



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name Bournmoor Primary School
Lambourne Close
Bournmoor
Houghton le Spring
DH4 6HF

Head/Principal

IQM Lead Mrs Laura Snowdon

Date of Review 23rd June 2026

Assessor Ms Gemma Robertson

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Trail Blazers

Ambassador Ms Annette Sowden

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2025	22nd September 2025	Yes
Spring 2026	9th March 2026	Yes – hosted at Bournmoor.
Summer 2026	26th June 2026	-



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The Impact of the Cluster Group (with details of the impact of last three meetings)

Having been accredited with the Centre of Excellence Award last summer, the school began attending cluster meetings in autumn 2025, creating valuable opportunities for professional dialogue.

During the autumn term, the school continued to strengthen its commitment to equality and inclusion, beginning with work at Ouston Primary on Show Racism the Red Card. They cluster also discussed engagement with external agencies and explored the language they use and how to ensure equality of opportunity across school life.

On 26th March, Bournmoor hosted a meeting at short notice when another school was unable to accommodate. The IQM Lead found the session extremely beneficial, particularly the chance to showcase the school, share inclusive practice and explain how an inclusive environment is created and sustained.

This collaborative work continues, with an upcoming meeting at Skerne in Darlington focused on SEND reform. Leaders value these cluster sessions not as training events but as spaces for rich discussion, reflection, and growth alongside like-minded colleagues, helping to refine ideas and strengthen inclusive practice across the school.



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Evidence

IQM Flagship Review Documentation
School Website
Last Ofsted Report – July 2024

Additional Activities:

Tour of school
Lesson drop ins
Observation of breaktime
Observation of Nurture Group
Observation of the start of the day and parent/staff interactions

Discussions held with:

Teachers
SLT
Students
Governors
Local Authority Advisor
PSA



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Evaluation of Targets for last 12 Months

Target 1: Embed the 'Principles of Nurture' training into school life as part of our wider inclusion support for pupils.

During my visit, it was clear that the school has made significant progress in embedding the Principles of Nurture across its wider inclusion offer. Staff spoke confidently about the training delivered by the Durham SEN team, and I observed these principles being lived out consistently in classrooms, communal areas and during transitions. The school has deliberately ensured that nurture-informed practice is not confined to a single group or member of staff; instead, relational approaches are used by all adults, creating a predictable, safe, and emotionally attuned environment for pupils. Each classroom has the zones of regulation that are used by the children throughout the day. Predictability is something leaders understand is needed for their children, so classrooms have familiarity, for example, tool kits for each child with things they need to regulate, similar displays, reading areas, zones of regulation. The children I spoke to told me they like this approach, 'it helps us that when we move to a different class we don't have to get used to new things, things stay the same.'

The impact of this work is evident in the school's daily routines. Predictable structures and calm, well-managed transitions were visible throughout the day, supporting the large proportion of pupils with communication and interaction needs (69% of the SEN register). Staff used the language of empathy naturally and consistently, and this was reflected in learning walks, playground interactions, and lesson observations. Pupils responded positively to this approach, demonstrating trust, confidence and a clear understanding of the strategies that help them regulate. I spoke to a group of children who told me that, *'the classrooms are fair. Key Stage 1 classes look similar and Key Stage 2 classes look the same. Because we have mixed classes when the Year 3 children leave key stage 1, the Year 4 children help them and set a good example. We all support each other.'* A key strength is the morning Nurture Group, which provides a soft start for identified pupils. I observed children arriving happily, greeted warmly by trusted adults who offered reassurance and structure. The children taking part in the group were calm, engaged, and happy. Parents spoke positively about the impact of this provision, with one parent commenting, *'He used to struggle to come in, but now he looks forward to seeing the nurture staff. It's made mornings so much calmer for us.'* Staff reported—and attendance data confirms—that lateness has reduced for many pupils accessing the group. Children are more settled on arrival, and parents feel confident handing them over to a supportive, consistent team.

