



## Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



**School Name** The Anchor Sendfriendly Centre

**School Address** 3 North Road  
Block E  
Plumstead  
London

SE18 1BS

**Head/Principal** Ms Lillian Odim

**IQM Lead** Ms Fiona Gabb

**Assessment Date** 28th June 2023

**Assessor** Ms Louise Simpson

### Sources of Evidence

- IQM Self-evaluation report
- Book review
- Learning Walks
- Learning Environment
- Individual Timetables
- Ofsted Nursery Inspection report
- Website

### Meetings Held with:

- Senior Leadership Team
- Support Staff
- Parents/Caregivers
- Greenwich Area Early Years Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)
- Greenwich Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Assessment and Review Officer



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### Overall Evaluation

The Anchor SENDfriendly Centre is a unique provision and one which is hard to visualise until you see it in person. It is awaiting confirmation from the Department of Education (DfE) regarding registration. This will further increase the opportunities for the provision both in the offer it aspires to deliver and the impact it can have to support pupils who have been on the edge of the education system by virtue of the perception of the challenge of their special educational needs.

I am in no doubt that the existence of this provision has changed the lives of both children and young people and their families, both in the short term and for the future. The commitment to access for all, quality provision and a desire to change lives is evident from the moment you walk through the door. This is not just a centre, it is a passion project for the two key leaders of the centre who have experienced the system. The staff they have recruited are those who wholly subscribe to the vision. This is not a provision that is easy to define, simply because they do not allow artificial barriers to be in the way of entitlement to education. “No child is left behind” is their strapline and the premise on which they operate.

The Anchor SENDfriendly Centre (TAS) is responding to a missing element in provision. However, it is not just a holding place, this is a visionary centre which does not rest on its laurels but self-propels to aspire to greatness. They have achieved success for children, young people and their families where they have experienced failure previously and had no other opportunities. Whilst the achievements to date have been impressive, there is an energy and drive to constantly improve, soaking up ideas like a sponge.

A representative from the Local Authority (LA) commented that they provide a necessary and effective offer. This is the second year placements are being made at the centre by the LA who believe they are, “doing a great job”, with success in part being due to the vision and motivation of the setting and the quality of staff training. The rigorous six-week review meetings are where the offer and progress of pupils is scrutinised. The LA are also excited about the proposed offer of Post 16 vocational courses TAS are wanting to provide once registered. Enhanced funding afforded by this status will provide even more opportunities.

The Greenwich Area SENCo described her positive relationship with TAS and commented on how receptive they are to advice and guidance for the provision, as well as how positive parents are on the support their child receives. She described how some parents had anxieties about their children due to the attitude of some provisions and professionals but that the, “ethos of positivity and celebration here changes parental attitudes”. She praised the thought that went into developing the provision and the “motivated happy staff”. She was also positive about the commitment and desire for multi-agency working. The Area SENCo also commented on how the development of the centre had not detracted from the focus in early years and indeed has enhanced it as staff from Post 16 also attended training and shared ideas as developmentally there are parallels with some of those pupils. She also mentioned the creative use of funding and the way TAS supports parents.

The reception area of the centre is a haven of calm for those walking into it who have often had traumatic experiences before arriving. An area to the side is set out comfortably, to be used by parents and caregivers for a little respite should they wish to use it. It can also be used as a non-intimidating area for meetings. Parents sense that they are truly welcomed



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and looked after as well as their children. When describing attendance at an event at school, one parent even commented that the staff look out for parents too and when seeing a parent on their own they immediately went over to support. They said it was like “no adult is left behind either”.

There are continuing adaptations being made to the building to ensure it is best used for the pupils it serves. The sensory and other rooms created are used effectively and are constantly being re-evaluated.

The ethos of this school is absolutely shared by everyone you come into contact with and staff model behaviours at all times. Policy development is collegiate and thoughtful in terms of practical application, with each person understanding the important role they have. As an example, transport is organised ‘in house’ with a Transport Division Team. The planning of how members are introduced to families, familiarising them with systems and routines, getting to know the pupil, understanding everyone’s anxieties and looking at the detail of triggers, important objects etc. has been key to successful transitions into the centre. Communication is regular with families and has enabled this team to make valuable contributions to safeguarding.

