



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School: Walton-Le-Dale High School
Brindle Road
Bamber Bridge
Lancashire
PR5 6RN

Head/Principal: James Harris

IQM Lead: James Harris

Date of Review: 23rd June 2022

Assessor: Sarah Linari

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: TEAM NW

Ambassador: Sarah Linari

Date of Next Meeting: 14th July 2022

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: Positive behaviour for learning approaches

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

Meetings held with:

- Headteacher
- Head of Science
- Acting Head of English
- Pastoral Support
- Deputy Headteacher (Teaching and Learning & Curriculum)
- Deputy Headteacher (Student Support)
- Head of Humanities
- SENCo
- Progress Co-ordinator - Head of Year 9
- PSHE Lead/ Mental Health Ambassadors Lead



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- Senior Student Team
- Mental Health and Anti-bullying Ambassadors

Additional Activities:

Sources of evidence:

- IQM Flagship Action Plan
- 2022 Ofsted Report
- Behaviour, attendance and safeguarding data report
- Headteacher Letter to Parents and Carers
- School improvement documentation
- National Performance Tables
- Teaching and Learning plans
- Pastoral Support Centre development plans
- School website
- Student-led tour of the school



Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Project Title: 'Exceptional Support For One Another'

Supporting Staff through effective, targeted and tailored CPD

There has been an increased focus on staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities to further develop the offer in place. All staff have access to a full menu of CPD opportunities and membership for the National College, where they can access a range of resources. The weekly Teaching and Learning Digest publication signposts staff to recommended courses and materials. The 'top tips' to support the teaching of reading continue to be shared on a weekly basis. There are also CPD sessions which are directly linked to the school's development opportunities. To ensure that the CPD offer is having a positive impact, there is a CPD survey which is carried out each half term, allowing evaluation of impact.

A key focus this academic year has been the Tom Sherrington's WalkThrus and work with the Teacher Development Trust. WalkThrus "explains the art and science of teaching in 5-step visual guides" (www.walkthrus.co.uk). The implementation of the WalkThrus pedagogical strategies have led to more consistent teaching and learning approaches. The School is a member of the programme and purchased the materials. Leaders intend to implement an instructional coaching programme using Tom Sherrington's materials next academic year. There was a whole-school training session in September, to which other local school staff were invited. To retain the focus throughout the year, there are optional weekly WalkThrus Wednesday sessions where staff meet to discuss instructional coaching and the impact of the strategies to share best practice.

The impact of this target of the Flagship has been significant. Middle Leaders talked about the impact of the CPD focus during the review day. They explained how each Curriculum Area chose two of the WalkThrus approaches to focus on initially. The most popular strategies were cold-calling, whole class feedback, say it again better and feed it forward. They feel that the students are responding well. There is an improved culture of independence and students knowing what they need to do and how to improve. Over time, they have become more confident to have a go at answering questions and contributing to discussions in lessons. With students encouraged to say their responses again, but 'better,' they are becoming habituated to talk using complete sentences. This has contributed to improved oracy levels.

Recent stakeholder questionnaires showed that 98% of teachers are actively teaching the meanings of new words, with 76% regularly planning reading activities within their lessons. To support students in reading and the increased gaps in students' phonics skills as a result of missing chunks of education due to school closures, 10 staff members have been enrolled onto a phonics teaching module at the University Of Cumbria. Approximately 5500 positive Class Charts points for 'Excellent Reading' have been awarded by staff. The Headteacher describes a "heightened awareness of the importance of reading across school." As a result of the work with the WalkThrus approaches, cold calling is now fully embedded across the school. The CPD menus and watchlists established through The National College have allowed 191.1 hours of additional CPD to be undertaken (an average of 4.07 hours per teacher).



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In terms of next steps, the Leaders plan to embed instructional coaching across the school as a key strategy for professional development.

Staff supporting students through a whole school individual mentoring model

The mentoring approach has been highly successful and offered much-needed support to students, especially throughout the pandemic. Initially, every student had a staff mentor. Out of 780 students, 40 were identified as vulnerable by the Government evaluation (looked after children, social worker involvement and those supported through education health and care plans (EHCP)). Inclusion Leaders identified a further 220 as vulnerable due to pastoral reasons, safeguarding issues or those on the special education needs (SEN) register. These students were given a mentor from the SEND and Pastoral Teams.

Since September of this academic year, the School has made changes to the pastoral systems. The vertical form group structure has been replaced by year group forms. This means that students will now have the same Form Tutor from Year 8 through to Year 11. Therefore, Form Tutors have become mentors for their tutees. Nevertheless, some students will continue to have other mentors from the SEND and Pastoral Teams, depending on their needs. Mentors are in regular contact with students during the school day in person (lesson time, breaktime, lunchtime, before and after school) and through online platform messaging systems.

In terms of impact, the recent Ofsted report highlights that “pupils are proud to attend this school. They described the support and care from staff as the main reason that they enjoy school and feel safe. They are confident that there is always someone who will listen to them and help them with any worries.” Pupils’ behaviour and attitudes and personal development are recognised as “good.”

Students supporting students through student leadership and participation

The Student Mental Health Ambassadors support students with their mental health and wellbeing across the year groups. This system was introduced as a response to the pandemic and subsequent increased mental health-related issues. All Mental Health Ambassadors have been trained by the Engagement and Prevention Lead for Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust. The training included topics such as safeguarding, active listening strategies, how to engage with students, promoting a positive mindset, positive self-worth, promoting basic mental health first aid, supporting students with low self-esteem, depression, anxiety and supporting students who may be self-harming or talking about suicide. The bespoke training was designed especially for Walton-Le-Dale’s Mental Health Ambassadors. The Mental Health Ambassadors are working alongside staff to develop and create the Wellbeing Garden which is intended for use by both staff and students. Next steps include the introduction of Wellbeing Wednesday for staff and students as well as creating a Wellbeing Newsletter.

The Anti-Bullying Ambassador role is another new student leadership role which was introduced to support students across all year groups. The 20 Anti-Bullying Ambassadors completed online training with the Diana Award in Summer Term last academic year. They



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are working with staff to create Anti-bullying Charters which will be displayed prominently around the School.

During the review, I met with the Mental Health and Anti-bullying Ambassadors who spoke very positively about their roles and the impact they have on improving the daily experience for their peers. I also met with the group of Year 10 students who had been shortlisted to be interviewed the following day for the new Senior Student roles. They were all highly articulate and spoke with passion and pride about their School. The Ofsted report from March 2022 recognised that “pupils have a voice in the school. They give their views through the school council and in other discussions with leaders.”

Agreed Actions for the Flagship Project 2022-23

Project Title: Exceptional Pastoral Support For All

Rationale: “We believe that education is for life and is more than preparing students for exams. We want our students to leave with the best exam results possible, but we also want them to leave us as well-rounded people.”

Inclusion Leaders at Walton-Le-Dale High School feel that “the educational progress of students is a priority but many students have barriers in different forms that can hinder their academic, emotional and social growth. We must help the students to find ways to overcome these barriers so that they develop into an individual who is prepared for life after Walton-le-dale High School.”

“Controlling behaviour inside and outside of the classroom can be a barrier for some students. Poor behaviour may be a choice, but for some there may be an underlying issue that needs to be addressed. Support must be provided to students so that they gain a further understanding of how the behaviour can affect their learning and produce strategies that the student can use to manage their own actions. Of equal importance is the emotional, social and mental health of a student and providing opportunities for our students to develop their own identities. Within school we must follow a person-centred approach so that all students have the opportunity to achieve not only academically but also personally. The role of the Pastoral Support Team is integral to support our students with their varied life experiences and needs and with a dedicated team and spaces we can deliver an all-encompassing framework around a student to provide an empathetic safe environment where they feel valued and encouraged to ASPIRE.”

The Deputy Head (Student Support) has devised a plan to provide a more cohesive package of support for students which will include a redesign of an outdoor building. There will be a dedicated Student Support Centre where students will access support for their mental health and wellbeing, behaviour and attitudes and any other barriers to learning. These three main priorities have been articulated:

1. To support students with issues around mental health and wellbeing.
2. To intervene with students who are ‘not getting it right’ regarding their attitude to learning and behaviour.



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3. To support students to overcome barriers.

Actions will include but are not limited to:

- Develop the building and purpose-built environment to create a new Student Support Centre.
- Devise a referral form and triage system.
- Create a staffing plan.
- Establish a programme of intervention designed to help the students to overcome barriers and provide strategies that can be used to minimise any behavioural issues.
- Create a provision map.
- Create an overview of the programmes of intervention.
- Establish a weekly Student Welfare Forum meeting.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The first meeting of the year became an online session and opportunity for colleagues to introduce themselves and share information about their schools. The second Cluster Meeting focussed on trauma-informed approaches, Thinking Schools and SEND support. The IQM Lead feels that the Thinking Schools approach is “worthwhile considering as a next step.” The Trauma Informed Schools approach looked at “strengthening relationships between stakeholders and recognising the impact of ACEs and what impact they have on children's emotional but also intellectual development.” Again, this is something the Senior Leaders will definitely look into in more detail. A member of staff will be attending the final meeting of the year hosted by a school in Bolton with a focus on creating a positive behaviour for learning culture.

The staff at Walton-Le-Dale engage well with the Cluster Group and are willing to share their best practice. We talked about them potentially hosting a Cluster Meeting next Summer Term to look at the new Student Support Centre (or progress towards its development).

Overview

Walton-Le-Dale's High School inclusive ethos is best understood when you visit the School and feel the warm, nurturing approach in person. The inclusive vision is based on excellent relationships between all stakeholders. The review visit began with a tour of the School led by Year 10 Mental Health and Anti-bullying Ambassadors, who were excellent representatives and role models for their School. They talked about the way in which mental health and wellbeing is prioritised by staff. They feel cared for. They appreciate that they have access to a School Counsellor, who they can access if they are struggling with their



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mental health. The staff mentor the students and all students have a key adult by whom they are supported.

The Headteacher leads the inclusive ethos by role-modelling the positive relationships. He constantly shares the message of having “unconditional regard” for the students at staff meetings. He is highly visible around school throughout the day and knows many of the young people and their families on an individual level. He has created a support culture amongst staff and prioritises their wellbeing. The staff feel trusted and empowered. They describe the “amount of trust from the Headteacher” as “unparalleled.” They appreciate that he listens to them and values staff opinions. When implementing any new initiatives, the Headteacher invites feedback from staff and takes time to explain the rationale. His vision is shared by all staff, who are fully supportive of his leadership.

The school's core ASPIRE values are displayed throughout the building as a constant reminder for staff and students. Through these values, young people are encouraged to be achieving, self-motivated, positive, imaginative, respectful and have empathy. They receive achievement points to praise the students for demonstrating the core values. From next academic year, the Form Groups will be linked to ASPIRE values. The Year 10 students talked proudly about the ASPIRE values and how they were involved in creating them. The ASPIRE values underpin the inclusive culture at Walton-Le-Dale.

Students behave well in lessons and during unstructured times. There is a mutual respect between staff and students. The students explain how the “teachers understand if you need any help with anything and take any issues into consideration.” Students get on well with each other and form close relationships with students from different year groups. The Year 10 Ambassadors said they will miss the Year 11 students as they have formed “close bonds”. The students themselves describe the school as inclusive and state that “we are so inclusive and accept anyone from anywhere.” They also describe a sense of community as “everyone is really friendly and we get along well together.”

Students are supported well academically as well as emotionally. Retention of prior learning is encouraged through starter session in lessons. In science, the Super Six starter activity includes questions to check understanding from the previous lesson, the current learning and a future topic. Across all subjects, mark scheme criteria are shared so that students know what the expectations are. They like that the teachers model the learning and provide opportunities for them to reflect on their learning through self-assessment tasks. Revision sessions explicitly teach students revision strategies as well as recapping key learning before assessments.

Members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ+) are well-supported at Walton-Le-Dale High School. Staff and students embrace differences though a culture of tolerance which has been instilled. The lunchtime LGBTQ+ is well-attended. It provides support for any students who identify as LGBTQ+ and those who wish to find out more or support the LGBTQ+ community.

The Pastoral Support Team work cohesively to offer support to the students and families. They also signpost parents and carers to support and engage external agencies if needed. Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are effectively supported to ensure all young people can access the provision. There are currently 22.5% of students who



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are identified as being supported with their SEND, with 4.2% supported through an education, health and care plan (EHCP). The teachers work closely with the Teaching Assistants to plan how to best support the students. Due to the number of children with autism, the School has an Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Manager who ensures the autistic cohort have the required support in place, as well as offering targeted interventions such as social skills groups. The SEND Team supports the wider staff in implementing quality first approaches to ensure all young people feel fully included in every aspect of school life.

Student Mental Health and Anti-Bullying Ambassadors offer peer support. They offer drop-in sessions to students and attend Form Time sessions to share updates or raise awareness of their roles and what is on offer to support mental health and wellbeing. Walton-Le-Dale’s Student Ambassadors represent the School at the Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust’s Youth Voices (youth council for the NHS). The previous Head Student leadership system has recently been overhauled to change to a more inclusive Senior Students leadership approach. Students are encouraged to voice their opinions and feel confident to discuss any issues with staff. Their voice is listened to and proactively feeds into whole-school development planning.

Staff are provided with wide-ranging professional development opportunities. The Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning ensures staff are supported through regular and appropriate training throughout the year. There is a comprehensive toolkit for teachers to implement in lessons which provides a consistent approach. Staff are encouraged to get to know all of the young people really well. They have a collective understanding of the student demographic and local context. Understanding the students, and their individual needs, forms part of initial staff induction sessions. During the new staff orientation days, there is a mini-bus tour of the local area to share information of the School’s context and deepen understanding. The Headteacher affirms that all staff who work at Walton-Le-Dale have to “have an inclusive mindset” and buy in to the inclusive ethos.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Walton-Le-Dale High School and experiencing its inclusive ethos in person. All staff and students were polite and friendly. The school has continued to move from strength to strength in terms of its inclusive practice. I therefore recommend they continue to hold Flagship status. The next review will look closely at the implementation of the new Flagship Project.

Assessor: Sarah Linari

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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