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Flagship Review Date: 5th July 2018

Summary

During its most recent Ofsted inspection in June 2018, Inspectors highlighted the positive comments from parents who value the school's ethos where difference is recognised and celebrated. The school has a strong reputation for supporting, managing and being successful with students with a wide range of vulnerabilities and needs. Inspectors also noted that *"pupils have moved to the school because of its reputation as a place where inclusivity is a strength."*

Walton le Dale High School is a smaller than average secondary school. The proportion of disadvantaged students is broadly average whereas the proportion of students who have SEND and those who have an EHCP or care plan is above average. The school meets the government's current floor standards.

Walton le Dale High School is in transition. The current headteacher took up role in September 2017 and following some disappointing results in the summer, he has made an immediate impact and the standard of provision is improving. School data predicts improvements in outcomes later this summer. School analysis shows that with the removal of outliers, overall outcomes would have been significantly better. Due to the inclusive admissions policy, which is put into practice with great integrity, the impact of a proportionally small number of students is weighty.

The school was awarded Dyslexia Friendly School Status by the British Dyslexia Association in February 2018. In her report, the verifier commented that:

"Particular praise is to be given for the monitoring and evaluation of intervention programmes and the quality of the data presented. The school has demonstrated that it is very open to change and to 'trying out' new approaches to support the individual needs of individual pupils."

In discussion with staff it was apparent that this continues to be a priority for the school. Far from being complacent having received the award, staff work hard to maintain the profile of this important aspect of the school's provision. An example of how this is achieved and at the same time offers support to staff to enable them to provide dyslexia friendly teaching and learning, there is a 'Dyslexia Friendly Idea' published in the weekly Teaching and Learning Digest. One example I saw was to *"Try using OpenDyslexic-Alta font"*.

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School staff have continued to develop their transition programmes with primary schools and in addition to the transition days they have introduced a literacy based, summer reading challenge. Staff across the school have contributed to a booklet that contains extracts from their favourite, age appropriate books. Examples include, The Magician's Nephew, Matilda, The Magic Faraway Tree, The Gruffalo, The Hunger Games and Lord of the Rings.

In addition, the school had developed a WELCOME project. (We Encourage Learning Commitment Opportunities Motivation Enjoyment) which is a booklet designed for high school staff to work through with small groups of year six pupils at their primary school. The activities inside the booklet help to familiarise pupils with the High School and contains tasks such as a quiz about the timings of the school day and advice about how to make new friends. The project was shared at an IQM Cluster meeting.

The new progress ladders have been in use during this academic year to inform planning and assessment of progress. New reporting systems are in place and are being reviewed at the end of the academic year. In addition, significant development of assessments is underway following whole-school CPD on an INSET day in January. I was able to see examples of how progress ladders were used in Modern Foreign Languages which included scrutiny of students' workbooks.

The curriculum is under review with significant discussions around the offering at Key Stage 4. A range of vocational courses have been maintained as well as introducing Computer Science as a new, academic, option.

Senior school leaders continue to be vigilant in its monitoring of student progress and attainment. The progress of current students is improving as found by inspectors in the school's recent Ofsted inspection. There is still much work to be done in order to make more rapid progress and in particular to make more consistent the robustness of monitoring and holding middle leaders to account. Senior leaders are acutely aware of this and have the resolve and ideas to put this right quickly.

Current school data is looking positive albeit generated amidst the context of turbulence created by changes to examinations and assessments. The school has set up study groups of teachers two of which have looked at 'teaching to the top'. Leaders are clear that setting higher expectations for all and providing appropriate support and interventions is the way forward.

It is pleasing that the school has been awarded the International School Award (bronze) as this aspect of the school's provision is strong. In pursuing the award, the school has set up an exchange with a school in China. Walton le Dale has already hosted students from their partner school in February 2018 and in April 2019, students from Walton le Dale will visit the school in China.