Staff wellbeing is a priority also, with staff commenting how they are helped both practically, emotionally and professionally from birthday recognition to signposting to mental health and financial services. I heard many times during the day how staff, “feel like they are a family”, “treated the same and loved the same”. They also added however, that they feel able to challenge, have differences of opinion and are comfortable to do that without fearing any repercussions.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) describes how the journey from meeting the Chief Operating Officer (COO) at a coffee morning discussing their children motivated them, “for the love of SEND,” to start the journey to building the Anchor SENDfriendly Centre. I believe this journey has much longer to travel and wish them well in whatever direction the centre goes next.

I am of the opinion that The Anchor SENDfriendly Centre fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark’s Inclusive School Award.

The school has submitted an Agreement to Participate in the Centre of Excellence programme committing it to annual reviews for the next 3 years and attendance at termly IQM Cluster meetings with other IQM Centres of Excellence and Flagship Schools. The Action Plan which has been submitted reads very well and gives us an insight into the future plans of the school. As such the school meets our Centre of Excellence criteria and I am happy to confirm that The Anchor SENDfriendly Centre has also achieved Centre of Excellence status at this time.

**Assessor: Ms Louise Simpson**

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

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



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

For the Anchor SENDfriendly Centre, inclusion is not a secondary focus. It is the absolute foundation, substance and heart of this provision which is evident in any discussion that takes place in relation to this centre.

This is a centre which fully believes that provision grows from the needs of each individual child. Teaching, training, and support are created from this base.

The fundamental principle and underpinning belief upheld by all who work in this centre is that 'No child is left behind'. To realise this aspiration, traditional attitudes to admissions criteria look very different here and after acceptance comes the focus on provision. This is particularly powerful and valued by families who have often either experienced failure in the system, had a negative experience or been excluded or not accepted in other settings.

This is a place where the whole child, their family and environment are seen as an integrated whole, and their commitment is therefore to address all of these areas and the focus is therefore truly holistic.

Some of these children and young people have been out of education for very extended periods of time putting pressure on families and negatively impacting on the self-worth and wellbeing, as well as progress for many of them. The impact of the 'can do' and 'let's work together' attitude of the school is something that cannot be underestimated for all parties.

TAS recognises that for sustainable support and progress they cannot work alone and they have therefore developed and fought for strong relationships with relevant partners for the best outcomes.

Individual successes however small are celebrated and shared so that hope and optimism are given to children and young people and their families.

Participation is valued and all parties are to be part of the plan for the children and young people.

TAS is a diverse multi-cultural organisation where pupils come with a variety of physical and special educational needs. All of these are valued and celebrated through individual approaches, attitudes to one another and an ethos of acceptance, tolerance and celebration of difference, day to day and through the curriculum.

All TAS staff are effective role models who demonstrate the behaviours and values of the centre, modelling positive behaviour, respect for diversity and empathy for students, families and staff.

There is a collegiate approach to policy development which goes beyond meeting statutory obligations. All aspects of an issue are considered to address the root causes. This is achieved through forums such as whole staff meetings and ensuring that partners are part of the process. This process can be complex but there is a culture whereby partners are able to voice their views knowing these will be considered respectfully.



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### Next Steps:

- Building on success to date, TAS are in the process of expanding to another site.
- Curriculum developments incorporating project-based learning, technology and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning are being planned.
- Technology as a tool for access, inclusion and equality are being developed so that pupils are not further disadvantaged, and support services are also being reviewed.
- Extending support services will be prioritised.
- Partnerships and collaborations will be further strengthened.
- Staff investment such as recruitment, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and wellbeing will continue to be evaluated.



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### Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

When the term, 'leading from the top' is used you rarely see clearer examples of this than at the anchor SENDfriendly Centre. The CEO and COO saw a need, having a shared experience of parenting children with significant special educational needs and disability. Their vision for this provision is fuelled by a passion for the rights and needs for their own children and, therefore, other children and families with similar experiences including those who may have been further disadvantaged by their lived experience of being from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

With this clear purpose and vision, they have recruited staff who fully subscribe to this commitment, share their values and are prepared to together go on a journey of continuous improvement, to include, and improve outcomes for children, young people and their families and communities.

