



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School Longdendale High School
Spring Street
Hyde
Cheshire
SK14 8LW

Head/Principal Ms Andrea Jones

IQM Lead Mr Alex Glancey

Date of Review 18th March 2024

Assessor Ms Alyson Tolley

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Northwessians

Ambassador Sonia Robson

Next Meeting May 2024

Meeting Focus To be confirmed

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Spring 2022	4th May 2022	No
Summer 2022	5th July 2022	Yes
Autumn 2022	10th November 2022	No
Spring 2023	4th May 2023	Yes
Summer 2023	29th June 2023	Yes
Autumn 2023	4th December 2023	No
Spring 2024	11th March 2024	Yes

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The school understands that being a member of the Cluster Group is an opportunity to seek out new ideas as well as share and disseminate their practice and be a supportive and proactive member of their group. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) attended the most recent meeting and has gained some useful ideas to support the planning and implementation of their resource base which is set to open in September 2024.



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Evidence

In advance of the review the school submitted a detailed evaluation of their Flagship Project (2023-25) for Year 1 and I was able to review this in advance. During the review I was able to meet with a variety of stakeholders and the detailed discussions enabled me to gain a thorough insight into the excellent inclusive practice that is embedded as well as an insight into the project for 2024-25.

Discussions during the review included the following:

- Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher (AHT) for Inclusion – discussions about the school/ Trust current context and continued school improvements in progress and Inclusivity.
- Key pastoral staff (teaching and non-teaching) – development of Relational Inclusion over the past 12 months.
- Deputy SENDCo and a Teaching Assistant (TA) – specialist intervention Forest Schools.
- Inclusion leaders – AHTs and Deputy Headteacher (DH) – review of the project to date and Year 2 Strategy.
- Students.
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).
- SENDCo and Aspire Centre Manager.
- Parents (non-teaching members of staff).

In addition:

- Tour of the School.
- Scrutiny of website and social media.



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The school's progress on the Flagship Project from last year is based on 'Relational Inclusion' and this is a two-year plan. The school has shown huge commitment to their inclusive ethos by working in partnership with the Executive Headteacher of the local Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in Tameside to develop and implement the relational inclusive practice, recognising that students' life experiences have a significant impact on their behaviour for learning and their engagement in school life. They have utilised research into the impact of trauma and types of attachment styles on young people as well as using the support from the PRU to upskill staff through targeted Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Subsequently, they have developed an extremely valuable and effective project that supports the complex needs of many of their students. This demonstrates their ongoing desire to continue to establish and embed positive well-rounded experiences for all their students, by consistently looking at the whole child and not just focusing on academic outcomes.

The vision is that by the end of the project, all stakeholders at all levels within the organisation will have accessed CPD in Relational Inclusion and will be using it in their everyday practice. This will ensure that all staff fully understand the impact that trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) can have on young people and that they have the skills, knowledge and understanding to apply this consistently across the school.

One of the key priorities of the project for Year 1 was to develop the practice of Pastoral Team Leaders and Pastoral Support Workers (PSW) through training on the impact of trauma on children, young people and their families. Key staff, including the 'on call' and Safeguarding Team, have received this training over the past eight months and continue to receive fortnightly CPD based on relational inclusion, ACES, attachment styles and consistency of language. One leader shared how important the use of language is with all young people but in particular those who have experienced trauma and how she felt the impact of this is so powerful in interactions with students. It is evident from discussions with Pastoral Leaders that they have welcomed this training and have used to it develop their knowledge, skills and understanding and have started to establish this in their work with young people. They explained that the training has helped them to understand students better, they feel they know what triggers to look for to help them identify need and they know what questions they need to ask. Those who teach have also been able to modify their approaches in the classroom and this has had an impact on their relationships with students.

The discussion with the pastoral leaders demonstrated their commitment to the project and they have been given the title 'Trauma Champions'; this in itself drives the message of what they are aiming to achieve and they are quite clearly adept at championing inclusion and working hard to meet the needs of all their students. The next step is for the Trauma Champions to provide CPD for the teaching team so that this can start to be developed and reflected in classroom practice, enabling teachers to support emotional regulation. This will then be rolled out to the wider pastoral team followed by support staff, including lunch time supervisors, the school's administration team and all other staff who have interactions with students. This highlights how Relational Inclusion is being prioritised across the whole school and further reflects the significant ongoing work being conducted with students and their families.



