



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School	Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School Clough Avenue Warrington Cheshire WA2 9PH
Head/Principal	Mrs Claire Curtis
IQM Lead	Mr David Clay
Date of Review	11 th January 2024
Assessor	Mrs Christine Slater

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Gardeners

Ambassador Ms Sarah Linari

Next Meeting

Meeting Focus

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Spring 2022	28 th March 2022	No
Summer 2022	7 th July 2022	Yes
Autumn 2022	4 th October 2022	Yes
Spring 2023	1 st March 2023	Yes
Summer 2023	15 th June 2023	Yes

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School has been an active member of their Cluster, Gardeners, attending all but one meeting and reflecting fully on the impact of participation within the network. The meetings were attended by the IQM Lead as well as other Senior Leaders, including the Welfare Co-ordinator. The IQM Lead described the strengths of meetings where the host school had developed their lunch time and their outdoor learning and play provision. This directly led to Meadowside restructuring their lunch times and inspired them to submit bids for outdoor equipment to enhance the provision for their children, particularly the Year 1 and Year 2 playgrounds.

A further Cluster meeting had a focus on Forest Schools. The school is working to further develop their Forest School offer and are structuring their own Forest School curriculum for their children who access Forest School sessions in Nursery and Reception, so that there is a clear progression of skills and knowledge.



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The IQM Lead shared the impact of a network meeting that focused on attendance and the high-quality strategies that were shared by schools. These strategies have been developed at Meadowside and the improvement can be seen in the attendance of the children, currently at 95%.

Overall attendance at the IQM Cluster meetings by the IQM Lead and other Senior Leaders has had a positive impact on practice and provision at Meadowside.

Sources of Evidence during the IQM Review Day

Discussions with:

- Headteacher (HT) and Inclusion Lead discussions about the IQM project, its context and the whole priorities.
- Meeting with teachers.
- Meeting with school council.
- Meeting with a range of support staff relating to IQM and varied inclusive roles within the school.
- Meeting with Governors and parents.
- Flagship target review and feedback with leaders.

Additional Activities:

- Tour of the school.
- Tour of the playground and lunch area.
- Book look.
- Scrutiny of the school's website.



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The development of staff and ultimately pupils' understanding of cognitive science has continued to be driven forward. There has been a specific focus on the impact of cognitive science on Quality First Teaching. Staff have worked together to identify the key strategies to go into their toolbox which include, chunking, scaffolding, modelling, retrieval practice, independent practice and task adaptation.

These strategies, along with additional detail and references to the research they are derived from, is compiled into the Quality First Teaching @MEADOWSIDE poster. This large poster is proudly displayed throughout the school and in every classroom. The highly inclusive philosophy behind this demonstrates the belief that at Meadowside if the needs of its most disadvantaged pupils are being fully met, the needs of all children are being met.

The staff have worked over the last year to further develop their wider curriculum offer through the development of a structured and focused curriculum. The key focus of this new curriculum is that the key knowledge and skills for each subject and year group are clearly mapped so that the children revisit areas of learning and can bridge back to consolidate prior learning as well as learning new knowledge and skills.

There is a consistency of approach to recording learning as all children have separate books for each wider curriculum subject. As there is a whole school focus on writing across the curriculum, the wider curriculum books used throughout the school are on buff paper and with guidelines to support neat, cursive handwriting. This model is used throughout the school, including within the additional resource bases which provide individualised support for children with significant additional needs.

Recognising the impact of the pandemic on the Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH) needs of the children at Meadowside Primary School, last year saw a drive to support those children in a reinvigorated approach to behaviour management and to the understanding of trauma and mental health on learners. Firstly, the school invested in training two members of the support staff team as Lead Mental Health practitioners who support children throughout the school as well as training a member of the team as an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA).

The school invested and used structured assessments of the children's mental health to give a baseline for the children but also to decide which groups of children were a priority and needed the support immediately. Using this data has meant that Senior Leaders have been able to ensure that the support goes exactly where it is needed most.

Senior Leaders discussed with the assessor the ongoing SEMH needs of their children within the social deprivation context of the school and this work will certainly continue and form a key aspect of the school's work to come.

To be able to support their children it is vital that the children have good and consistent attendance; therefore, a key focus for both last year and continuing into this academic year is to improve the attendance of all children.



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The school has responded to the challenge of improving attendance with great drive, imagination and commitment. This is the way that the team at Meadowside meets so many of the challenges before them. The Headteacher described the intensive tracking which is put in place by both her and the office staff to ensure that children at risk of low attendance or persistent absenteeism are identified and highlighted.

There is an understanding that one size does not fit all and that each individual child and family may need different support. For some children it is to always come through the front door so that the office staff can give them a sticker, for others it is for the Welfare Co-ordinator to go round to the house and to walk with the family to school or to pick them up in a car. If a child has missed the morning session (not through illness) can they be encouraged to come into school for the afternoon. The School Nurse is also a vital part of the process, supporting school in the drive for good attendance for all.

