



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 Mrs Alex Davidson

Date of Review 26th March 2025

Assessor Mr Mike Bousfield

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Gardeners

Ambassador Mrs Sarah Linari

Next Meeting 19th May 2025

Meeting Focus TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2023	17th Oct 2023	Yes
Spring 2024	22nd Mar 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	02nd May 2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	05th Nov 2024	No
Spring 2025	13th Feb 2025	
Summer 2025	19th May 2025	

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Meadowside has not attended the previous 2 IQM cluster group meetings because the key member of staff left the school and unfortunately emails were not redirected to the new IQM lead. With all admin problems now resolved, the school is once more committed to attending cluster group meetings going forward.

There was no one available in school to comment on the impact of past meetings. The culture of collaboration in school is strong, with all staff well used to liaising and collaborating with colleagues in other schools within the trust and beyond.



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Evidence

- IQM FSS Review Documentation
- School website, including Ofsted Report
- Contextual data provided by the school
- Documentation pertaining to the identification of CPD need and subsequent planning
- Graduated Response Documentation
- Whole school Behaviour Policy and supporting Documentation.

Meetings with:

- Senior Leaders
- Teachers
- Teaching Assistants
- Attendance Team, including Governor
- Pupils
- Parents

Additional Activities

- Learning walk accompanied by SENDCo and Designated Provision Lead



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The initial Flagship Project was based on metacognition and focused on academic progress. At the time of the last review, the then new Headteacher identified a need to pivot towards the role of metacognition in managing emotions and in better mental health and wellbeing. The following elements were therefore identified for the school's project:

- Review and relaunch of behaviour policy, including staff training.
- Introduction of 'My Happy Mind' as a universal offer for understanding mental health and wellbeing.
- Development of a trauma informed approach to working with pupils and their families.
- Improvements in attendance for some pupils.
- Continued focus on metacognition in learning.
- Development of pupil's awareness and knowledge of different faiths and cultures.

The review of the Behaviour Policy was a crucial piece of work, with a great deal of research and consultation invested in order to "Create a positive culture whereby children value their education and recognise the importance of a calm and positive learning environment." Staff were given appropriate training, and consistency of language and responses was introduced and relentlessly reinforced.

Adults began to model conflict resolution and gave pupils opportunities to 'reset' and 'fix it' when things had gone wrong. The Behaviour Policy document supports all staff to respond consistently and to 'coach' pupils in managing their emotions. This approach replaced the old model, described as 'top-down' by the Headteacher.

It has taken considerable effort to introduce these changes. In addition to the usual challenges when instigating cultural change, school staff have had to deal with the disruption of moving to temporary teaching accommodation for 3 months of the academic year. Maintaining the momentum for change was a priority for this period, and as a result, the behaviour policy is starting to become embedded within the school and staff and pupils speak positively about the difference it has made.

'My Happy Mind' was introduced as part of the curriculum so that all children learn about how their minds work and make 'healthy choices' mentally as well as physically.

Alongside this, Colour Monsters (for the younger pupils) and Zones of Regulation have been introduced via the PHSE curriculum and assemblies. Pupils learn to recognise different emotions in themselves and others and learn how to respond appropriately. Staff have been given training and regular opportunities to review these resources.



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This has supported the introduction of the Behaviour Policy, giving pupils metacognitive awareness of their emotional state, and is used well in school. Staff report that pupils regularly refer to the learning from 'My Happy Mind' and use the language as part of their everyday communication.

Awareness has been raised of Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences and the recognition that these are relatively high in the community around the school. Efforts have been made to ensure that trauma is recognised, and efforts are made to offer the right support so that children and their families can access education and achieve their full potential. This includes adaptations and scaffolding to ensure that pupils are, as far as possible, ready to learn when they enter the classroom. This includes work at a formal and less formal level.

Positive changes to the approach to attendance saw a big reduction in persistent absence and a big increase in the headline figure for overall attendance in the 2023/ 24 academic year. The Attendance team works cohesively and includes a member of the governing body. Careful monitoring and high expectations are accompanied by strong empathy and support for families. This includes emotionally based non-school attendance support for anxiety, practical support and signposting for families and a recognition and celebration of progress.