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The Trauma Champions have been developing screening tools to enable them to start to match provision to need. They are using some internally designed tools (School Around the Child) as well as modifying others (Boxall Profile). They are consistently evaluating these and proactively seek out other tools to enhance their identification of need including working with a Trauma Therapist and other professionals. Following screening, plans are devised that reflect the progress and ever-changing needs of each student. These plans have been developed using a standardised proforma to build an accurate profile and the school has worked with external professionals to quality assure (QA) before the plans are implemented.

The school has used data strategically to identify their initial cohort of students. The cohort includes those students at immediate risk of permanent exclusion, those at future risk of permanent exclusion, with high suspension rates and those who may be under the radar. Using all available data, they have identified approximately eight students per year group (no more than forty in total) to trial the plans and interventions. Initial meetings have been led by the pastoral team and have taken place with families being fully engaged in the process thus ensuring a holistic approach.

The school has identified key impact measures and has looked at behaviour and attendance as well as a range of soft data such as student voice, engagement in interventions and lessons, and body language. They gave an example of a Year 8 boy who last year had received several fixed term exclusions but having received support and intervention through the project is now a 'different student'. He is fully engaged in learning and enjoying all aspects of school including positive acknowledgement of his successes through the behaviour system. He has had no major behaviour incidents and one member of staff highlighted how his body language is one of the key indicators of these changes whilst he is consistently engaging in active learning. Another example was a student who had previously been at risk of permanent exclusion; the initial screening unravelled significant information regarding experienced trauma and ACES and subsequently, staff were able to use different approaches with him and were taught how to 'bring him down'. The impact of the work done with this student has been massive and he now helps to support his peers. Pastoral staff feel that they are being more proactive in their interactions with young people and this has had an impact on their day-to-day work. The Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) reported that the numbers on the corridors have significantly reduced over the past year and when I was taking a tour around school there were very few students out of lessons.

In addition to the CPD on trauma, there has been whole school training on staff wellbeing and it was pleasing to hear that there is a daily behaviour debrief where staff check up on each other and offer support when needed. The Deputy Headteacher talked about how helpful this can be after a hard day and that staff were able to openly discuss their feelings. This was reinforced in other discussions throughout the day.

The school has several excellent ways to communicate student needs to staff and is using these to promote the work being done through the project. A weekly staff briefing is held with a dedicated student element where key information is shared so that staff can use this to further support those students. There is also a monthly student bulletin to raise staff awareness of those most in need. There are also regular inclusion briefings where the focus is on one student and appropriate information is shared with staff



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alongside suggested strategies. The Assistant Headteacher gave a recent example of a parent coming in to work with their child's teachers to inform them of health issues and to answer any questions staff might have. This is an outstanding example of the work being done with parents/carers and further evidence of outstanding inclusive practice.

Without a doubt, the school has made huge progress during Year 1 of Relational Inclusion and this was evident from all aspects of the review and from discussions with staff and students. They have a clear plan for Year 2 and spoke at length about the next steps to drive Relational Inclusion so that it is consistent across the school.



Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Relational Inclusion Year 2

Whilst the school has made progress and had measured impact during Year 1, they will continue to focus on developing, establishing and embedding their understanding of how to support those students who have difficulty regulating their social and emotional responses and are at risk from several different factors both in and out of school. CPD for the rest of the staff is essential and is being prioritised. Teaching staff will receive the next tranche of training because, as they have rightly identified, what happens in the classroom is key to the experiences students have in school. Staff have already had initial training to raise awareness but the next steps are crucial so that teachers have the right tools to support students with emotional regulation both in and out of the classroom. Alongside this they will continue to develop the use of assessment tools so that they can identify the appropriate support and access to services.

The two key areas of focus remain the same but build on progress made in Year 1:

- 1. CPD for all staff will be undertaken in Relational Inclusive practice so that they fully understand the impact students' life experiences can have on their behaviour and their wider engagement with school. This will lead to the development of the Pastoral Team Leaders and PSWs, of the teaching staff and the wider support staff:**

Development of the teaching staff, followed by the same for the wider support staff. Trauma Leaders/Champions will support the CPD of the wider teaching and support staff, ensuring that the relevant staff receive training and education on the impact of trauma on students so they can recognise the symptoms of trauma, recognise the range of stress responses, identify trauma reminders, support emotional regulation in the classroom and around the school, relevant to their roles.

- 2. The school will develop the use of results of trauma-informed assessments and profiles so that they identify appropriate trauma-specific services and support for students, leading to individualised plans that reflect the progress and ever-changing needs of the student:**

Continuing to use data strategically to identify the cohort of students where there may be an immediate risk of Permanent Exclusion (PEX) from school, future risk of PEX, high suspensions and those under the radar.

Continue to establish and implement the use of trauma screening tools within the school setting that have been tested, ensuring that they consistently measure what they are intended to and making use of external professionals to QA this before plans are implemented in the school setting.

Working closely with the Trauma Therapist to identify appropriate trauma screening tools to use to support diagnostic understanding of the causal reasons for behaviour, training staff in the use of such tools as appropriate and then implementing the use of the screening tools before the next step of developing profiles and plans.



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Further continuing to develop and implement a standardised proforma to build an accurate trauma-informed student profile that informs pertinent, personalised support and approaches, whilst also working with the Trauma Therapist and ABE to continue to develop and refine the 'School Around the Child' approach and proforma. Alongside this, appropriate pastoral and inclusion staff will be trained in its use and then the approach will be trialled with key identified students to develop and implement a range of personalised strategies. The impact will be evaluated to inform successful outcomes and the review and roll out of the approach more widely across all year groups.



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Overview

Longdendale High School (LHS) is a mainstream 11-16 secondary school in Tameside with 805 students on roll. A total of 28.8% are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and over 31% of students are Pupil Premium (PP). A total of 12.2% of students are identified as having a Special Educational Need/Disability (SEND) with 18 students having Education, Health and Care Plans. The school has had a strong reputation for inclusion in Tameside for over 20 years and the strong inclusive ethos is evident through its website and social media. On arrival at the school, I immediately felt welcome and this was reiterated throughout the day through discussions with staff, students and parents and as I walked around the building.

LHS is part of the Stamford Park Trust led by Ashton Sixth Form College (ASFC) and it is evident from discussions with the Headteacher that there is a strong sense of collaboration across the Trust. There are regular calendared subject-specific network meetings across both the secondary schools which has led to improved practice within the two schools. Last summer there was specialist SEND CPD across the schools and again this is another example of the beneficial support from the Trust. The two secondary schools within the Trust have shared enrichment such as LHS students using the gym at the other school, students are taken there to use the facilities as part of the inclusion programme focusing on improving attendance and raising awareness on promoting health. There has also been some significant financial investment from the Trust which has resulted in a new library resource, new ICT facilities which were highlighted on the tour, a new minibus and very importantly, a new heating system!

Links with ASFC are strong as this is the destination for most students from LHS post-16. There are taster days for students including a recent one for Year 7 students which is an excellent example of promoting aspiration from an early age in school. The Assistant Headteacher spoke warmly about the work being done by ex-LHS students returning to school to work with students and the development of alumni is a testament to relationships staff in LHS have had with students over time.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have worked hard with all stakeholders to relaunch the school's vision and core values: Responsibility, Resilience and Aspiration applicable to both staff and students. Inclusion permeates the forefront of the mission statement and it is more than just a 'statement', the school does what it says. The values are highly visible on displays around the school and the fact they are concise means they are easy to read and digest by all stakeholders regularly.

I had the opportunity to meet with a variety of stakeholders throughout the day as well as take a tour around the school. It was evident throughout my interactions with staff and with members of the SLT that there is a strong sense of pride in being part of LHS; the commitment to reflect and self-evaluate underpins everything they do. The passion for inclusion percolates through all areas of the school and from every member of the team. Whilst walking around the school, interactions between members of SLT and support staff with staff confident in approaching SLT to ask questions. There is also evidence of a strong commitment to supporting and developing staff both professionally and personally. Building opportunities to debrief and access support for staff is a real positive for their emotional health and wellbeing. Staff also have access to the Employee Assist Programme which has been brought in by the Trust.