The Welfare Co-ordinator also recognises the need to praise those children whose attendance has started to improve and to praise even the 'small wins' with the child and the parents. Attendance post cards are sent home to celebrate improvements, prizes are given from the 'Special Cupboard' in addition at the end of term where some parents may not send children in for the final few days, Meadowside launch a prize draw. This prize draw is publicised in the weeks leading up to the end of term. Each day that the children attend school in the final week, they get a raffle ticket to go into the prize draw and at the end of term the winning ticket is drawn out in assembly, thus improving attendance and raising its profile throughout the school.

It is strategies like the ones mentioned above which have improved the overall attendance of children at Meadowside to 95%, a significant achievement which is to be celebrated.



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Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Overall Target:

To support the children in understanding both their cognition and SEMH needs so that they are fully equipped to independently access education and fully prepare them for their move to secondary school.

Target 1:

Behaviour policy.

- To continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of the behaviour policy.
- To continue to work with staff to develop the culture away from a 'consequence' approach to a more restorative approach.
- To continue training for children and parents on the Behaviour Policy and the philosophy behind it.

Target 2:

School-wide approach to promoting mental health.

- To Introduce 'My Happy Mind' programme to the whole school staff.
- To roll out the programme and ensure all staff are trained.
- To monitor and evaluate the impact of 'My Happy Mind' through Pupil and Staff Voice.

Target 3:

Graduated response to children who have experienced trauma.

- For the SEMH team to meet monthly to allocate resources and consider strategically about the needs of the children and the resources available.
- To ensure that the deployment of staff is constantly under review to ensure greatest impact on children.

Target 4:

Develop children's understanding of how they learn. Children to be able to articulate.

- To revisit training on cognitive science with all staff, ensuring new members of staff to the school are fully trained.
- To monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in terms of cognitive science giving precise and targeted feedback.
- To work with children to encourage them to reflect on their own learning needs and provide them with the vocabulary to be able to articulate those needs.
- To develop a toolkit of approaches that supports children to become independent learners.



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Target 5:

To ensure that all children are aware of faiths and cultures other than their own.

- To highlight and learn about different the faiths and cultures in our school, wider community and the cities of Manchester and Liverpool.
- To plan celebration days for key festivals which are celebrated by members of the community and beyond.
- Invite parents from the school community to come to school to talk about their faiths and cultures.
- To develop a culture of understanding and inclusion through the celebration of diversity.



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Overview

Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School is a one form entry school, with two Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) bases and a large nursery, having a total of 270 children on roll. There are approximately 58% of the school population accessing Pupil Premium (PP) grant with a growing population of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), currently at approximately 20%.

The academic year 2022-2023 has been a year of change and challenge for Meadowside Community Primary School and Nursery. The school is undergoing significant building work, including a new roof and the installation of an environmentally friendly heating system, causing significant disruption to the school site. In addition, a new Headteacher was appointed in April 2023, swiftly followed by a visit from OFSTED, who judged the school as 'Good'. These numerous challenges have been navigated with huge professionalism and dedication by the whole staff team.

Within this challenging time of upheaval, Meadowside continues to be an incredibly warm and welcoming school whose inclusive ethos is at the centre of every decision, process and system. Meadowside is truly an inclusive school and furthermore an incredible example of an IQM Flagship school.

The Headteacher fully embraces her role, understanding that as the leader of a community school her priority must be to win the respect and loyalty of not only the children and staff but also the parents. Her determination, warmth and genuine care for the school has ensured that in a short amount of time, she is fully respected as the school leader, not only by the children and staff but also the parents. Staff spoke warmly about the change of direction the school was taking in terms of behaviour management under her leadership. They described how she had achieved this through working with staff and taking them with her as opposed to simply imposing her philosophy on the staff. "She leads by example".

The IQM Lead and Senior Leaders have an overwhelming drive to improve standards within the school and they fully recognise that children's emotional needs must be met alongside their academic needs. This has led to the journey of change, to shift the culture of the school towards the children understanding their behaviour and a change of mind-set towards management of behaviour within the school.

The Headteacher described behaviour as, "communication" and has been committed to ensuring that all staff fully understand her inclusive and restorative approach to behaviour management. Along with Senior Leaders, this has been done through the development of a new behaviour policy and through leading by example in her commitment to giving children who struggle to make the right behaviour choices, a voice and a place to go. The Rainbow Room is a space to be used at break and lunch times for those who have made the wrong choices in the playground. It is not a punitive space, it is a place for reflection and discussion, a space for the children to start to understand their behaviour choices and to build strategies for change.

Senior Leaders are visible at the beginning and end of the day, welcoming children and parents and addressing any concerns immediately at their point of origin. In April 2023



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when OFSTED visited the school received only 30 responses to the OFSTED questionnaire; however, when a questionnaire was sent out by school in the following term, they received 70 responses showing improvement in parental engagement.

