



## Evidencing success

**Michael Faraday Primary School in Walworth, London, is a vibrant and caring school at the heart of a diverse community, and has been successfully led by the dedicated Headteacher, Karen Fowler, for almost two decades.**

The school is situated in an area unhelpfully dubbed by tabloid press as 'Hell's waiting room'. It's mission is not only to raise academic achievement, but also give the children a sense of social responsibility and respect for others.

The school's focus is to make sure each child reaches their potential. They use CEM's reception baseline assessment, BASE, and the Year 1 to 6 InCAS assessment to identify

individual needs, tailor provision and make sure the children stay on track.

'We serve a really diverse and fantastic community' Karen Fowler explained, 'and for me it's really important that our community believes they have something special with this school.'

'My duty as a Head is to make sure each child reaches his or her potential, and that is a non-negotiable. My commitment to the parents is no matter what the starting point we are going to give them the very best we can.'

'So we devote lots of resources to provide things not only for children with special education needs but also for more able children. We have to make sure that we can identify all our children's needs and they are offered experiences that will enrich their lives.'



## Coping with change

'We first used InCAS because there have been so many changes in terms of the curriculum and assessment lately, and teachers were feeling very vulnerable and very insecure about what they were doing. I made my mission to find something that was going to be the most effective tool to provide them with the broadest data set.'

'I wanted something that would be totally objective, that wouldn't be tortuous for the children, and I wanted something that had a proven track record and wasn't from a company that are focussed on making money. So InCAS was something that ticked all those boxes.'

## Using the data

'InCAS is about identifying what children can and can't do so you can then fill the gaps. And when we first did it, the teachers were so excited! They thought the level of detail in the feedback was amazing. The teachers only see it as a positive, a way of nurturing and developing all of the children.'

'Of course we want our children to love coming to school and to be offered fantastic interesting things to do...but we also need the data.'

'The InCAS assessment means that my teachers have a set of data which is transformational. It has given them all so much information on every individual child, so you can tailor the curriculum to ensure that every single one of them is getting the best possible educational experience.'

'For example, what we have identified with pupils' reading in Year 2 is that the children are really good at decoding, but they don't necessarily understand - this appears to be a national trend - so one of our teachers is developing a new model to address this and hopefully have a positive impact.'

'Now I've become slightly obsessed with data to be honest! We use it for so many different purposes. It's incredibly useful for our SENCO, and because of the different areas it assesses, it feeds into our detailed individual education plans for our children. The data provides further information to support the evidence needed when applying for an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) and if successful, this brings in additional funding for a child. It's incredibly useful for that.'





## Developing the whole child

Teachers use the assessment as a tool to plan the curriculum for individual children, and it gives very specific information about where the gaps are. For example, in maths it really drills down into specific elements of general maths and mental arithmetic, and that's really useful. We can then compensate and say 'okay, that child is struggling with multiplication' for example, and the teacher knows where to pitch particular work for individual children.'

Karen and her staff's focus is always on the individual; identifying individual needs, providing tailored opportunities and experiences for each child and making sure each of them reaches their potential.

'For me it's about our commitment to developing the whole child. We don't just focus on the SATS. I want our children to be literate, to be thinking, to be aware of art and music, and to see how all these things can enrich your life. Being literate and numerate is a basic, and something you need to go on to be confident, articulate adults who are ready to take on the world.'

'I am not a fan of tests at all. There are the statutory tests that you have to do, but I see InCAS as information gathering on children. The children don't see InCAS as being a test...I know it might sound daft, but the children just see it as fun.'

## Identifying trends

The pupils at Michael Faraday sit the InCAS assessment in the Spring term so that teachers can use the information in the end of year reports, as well as to passing the detailed feedback on to the next year group. 'The age-related scores are really useful so there's that direct comparison' Karen explained.

'We use the InCAS data in our termly pupil progress meetings, alongside our own tracking data, as well as the Key Stage tests, to track how the children are progressing, and it's really useful to see any patterns or trends.'

'But the thing I really value most about the InCAS assessment is that it is a system that I know I can trust. It's well-established, it's based on the best research, and it's not about profit.'

'It's really helpful for supporting teachers' judgments about children's levels because it makes the teachers think about the individual child, and make them revisit what they had thought, and whether their expectations were realistic, high enough or too high. That's really all you want: that the teachers think about the children they are teaching and what they can do to best meet their needs.'



InCAS has six modules which can be completed in any order, at any time of the year:

- Reading
- Spelling
- Mathematics
- Mental arithmetic
- Developed ability
- Attitudes

Each module takes around 20 minutes to complete and a whole class or cohort can be assessed at the same time. The computer-adaptive nature of the assessment means that questions are tailored to the individual pupil so the assessment is not too difficult and not too easy. Each child experiences a personalised assessment that is suited to them.