Although the great gains of the last year have not been sustained, this is due to the disruption caused by the move off-site, and it was agreed in discussion that the story behind the data is more important than the headline figures for this area. The team has a clear strategy and displays good practice.

The original focus on metacognition has been maintained through the use of explicit modelling and reflection in lessons. Staff feel that this has resulted in increased confidence, motivation, and independence.

Progress towards broadening pupils' awareness of different faiths and cultures has not been as rapid as was originally hoped, with several 'next steps' identified. Although there is a cultural offer within the school's assembly rota and calendar of events, it is hoped to embed this deeper with the curriculum.

Next Steps

Leaders identified further training, monitoring, and support as necessary to embed the new approach to creating a positive behaviour culture, particularly to focus on positive relationships and the establishment of trust. Further monitoring and review of the Quality First Teaching model was also identified, particularly around routines, transitions and the modelling of problem solving.

The role out of 'My Happy Mind' is to continue, with the involvement of parents seen as a natural next step. Moving the focus on metacognition further towards mental health and wellbeing was also identified as a next step, as were continuing to improve attendance and auditing the representation of culture, faith, and language within the curriculum. Allowing pupils to develop leadership roles in the area of mental health and wellbeing was the final aim to emerge from the previous project.



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Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

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

Through the completion of this project, the leadership team at Meadowside plans to build on previous work with the aim of promoting full access to learning for all pupils and the understanding of mental health needs.

This will include fully embedding the behaviour policy which has been introduced in the past 12 months, and which supports good mental health. They also aim to create a toolbox of strategies for learners, giving them techniques for self-help so that they can recognise and regulate their own emotions as well as being able to deescalate conflict and problem solve.

Training will be given so that the staff team recognises behaviours that are rooted in trauma and understands how best to support these.

Developments in the curriculum will be embedded so that pupils learn about neuroscience and habits that promote good mental wellbeing.

Building on the successful implementation of this universal offer for SEMH, the intention is to provide comprehensive intervention strategies at Wave 2 that will promote independence and self-management for pupils with a higher degree of need thus strengthening the graduated approach in school and support those pupils who have experienced trauma.

It is also planned to continue the work on developing the cultural and religious awareness of pupils. An audit of the curriculum and resources in school is planned as part of this work. Opportunities to focus particularly on different cultures and faiths that are represented within the school community, and perhaps to involve pupils themselves were discussed as part of this review.

There has been thorough research, consultation, and evaluation in the development of this project plan. Leaders have a very clear idea of what inclusion means at Meadowside and how they can develop this further in the next 12-month cycle. There is a strong degree of commitment within the team, and especially with in the leadership team.



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Overview

'Nurturing,' 'family,' 'joyful,' and 'solution-focused' were the words chosen by staff to describe Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School, which is also an accurate summary of the evidence gathered during my visit to the school.

There have been many recent changes, including the appointment of new senior staff, and not least a critical incident which meant that the school building was unusable for 3 months of this academic year. The school community has demonstrated resilience and determination to keep the best offer possible for pupils. 'Driven' and 'determined' are therefore also suitable adjectives to describe the leadership team.

Meadowside has a specialist resource provision for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, providing expertise and resources which are well used by the school. In KS2, the primary need of pupils is Cognition and Learning, while the KS1 Designated Provision (DP) is a Development Centre with a greater variety of need. Currently, Speech, Language and Communication is the biggest area of need in the KS1 DP.

Leaders are ambitious to expand specialist provision in KS2, especially so that current KS1 pupils will be able to have a smoother transition and will be able to carry on their education here.

The school is part of the TCAT Multi Academy Trust, and expertise and resources from the trust are used well by the school. For example, many teachers talked about the value of the various hub meetings that they are enabled to attend.

There is a calm, purposeful and relaxed atmosphere in the building, despite high numbers of pupils with SEMH needs. This is due to the actions taken in the past 2 years to recognise the source of difficult behaviour, encourage pupils to understand and manage their own emotions and develop toolkits of regulation strategies for all.

