



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School: Walton-le-Dale High School

Head/Principal: Mr James Harris

IQM Lead: Mr Peter Howarth

Date of Review: 8th June 2021

Assessor: Sarah Linari

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: The Inclusion Pioneers

Ambassador: Stephanie Robinson

Date of Next Meeting: TBC

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: TBC

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

Online meetings:

- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher - IQM Coordinator
- Assistant Headteacher – Teaching and Learning
- Assistant Headteacher – Curriculum
- SENCo
- Head of English
- Head of MFL
- Head of Humanities
- PSHE Coordinator
- Head of Year 9 - Anti-bullying Lead
- Head of Year 10 – Mental Health Ambassadors Lead

Additional Activities:

Documentary evidence:

- IQM Centre of Excellence review documentation



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



- 2018 Ofsted Report
- School improvement documentation
- National Performance Tables
- School website
- School improvement audit
- CPD evaluation and plan
- Cluster meeting impact summary
- Parent feedback responses
- Case studies from the mentoring programme
- SEND Review
- Attitude to learning and attendance overviews



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The Flagship Project 'Exceptional Support For One Another' was developed in the final summer term of the last academic year and implemented throughout this academic year. The concept for the project was borne out of the school's priorities for development and provides a natural progression from the previous teaching and learning project. Evidently, there has been significant disruption across all schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, which have hindered the desired progress and implementation of this project. However, the Leaders have sustained the focus on this area of whole school development and are able to demonstrate positive impact

Target 1: Supporting staff through effective, targeted and tailored CPD.

Senior Leader's support for staff development is evidenced via the school's website where they articulate their commitment "we consider continued professional development as key to the development of our school and, more importantly, to the development and wellbeing of each member of staff who is part of our community." There is a transparent approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) with a clear outline shared on the website. There is a Teaching and Learning Digest that is also shared weekly on the website. Leaders have been collaborating with the Teacher Development Trust to create a bespoke CPD package which includes a menu of all the development and training opportunities on offer. The school has funded membership to The National College for all members of staff who can access all the training on offer, giving equality of opportunities to everyone.

To decide the CPD menu offer, leaders started by conducting a full audit of teachers' CPD needs using an audit tool provided by the Teacher Development Trust. This is revisited with anonymous half termly CPD surveys to evaluate the impact of the CPD activities completed, and gauge engagement levels. The menu is categorised into different career stages to signpost staff to career appropriate development activities and encourage aspirational development.

In addition to the personalised CPD approach, there is a termly CPD focus which links directly to the priority areas identified through the school development plan. The CPD strategy is ever-evolving in response to internal and external factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic, which prompted the shift to online learning and the developmental need to upskill staff in using the technology confidently. The current CPD focus is 'reading.' Leaders identified the importance of developing reading skills to improve pupils' literacy and remove any barriers to learning across the curriculum. This led to the implementation of the 'Reading Warriors' reciprocal reading programme.

The half termly foci is a cohesive approach to target school improvement which enables any new strategies to be fully implemented and embedded. This is followed by a full audit of teaching and learning to evaluate the impact and consistency of application. The teaching and learning blog are sent to all staff on a weekly basis. In a recent survey conducted by the Senior Leader who leads teaching and learning, 96% of staff said they read the digest regularly. Alongside supporting the teachers to develop pupils' reading skills through the CPD focus, the school has introduced biannual reading tests for all



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



pupils. The scores are communicated to parents to involve them in the focus thus creating a fully integrated approach to support.

In discussions with Middle Leaders during the review, the Heads of Curriculum explained how they also have a focus on improving their team members' subject knowledge as part of their departmental CPD agenda. An example was given by the English Lead who has subscribed to the 'Massolit' course which works with university academics to produce high-quality, curriculum-linked video lectures thus enhancing teacher and pupil knowledge of the literary texts studied at GCSE.

Target 2: Staff supporting students through a whole-school individual mentoring model.

In January 2020, a school improvement audit was conducted and it recognised the need for an increased focus on staff and student wellbeing. This need was amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic which shortly followed. Initially, the IQM Coordinator designed this intervention to support pupils as the country emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic but unfortunately, the situation is not too dissimilar now as it was a year ago. Leaders talk about how the system of mentoring, which was established this year, has been invaluable to the welfare of their children during this unprecedented time. Staff use their strong relationships with pupils to forge a mentoring model where every pupil has been allocated a 'key adult' on the staff body who knows them well. Of their 780 pupils, 40 were identified as vulnerable by the government evaluation (CLA, Social worker involvement, EHCP). Inclusion leaders identified a further 220 as vulnerable for various pastoral reasons, safeguarding reasons or if they are on the SEN register. The 260 vulnerable pupils were contacted once per week throughout lockdown. The remaining pupils were contacted fortnightly. The mentoring model has continued since the return to school. The Deputy Headteacher created a central mentor meeting record form to keep track of all meetings and any subsequent actions. Where necessary, staff feedback any concerns via the CPOMS safeguarding platform.

