



## Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



### Overall Evaluation

Scarcroft Primary School is a two-form entry primary school located in central York. It is part of a family of schools within Excel Learning Trust. There are currently 377 students on roll, 19.7% of whom have English as an Additional language (EAL) and 26 different languages are spoken. The school is situated in an affluent area, yet serving a uniquely diverse community that includes a higher-than-average number of asylum-seeking families and pockets of deprivation. Within this, 15% receive Pupil Premium funding and there are 48 children on the SEN register. The overwhelming majority of children with SEN support relates to Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Communication and Interaction needs.

All staff are deeply committed to equity and go beyond inclusivity to actively address the disparities in pupils' starting points, ensuring every child is truly seen, supported, and empowered to succeed. A school with a distinctive sense of community and warmth, consistently described by staff, pupils, and parents as a special place where children feel happy, valued, and eager to attend — reflected in its high levels of attendance and engagement. Parents speak with genuine affection and gratitude; one shared that, since moving their child to Scarcroft (even though it now requires a daily bus journey) their child is “like a different child,” while another simply described it as the “best school on the planet.”

The Head of School is relentless in her commitment to ensuring equity for all, she and the SLT thoughtfully consider the world through the eyes of neurodivergent learners, the school fosters a culture of calm, respect, and accessibility — with a staff team deeply committed to creating an environment where every child can thrive in ways that work for them. The staff team is united by a strong commitment to inclusion, with a clear belief that children's needs should never define them — as one teaching assistant put it, the priority is to recognise each child for who they are, not just the support they require.

Children and families with English as an Additional Language (EAL) are exceptionally well supported at Scarcroft. The school offers a unique and responsive provision for pupils who arrive with little or no English — a need that arises frequently. Scarcroft has embraced this need with compassion, determination, and professionalism. Staff have responded with unwavering commitment, ensuring that no child is left behind — and that every pupil has equitable access to education, opportunity, and belonging. It is difficult to imagine a more supportive and nurturing school environment in which these children could begin their educational journey in the UK.

Pastoral care is a cornerstone of the school's inclusive ethos, championed from the top by a Head of School who firmly believes that “if they're not happy, then they won't learn.” This belief is reflected in the school's commitment to pupil wellbeing and in its carefully considered recruitment of staff who share this child-centred philosophy. The Pastoral Leader plays a pivotal role in cultivating a safe, nurturing environment for the school's most vulnerable learners. His work is grounded in mutual respect—an approach that resonates not only with colleagues but also with pupils, particularly those who have faced challenges in previous educational settings. The impact of this care is evident throughout the school community. Staff demonstrate a relentless commitment to inclusion, continuously adapting their strategies to meet the individual needs of each child. This flexible, compassionate approach ensures that no child is left behind, and that every learner—regardless of background or circumstance—feels supported, understood, and able to thrive.



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At Scarcroft, the hidden curriculum is intentional and thoughtfully embedded into daily practice — from a daily circle time exploring important topics including protected characteristics to a curriculum offering exposure to diverse authors. All staff are trained in adaptive teaching, ensuring that barriers to learning are actively addressed so that children can access the curriculum alongside their peers. Support is never tokenistic; interventions are tailored to individual needs. Classrooms are inclusive by design, offering calm, safe spaces and small, thoughtful adjustments — such as a child choosing to stand on a wobble board to self-regulate while fully participating in learning.

The Senior Leadership Team has invested considerable thought and care into developing The Nest — a dedicated space for learners with additional needs who face barriers to learning. This nurturing and highly effective provision plays a central role in the school's genuinely inclusive ethos. Pupils benefit from a high adult-to-child ratio, enabling meaningful, consistent interactions with trusted adults. Within The Nest, children are supported to build self-regulation skills and develop positive peer relationships through art therapy techniques and a topic-led, hands-on curriculum that fosters independence and confidence. The success of this provision is evident in its flexible, needs-led approach: children access The Nest for varying durations based on their individual circumstances, with the aim of gradually reintegrating them into full-time classroom learning as they are ready.

This is Scarcroft's first application for the Inclusive School Award, and it is clear that inclusivity is deeply embedded in the school's ethos. Staff demonstrate an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of the children in their care — a dedication that is instinctive and consistently evident across the school. Scarcroft offers an exceptional provision for learners with English as an Additional Language and those requiring additional pastoral support.

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

**Assessor: Ms Rosy Vincenzi**

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

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