There is ample evidence throughout the environment of the progress made. For example, displays show that colour monsters and zones of regulation are used in every classroom to help pupils talk about and understand their feelings. A toolbox of strategies has been created so that when pupils do start to become dysregulated, they can recognise this and find different paths. Safe regulation spaces around the school, including specialist classrooms and zones with sensory circuits, have been created. This gives access to regulation for all.

There is a high degree of alignment between different groups of staff and pupils when they talk about the impact of these initiatives. It is widely agreed that the school has moved from a top-down approach to behaviour management to a relational approach, understanding the needs of each individual and where behaviour is coming from.

There have been lots of training opportunities and opportunities to collaborate and see good practice within and outside of school for staff. The good support from the SLT is also acknowledged by all staff, and there is an implicit awareness of staff needs.



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These actions have had a positive impact, and staff feel that dysregulation has decreased. Staff say that pupils have been empowered, and they recognise that whilst the frequency of dysregulation may not have fallen much, the length of time needed to de-escalate has dramatically reduced, and this has had a huge positive impact on teaching and learning.

The behaviour of pupils was excellent throughout the review visit. They were highly engaged in lessons, and focus was good, whether these were more formal indoor lessons, or 1 of the 'active learning for maths' lessons that were taking place throughout the day in the outdoor environment.

The early years is very purposeful with lots of early language skills and PSED evident in activities. The environment is warm and stimulating and contains areas to meet the different needs of children, including the specially designated quiet area.

Staff say the pupils throughout the school are encouraging of each other and supportive when others are dysregulated. There is a growing awareness and understanding of dysregulation, which has improved pupils' empathy and ability to support each other. Pupils agree and they understand that children have different needs.

The older pupils were happy to share that they make extensive use of the regulation spaces and say that they have become much more able to cope and deal with difficult emotions and to reset themselves in the past 12 months. They say that the school is safe, and they are proud of the way children help each other.

Pupils have opportunities to do this formally through their roles as School Councillors and 'Wellbeing Warriors', and this is potentially an area for growth, as pupils would apparently respond well to being given opportunities to lead within their community.

CPD for staff is based on research and is designed to meet clearly identified need. The leadership team has engaged with Warrington's 'Unleash Greatness' programme, carrying out an initial audit which identified key areas for development. The audit involved staff rating their confidence in areas of effective practice, labelled 'Theories of Action.' Analysis of staff responses resulted in 3 relevant and impactful areas for development: questioning, child engagement, and behaviour management.

Staff are very positive about CPD and opportunities available to collaborate internally and externally.

Quality First Teaching in the context of Meadowside has been clearly identified, there is a poster in every classroom and bespoke documents for different areas of need; these give clear guidance at each stage of the graduated response.

The graduated approach for SEMH includes a strong universal offer, including My Happy Minds, Zones of Regulation, and explicit teaching within the PHSE curriculum. A suite of Level 2 resources, with an extensive list of interventions including ELSA and play therapy etc. further supports pupils and their teachers. Access to interventions is through regular meetings between the SENDCo and class teachers. Level 3 interventions are also clearly signposted within the school's documentation.



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Parents are exceptionally positive about the school, particularly those parents of children with additional needs.

"Attending this school has been life-changing for my child, I feel he's in the right place, treated in the right way and given opportunities. He has achieved more than I expected," said a parent. This was readily confirmed by others, who added, "My daughter is where she should be [despite] a very low starting point, due to the efforts of the school. When she was reluctant to attend her emotional needs were met through a soft landing," and "I felt guilty about my child's need, but school staff have made me feel better. They know my child inside out."

Finally, A parent added that, "I feel like the staff are my friends, they support me so well," which really sums up the sense of belonging that is at the heart of inclusive practice.

School staff are incredibly committed and, despite the big challenges they have faced, have made the planned improvements in behaviour a reality.

Because it has been some time since the initial IQM audit and assessment was carried out, and there has been a substantial change in staffing, particularly at leadership level since then, we discussed the value of revisiting the IQM framework, especially for the SENDCo/IQM Lead.

It is very clear that the Meadowside community is focused on achieving the very best for all of its pupils, and it was a great pleasure to visit for this review and to see the hard work that goes into this. The community is rightly proud of its 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: Mr Mike Bousfield

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd