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	Ms Alexandra Davidson
Date of Review	26th February 2026
Assessor	Mrs Sarah Linari

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group	Gardeners
Ambassador	Mrs Sarah Linari
Next Meeting	8th June 2026
Meeting Focus	North West Regional Cluster Collaborative

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Summer 2024	02-05-2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	05-11-2024	No
Spring 2025	13- 02-2025	No
Summer 2025	23-06-2025	Yes
Autumn 2025	19- 11-2025	Yes
Spring 2026	03-02-2026	Yes

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The school has engaged positively with cluster programme as part of its commitment to reflective practice as a Flagship School. The IQM Lead actively participates in cluster meetings. The autumn term meeting focused on outdoor play and learning provision, allowing the IQM Lead to draw comparisons with the current plans to introduce a structured play programme at Meadowside. Two members of staff attended the most recent meeting held at Impact North West. They reported that hearing the stories and experiences of the young people at the alternative provision reinforced the importance of ensuring that mainstream schools are equipped to meet the needs of all learners effectively. One leader reflected that the key message they took from the visit was, "this is why we have to get it right in mainstream," highlighting the alignment between the discussions at the meeting and the school's own ethos and priorities.

Participation in the cluster group has supported the leaders not only in sharing practice but also in reflecting critically on provision at Meadowside, and identifying future areas for development, including the strengthening of pupil voice.
The IQM assessor suggested that the leaders may wish to consider hosting a cluster meeting, for a second time, to share the more recent developments and best practice which has been introduced under the current leadership team.

Evidence

This was the school's fifth annual Flagship Review. The IQM Lead submitted a detailed evaluation and action plan. The timetable for the review day included a range of activities including discussions of the IQM action plan with different stakeholders, thus enabling the assessor the opportunity to review a broad range of evidence, and the ongoing development of the 8 IQM elements. The Assessor evaluated the school's commitment to inclusion and successful completion of the previous year's targets through a wide range of evidence, including:

- IQM Flagship Evaluation and Action Plan
- Trust Academy Development Plan and priorities 2025/26
- Demographic data
- Attendance data
- Attendance tracker
- PA tracker
- Attendance Action plan
- Attendance information booklet for parents
- Case Studies of pupils
- School website
- DfE data and performance tables
- Learning walk – mainstream and DP rooms
- Observation of Strengthening Minds intervention
- Observation of year 5 Maths session
- Strengthening Minds Programme – teacher and pupil booklets
- Displays in classrooms
- Learning environment
- QFT at Meadowside overview document
- Assembly rota
- Stay Safe posters

<u>Discussions with:</u>

IQM Lead /SENDCO
Designated Provision Lead / SENDCO
Headteacher
Teachers
Teaching Assistants
Pupils (including children with SEND and members of the School Council)
Parents/carers
Welfare Officer
Office Manager

Evaluation of Annual Progress towards 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.

The school has undertaken a strategic programme of development to strengthen pupils' understanding of their own learning and emotional needs. This work has been driven by the Senior Leadership Team, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) and the Designated Provision (DP) Lead. The project has focused on embedding a consistent whole-school culture that prioritises emotional regulation, metacognition and inclusive practice. During the review, leaders reported that this work has also formed part of a wider cultural shift across the school.

A central aspect of the project has been the systematic development of approaches to support pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). The use of the Zones of Regulation across the school has provided pupils with a shared language to recognise and manage emotions. This begins in the early years, where the "Colour Monster" approach is used to support emotional awareness, and continues throughout the school through displays, classroom discussion and integrated teaching. In addition, the 'My Happy Mind' programme is now embedded from Reception onwards, with a weekly discrete lesson supported by regular reference throughout the school week. Pupils have developed strategies such as breathing techniques and taking reflection time during lessons (if needed), enabling them to understand their emotions and manage challenges more effectively. Targeted SEMH interventions further support pupils who require additional guidance. The Strengthening Minds programme, delivered in small groups by trained staff, enables pupils to explore emotional responses, reflect on behaviours and consider how their actions are perceived by others.

Observations during the IQM review visit demonstrated that pupils were highly engaged in these sessions and were able to discuss emotional triggers and strategies for managing them. Staff report that this intervention, although in its early stages, has already strengthened relationships and supported pupils to develop more positive attitudes towards school. In addition, the school offers a range of therapeutic and pastoral support including Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) sessions, access to a Play Therapist and strong welfare support for families.

Alongside SEMH development, leaders have prioritised the explicit teaching of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Teaching strategies across the school increasingly support pupils to reflect on learning processes, for example through the use of the "GULP" approach (Get it, Use it, Link it, Prove it) and structured modelling of thinking processes in lessons. During classroom observations, teachers were seen clearly modelling learning steps and checking pupils' understanding, enabling children to follow and apply strategies independently.

Overall, the school has taken significant and thoughtful steps to develop pupils' understanding of both their cognitive processes and emotional needs. Through a combination of universal strategies, targeted interventions and strong collaborative leadership, pupils are increasingly equipped with the skills required to access learning more independently. This work provides a strong foundation for supporting pupils' confidence, resilience and readiness as they prepare for the transition to secondary education.

Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Project Title: *To use technology and digital tools to remove barriers to learning and enhance inclusive practice across the school.*

The school has identified the strategic use of technology as a key next step in further strengthening inclusive practice and enabling all pupils to access learning more independently. Building on recent work to develop pupils' understanding of their cognitive and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, leaders now plan to extend this work by embedding digital tools that support accessibility, engagement and independence across the curriculum.

The IQM Lead outlined the rationale for the new project focus:

"Due to a change in leadership since the last project title was decided upon, a new project has now been created, linking to emerging needs and the school improvement plan. This project aims to strengthen inclusive practice across the school by embedding technology and digital tools that support accessibility, engagement and personalised learning for all pupils."

Leaders have already started laying the foundations for this development through participation in a trust-wide Digital Literacy Project. As part of this initiative, the school has undertaken a detailed audit of its current technological provision, including hardware, software and the range of applications currently used across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This review has enabled leaders to identify which digital tools are already supporting learning effectively and where additional resources or training may be required. The audit will inform decisions about future purchases and ensure that all technology adopted by the school is purposeful and aligned with teaching and learning priorities.

A key element of the project is the introduction and development of the use of iPads to support teaching and learning. Teachers are increasingly using iPads flexibly within lessons to model learning, share explanations and support pupils in recording their work, as evidence in lesson drop-ins on the review day. The school has invested in the digital platform Showbie, which allows teachers to provide visual modelling, screen recordings and voice instructions that pupils can revisit independently.

The use of technology is being carefully developed with a strong emphasis on pedagogy rather than simply increasing the use of devices. Leaders have encouraged staff to trial new approaches in a manageable and reflective way, with teachers currently exploring one new strategy each week using their teacher iPads in the classroom. Staff training is being led collaboratively by the DP Lead and Year 5 Teacher, who are involved in the trust-wide digital learning hub. This model enables the school to benefit from shared expertise and ensures that developments are informed by wider best practice across the trust.

The school intends to introduce the use of iPads gradually across Key Stage 2, beginning with Year 5 pupils and extending further in the summer term and next academic year. In addition, leaders are exploring the targeted allocation of devices to pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), enabling these children to access assistive technology that supports communication, organisation and independent learning.

The intention is that digital tools will increasingly be used to remove barriers for pupils with a range of needs, including cognition and learning difficulties, speech and language needs and SEMH challenges.

Leaders are also mindful of the need to ensure that pupils develop the skills required to use digital tools effectively and safely. Planned developments therefore include the explicit teaching of digital literacy and online safety, as well as the introduction of programmes designed to strengthen critical digital and media literacy. The school is also planning to provide workshops and guidance for parents and carers to support the use of technology at home and to strengthen understanding of how digital tools are used to support learning in school.

The assessor has suggested links with other IQM Centres of Excellence and Flagship schools which are also using technology and AI effectively to support inclusive practice. The assessor will provide email introductions to facilitate the new collaborative links.

Overview

Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School is a smaller-than-average primary school located in Warrington, serving pupils aged 2 to 11 and is part of The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT). The school serves a community experiencing high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, with a significantly above-average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (around 64.8%). The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is also well above the national average, at approximately 35.5%, and the school has three specialist Designated Provision rooms.

Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusive practice through the development of a carefully considered learning environment, a collaborative staff culture and systems that ensure pupils' needs are identified and supported effectively. Leaders have placed significant emphasis on ensuring that inclusive provision is embedded across the whole school rather than existing as a separate strand of practice. This approach is reflected in the consistent routines, high-quality classroom environments and coordinated systems that support pupils to access learning successfully.