The IQM Coordinator provided numerous examples of case studies which demonstrate the positive impact the mentoring approach has directly had on improving pupil wellbeing and engagement with school. It has also allowed the staff to forge stronger relationships with home, in particular the harder to reach families.

Target 3: Students supporting students through student leadership and participation.

Pre-Covid times, the pupils were organised into vertical tutor groups to provide a structure for peer support and interaction. In line with national safety guidance, the pupils are now in year group forms. Therefore, the student leadership structure has been reorganised to complement the current pastoral structure, ensuring participation from each form across all year groups. In addition to the traditional leadership roles, the leaders have reinvigorated the system to include specific areas of leadership: the Student Cabinet, the Eco Group, the Online Safety Group, and the Charity and Fundraising Group. They have also recently introduced two new student leadership roles: the Anti-bullying Ambassadors and Mental Health Ambassadors.



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



The Mental Health Ambassadors have been instrumental in establishing the recently created Wellbeing and Memorial Garden. All Mental Health Ambassadors have been trained to support with topics such as: safeguarding; active listening strategies; how to engage with peers; promoting positive mindset, positive self-worth, and basic mental health first aid; supporting fellow pupils with low self-esteem, depression and anxiety; supporting students who may be self-harming and talking about suicide.

The Anti-bullying Ambassadors have completed the nationally accredited training with the Diana Award. There is a desire for the student leadership projects to be student-led. An idea which has derived from initial meetings with the Antibullying Ambassadors is to create an anti-bullying charter, a mutual agreement which would be signed by all pupils.

Agreed Actions for the next steps of the Flagship Project

The 'Exceptional Support for One Another' is a two-year project. With the disruption to intended plans for this academic year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was agreed that some of this year's planned actions will carry over for the next academic year. Although the Senior Team have continued their focus and been relentless in trying to implement the plans as initially desired, this year's plans have not been fully embedded. The plan for the project next year is to embed the practice and enhance the systems already implemented.

Next Steps:

Supporting staff through effective, targeted and tailored CPD

Senior Leaders plan to build user groups within The National College to signpost staff to targeted CPD which is closely aligned to the school development plan. They feel there is a need to maximise the impact of the current subscription and create a strategic overview of how it is used and monitor the engagement from all staff more closely. The leaders plan to continue working with the Teacher Development Trust. They also plan to implement Tom Sherrington's 'WalkThrus' toolkit. The intention is to use his materials in an instructional coaching programme. Tom Sherrington is due to join staff in school at their first teaching and learning conference. Leaders also intend to further develop the lesson study model to extend the impact.

Staff supporting students through a whole-school individual mentoring model

The mentoring system will continue into next academic year, with amendments made to the expectation of how frequently meetings take place to reflect the change in circumstances now pupils are back in school. The system should be evaluated fully in the autumn term to measure the impact on pupil attendance, behaviour and outcomes.

Students supporting students through student leadership and participation

As the Student Leaders, Anti-bullying Ambassadors and Mental Health Ambassadors have now all been elected, and have completed the necessary training, the next steps are to raise their profile across school and introduce them via assemblies and tutor time



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



activities. They will be identifiable by their lanyards, allowing other pupils to approach them should they require support. The plan is to have targeted notice boards and video blogs to raise awareness of specific topics. The Anti-bullying Ambassadors plan to create a diversity mosaic entitled 'We Are One' to epitomise their commitment to celebrating diversity. The Mental Health Ambassadors are planning to offer a drop-in service for their peers. The staff links will be allocated to support and facilitate the different student leadership groups. To complement the various student leadership groups, leaders would also like to establish an LGBTQ+ group.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The IQM Coordinator explained that the school is fully committed to participating in the Cluster Group. There have not been as many opportunities to meet as a group due to the lockdown restrictions. In March, a Walton-le-Dale Higher Level Teaching Assistant attended the virtual cluster meeting hosted by Moldgreen School in Wakefield with the theme 'involving the community to support inclusion.' The member of staff brought back many useful ideas about how to develop links with other organisations such as football clubs, local primary schools, and church groups. The host school also talked about the UNICEF 'Rights Respecting Schools Award' which they are now considering implementing at Walton-le-Dale alongside redeveloping links with local primaries that were in place prior to the pandemic. In December, there was a meeting held virtually with a focus on 'inclusion versus exclusion' and 'peer mentoring.' Walton-le-Dale staff would have loved to attend but were unable to as they had in-school commitments they were not able to change at short notice.

