for development:-

- All staff who have access to student profiles and other sensitive data should sign a “confidentiality” (data protection) form.

Element 2 - Learner Attitude, Values & Personal Development

Pupils' behaviour makes a strong contribution to good learning in lessons. Their behaviour is welcoming and positive. They routinely show responsibility in responding to the expectations of staff, set consistent standards for themselves and respond quickly and well to any additional guidance from staff about how to conduct themselves. They behave considerately towards each other. The students are enthusiastic and enjoy their lessons and activities - including foreign visits – and the wide range of subject and sports' events. The Pastoral system is very student focused – early intervention strategies are a key feature in the success of the programme.

Strengths:-

- Students' personal development is a key strength of the school. Students are happy, very well behaved and enabled to develop a caring attitude. The peer mentor programme is outstanding. Over 80 students are actively involved in supporting other students and are trained to undertake restorative discussions to solve problems.
- The departmental analysis of incidents makes a real contribution to the work of the pastoral team.
- Students are very aware of the vast range of help available to them and are appreciative of the harmony and ethos of care and support.
- Advice and guidance, particularly when students join Year 7 are very good.
- Students feel safe and secure and the school's work to challenge any forms of bullying is highly effective.
- Students are enabled to develop their economic understanding and employment skills in a variety of innovative ways.
- The school caters very well for all students, including those with difficulties such as visual impairment. As a result, all students thrive and succeed.
- The CSI team and a dedicated team of caring staff work well together and with external agencies to respond to individual needs.
- Students develop leadership skills in a range of ways; including acting as peer mentors, prefects, student council members, sports' leaders and many other roles.
- The views of students are gathered and acted upon.

Areas for development:-

- To extend the good practice of the peer mentoring scheme to a peer counselling scheme. This would enhance the already excellent and successful peer mentoring scheme.

Element 3 - Leadership & Management

The leadership and management of the school are consultative and delegates very well whilst endeavouring to support and empower middle managers. The professional development of staff is outstanding. Staff love working at the school. The SIP gives an extremely clear indication of the direction the school is taking and ensures that the route to inclusion is effective and understood by all staff. The HT has clear, well communicated, vision and purpose. Leadership of initiatives is highly effective. A rigorous programme of monitoring and observations ensures that the clear commitment to Inclusion is carried out at all levels. The Senior Management Team has well defined roles and responsibilities but maintains a clear focus on the core function of school improvement. Inclusion and the equality of access of all pupils to the taught and extra-curriculum are very strong. The leadership and management of The Centre for Student Intervention (CSI) team is a real strength. Leadership, management and support of TAs and other support staff is outstanding.

Strengths:-

- The Senior Leadership Team and governors demonstrate a total commitment to the needs of all students and work tirelessly to promote an ethos of inclusion.
- Policies are well conceived and rooted in best practice. The school is at the leading edge of many initiatives and is regularly asked by the local authority and other organisations to share models of best practice.
- The SLT has driven a strategy to improve attendance and to ensure that all students achieve their potential. Their commitment to the care and support of students is reflected in the structures, routines and practices that are embedded in the school.
- The governors show real commitment to inclusion and monitor pupil development through the Inclusion Committee, which is highly effective.
- The dedication, professionalism and sensitive leadership of key senior staff underpin the ethos and effectiveness of the school's approach to inclusion and care.
- The school's focus on high quality induction and CPD for all staff ensures ongoing development. There is a clear and shared focus on emotional and social development, behaviour for learning and inclusion.
- The SLT and all staff are involved in effective self-review and evaluation and Performance Management targets are linked to the school's priorities.
- The governors and SLT have established a clear structure and well defined roles for all members of staff who feel valued and positive about the direction the school is moving in.



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Areas for development:-

- Monitoring Inclusion – consider looking towards an “*Inclusion monitoring group*” a delegated diagonal slice through the staff with a clear remit, research brief and timeline (a KLAD audit). Maintain a “*Rolling IQM 10 Elements*” document, the SLT could delegate this now to the above mentioned team and report to the Governing Body Inclusion Committee.

Element 4 - Staffing System & Organisation

The Continuing Professional Development programme is carefully linked to the school's improvement priorities, the inclusion agenda and performance management. It is extremely well managed and plays a significant role in moving the school forward. Staff are very proud of their school, staff turnover is low, they enjoy working at The Heath – the whole workforce feels valued.

Clearly defined staffing structures and the excellent use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning was evident. Individual pupil support is a real strength. The Inclusion agenda has been in policy and practice for several years.

Strengths:-

- All staff members have a job description and are very clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Workforce reform has ensured appropriate systems and structures and the school emphasises staff well being through work-life balance activities and training.
- The staff structure reflects the school's commitment to care, guidance and support.
- CPD and PM is effective and focused.
- Support staff are valued and an integral part of staff teams.
- All aspects of school performance are monitored and evaluated and governors are actively involved in reviewing developments.
- Teams are effectively led and there are opportunities for staff to take on new responsibilities.
- External advisers and consultants are used effectively and the school engages with other schools and organisations to ensure that it remains at the leading edge.

Areas for Development:-

- There are no significant areas for development.

Element 5 - The Learning Environment

Resources for ICT are excellent; all classrooms have interactive whiteboards making a significant contribution to teaching and learning. Schemes of work reflect the inclusion agenda with a clear focus on learning styles and an individual approach to pupils experiencing a range of learning difficulties. Although not barrier free, the school has appropriate resources to meet the needs of pupils who have some disabilities. Lessons include learning objectives and enhanced objectives with outcomes, AFL, differentiation, literacy strands, use of ICT, extended learning, use of TAs and learning support. Vulnerable pupils develop well with the help and support of a range of professionals and, as a result, pupils feel secure. Arrangements for risk assessments and for the health and safety of students are first class. The arrangements at lunchtime are very well managed.

Strengths:-

- The school is welcoming and great efforts are made to ensure that areas are bright and stimulating.
- Displays are varied and imaginatively presented. The school's commitment to inclusion and the importance of each individual is visible. Achievements of all students are recognised and celebrated.
- The school has used spaces creatively to provide suitable areas for learning and support. The CSI area is calm and homely and offers high quality care.
- Students show respect for the environment and welcome visitors with pride.
- All rooms exhibit a commitment to creating a climate for learning.
- The learning environment serves to effectively reinforce the school's values.
- The school makes maximum use of its grounds and the available resources. The provision of a covered external social space for students has ensured that they have a pleasant venue to socialise and to enjoy break times.

Areas for development:-

- The school recently (under the New Government programme) heard that it is not now to receive new buildings within the BSF programme. The best use is made of the current accommodation but access is very problematic in some areas and some teaching spaces are not fit for purpose. This is very much beyond the control of the leadership and management of the school as significant funding is required to update and even maintain the present building and grounds.

Element 6 - Teaching & Learning

The school encourages staff development to explore new ways of enabling pupils to learn. The programme for monitoring the quality of teaching means that teachers are coached and helped to improve. The willingness of many teachers to be innovative and release pupils' potential was evident. Teachers' planning demonstrates a clear understanding of the ways in which pupils learn and the impact of teaching on learning. Staff know the pupils very well – not only personally but in context of all the complex social, cultural and academic learning needs. Both staff and pupils enjoy each other's company. A very wide range of educational trips and visits takes place at The Heath and these are appreciated and enjoyed by pupils and staff alike.

Strengths:-

- There are a wide variety of teaching and learning approaches used.
- All lessons are led by clear objectives.
- ICT is used across departments to enhance learning and research.
- Very good relationships are a hallmark of the school.
- Assessment for Learning is well developed and students are involved in self and peer assessment.
- Teaching and learning is closely monitored and expectations are high. The quality of lessons observed during the assessment (4 x 15mins) was good and outstanding.
- There is a good awareness of different learning styles and how they impact on classroom practice. In-depth consideration of how students learn and the significance of emotional development is informing planning.

Areas for development:-

- Focus on increasing the range and type of questioning styles used in lessons as an additional differentiation strategy (Socratic, using Bloom's Taxonomy).
- Make explicit the type of differentiation used in lessons as against just the actions to be taken. (*e.g., outcomes, pace, dialogue, support, resource, and task*).

Element 7 - Resources & ICT

The school makes excellent use of existing ICT provision both within suites, individual use and in classrooms. There is equal access across the school to ICT. There is a high level of confidence and use of ICT by pupils and staff and resources are targeted well, linked to the School Improvement Plan and to department requirements. Pupils that require access to specialised equipment are catered for well.

Strengths:-

- Technology status has had a visible impact on the use of ICT across the school.
- Curriculum access for all students, including those with visual impairments, is ensured through the provision of appropriate resources and support.
- ICT is used extensively to ensure effective communication.
- Teaching materials are evaluated and adapted by teachers and support staff.
- Students are enabled to develop ICT skills and other skills that enhance their employability.
- Enterprise Education is a key strength of the school.
- Lesson planning incorporates the effective use of resources and ICT.
- Resources are used effectively and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Areas for development:-

- There are no significant areas for development.

Element 8 - Parents & Carers

All staff work very hard to involve parents in school life and in their children's learning and, as a result, the majority of parents are very supportive of the school. Communications with parents are excellent at all levels with clear lines of contact. They know exactly what is happening in the school. The newsletters for parents are very helpful and informative and a model of what schools should be providing. Two developments are in place which demonstrates the school's commitment to a "learning community".

Strengths:-

- Parents and carers are very supportive and positive about the school.
- Parents feel fully informed about their children's progress and feel that communication is very good.
- A range of meetings and events ensure the full involvement of the majority of parents. The flexibility of the school and approachability of staff are appreciated.
- The attendance at parents' evenings and other events is very high.
- Parents are clear about school policy and they share the school's aspirations.
- Parents appreciate the quality of support and help offered and speak passionately about the help given to their children.
- Parents value the high quality of transition support and guidance into Year 7 and describe their children feeling "at home" straight away.
- The school offers direct support to parents with difficulties over aspects of childcare.
- Parents feel that issues are resolved effectively and express confidence in the school.
- Parents say that many students would not cope with secondary school without the outstanding help offered by The Centre for Student Intervention.
- They feel that their children are known and valued as individuals.

Areas for development:-

- There are no significant areas for development.

Element 9 - Governors, External Partners & Local Authority

The school enjoys a very good relationship with the LA working with a wide range of external partners, cluster schools and outside agencies. The relationship the school has developed with its feeder schools is outstanding. The arrangements for transition between the primary cluster and the school are a model of best practice and contribute to the real inclusive quality of education provided. The Governing Body of The Heath is a thriving, supportive and reflective group who challenge constructively where appropriate whilst showing enthusiasm and commitment to the school, its children, parents and staff. Value for money underlines the decision making of the Governing Body. The Governing Body know the school and its staff very well. One governor said “As a Governing Body we try to find out what the children need to succeed”.

Strengths:-

- Governors are fully aware of school priorities. They provide support and challenge to the SLT and are actively involved in school life.
- Governors are committed to the school’s inclusive and caring ethos. They operate effectively as a board and within committees such as the Inclusion Committee. They monitor all aspects of student development and school improvement.
- The LA is very positive about the school and is engaged in innovative developments with key staff in relation to a range of initiatives. The school models best practice across the LA on a number of aspects and offers support to other schools.
- The school works closely with a range of external agencies. For example, its work with CAMHS is dynamic and effective and it has developed a range of multi-agency responses.

Areas for development:-

- There are no significant areas for development.

Element 10 - The Community

A definition of community in terms of school provision is working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all the individuals and groups within the catchments and wider areas.; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the school. This is what the Heath does well.

The school is outstanding in regard to promoting community cohesion. The school is proactive in the leadership of a cluster of local schools, some of which are faith-based partner schools. Through the work this group secures positive transition from primary feeder schools as shown in parental survey and pupil voice work, contributes to professional development, engages with a range of national initiatives to support young people.

Strengths:-

- The school is very highly regarded in the local area and it sees itself as being at the heart of its community.
- The local community uses the school extensively.
- The school has strong links with a range of agencies, such as the local PCT, Connexions, the police, Youth Service, CAMHS etc and has dynamic partnerships with local primary schools and special schools.
- The school website and newsletters ensure that the community is kept informed of developments.
- The school shares expertise with the local community and serves its neighbourhood very well.
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award and a range of other schemes ensure that students are actively involved in serving the community and vulnerable people.
- The school reaches out to its neighbours and holds events in local venues.

Areas for development:-

- The school would benefit from a twinning with a school from a more multi-racial area in order for the pupils to experience a wider range of young people (links work very well in the creative and performing arts, sport and for higher attaining pupils).

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Good and outstanding progress has been made on all issues identified from the previous IQM assessment.

Assessor: Roger Yates

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