



# Great Denham Primary

has achieved the Inclusive School Award.



## **Exceptionally Inclusive Educational Setting**

Great Denham Primary School is a unique and exceptionally inclusive educational setting where the Headteacher and her team of senior leaders have a profound understanding of the joys of childhood. They have used this awareness to develop a curriculum and learning environment that reaches out to every child whatever their background, to ensure that learning at the most creative, reflective and relevant level takes place. Together with their dedicated team of teachers and support staff they have courageously followed their belief that childhood is a precious time, when individuals develop their values, behaviour for learning and self-belief. They have a collective view that by creating an exciting, 'irresistible' learning environment, set within high expectations of respect and determination, great learning will take place.

## **Strong Leadership**

Strong but subtle leadership by the headteacher enables her senior leaders to work closely with her to fulfil her vision of a fully inclusive vibrant school, encompassing the aspirations of the whole community. There are three deputy headteachers and whilst they support each other in their overall drive for excellence they each have a focus, with one taking responsibility for inclusion in its widest sense. This deputy is also the SENDCo and because of her passion and commitment, the school is identified by its openness to accepting children with extreme needs and for its success in fully integrating the most vulnerable and challenging children. There are 16 children with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and 4 who are undergoing assessment. 33% of the children have English as an Additional Language (EAL) reflecting the ethnic diversity of the school. The SENDCo thrives on challenge and has organised tremendous support for all vulnerable children

including those with highly demanding medical needs. She leads a team of professionals whose expertise is used to support those in need. They meet regularly with the SENDCo to share expertise and assess the success of an approach or intervention. They also give support to each other ensuring that the emotional demands of their work do not impact negatively on its success. They include a Drama therapist, a Family Support Worker, specialists who work with children with sensory impairment, autistic spectrum disorder, attachment disorder and communication difficulties. From September (2017) there will also be a specialist professional to support children with EAL.

## **Core Values – Equality, Friendship, Respect, Excellence, Determination and Courage**

The core values of Equality, Friendship, Respect, Excellence, Determination and Courage, are firmly embedded, known and driven by every member of the school community. All those spoken to during the assessment articulated these values and the support and care evident was testimony to the high expectations. Friendly, confident children and staff members chatted and greeted me continually. The Office team, Site Manager, Kitchen team, Business Manager, Headteacher's PA, Governors and all Support Staff gave the same message of care, respect and inclusion of all members of the community. They feel valued themselves and understand how to make others feel valued.

## **A Very Special Place**

Children at Great Denham are extremely proud of their school and understand and appreciate that it is a very special place in which to learn. They were constantly showing me their project books, new discoveries on the iPads or telling me about their current topic. They also expressed the importance of respecting and including everyone in the school and appreciated that difference should be celebrated. Because the school is only 5 years old the senior children transferred to Great Denham from other schools. Some confided about how difficult it had previously been to spend a day at a desk within one classroom and that the freedom they experience now really helps their learning. One child said, 'we have inspiring classrooms with various places to work', another said that she loves 'to work in the break out areas and outside' whilst another said, 'we can choose where we want to do our work'. Every child observed was on task and engaged, acting responsibly and not necessarily being closely supervised by adults. The setting exudes trust and responsibility and pupils respond positively.

## **A Richly Resourced Learning Environment**

The learning environment is richly resourced. The classrooms are bursting with colourful displays celebrating learning and the breakout areas with large adaptable role play structures feeding creativity and imagination. There are two open air quadrangles in the centre of the building, one housing a sensory pod and sensory garden, the other

furnished with attractive seating and table areas. Engagement is a key element of learning and teachers have studied and apply the criteria of the Leuven Engagement Scale. Children are free to complete tasks where they feel most comfortable and so reprimands for lying on the floor or on a bean bag just don't happen. Children are calm and everyone is included in the wide variety of activities. However, they know what to do if another child is having a challenging day. This is a school that has welcomed children whom have been excluded from other settings, so from time to time there are crisis points. The policy is to remove the majority and for the specialist to work with the child needing support. Whole classes of children have been known to quietly move to a different learning area whilst the situation was resolved. There aren't any negative judgements and children understand that a particular child may still be adjusting to the 'Great Denham way of doing things'. Positive affirmation is a key component of the setting and during my tour with the SENDCo she was continually praising children for their work and their focused behaviour for learning.

## **An Open Door Policy**

Parents appreciate an 'open door policy' and the encouragement they receive to become involved in all the work the school is doing. They are regularly welcomed into school to celebrate the 'fabulous finish' of a topic, assemblies and other celebrations of child achievement. The Family Support Worker is also the Safeguarding lead and reaches out to families needing extra support. She has excellent relationships with outside agencies and involves them when necessary. Children regard her as their friend and often seek her help when they need to sort out a worry or problem.

## **Successful Transition**

Successful transition and the settling of children into the school or into a new year group is treated very seriously and home visits are carried out for all Pre-School and Reception children. All children experience a transition week at the end of the school year so that they effectively move to a new classroom with their next teacher before they leave the school for their summer break. In this way fear of change, which can worry some children for six weeks, is allayed and children return to school in September already familiar with the new situation.

## **At the Centre of the Local Community**

The school is at the centre of the local community. The large new estate within which it is situated had few community facilities until very recently, so the school opened its doors and welcomed the different groups needing a space to meet. Consequently, it became the hub for local people and even though there is now a community hall nearby, the school retains its high status for community involvement. The Religious Education curriculum reflects the diversity of religious belief in the community and the children

enjoy learning about other faiths and traditions. There is a deep-rooted sense of enjoyment of learning and discovery and great respect for the views and beliefs of others.

## **Governors are Regular Visitors**

Governors are regular visitors and fully endorse the school's ethos. They represent all areas of the community and have an impressive skill set. There is a range of governor committees but also a system of priority teams made up of governors who go into the school to fulfil tasks. Many governors are also parents of pupils in the school and spoke incredibly positively about the way in which their own children are benefitting from the unique way in which the school operates.

## **Very Strong Leadership**

The headteacher and team of deputies give very strong leadership and a clear well-defined vision for a stimulating, and inclusive learning environment. Whilst constantly monitoring what is happening within the school, they also look outwards and share an enthusiasm for professional development for all. They have invested in training in 'critique' to further develop their reflective skills and are supported through their links with EOS Education, as they strive to ensure that the curriculum places the child at the centre. The school is a Regional Training Centre for Apple Education, and teachers have been acknowledged as Senior Leaders in Education by the National College.

## **A Strong Ethos of Equality and Inclusion**

The community atmosphere within the school is tangible. There is a very strong ethos of equality and inclusion with respect for the carefully designed roles and responsibilities of every employee. Great Denham Primary School is a shining example of the education system working for inclusion and the well-being of every single child.

Find out more about the IQM Inclusive School Award

If your school is interested in obtaining the IQM Inclusive School Award or you wish to talk to a member of the IQM team please telephone:

**028 7127 7857** (9.00 am to 5.00 pm)

or email: [info@inclusionmark.co.uk](mailto:info@inclusionmark.co.uk) for further details.