A key strength of the school lies in the purposeful and calm learning environment that has been developed across all phases. From the Early Years onwards, classrooms are thoughtfully organised to support learning and engagement. In Reception, the environment is particularly well-designed, with careful attention given to layout and presentation to create a calm and welcoming atmosphere. Staff have introduced features such as low lighting and clearly structured areas that help pupils to settle quickly into learning. Similarly, across the school, displays are purposeful and support pupils' understanding of key concepts and routines. Staff regularly review classroom environments together during staff meetings, including opportunities for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1 teachers to visit each other's classrooms and reflect on practice.

Clear routines are embedded from an early stage in pupils' school experiences. These routines provide structure and predictability, which supports pupils to move confidently between activities and to focus on learning. During the review visit, pupils moved calmly around the school and settled quickly into lessons. A whole-school singing assembly was taking place in the morning of the visit, illustrating the positive culture that has been established, with pupils participating enthusiastically and staff modelling positive relationships. The school's emphasis on a safe and inclusive space is evident in the way pupils interact with each other and with adults.

Provision for pupils with additional needs is well-coordinated and benefits from strong collaboration between leaders and staff. The mainstream SENDCo works closely with the DP Lead/SENDCo, Welfare Team and teaching teams to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. Leaders have established systems to ensure that pupils' needs are identified and monitored effectively. Assessment information is used strategically to identify gaps in learning, including through detailed question-level analysis. This enables staff to respond quickly where pupils require additional support and ensures that teaching can be adapted accordingly. Pupils are supported through carefully designed provision plans, flexible routines such as soft landings and movement breaks, and access to specialist interventions.

Staff described the school as a highly supportive environment in which colleagues work collaboratively to address challenges and share ideas. One member of staff commented that "everyone checks in on you and supports each other if you need anything," reflecting the strong sense of teamwork that underpins the approach.

Teaching Assistants (TAs) play an important role in supporting pupils' learning. In Key Stage 2, all TAs have been trained to deliver intensive reading interventions aimed at accelerating progress for pupils who require additional support. This targeted provision is carefully coordinated and contributes to improving outcomes for pupils. TAs are also actively involved in classroom practice, working alongside teachers to support pupils' understanding and ensure that learning remains accessible.

The school's inclusive ethos is further strengthened through a range of opportunities that promote pupil voice and leadership. The School Council, which includes representatives from each class as well as pupils from the DP, meets regularly to discuss issues relating to pupils' experiences in school. In addition, pupils participate in the TCAT Parliament, which provides opportunities to work collaboratively with pupils from other schools within the trust. These opportunities encourage pupils to contribute to decision-making and to develop a sense of responsibility within the school community. Pupils spoke positively about these opportunities, explaining that they help them to share ideas that can improve school life.

The curriculum also provides a range of experiences that broaden pupils' learning and support personal development. Pupils described a variety of opportunities that they particularly value, including residential visits, museum trips and creative subjects such as art. One pupil explained that "the teachers do what they can to help and support in class," highlighting the way in which staff work with pupils to ensure that learning is accessible and enjoyable. Pupils also spoke enthusiastically about lessons where they are encouraged to challenge themselves, such as in mathematics where additional challenge activities allow them to deepen their understanding.

Partnership with parents and carers is an area of strength. Parent and carer representatives who kindly met with the assessor were highly positive about the support provided by staff, and the strong communication systems in place. They commented on the willingness of staff to listen to their perspectives and to respond to their children's needs. One parent highlighted the accessibility of leaders, noting that if they wish to speak with the SENDCO or class teacher, "they will give their time." Parents and carers also spoke positively about the range of workshops, coffee mornings and support sessions offered by the school, which help them to feel involved in their children's education.

The school's work with families is supported by a proactive Welfare Team that maintains regular contact with parents and carers. The Welfare officer and Office Manager play a crucial role in supporting pupils and families, including through home visits and close monitoring of attendance. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the context of the local community, recognising that many families face significant challenges. Leaders have therefore developed systems that combine high expectations with a compassionate approach that seeks to understand and address barriers to attendance and engagement. The Headteacher is an inspirational leader who plays an active role in maintaining the inclusive culture. Staff and parents all commented

positively on the headteacher's presence around the school and the positive relationships that have been developed with families.

Assessor: Mrs Sarah Linari