The interest in the Amnesty group continues to grow and is an integral part of the school's Opening Minds curriculum. I spent time with a group of students who are members of the Amnesty group. They were articulate, well informed and ardent in their support. The group is very active in promoting its work and examples include fund raising in Uganda for sanitary protection for girls who cannot attend school, working with a local charity to raise a target of £1,000 (£700 raised so far) and a teddy bear protest. This teddy bear protest was in part to raise awareness of the plight of children

in Syria and refugee children. In excess of 250 teddy bears were brought into school representing a child who had lost their life in such extreme and difficult circumstances and displayed in the school garden. It was a profound moment in the school's year.

The teddy bears were sent off to the Teddy Bear Trust to be sent to refugee children. The strength of this group continues to grow and is impressive. The leadership that student members' display is equally impressive as is that provided by staff who facilitate and coordinate the work of the group and others such as supporting Fair Trade. The school is considering becoming an Amnesty 'Human Rights Friendly School'.

In common with many schools I visit, Walton le Dale has identified a growing need to address mental and emotional wellbeing in school. With the apparent decline in outside agency support and growing demand for support, school leaders have decided to develop their provision in this area. There are three members of staff who have attended training in First Aid in Mental Health and all staff have attended awareness raising training. The school is fortunate to have found that they can access support for parents through the Lancashire Wellbeing Service which is proving to be a valuable resource. The school has rightly identified that support for parents is equally important.

Walton le Dale is proud of its inclusive ethos and there is a dedicated page on its website that makes this very clear;

"Walton-le-Dale is proud to have held the prestigious INCLUSION QUALITY MARK since 2007. In 2014 we received the 'Flagship School' status which recognises the best practice for inclusion. Our flagship status was confirmed in 2015, 2016 and 2017 after further inspections."

There is an 'Inclusion Statement' that begins *"Walton le Dale is committed to valuing the individuality of all our children."* It continues, *"The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our students matter and we celebrate the achievements of everyone. The school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background and that students have a common curriculum experience."*

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark, Flagship review.

The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach and in-school research. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Flagship status.

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:



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



Assessment Commentary on Flagship Action Plan:-

- The school is in transition but unequivocally retains its truly inclusive ethos. The new headteacher, appointed in September 2017, has continued to develop the school carefully guarding the fundamental ethos and culture of inclusivity. The headteacher, along with other senior leaders, has set realistic but demanding standards and he is determined, measured and ambitious in his pursuit of improved outcomes for young people. There are detailed plans for continued development within which the following constitute the IQM action plan.
- The school has identified a need to promote literacy still further. Plans include a strategy referred to as 'knock, knock' which will be used as part of the paired reading scheme. Whilst developing provision in school for the students, leaders have rightly made plans to support parents in developing their skills in support of their children. This will begin with parents of year 7 and during the parents' evening a workshop will be available for parents to attend.
- Although attendance is in line with national average, the school is keen to improve attendance further and in particular for those groups with poor attendance such as disadvantaged students. The school will also look at developing strategies for other identified groups such as the nurture group. The school will look at refining its mentoring programme to address some issues with boys' attendance. In addition, the school will look into the possibility of appointing a Family Support Worker.
- Professional development is included within the plan and next year will continue to support 'teaching to the top'. Results this summer will provide quantitative data to enable leaders to begin evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy.
- Continuing to develop provision for emotional and mental wellbeing remains a priority and this will include the deployment of the recently appointed school counsellor who will be working in school one day per week.
- Governance will be strengthened by attaching governors to departments and will be invited to take part in meetings between middle leaders and their link senior leader.

Further Developments agreed after discussion:-

- It was decided that all of these plans will continue but that the new planning document for IQM Flagship schools would present a better, more focused opportunity to bring about further improvements to the school's provision. The school has a number of challenges ahead, but key will be improving teaching and ensuring greater consistency in its quality.
- Following discussion with the headteacher and the IQM coordinator, it was agreed that the plan already submitted would go forward but that the new planning document would be completed in September 2018 and forwarded to IQM for review in twelve months. The agreed focus for the project is:

"Outstanding teaching in an inclusive classroom".