The close relationship between school and parents is started early with the school hosting a parent and tots group called 'Mini Meadowsiders'. This weekly group is a place for parents to meet and chat and for staff to give support where necessary. The relationship is continued when the children start nursery and reception, with the staff conducting home visits for every child attending the school. The staff described the visits as vital to building the positive relationship with school but also to support families who may benefit from early help or the early identification of additional needs.

In discussions with parents and Governors, the IQM Assessor was told how much their child, "loves this school.... they have had good teachers, good friends and everything is tailored to suit your child". Parents described the use of Class Dojo and how much they appreciate receiving messages about their child, particularly when moving towards a transition, either to a new year group or to a new school. Parents of children from the resource base described how the school had ensured that their child had access to all after school clubs as well as putting adaptations in place to ensure they could enjoy the wrap around care provided. A parent commented, "there are no barriers in this school, they are all included with the whole class".

This commitment to parents and the community is continued with the links made with business organisations. Using the school premises to provide training courses local businesses work with the school to support people into employment. Parents and other members of the community can enrol, and this has led to a number of parents qualifying for work within school and elsewhere, thus having an incredibly positive impact on the children and families.

The two SEND bases for children with significant additional needs are calm and well-structured spaces, enabling children to access their own individualised curriculum at their own levels. Staff have a clear understanding of the needs of each child and adapt their timetables to suit the children's needs with children integrating into mainstream where appropriate. These plans are under constant review allowing for the altering needs of children to be considered.

These are totally child centred havens, working to develop the skills of the children within them. The IQM Assessor was amazed to see a large group of young children sat eating snacks together, developing their social skills with the highly skilled staff supporting them. This demonstrates the progress these children have made in this incredibly supportive and nurturing environment.

The IQM lead speaks with great pride about the progress of children in the SEND bases and the inclusive practice which ensures that the children are all part of the school, attending assemblies, being part of class productions. As a parent commented, "the children are all part of the school community".

Alongside the Headteacher, IQM Lead and other Senior Leaders, the Welfare Co-ordinator at Meadowside drives the culture of inclusion, working to ensure that all



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children can overcome their barriers. A 'Soft Landing' breakfast club has been introduced for those children who have not had a smooth start to the day, enabling them to ease into school, rather than their behaviour escalating. The IQM Assessor met with one of the children from the 'Soft Landing' breakfast who was able to explain the school rules of being Respectful, Responsible and Ready and what they mean. The warmth of the relationship between him and the Welfare Co-ordinator was evident. During a tour of the school the IQM Assessor saw this child in his class accessing the curriculum.

The nurturing culture of this school does not stop with the children and parents, there is a great drive for staff wellbeing which was evidenced through a tour of the school and conversations with both teaching and support staff.

Two members of the support staff team have trained to become Mental Health Leads and when considering the mental health of staff asked staff about their needs. The result was the Zensation Room. This space, formally a cupboard, has been transformed with subdued lighting, aromatic scents, affirmations and comfortable seating. It is a space which can be used by all staff for some peace and quiet, a time for reflection, away from the hustle and noise of primary school for a few moments of re-booting. This shows a great commitment to the wellbeing of staff.

The IQM Lead also described other ways in which the wellbeing of staff is supported such as treats being left for staff with positive affirmations, 'Pass the Mug' a mug of treats left anonymously for members of staff and then they pass it on, and an anonymous 'Shout Out' board a way to thank each other for those kind deeds.

Support staff, while talking to the IQM Assessor, describe a 'tag team' culture where staff step in to support each other during times of crisis, they feel appreciated and valued particularly when they are given the opportunity to gain additional skills through training. Teaching Assistants explained how they work very much alongside teaching staff and feel their opinion is valued and part of the decision-making process. Teachers describe the school as one where, "all are welcome, and we celebrate the unique about our children and families". They agreed that no staff, "shy away from the difficult conversations" if they are necessary. The Early Career Teacher described the ongoing support she receives from her Mentor and from the Headteacher, who was described as, "solution based". Staff feel that they can go to Senior Leaders and that they will be listened to. They describe how the Headteacher will cover classes to give teachers time to come out of class when necessary and that the Welfare Co-ordinator is always there to support and help.

Feedback

The IQM Assessor gave verbal feedback to the Headteacher, IQM Lead, Assistant Head Teacher and Welfare Co-ordinator. The focus of the feedback was:

- Strength of the Inclusive culture throughout the school.
- The evident drive of both the Headteacher, the Senior Leaders and all staff to meet the needs of all the children through understanding of their own mental health.
- The extraordinary work done to improve attendance.
- The focus on staff wellbeing.
- The success of many aspects of the Flagship Action Plan.



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It is evident that Meadowside Primary School has the children at the centre of all its decisions, systems and processes. However, this is not at the exclusion of parents who are valued and consulted or staff who participate in decision making and whose welfare is very high on the school agenda.

Meadowside is an extraordinary school and rightly deserves the title of Inclusion Quality Mark Flagship School.

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: Ms Christine Slater

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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