Parents spoken to commented on the leadership of the centre. They credited the success of their children being a "testament to the Headteacher's vision and passion".

The planned developments and creation of another centre show clearly how visionary and aspirational the leadership of TAS is. Staff have said they feel in a strong position to continue the work developed in the centre so that these visions can be achieved without risk to the current provision.

The leadership team is cohesive and strong with individuals confident in their areas of expertise and able to contribute to whole centre developments. There is a culture whereby staff feel able to identify development needs along with areas of interest. The Senior Leaders are always looking for additional training opportunities.

The strong management is supported by comprehensive policies and procedures including those for curriculum development, recruitment and retention, student support services, facilities management, and financial management. Confidence in these areas affords the focus on delivering high quality education. There are robust systems for student achievement, teacher effectiveness and centre performance.

#### Next Steps:

- Improve data driven decision making.
- Continue effective collaboration of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to develop new projects.
- Introduce further innovation to the Leadership Team including using new technologies and methodologies to improve teaching and learning.
- Renewed focus on accountability measures meet performance standards.



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

The curriculum structure and organisation at TAS ensures active engagement from a very diverse group of learners.

Challenging and engaging learning experiences alongside extra-curricular activities are offered, ensuring progression is maximised.

Whilst there are clear frameworks with TAS following the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, Key Stage (KS) 1 and 2 frameworks where appropriate, there is a constant review of individual learning plans and timetables. This is fluid and responsive.

A broad curriculum is offered despite needs which is sequenced to ensure progress through an increasingly series of complex concepts and skills whilst developing critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration. There is an additional focus on character development with the aim to develop students' social, emotional and ethical skills alongside their academic skills. It includes teaching children to be responsible, respectful, empathetic and honest.

The curriculum design also addresses the local national and international dimension. At a local level, the children consider the needs and interests of the community in which the centre is located. The local area, local history, culture and traditions are all explored.

Field trips and excursions take place. Regular trips take place to the supermarket one afternoon a week to support integration within the community, developing everyday skills to promote independence.

The students at TAS have specific changing needs and circumstances so teaching methods and strategies are adjusted at an individual level with support being targeted responsively.

There are clear pathways for all students which are reviewed regularly.

#### Next Steps:

- Develop the regular trips which take place to the supermarket one afternoon a week to support integration within the community developing everyday skills to promote independence.
- Developments in curriculum structure will include the integration of emerging technologies to provide more interactive and immersive learning experiences, recognising also that for some young people technology has a greater impact on their lives.
- Pupil engagement will be an area of development to ensure a more personalised learning approach aligned with interests and goals alongside a project-based approach.
- Data will be used more effectively to provide personalised support and resources.





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

Being a centre which caters for diverse learning needs and disabilities, TAS ensures that physical space is accessible and accommodates needs of students with mobility challenges and/or sensory needs. Physical equipment is installed and utilised and there are designated learning areas to meet the needs of all pupils. One parent commented on the, “can do attitude” of the centre with appropriate resourcing in all areas.

Resourcing is carefully planned with oversight by the Senior Leaders. Staff are able to make recommendations which are then quality assured and checked for health and safety. Environments are adapted where there are specific issues due to safety, eg: one area in the Post 16 part of the centre is monitored closely due to an individual who is at risk of ingesting objects.

On my learning walk I observed the sensory room, immersion room, music room, ball pit room and art room. The sensory room has changeable visuals and smells and is utilised well according to specific needs. Whilst sensory breaks are planned, individuals have influence over these. I am mindful that these facilities were provided in the context of funding limitations due to the designation of the provision, so I am excited to see what further developments can be made.

Visual supports such as ‘now and next’, timetables, actions and gestures are all observed to transition between activities to promote independence.

Individual learning plans are key to the success of this provision. Resources to support learning are tailored and adapted with regularity responsive to changes in needs and behaviour. There is good evidence of how visual aids, hands on activities, auditory cues and kinaesthetic elements enhance accessibility and learning outcomes.

