



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Engineering College
Glenburn Road
Skelmersdale
Lancashire
WN8 6JW

Head/Principal Mrs Mary Henshaw

IQM Lead Mr Ryan Hughes

Date of Review 30th September 2024

Assessor Mr James Harris

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group No Limits

Ambassador Ms Siona Robson

Next Meeting 09th October 2024

Meeting Focus TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Summer 2023	23rd June 2023	Yes
Autumn 2023	21st November 2023	Yes
Spring 2024	02nd February 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	26th June 2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	09th October 2024	

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Engineering College (OLQP) has been an active participant in the cluster group, attending all meetings. The information gained from the meetings has been used to investigate resilience toolkits for use within social, emotional, and mental health support at OLQP. Cluster group meetings have also contributed towards the development of the enrichment curriculum as well as the promotion of leadership opportunities for younger students. Discussion at a cluster group meeting has also assisted in the development of e-safety provisions within the school. OLQP is now seeking to extend its range of links with other IQM schools in the North West to continue to learn from best practices.



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Evidence

Discussions with:

- IQM Lead (Deputy Headteacher)
- Headteacher
- Literacy Coordinator
- Subject Leader of English
- Library Co-ordinator and Teaching Assistant
- Pupils
- Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)
- Assistant Headteacher and Safeguarding Lead
- Assistant Headteacher and SENDCo
- School Chaplain

Additional Activities:

- Learning walk
- Scrutiny of the school website
- Consideration of School Improvement Plan (Post-Ofsted Action Plan)
- Phone call with a member of the governing body
- Study of published school data



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Engineering College's annual progress is based on a project with three literacy foci: implementation of Bedrock Literacy, vocabulary development in the curriculum, and phonics.

The implementation of Bedrock has been extremely successful over the past year, with evidence of significant improvement in reading ages across all three year groups (Years 7, 8, and 9) who have been involved in the project. Leaders spoke with pride of how OLQP has been one of the most engaged schools nationally and internationally with the Bedrock platform. Pupils that I spoke to recognised the benefits of Bedrock and considered that it improved their reading. Importantly, the pupils were able to articulate why the development of reading is so important for their future success, both in school and beyond.

There has been a significant investment of time in the implementation of Bedrock across 3-year groups, and leaders that I spoke to were very positive about the engagement of pupils, with no difference between genders and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) being equally engaged. The school has a high percentage of students who are eligible for Pupil Premium, and these students have made particularly significant progress in their reading ages.

The school has been willing and able to share its expertise in this area and the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher spoke to me about presentations that they had given within various school networks about the implementation of Bedrock.

Phonics provision, through the "Fresh Start" programme, is part of a wider programme of reading development across OLQP. As part of my visit, I discussed with a member of staff who is involved in the delivery of several of the reading programmes, including phonics. I also had an extended discussion with the literacy coordinator and the subject leader of English, who has been instrumental in moving literacy development forward within the school. Through case studies and examples, these staff were able to show me the significant developments that individual pupils have made, often from a very low literacy base, as well as describing the wide range of interventions that are in place. The school has moved across to the NGRT test, administered twice a year, to measure reading age, and the results of these tests are carefully scrutinised, and intervention groups are established. This includes small group reading interventions during form time, after-school reading groups, and individual phonics work. I had the pleasure of speaking with a group of students who have been involved in these groups, and they could all describe the steps that they had taken. For example, a Year 10 pupil talked about how one-to-one phonics intervention was enabling her to access her GCSE courses, and several pupils in Year 9 described how the after-school small group reading sessions were developing their confidence to read aloud.

The literacy coordinator and subject leader for English described the use of the Amber Reading Unit with Year 7 and the way in which this is linked to the various interventions in place.



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All the teaching staff have undertaken training from Laura Kay at Liverpool School Improvement on a multi-method approach to vocabulary development, and this work is leading to a relaunch of "Reading for Meaning" to enhance disciplinary literacy and comprehension across all subjects. I had a detailed and interesting discussion with a school leader who is a maths specialist about the ways in which reading for understanding is different in mathematics and the ways in which pupils need to approach reading in mathematics. Pre-teaching of vocabulary is standard teaching and learning practice across the school.

I asked staff what had changed about literacy over the last year or so, and they told me that there had been a definite positive change in the pupils' attitude to reading, anecdotally evidenced, for example, by increased numbers of pupils making use of the library facilities of the school.

Leaders are clear about the next steps in each of these areas as part of an integrated approach to literacy development and how this project links to the project for the coming year.



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Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Project Title: Improving Student Reading Ages and Vocabulary Development

Context: Reading continues to be a significant priority for the school, and it is central to the school's post-Ofsted action plan. The school has many learners who arrive with reading ages considerably lower than their chronological age and addressing this is central to the inclusive nature of the school.

One of the key points discussed during the Flagship Review was how the work on literacy over the past few years led to the development of a comprehensive reading approach that should be widely shared within the network of IQM schools and beyond. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher agreed that existing networks, such as with the Archdiocese of Liverpool, would be one of the suitable forums for this, based on previous presentations on the school's success with implementing Bedrock.

A significant issue for the school is that of low educational aspirations in the local community. An essential aspect of this project, which was discussed during the visit, was enhancing the involvement of families in the development of reading. This is challenging within the school's context. There is already good work in this area through, for example, information evenings about Sparx Reader, and enhancing this will be a focus for the school over the coming year.

Target 1: Introduce a form-time comprehension programme

It is clear from discussions with school leaders that, while reading ages have been improved across the school, comprehension remains a significant challenge. To address this, the school is planning to develop specific resources to engage pupils with reading and understanding what they have read.

Next steps:

Discussions with Senior Leaders based on the review of last year's project indicated that a link should be made between the new form-time programme and the relaunch of "Reading for Meaning" so that the development of comprehension becomes embedded across the curriculum.



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Target 2: Launch Sparx Reader

Several staff and pupils mentioned this during discussions, with the launch already being underway. This package adds a new dimension to the literacy provision, and the pupils that I spoke to were very positive about the new package. The school already uses Sparx Maths, so the students are used to the interface. As with Bedrock, the school is investing significant curriculum time and school resources in implementing this strategy.

Next steps:

There is already a “buzz” around the use of Sparx Reader, and the further development of leaderboards and reward systems around its use will enhance its effective use across schools.

Target 3: Embed Bedrock Literacy

The school has experienced a significant turnover of teaching staff, with 19 new teachers starting this September. It is important that the excellent work on Bedrock over the last 12 months is continued and this will require training for new staff and the sharing of best practices.

Next steps:

The discussions during the review centred on the turnover of staff and its implications. It is clear from the evidence presented that Bedrock is a very successful initiative, and including it in this year's plan, alongside the developing use of Sparx Reader, ensures that the progress achieved will continue.

Target 4: Develop targeted intervention provisions

There is a significant range of targeted interventions in place, as described in the review of last year's project. Leaders see these as keys to addressing the low reading ages of many students and thereby removing barriers to accessing the curriculum. This is in line with the highly inclusive nature of the school.

Next step:

The success of the phonics programme is evident from last year; discussions centred around how to extend the number of students who can benefit from it (and from other literacy interventions). There are also groups of students who are reluctant to attend after school provision, for example, and the school is looking at ways to increase their motivation and attendance. The school already provides free bus travel for those who attend after school. The intervention work is successful partly because of strong relationships between individual pupils and the staff delivering the interventions so this is an area of strength through which further attendance can be supported.



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Overview

Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Engineering College (OLQP) is an 11-16 secondary school located in Skelmersdale, Lancashire, in an area of high social deprivation. It has 855 pupils on roll, with 42% of its students being eligible for pupil premium. The last published data showed that the number of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is in line with national averages but this data does not entirely reflect the very significant number of pupils with a wide variety of needs in the school who are carefully internally identified. There are currently a large number of pupils for whom an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) application is underway or for whom an EHCP has been recently granted.

The most recent monitoring letter from Ofsted said, regarding the schools' focus on reading, which has formed the IQM Flagship Project.

"This work has gathered pace. The school has improved the accuracy with which it checks pupils' reading ability. The school has pinpointed that, for some pupils, this is owing to gaps in their phonics knowledge. In response, the introduction of a systematic phonics programme is starting to help these pupils develop as fluent and accurate readers. Staff are better trained to deliver the phonics programme. Most pupils respond well to the phonics sessions, as reading books is more suited to their reading needs."

Ofsted also said, with regard to the inclusion of students with SEND:

"The school has high ambitions for the most vulnerable pupils at the school. The SEND team have reviewed the information that teachers receive in relation to pupils' needs. They have made sure that suggested strategies on pupils' individual support plans are appropriate. Therefore, staff are guided well so that they can adapt their lessons so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum."

OLQP continues to be a highly inclusive school. I had the pleasure of discussing the way in which the Catholic ethos supports inclusion within the school with both the Headteacher and the recently appointed school chaplain. The inclusion of all is clearly central to the mission and life of the school. The Headteacher spoke of the school inculcating the qualities of respect, responsibility, and resilience. She also spoke of forgiveness as a key element of the behaviour policy, drawing upon the teachings of the Catholic church.

From my visit, the learning walk and discussions with leaders, it is very clear that inclusive practice is thoroughly joined up and integrated. For example, the school is rightly proud of the new ASPIRE on-site alternative provision and of the various ways in which young people with mental health and other needs are supported. It is very impressive that this sits alongside detailed work on inclusive teaching, learning and behaviour policies so that "mainstream" practice is appropriate for the vast majority of learners within the school. As the SENDCo stated, "Good practice for students with SEND is good practice for all." Professional development and comprehensive staff induction are integral to this approach and this has been particularly important this year due to a large number of new staff joining the school.



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Everything at OLQP is rooted in the "Our Lady's Way." I arrived on a very wet morning at the start of school to witness a large number of staff meeting and greeting pupils and reminding them that as they stepped over the "green line" at the front of school they were then expected to follow the "Our Lady's Way." I had interesting discussions with several leaders and other staff about the balance between meeting individual needs and establishing consistency of expectations and it is clear that this tension is well understood and accepted by the staff team. An example of this is the recreation of the "Reflection" space where a dedicated member of staff works with those students whose behaviour means that they cannot be in their regular classroom temporarily; the emphasis of this provision is on support and restoration. Discussion with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCo), who is a member of the Senior Leadership team, corroborated that all staff at the school accept that inclusion is a key part of working on the team at OLQP. Pupils that I spoke to value the support and care that they receive from staff, and it was evident from my learning walk that relationships between staff and pupils are strong and respectful.

For a range of reasons related to available provision, the school has recently invested in the ASPIRE Centre which provides on-site alternative education for students who require it for a period of time. This is divided into Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 groups. The Key Stage 3 provision provides wrap-around support, including enrichment activities, personal development and transport to school as it works on a different timetable to the rest of the school. Pupils' curriculum access is maintained by ensuring that lessons within ASPIRE are delivered by subject specialists who are particularly identified due to their skills in teaching disaffected students. The provision at Key Stage 4 is similar, but longer term, and sits alongside vocational placements. ASPIRE is proving invaluable in starting to reduce exclusions and suspensions and in ensuring small-group support for those who most require it.

In response to a significant number of students who experience issues with their mental health, OLQP has recently renovated the "BASE," which is a well-configured and calm space staffed by a dedicated member of staff that provides respite for individual students. The BASE and the Study Room together provide an effective approach to reintegrating students into school who may have been absent for a significant period of time.

Careful thought has recently been given to the curriculum grouping and setting. The nurture group that existed in Years 7 and 8 has been discontinued, with the provision moving to support individual students within the main school. On my learning walk, I encountered a Year 11 English group made up entirely of boys and enquired about gender-based settings. I was informed that considerable effort is given to ensure that pupils are in front of the "right" teacher, indicating the priority that the school places upon relationships at the heart of education. In conjunction with the development of the ASPIRE provision at Key Stage 4, the curriculum and option choices have been redesigned with several separate pathways implemented around the needs of student groups. Students that I spoke to were positive about the range of subjects that they could choose from as they entered Year 10. To extend the wider curriculum, work experience has been introduced for all students during their time at OLQP, and the



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“Curriculum for Life” has recently been enhanced through the provision of dedicated “drop-down” days.

All of this is evidence of an integrated approach to meeting the needs of individual students. This approach is supported by a recently reconstituted Governing Body, which is made up of a significant number of professionals with the capacity to support and challenge school leaders. I had the pleasure of speaking with one of the more recently appointed Governors, who said that the Governing body is entirely supportive of the inclusive ethos of the school and considers that they are provided with sufficient information to challenge and question practice within the school.

My learning walk took me into lessons in English: Year 11 studying Romeo and Juliet using appropriate literacy comprehension strategies; Year 9 studying mathematics; and Year 10 in drama, where the very positive relationships between staff and students were evident. In all classrooms, learning was purposeful, carefully crafted, and inclusive.

The school continues to move from strength to strength in terms of its superb inclusive practice and 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 Flagship School. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Flagship 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 Flagship status.

Assessor: Mr James Harris

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. McCann'.

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