The impact on emotional regulation is notable. Across the school, pupils demonstrated improved self-awareness and were able to articulate what helps them. Behaviour incidents have reduced significantly, and pupils were able to identify strategies they use independently. One child explained, *'If I feel myself getting stressed, I know I can take five minutes and then I'm fine again.'* Another pupil shared, *'I used to argue when things were wrong in my book, but now I can stay calm and change my actions.'* These comments reflect the school's success in embedding shared language, routines, and expectations.



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On my tours of the school, observations of playtimes, transitions, and lessons I witnessed calm, engaged, and happy children who show a genuine love for the school and a genuine support for each other.

Engagement in lessons was strong. Pupils' books showed clear progress, and their motivation was evident in the quality of work produced. Staff have adapted the school's lesson observation form to include a section on inclusive practice, demonstrating their commitment to sustaining and evaluating the impact of nurture-informed approaches. During observations, I saw pupils confidently accessing support, using visual prompts, and engaging in learning with enthusiasm. Staff told me that children have shown improved regulation and engagement, as well as increased confidence, social connection, and pride in their achievements. This was evident to me not only through conversations but from all of the interactions I witnessed throughout my visit.

I also observed pupils actively shaping the nurture provision by requesting resources and supporting one another. One child who had previously been extremely anxious now attends daily and has grown significantly in confidence. Staff described how this pupil is now recognised by peers for their artwork and willingness to share skills—an example of the nurturing culture the school has created.

Overall, the school has successfully embedded the Principles of Nurture into daily practice. The consistent use of relational approaches, predictable routines and empathetic language has created a calm, supportive and inclusive environment where pupils feel safe, understood, and ready to learn. The impact on wellbeing, attendance, emotional regulation, and engagement is clear, and the school's commitment to sustaining this work is evident in both practice and culture.

Next Steps:

The school's next steps focus on deepening its relational and nurture-informed practice by providing whole-staff CPD on Emotion Coaching to ensure that shared language and approaches are consistently embedded across the school. Leaders plan to align the Principles of Nurture more explicitly with the school's Behaviour Policy and wider relational practice so that expectations, routines, and responses are fully formalised and understood by all staff.

The graduated response will be strengthened further by embedding nurture-based strategies within individual plans, including SEN Support Plans, ensuring that adaptations and relational approaches are clearly documented and consistently applied. Alongside this, the school intends to enhance parental engagement by improving communication around nurture approaches, enabling families to understand and use the same strategies at home, thereby reinforcing a cohesive and supportive experience for every child.



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Target 2: Develop pupils' language and vocabulary skills in our EY setting to support their transition across the primary phases and beyond.

The school has made strong progress in developing pupils' language and vocabulary skills within the Early Years setting, ensuring that children are well prepared for transition across the primary phases and beyond. During my visit, I observed a highly intentional approach to vocabulary development, with staff carefully sequencing opportunities for children to learn, rehearse and apply new language through a blend of adult-led teaching, repetition, and inclusive support. This was evident in planning, learning walks and lesson observations, where adults consistently modelled and revisited key vocabulary, enabling children to use it confidently in both talk and early writing.

There are numerous planned and spontaneous opportunities for oracy development, with children sharing daily, speaking in full sentences, and demonstrating growing confidence when interacting with adults and peers. In the early year's classroom, I observed the class teacher modelling her thinking aloud and asking the children to do the same.

Verbal peer feedback is used effectively to strengthen spoken language and teacher's model this to children. One child told me that she feels listened to and enjoys sharing her ideas when she gets a chance to give and receive feedback from her classmates. I saw children using working walls, vocabulary prompts and photo stimuli to support their understanding, and they were able to articulate the meaning of new words in context. Language development and oracy skills start in early years and continues throughout a child's time at Bournmoor. I spoke to a group of leaders who told me that, *'Early Years is not an island at Bournmoor, it's very much a part of the school. We know it can't just happen in Early Years; this is where it begins but it has to be consistent all the way through.'* At Bournmoor language development starts with their 3-year-olds and staff look at stage not age. Staff see it as a continuous approach that they have to take in order to support children and challenge them.