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Discussions with the Headteacher and AHT (Inclusion) shared some of the many improvements that have taken place over the past year. The school has invested in employing two Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs), one with responsibility for whole school literacy and the other, numeracy. This enables them to have robust measures in place for identifying and supporting those students who need additional support and intervention, from those needing light touch to those needing more intensive support. The school has prioritised whole school CPD on the new behaviour policy and this has had an impact on consistency. High-quality CPD has also been provided relevant to individual staff needs as well as the priorities of the school. This means staff feel supported and can seek support and advice when needed from their peers as well as from SLT. The school is forward-thinking and is consistently self-reflective, having had a National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) SEND review last summer which resulted in some positive outcomes for the school as well as external recognition for the hard work done by the SEND Team. Linked to the Teaching and Learning framework, 'walk-throughs' have been introduced and staff have bought into these with the impact being seen in the planning and delivery of lessons. This has supported teachers by recognising good practice as well as providing opportunities for further development.

It is evident that student leadership continues to be a highlight of the school and continues to be well coordinated. I was able to briefly meet the Head Girl and Head Boy who presented as happy and confident individuals. There has been proactive work in encouraging disadvantaged students to take on leadership roles and during the Head Boy and Girl recruitment process, there were some students with SEND who applied and had interviews. This reinforces the good work within the school that encourages such inclusivity.

I met with the Deputy SENDCo and member of the Inclusion Team and they shared the fantastic Forest Schools project. This has been established with the support of a Forest Schools Leader who has worked alongside a member of the school staff who is currently being trained as a leader. The Deputy SENDCo has devised the Young Leader scheme and whilst it is still in its early days it looks to be forward-thinking with opportunities for students to celebrate their successes. I had the opportunity to speak with some of the students who have been involved and they were able to articulate how much it has helped them and it was lovely to see them able to share their experiences so positively.

I had the privilege of meeting with some students who have all previously struggled with different aspects of school. The fact that they were able to speak independently to me about their experiences and the support they have had, further highlights the outstanding work that is done to support vulnerable young people. All of them have received support from the Aspire Centre which is an integral part of the school. It has two teaching rooms and students can access both one-to-one and small-group support. One student talked about how she feels she has been listened to and how she feels she can approach any member of staff in the Aspire Centre when she needs support but mentioned in particular, the Deputy SENDCo who has played a part in supporting her to become the quietly confident Year 11 student that she presents as. Other students talked about all staff in LHS 'care' and they feel that they also listen to them. All students I met are a real credit to the school and a testament to the hard work of all staff.



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Meetings with other stakeholders also highlighted other areas of excellent practice. A discussion with the DDSL, also a Trauma Champion, outlined the school's focus on early help where possible. She also talked about the benefits of attending the daily behaviour debrief sessions. She makes sure she links in with other colleagues such as Heads of Year and the SEND team to ensure a joined-up approach rather than working in isolation. Again, another example of the whole-child approach to supporting students.

The SENDCo and Aspire Manager talked about the role the Aspire Centre plays in supporting a range of students and gave some good examples of effective practice. The centre is open for breakfast throughout the day and after school where it is being used as a stepping stone to support several students back into school. It is staffed by experienced members of staff who have significant knowledge and understanding of a range of needs. They are approachable and provide a welcoming and caring environment. Students can also access the area at unstructured times such as break and lunch and this provides a haven for some of the most vulnerable students. This was also supported by both student and parent voice. The SENDCo also shared information about the 'Healthy Hyde' project with the Primary Care Trust whereby a member of the Health Team comes in weekly to focus on the wellbeing of students. The recent focus has been on 'Managing strong feelings' and then participating in some physical activities. They have also offered support in the community to try to re-engage persistent absentees. I also met with two parents (who also work in the school) and they spoke enthusiastically about the support their children receive; they also spoke highly about communication between school and home and said that as parents (as well as members of staff), they always feel listened to.

I am therefore firmly of the opinion that the school continues to fully meet the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award 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 Alyson Tolley

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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