Excellent use is made of support staff to ensure needs identified through Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) targets are met. There is a good mixture of individual and group activity to ensure pupils are challenged and have opportunities for socialisation. All learners have their own support workers who have excellent knowledge of the needs of the children and the targets they are trying to achieve through collaboration with teachers who have overall oversight.

During my discussion with the Local Authority Area SENCo, it was made clear that needs identified in EHCP plans or other intervention planning were being met effectively with good collaboration with professionals.

The quality of the learning environment reflects the inclusive ethos of the school. The learning environments are thoughtfully designed and maintained demonstrating a commitment to creating an atmosphere that supports the unique needs and abilities of children with special educational needs. This includes considerations regarding accessibility, individualised support, specialised resources and a nurturing and accepting atmosphere.

There is a culture of professional dialogue in the centre, and leaders are outward looking to identify further best practice and equally open to constructive criticism if it can improve outcomes. There is a healthy attitude to ‘risk’. This results in active and experimentation followed by evaluation and reflection for professional development.





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### Next Steps:

- TAS seeks to introduce more flexible seating arrangements, incorporate elements of nature and sensory friendly features and using technology to enhance the learning environment.
- Planning developments will include designing differentiated scaffolding strategies and assessment methods.
- There will be a full resources audit with a focus on utilising new technology tools and digital platforms.
- The commitment to staff development will continue, so that their repertoire of instructional strategies, researched based practices and educational developments will be maintained and developed.



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### Element 5 – Assessment

During the visit I was made aware of how staff use prior attainment to identify gaps in learning to plan effective learning opportunities. A range of data is collected and analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses. TAS is adept at planning learning opportunities that address specific areas of need.

TAS has created portfolios of students' work over time which are used to track progress. Checklists have been used to track progress towards specific goals or learning objectives. Progress reports are used to identify areas of strength and weakness and to guide instructional decisions.

Some pupils at the centre have had very disrupted education so this needs to be considered as a context when looking at assessment data. For pupils placed in the provision as an interim measure there are robust review meetings every six weeks to consider whether the placement should be extended. It is testament to the centre that the required progress and criteria are made to secure ongoing placements when there is a significant level of scrutiny from the placing authority/authorities.

### Next Steps:

- To continue to prioritise individual assessment approaches that cater to the diverse needs of learners with special educational needs. This may involve utilising a variety of assessment methods and tools that consider each learner's strengths, interests and preferred model of expression.
- It is hoped that additions to individualised assessments will provide a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of each learner's progress, allowing for improved targeted and personalised learning plans.



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

During my visit it was very apparent that some individuals at TAS present with very complex behaviours. There was an overwhelming feeling, however, that the understanding of staff of these needs, and the confidence in their strategies to manage these, have created an environment that is calm and organised.

The centre is aware of how to support these needs and are skilled in de-escalation techniques and creating the right environment and expectations. One example is where a pupil, unsuccessful in their previous setting had been on a 1:7 ratio. Having been out of the system for a long time he has settled at TAC with a much-reduced support ratio and is making progress.

There is a clear focus on transitions to minimise disruption and sensory areas and other interventions are used with great effect to enable pupils to return to task more readily. One parent commented that in his child's previous setting he had been experiencing, "full containment". However now he felt there was the right balance, "he is being distracted for further learning, not containment; it is distraction with a purpose". He is now eager to learn and runs into school happily which is a huge relief to the family who are seeing the progress at home.

Parents also commented how the inclusive environment promotes an attitude of understanding of acceptance of individual differences. A harrowing description was given by one parent of how at a previous setting he felt like his child was treated like a dog barking in a corner. It has taken a great deal of positive experiences to therefore feel happy with another setting.

#### Next Steps:

- TAS will consider implementing Social Emotional Learning Programs which explicitly teach and foster skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building and responsible decision making.
- Further develop and refine the positive behaviour support system.
- Promote a growth mindset and metacognitive skills among learners to enhance motivation, resilience and self-directed learning skills.



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### Element 7 - Parents, Carers, Guardians

TAS is a centre which truly believes and expects parents and caregivers to be equal partners in the planning and decision making for children and young people. They also have a clear understanding of the pressures that can be felt by families with children with complex needs in addition to some everyday challenges faced by families. They offer a wide range of support including the out of school hours and holiday activities as well as signposting and supporting families to services which impact the whole family. Some of these needs are identified during home visits and the school goes the extra mile to ensure entitlements are received, challenging service providers when necessary. One parent commented, “this is a family centre, they get it’s not just about the child”.