Leaders told me that monitoring evidence, including lesson observations in maths and English, showed how deeply embedded language development is across the Early Years curriculum. Topical vocabulary is also reinforced through whole-school events such as Remembrance Day, Children in Need and Anti-Bullying Week, with Early Years pupils confidently presenting their work in whole-school assemblies as part of their oracy development. Reading sessions are used to check vocabulary understanding and encourage prediction, explanation and discussion, and children are able to articulate their views on class stories with enthusiasm.

The carefully chosen texts and half-termly topics provide rich opportunities for widening knowledge and language, and monitoring shows high levels of engagement and pride in learning. When I visited classes, I witnessed this first hand; children are enthusiastic by their learning and actively engage in it; confidently sharing their ideas and supporting each other with verbal prompts and feedback.



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Next Step:

As the school continues to strengthen its Early Years provision, leaders plan to maintain a clear focus on language development and vocabulary acquisition, particularly as the new two-year-old setting opens in September. This will involve monitoring how effectively adults use high-quality interactions when working alongside children, ensuring that spoken language is modelled, extended, and embedded throughout daily interactions.

Leaders also intend to deepen the intentional use of Tier 2 vocabulary across the curriculum so that children encounter rich, ambitious language in planned teaching and child-initiated learning. These steps will ensure that vocabulary development remains a central thread of Early Years practice and continues to support children's communication, confidence, and readiness for the next stage of learning and beyond.

Target 3: As part of our curriculum focus, ensure subject leaders identify the ambitious end points for each year group that children should achieve in all subjects.

As part of the school's curriculum focus, leaders have worked to ensure that subject leaders clearly identify ambitious end points for each year group. During my visit, I saw teachers using a wide range of approaches to teach core components securely, adapting learning through interactive methods and encouraging pupils to think critically as they build strong foundations. A consistent emphasis on growth mindset supports pupils to overcome barriers and develop confidence in what they know and remember.

Pupil voice is gathered systematically through planned opportunities such as Time to Talk sessions from EYFS to Year 6, and children were able to articulate what they had learned and how they remembered key knowledge. One child told me that Time to Talk is *'helpful because it's a reminder of what you've learnt, and you might remember more because of it.'*

The staff team at Bournmoor is small so they work together closely to share effective strategies during meetings and curriculum reviews, ensuring that best practice is embedded across the small team. Book monitoring and lesson observations—such as those completed in March—show clear evidence of adaptations and approaches that help pupils retain learning and work towards their end points. Governors have also undertaken a range of monitoring visits with subject leaders, strengthening oversight and ensuring alignment with the school's curriculum intent. During my time with the school's governors, one governor told me that what impresses her during subject visits and audits is that they get to see a range of children's books and speak to a range of children with different needs; *'everyone is given a chance to be part of visits, including meeting children who struggle to communicate. Everyone is included and this gives the children confidence.'*

SEN training and reviews further support teachers to adapt teaching so that all pupils, including those with additional needs, can access the curriculum and make progress towards their identified end points. Leaders shared pupil voice with me that was gathered through SEN plans. This confirms that children understand how they are supported and they can talk about the strategies that help them succeed.



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The school's work on identifying ambitious curriculum end points is strongly supported by a wide range of evidence that demonstrates both impact and consistency across subjects. During my visit, I had the chance to look at pupils' Time to Talk sheets and their 'Time to Talk About Subjects' reflections, which clearly showed that children can articulate what they have learned, how they remember key knowledge and how the curriculum supports their progress. SEN plans further evidenced how adaptations and personalised strategies enable identified pupils to work towards their end points successfully. End-of-topic quizzes and glossaries in pupils' books demonstrated improved vocabulary retention and increased quiz scores in KS2, reflecting secure knowledge over time.