The IQM Coordinator described how they are currently facing the challenge of increased incidences of disrupted behaviour following the Covid-19 restrictions which have had to be implemented. To aid them with this area of development, I have created an opportunity to forge a collaboration of excellence practice sharing between Walton-le-Dale and an IQM Centre of Excellence School who have found the perfect balance between high behaviour standards and a fully inclusive ethos. The Headteacher and IQM Coordinator feel that working in partnership with a school who shares a similar pupil demographic will be more beneficial.

The IQM Coordinator has expressed interest in hosting a Cluster Meeting this academic year to highlight their Flagship Project. It will be wonderful to see Walton-le-Dale establish more formal channels for best practice sharing.



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Overview

Inclusion at Walton-le-Dale is not a 'bolt on' or a single strand of school development; it is all-encompassing and at the heart of everything they do. The Ofsted 2018 report recognises that "pupils, parents and carers value the school's inclusivity. Peoples' differences are recognised and valued. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for at school." "Inspectors noted a number of examples where pupils have moved to the school because of its reputation as a place where inclusivity is a strength." All staff involved in the meetings throughout this review process are fully aligned to the school's ethos and fundamental commitment to being fully inclusive.

Staff at Walton-le-Dale are valued as professionals. The Headteacher speaks with pride when he explains how he "leads the school on trust and kindness." This is exemplified through the performance management targets which are centred around personal professional development, as opposed to the numerical targets dictated via the appraisal processes in most other schools. Staff are given the freedom to participate in CPD activities which allows them to realise their personal ambitions for further development. There is a collegiate approach to school improvement and staff collaborate inter-departmentally to share ideas and 'top tips.' Recently Qualified Teachers (RQTs) have been involved in a lesson study initiative to give them extra support from a mentor this year. This evolved from the gap identified from the disruption to their induction year which impacted the opportunities to gain experience from colleagues. Through a coaching and mentoring model, they are observing best practice across the school to support them in enhancing their own practice.

The Headteacher adopted the strapline "stay connected and be kind" throughout the pandemic to support staff, pupils and families. Senior Leaders prioritise opportunities for staff to connect via a more informal, social setting with weekly catch-up meetings. This allows Leaders to monitor staff wellbeing and offer additional support where needed. To keep morale high, they offer additional gestures such as when they arranged for a mobile food van to attend school and bought pizzas for all staff. To support the mental health and wellbeing of all, the school has added additional counselling sessions to provide two full days access to the school counsellor. This service was made available for pupils during lockdown, particularly the pupils from 'Key Worker' families. They have also introduced the 'Butterfly' programme which supports vulnerable children.

The commitment to supporting staff and pupil wellbeing is further exemplified through the creation of the Wellbeing and Memorial Garden. This wellbeing space is used by the pupils who follow the ASDAN curriculum, who maintain the garden. The garden can be accessed by staff and pupils as an opportunity to connect with nature and take some time for mindful relaxation. Senior Leaders have plans for how they will maximise the use of this space to offer pupils alternative intervention and educational experiences such as horticulture programmes.

To further support staff and pupils' wellbeing on the return to school, the Headteacher made the decision for teachers to remain in their own teaching rooms and for pupils to move around school, planning a ten-minute break in between each lesson to adhere to safety guidelines. This allows staff to feel comforted by having their own space, with access to all their teaching resources. This also means they do not have to move around



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



the building for each lesson thus reducing levels of anxiety. Another benefit is that it provides pupils with the chance to walk around and have some fresh air in between lessons, as opposed to sitting in the same room for the entire school day. The benefits are twofold.

Walton-le-Dale highlights the importance of pupils' personal development and prioritises the tracking of attitudes to learning data as opposed to progress data. The Headteacher feels that excellent effort and behaviour are key to improving pupils' outcomes. Their saying "those who work hard, and work with us, do well" is shared with pupils and families to emphasise the correlation between engagement, effort and successful outcomes. The analysis of attitudes towards learning data in January 2021 demonstrates that "the gaps between cohorts are narrow, in general, and narrower than in recent years" which "leads to the prediction that gaps in GCSE results will be significantly reduced". Where pupils have been identified as having a 'poor' attitude towards learning, intervention has been planned whilst the pupils who have a positive attitude towards learning are recognised through school-wide celebrations.