There is regular communication between home and school to celebrate successes and for other updates. This is in a variety of formats to meet the needs of families and there is an emphasis on using accessible language.

There is a specific focus on ensuring that the centre environment is welcoming and accessible with parents knowing that centre staff are sensitive and non-judgemental.

Knowing that bringing children to school can be very challenging at times, a welcoming comfortable homely space has been created by the reception area where parents can just sit comfortably, take time for themselves and seek support if they wish to before they continue with their day.

I had the opportunity to hear from parents who have children at the nursery provision and who have had children transfer from the centre to mainstream provision.

The Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI) nursery is open to all although places are increasingly sought after by parents of children who have SEND needs through parental and other professional recommendations based on feedback. One parent had a neurotypical child attend as well as their sibling, as they felt it mirrored life and was beneficial to both children.

All parents articulated a relief that they had found somewhere that sincerely believed they could meet the needs of their children and where they were truly wanted. They spoke about previous rejection, a sense of failure, stigmatisation and judgement at other placements their children had attended, been excluded from or not even accepted. This had clearly had a devastating impact. The sense of relief to be in this kind of environment was conveyed by all parents with one saying, “I breathed a sigh of relief, the setting did not disappoint”. Another stated that accessing TAS was “literally a life saver, I felt like I had nowhere to go”.

As well as the sense of relief, parents were forthcoming with the impact the offer in the provision has had. The urgency to address the needs was appreciated with comments such as “they just took things on from the get-go” and pieced everything together and “didn’t work in silos”.

The impact on both children and families is immeasurable. One parent was keen to point out that the attitude towards her child had helped her own self-belief meaning that they transferred amazingly successfully to mainstream when appropriate when previously she would have felt that specialist provision was the only option.



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### Next Steps:

- Expand the range of parent education and workshop opportunities to enable them to further support their child's learning.
- Establish parent support groups to create a sense of community and allow parents to exchange ideas and access emotional support.
- Involve parents and caregivers in the school community so they can contribute their unique skills, talents, and perspectives to further strengthen the partnership between home and school and strengthen collaboration to jointly develop strategies to support learners.
- Enhance the website with a parent portal to improve updates on successes, events and other updates.



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

TAS has established partnerships with local organisations, businesses and community groups that offer resources and expertise relevant to special educational needs and disability. There are collaborations with libraries, museums, arts centres, sports clubs, vocational centres and therapy providers.

The centre also attends local events, workshops and conferences relating to special education and disability services. They are part of relevant professional organisations.

TAS links with other educational establishments, local authorities and community organisations contributing to policy development. They also work with local and other partners to develop CPD programs specifically tailored to staff in the centre.

The leaders of the centre have also identified alternative providers that align with the educational goals and needs of the learners in the centre and seek providers who are able to offer unique expertise to complement the curriculum and support the holistic development of learners.

There is an open and transparent communication with the local community in the form of newsletters, website updates, social media platforms where news achievements and events are shared. This is essential to foster true community cohesion and participation. Parents are also supported so that they are empowered to access the offer in their locality with confidence.

TAS has forged links with schools, organisations and educational institutions in different countries. Currently there are links with Nigeria and Ghana. These partnerships facilitate cultural exchanges, joint projects and collaborative learning opportunities. Pupils are supported to be global citizens through exploring a range of topics.

The expertise of the centre has been recognised by one major partner Peabody who have commissioned TAS to work with churches attended by Black African families in recognition that children with young people with SEND from some communities are often not attending with other siblings. Training has been provided to these places of worship to advise on how to make them more accessible for young people and to explore and discuss views on disability and visibility within those communities. This will have a positive effect on young people where understanding, attitudes and practices may change affording more inclusion for children and young people, not just within the church but within extended families and therefore social opportunities. The potential to extend this work to other places including places of worship is an exciting development.

#### Next Steps:

- To develop and implement community outreach programs to actively engage with local organisations businesses and community groups to build stronger connections to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs and disabilities.