Next Step:

As the school continues to strengthen its curriculum work, leaders plan to embed the Time to Talk About Subjects approach following its introduction in 2025–2026, ensuring that pupils can articulate their learning, understand key concepts and reflect confidently on what they know and remember. Monitoring will place a stronger emphasis on responsive teaching so that staff can identify misconceptions swiftly, provide timely support and ensure that all pupils keep up while deepening their understanding. This continued focus on pupil voice and adaptive practice will help secure ambitious end points for every learner and further strengthen curriculum coherence across the school.

Target 4: To support pupils to know and remember more over time, subject leaders review and evaluate the impact of the different strategies, adapting and changing where necessary.

Leaders have continued to strengthen their work on supporting pupils to know and remember more over time, with subject leaders increasingly confident in reviewing the impact of different strategies and adapting their approaches where necessary. During my visit, it was clear that the school's focus on building pupils' long-term memory and schema is deeply embedded in classroom practice. This was evident during lesson visits and book looks.

Teachers have refined their use of retrieval opportunities, planned scaffolding and pre-teaching of vocabulary, drawing on the training they received from the Durham SEN team, metacognition CPD and subject-specific development. This has resulted in pupils who can articulate how new learning connects to what they already know, reducing anxiety and increasing confidence. One of the children I spoke to told me that because they know what they are learning, they feel less anxious in lesson, *'before I used to feel worried in lessons that I wouldn't know the answer, but now that I can explain how I'm feeling and tell my friends and teachers what I know, I feel more confident.'*

The introduction of the Time to Talk approach has formalised how pupil voice is gathered, enabling leaders to understand which retrieval strategies are most effective and to refine practice accordingly. Governors have undertaken a range of monitoring visits, providing positive feedback on the adaptations seen in classrooms and the clarity with which subject leaders articulate their curriculum intent and impact. One governor told me that *'during a governor monitoring visit, I looked at geography books. I was impressed with the*



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children's understanding and knowledge base. I could also see how progressive the children's vocabulary choices were – it was really interesting. Leaders have also engaged in external collaboration, including SENCO network meetings, cluster work on retrieval practice and participation in the Linking Leaders project with Lambton Primary, which has strengthened professional dialogue and shared best practice.

Next Step:

As leaders continue to strengthen pupils' ability to know and remember more over time, the next steps focus on deepening the school's use of pupil voice, scaffolding, and assessment. Leaders plan to develop more regular and structured pupil voice routines to check what pupils can recall over time, ensuring that children can articulate their learning confidently and identify the strategies that support them best.

Alongside this, the school will strengthen the use of scaffolded resources to promote independence and improve recall, particularly for pupils who require additional support to access the curriculum.

Finally, leaders intend to use assessment even more effectively to inform teaching and learning, ensuring that retrieval opportunities, adaptations and responsive teaching help embed key concepts securely and enable all pupils to make strong progress over time.



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Agreed Targets for next twelve Months.

Target 1: Ensure daily routines and teaching in mixed nursery and Reception classes are carefully organised so that the youngest children develop secure foundations in communication, independence, and emotional regulation.

Comments

The introduction of two-year-olds into the mixed Nursery and Reception classes makes it essential that daily routines and teaching are carefully structured so that the youngest children can be fully embedded in the school's expectations from the outset. Staff recognise that the new two-year-old provision will need close support to ensure consistency across the early year's environment, enabling children to develop secure foundations in communication, independence, and emotional regulation. Routine is central to this, and the team is committed to creating predictable, nurturing structures that help even the youngest learners feel safe, settled, and ready to engage confidently in their learning.

Target 2: Embed Emotion Coaching in our school as part of our approach to emotional wellbeing and inclusion.

Comments

The school is now ready to build on the successful completion of the Principles of Nurture training by embedding Emotion Coaching as a consistent, whole-school approach to emotional wellbeing and inclusion. With new staff joining, leaders recognise the importance of developing children's emotional literacy and ensuring that all adults respond to incidents using shared, agreed statements and strategies so that practice remains consistent. Staff already coach one another effectively, and there is a clear commitment to deepening this by reflecting on what they say that works and strengthening the common language that underpins the school's relational ethos. This next step aligns naturally with the nurture principles and will be further supported by accessing SEND training through Durham. Embedding Emotion Coaching will also complement the routines being developed in the nursery, ensuring that the youngest children begin to build strong emotional literacy from the very start of their school journey.