The 'exceptional support' focus extends to all members of the Walton-le-Dale School community: pupils, staff and parents. All teachers have a 'Teaching Toolkit' to support their practice, as do the teaching assistants. There are currently 15 teaching assistants employed. In addition to providing 1:1 support for the substantial number of pupils with Educational, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), they deliver small group intervention sessions. The teaching assistants' feedback is valued and used to improve teaching and learning across the school. With three quarters of the teaching assistants' time deployed supporting in lessons, they are constantly observing the practice across all curriculum areas. They provide feedback about how teachers are tailoring lessons to allow all Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) pupils to successfully access the learning. This open culture means that every child has their needs met. The best practice strategies observed are shared widely to enhance the learning experience for all.

The approach to behaviour is based on an ethos of tolerance and understanding with clear expectations in terms of non-negotiables, such as physical threat or violence. The number of fixed term exclusions has increased during this academic year. The Headteacher and Senior Leaders do not take the decision to exclude lightly and are disappointed with the numbers but have had to make decisions to ensure the safety of all pupils and staff in light of the recent Covid-19 safety measures and ensure reduced capacity. With the inability to mix year group bubbles, the lower-level consequences have not been viable to run, such as detentions. Therefore, to uphold high standards of behaviour and a safe environment for all, the Headteacher has made the decision to use fixed term exclusions as a short-term intervention. The Deputy Headteacher consults with local schools, external providers and the Local Authority to offer alternative provision to prevent pupils from being permanently excluded. They create innovative solutions to make sure that they do not give up on any child. Moving forward, leaders are keen to research options to provide in-house support and will be forming good practice share partnerships with other IQM schools where there are successful examples of this.



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Walton-le-Dale's remote education provision throughout the lockdowns, and for those pupils absent due to self-isolation, has been excellent. The school completed the Department for Education review of remote education provision in February 2021. The findings are highly positive with most areas identified as 'embed' or 'sustain,' the highest scores. Some of the identified strengths include "the curriculum is clear and well sequenced and published on the website. It is largely identical to that taught in class, with obvious modifications for practical specialist activities" and that they provide "frequent bulletins and information for parents and carers" with a "regular structure of timetable coupled with resources for asynchronous learning." To support pupils' wellbeing, they used "individual mentoring and family contact" with "clear lines of reporting and follow-up" for any safeguarding concerns.

There is an open, reflective culture towards school development which involves all stakeholders. This academic year, feedback from staff and pupils shows that there has been an increased focus on vocabulary instruction and an increased use of visualisers to model and scaffold the learning. They have noted an increase in the confidence of teachers in the use of Teams and Class charts to support the educational experience. The positive impact of the behaviour focus, with the introduction of the 'golden rules' policy, was also highlighted along with the changes made to the remote learning policy to optimise pupils' ability to access and submit work online.

Parents and carers are welcomed to be fully involved in school life. All school development information and results from reviews or monitoring activities are published on their website. Parental feedback is collated on a regular basis with surveys which link directly to school priority focus areas. The most recently collated feedback from parents embodies the inclusive nature of the school. One parent commented that "the teachers want the best for the children, inside and outside of school. They are professional, approachable and want to help." One parent summarises the opinion of many saying that "it has such a friendly and supportive atmosphere." There are numerous remarks regarding the "positive, caring and nurturing environment" and parents describe Walton-le-Dale as "a caring community who do all they can to help every child." It is evident that parents value the emphasis the school places on wellbeing. Overall, parents and carers are highly positive about Walton-le-Dale and it has built a reputation for itself in the local area as a supportive, inclusive school, particularly for the parents of children with SEND.

The quality of provision for pupils with SEND was evaluated through a diagnostic review in July 2020. Commenting on the effective leadership and management of SEND, the report states that Leaders "have an inclusive ethos and are committed to supporting learners' social and emotional wellbeing" and they are "committed to its core values of a culture of support for SEND pupils." The school continues to be a dyslexia-friendly school. The SENDCo describes how tailoring the learning to allow dyslexic pupils to access the curriculum comes naturally to staff. They have a sustained focus on differentiating the learning to cater for all pupils' needs.

Walton-le-Dale prides itself on its distinctive ethos which "is at the heart of all we do." Their key priorities for the next academic year are:



Annual Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



- improve pupil outcomes – especially for those identified as disadvantaged and those with SEND.
- improve health, wellbeing, workload and environment for staff and students.

These priorities provide a further example of the importance Leaders place on providing an inclusive education.

It is clear from the review process that the staff team at Walton-le-Dale continue to be fully committed to inclusive education with many areas of excellent practice. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Flagship Status and is reviewed again in 12 months' time. I am confident their Flagship Project will continue to have a hugely positive impact on providing exceptional support for staff and pupils. Thank you to all for such a well prepared, enjoyable and informative day at Walton-le-Dale.

Assessor: Sarah Linari

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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