Target 3: Embed Nurture Principles into our Behaviour Policy

Comments

To strengthen the consistency of the school's relational approach, leaders plan to embed the Nurture Principles formally within the Behaviour Policy so that expectations are fully standardised for all staff, including those new to the school, and for children arriving with different experiences or behaviour needs. Moving beyond a verbally understood approach, the intention is to ensure the principles are clearly documented, shared with governors as part of their monitoring role, and communicated with families so that parents can draw on the same strategies at home. This will create a coherent, whole-school framework that reflects existing practice while ensuring continuity, clarity, and shared understanding for everyone in the school community.



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Target 4: Strengthen pupils' ability to know how to keep themselves safe and healthy, including how to look after their mental health and how to maintain an active lifestyle.

Comment

As the school prepares for the forthcoming RSE changes, leaders are focused on strengthening pupils' ability to keep themselves safe and healthy by ensuring that both the policy and curriculum are fully aligned with the new requirements. The updated RSE policy is currently out for consultation with parents and published on the website, reflecting the school's commitment to transparency and partnership.

The next step is to ensure that what is taught is genuinely effective for children, particularly in helping them understand how to look after their mental health and maintain an active lifestyle. Ongoing pupil voice through Time to Talk will play an important role in evaluating this, enabling leaders to check whether the curriculum is having the intended impact and to refine approaches so that pupils develop the knowledge, confidence, and strategies they need to keep themselves safe and well.



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Overview

Bournmoor Primary School is a smaller-than-average community school in Durham that serves the village of Bournmoor and its surrounding areas. The school supports a diverse population with above-average levels of disadvantage and a higher-than-typical proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils are of white British heritage, and all currently speak English as their first language. Despite the challenges associated with serving a community with high levels of disadvantage, the school offers a warm, caring ethos where children access a full, engaging, and ambitious curriculum that reflects the school's commitment to inclusive education.

From the moment you step through the doors of this school, you are met with a warmth that is both immediate and unmistakable. Visitors consistently describe the atmosphere as homely, welcoming, and inclusive, with one governor capturing it perfectly: *'You walk through the door, and it feels homely and like one big family.'* This sense of belonging is not superficial; it is the product of a culture where inclusion is not an initiative but a way of life. The school lives and breathes its values, and the impact is felt by children, families, staff, and the wider community.

Parents repeatedly describe the school as a 'family school' where acceptance is the norm and difference is embraced. One parent reflected on their older child's experience when a transgender pupil joined the school, explaining that *'the children were educating us all'* and that the school prepared pupils sensitively so that *'everyone accepts everyone.'* This proactive, thoughtful approach to inclusion is evident throughout the school's practice.

Children themselves articulate a mature and compassionate understanding of difference. They talk openly about using fidgets, cushions, laptops, and sensory supports, explaining that these adaptations help them learn and that *'no one comments on additional needs.'* They describe a culture where stimming, rocking, or using alternative equipment is normalised and respected. This acceptance is reinforced through consistent classroom environments, which pupils say feel fair and supportive across year groups.

The school's restorative approach to behaviour is another cornerstone of its inclusive ethos. Parents describe how issues are *'resolved quickly'* and how they feel comfortable approaching staff because *'there's always someone there to talk to.'* This relational trust is a defining feature of the school and contributes to the calm, respectful behaviour observed throughout.

This is a true community school—one that understands its context and embraces its responsibility to support families in meaningful, practical ways. The school counsellor describes the area as *'a really hard to reach area'* yet notes that parents willingly engage because they trust the school and understand that support is offered with compassion rather than judgement. Her weekly presence, combined with daily check-ins, attendance follow-ups, lunchtime conversations and holiday contact, ensures that children and families receive consistent, tailored support.

Community events are inclusive, joyful, and central to school life. Sports day is designed so that *'everyone gets something whether you're sporty or not,'* with alternative roles for children who prefer not to perform publicly. Seasonal events such as the Christmas tree



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lights, bauble-making and Christingle services bring families together, while the summer fayre—complete with food, stalls, and bouncy castles—creates a sense of celebration and belonging. The school's strong relationship with the local church enriches the curriculum and reinforces community cohesion, with the vicar noting that children arrive *'prepared with questions'* and always behave with politeness and curiosity.

Governors are highly active and deeply invested in the school. They attend trips, participate in audits, support nurture training, and engage directly with pupils. Their reflections highlight the school's exceptional ethos, describing it as *'a little oasis'* within the estate and praising the staff's unwavering commitment to children's wellbeing and success.

The school's commitment to supporting families is profound. One parent of twins with ASD described the transformation their children experienced after moving from another local school, saying, *'They are happy and learning... If it weren't for the school, we wouldn't have the EHCP.'* Staff advocated tirelessly during meetings with case workers, ensured the children were fully included in mainstream experiences, and provided emotional support during the parent's own health challenges. The parent emphasised that *'every member of staff is lovely—caretaker, receptionist, class teachers. All know the children's names and situation.'*

This level of personalised care is mirrored in the school's nurture provision. The nurture room is described as *'quiet and peaceful,'* offering children a calm space to reset, eat breakfast and prepare for learning. Adaptations are made thoughtfully and without fuss, whether supporting a child who cannot tolerate socks, managing transitions after lunch, or providing sensory tools to help with regulation. Staff know every child and every family, enabling them to respond quickly and effectively to emerging needs.

Financial inclusion is also a priority. The school never charges for trips, offers bursaries of up to 75% for residentials, and maintains a flexible approach to uniform so that no child feels pressured or excluded. This commitment ensures that all pupils can access the full richness of school life regardless of circumstance.

The curriculum is ambitious, enriched and outward-facing. The Local Authority Advisor praised the school's involvement in wider projects, including building a solar-powered car with Nissan, and noted that the school's offer *'is wider than any other small school.'* Children are confident, articulate, and enthusiastic learners who support one another through peer feedback, self-marking and collaborative tasks. They speak proudly about the school's IQM and Rights Respecting achievements, recognising that these reflect the values they live every day.

Governors are closely involved in curriculum monitoring and speak highly of the school's clarity of progression and ambition. They value opportunities to review books, talk to pupils—including those who struggle with communication—and observe practice linked to school development priorities. Their involvement strengthens accountability and reinforces the school's culture of continuous improvement.



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Leadership is a significant strength. The headteacher is described as open, supportive and forward-thinking, with the Local Authority Advisor noting that she is *'ahead of the game in terms of school evaluation and next steps.'* Her commitment to inclusion is unwavering and sets the tone for the entire school. Staff *'really respect her'* and appreciate her willingness to try new ideas and prioritise children's needs above all else.

This leadership inspires a staff team who consistently go above and beyond. They attend events, support families, adapt provision and nurture every child with genuine care. As one governor observed, *'Staff are genuinely in it for the kids; it's not just the teaching side, it's everything else.'*

The impact of this school on its community is profound. Families return generation after generation, drawn by the school's reputation for kindness, inclusion, and excellence. Children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Vulnerable pupils find safety, stability and belonging. Parents feel supported, respected, and understood.

Perhaps the most powerful testimony comes from the children themselves, who describe their school as fair, supportive and special. They appreciate their teachers, value their peers, and recognise that everyone receives the help they need. Their pride is evident when they say, *'We have lovely teachers that appreciate our work and we appreciate them.'* This is a school where inclusion is not an aspiration—it is a lived reality. A school where every child is known, every family is valued and every member of staff contributes to a culture of compassion, ambition, and joy.

I am firmly of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to maintain its status as a Centre of Excellence. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence status and is reviewed again in 12 months. The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Centre of Excellence status.

Assessor: Ms Gemma Robertson

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH

Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd