



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School: Newfield School
Oldbank Lane
Blackburn, Lancashire
BB1 2PW

Head/Principal: Dave Terry

IQM Lead: Jennifer Riley

Date of Review: 19th May 2022

Assessor: Matthew Cuss

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: CIN NW

Ambassador: Sarah Linari

Date of Next Meeting: 7th July 2022

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: Forest School and curriculum, nurturing provision, and transition

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

Discussions with:

- Headteacher and Inclusion Lead/Deputy Head/SLT. Discussions about the IQM Flagship Project and whole school priorities.
- Meetings with teaching and SLT (Senior Leadership Team) staff related to outreach work and training offer.
- Meeting with staff related to the IQM project and progress made towards autism provision improvement and autism satellite provision, the wider curriculum, community art projects, poetry installations, dance workshops etc.
- Meeting with Family Wellbeing Coordinators.
- Teaching Assistants to discuss their multiple roles.
- Discussion with Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) and Counsellor.

Additional Activities:

- 'Vision of the day' meeting
- Tour of the School alongside pupils and meetings with pupils
- Scrutiny of website, social media: in relation to the project focus and meetings focused on the next steps of the IQM flagship project



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The school's progress from the previous year is based on the project focus of:

'Strengthening Links to Local Communities.'

with the main objective to; eliminate barriers, increase community links and pride with the understanding of Newfield School inclusive of all children and young people with disabilities.

During the review of the school's progress towards completing this project, it was evident that the detailed preparation, as well as the application of their targets, were both determined and practical, related to the need to keep their students safe during the pandemic and to also interact with the community in creative ways. The plan from leaders was mindful of the vulnerability of their pupils and their SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) setting. They were also careful and considerate of issues related locally to Blackburn during the pandemic and how that needed to be closely monitored in relation to socialisation and community links.

Despite these unavoidable restrictions, leaders still linked with the setting of the Queen's Lodge via artwork at Christmas time and have maintained links with a school orphanage in Kenya. To further maintain links, the school still forged bonds with local and regional schools such as Seashell Trust Manchester and Chestnut Lodge in Widnes via email, through local and national initiatives.

One main aim of the project, simply put, is for the whole school community to have developed in terms of an outreach offer, which they have worked very hard to achieve, particularly in the creation and appointment of 2 new 'Family Wellbeing Coordinators' who provide support for parents and families. These professionals offer a variety of support including phone calls, attendance support and advocating for families at social care meetings, providing home visits and also offering family training sessions. They even nurture trust through coffee mornings and have been supporting parents to attend medical appointments for their children.

The drive and passion of the staff in partnership with the community has bred wonderful schemes, support, and values in line with each IQM project target and the Wellbeing Coordinators are a wonderful example of this. They also crucially work during the school holiday period which means they can continue to support families in the community when school is not in session, which has proved very successful. They also run a sibling's group, working alongside the Children with Disabilities Social Care Team during each holiday. This is wonderful progress and gives the community of Newfield School a feeling of constant care in line with all the values of Inclusion.

Therefore, when observing staff and children within the school and having meetings related to each of the project targets, it was inspiring to hear how Newfield has worked so hard to become more visible, transparent, and active within the local community. Each small action leads to a benefit for the children and comforts and



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supports other settings as well as building trust with families who might attend Newfield in the future.

They build these links through a range of proactive and informative actions such as having a Newfield stall at the Blackburn Disability Information Day 2022 at Blackburn College, giving information, and networking with a range of providers and service users. They are currently planning a multi-agency transition event to support families thinking about next steps after Newfield, including colleges and social care providers.

The children are clearly cared for and provided for at the point of need, but the IQM project has further developed the mindset of the school with a range of creative and 'outward looking' ideas. For example, Newfield has developed autism provision within a local primary school with a TLR (Teacher with Learning Responsibilities) appointed to lead on this development. The children working there can join in lessons with mainstream peers, make use of the Forest School provision there, as well as coming into the main Newfield building at times to spend time with their peers there. This is working well and is a good example of shared resources promoting collaboration.

One of the key areas of the project was related to providing and accessing training and Newfield has been able to continue their collaborative practice in terms of being a Training Hub. With their lead in this area (Another TLR) delivering training on Autism to all staff in school and to other schools in Blackburn and Darwen. This is having a great impact in the community and Newfield are now widening the delivery of the training to include social care and respite centres within the community. This has also developed alongside online training.

All these actions lead to a culture of 'what more can we do?' and the school is preparing and working hard to develop their outside spaces for their pupils and the community. The ideas and willingness to share shows great planning and a deep care for others. They have also made links with a number of charities supporting the development of outdoor spaces, including carrying out a tree planting project where Newfield will be encouraging all members of the Newfield family to get involved with tree planting on the school grounds. Much of this has taken place recently to great success. The school has also been working with The Tree Council who run a Young Tree Champion scheme which Newfield has been successful in joining, the purpose of which is getting pupils out into nature and helping to improve the environment. Staff clearly want their pupils to practically develop their understanding and awareness of the natural world.

Leaders are aware of their position on the journey to completing the project and how to complete it. Leaders made it clear they want to 'roll out' more community work in all the areas they have been strategically working on. I am certain that during 2022 the objectives for the Flagship project will be embedded and the roots of Newfield School within the community will become even stronger.



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Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project:

'Strengthening Links to Local Communities'

Overarching Aim: *To increase community involvement; eliminate barriers, increase community links and pride and understanding of Newfield School inclusive of children and young people with disabilities.*

Develop a community stall within Blackburn Market, in conjunction with Work Experience opportunities.

The school has made a link with Blackburn market, children from the ages of 14 to 19 make items within lessons to sell on the stall itself, some excellent practical and social skills have been nurtured in this area. This has included the act of setting up the stall, making it presentable, selling items to the public and interacting with them. Pleasingly, this includes the School for Autism pupils who take part and run the stall, alongside SEND school pupils. This has been developed from early steps where pupils create 'enterprise' stalls in school and have opportunities to sell to their peers, which have also been taking place when other opportunities have been limited due to the pandemic. Again, creative steps have been made to continue the work experience process no matter the local/global restrictions and the school has worked to nurture independence in 'Takeover Day' in school. This takes place over a week in November for pupils to experience a range of professions within the school building.

Next Step as Discussed during the Flagship Review:

Staff and Senior Leaders want to enhance staffing numbers to ensure the use of a range of settings such as resuming work at the market and establishing further work experience locations and more individual placements, especially for older students.

Nurture links with residential homes, Post 19 providers, mainstream providers, and further parental engagement.

There have been many mutually beneficial events with the local residential home and children and staff spoke with pride and happiness about the choir's Christmas Singing event and their mutual support of Fair-Trade products in both settings. The next step is to be able to invite them to more events such as School Plays and Productions and informal 'tea and chat' visits.

The Family Wellbeing Coordinators are now in post and making an incredible change in the community through all their actions and events, as mentioned in the overall overview of progress mentioned earlier in this report. However, it must be noted that giving these roles titles and areas of accountability was a brave choice by leaders and is an investment that is paying off handsomely in the lives of the school and wider community.



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Related to transition and links to other settings, the school has built links with Blackburn College and host meetings for parents related to transition and have attended other settings such as Stonyhurst and St Thomas' for wheelchair dancing events. Parents of younger children have been engaged by 'Buzzy Bees' Early Years events and the children already in situ at Newfield have benefitted from the school taking part in the Linking Schools Project and having a Satellite provision for Autism at Shadsworth Primary School. The links with parents, other settings and the community are consistently being reviewed, added to and are ever-growing!

Next Step as Discussed during the Flagship Review:

To continue on this path and see even more links with the older people from Queen's Lodge. Leaders are keen to develop opportunities for parents as volunteers in school and host sessions for parents to take part in learning alongside their child. The next step is to build more taster days at Blackburn College and link this to a full transition event, which will maintain and develop link schools and settings.

Develop and formalise CPD training and development offer from Newfield to other schools and providers and provide support to others related to Disability Awareness.

Newfield have used local and IQM links to support their own staff and staff from other settings to enable tours of differing facilities, spending time in varied classes observing strategies, observing different visual supports, use of visual timetables amongst other beneficial training and development activities. Newfield teachers have been going out to observe and offer advice to specific challenges in mainstream classes with particular children.

They are on the path of developing a portfolio of traditional training for staff training on specific topics such as Makaton, Communication, Disability Awareness, Autism approaches. Leaders are aware that to grow this offer they need to generate income in order to ensure this is sustainable.

The school has hosted Disability Awareness sessions for school staff, parents, local businesses, mainstream schools and continue to offer disability awareness training to local businesses. They also want to provide training sessions for social care services and another TLR has been appointed to develop this training offer. This will involve a training area on the school website and ways to publicise courses to benefit the community.

Next Step as Discussed during the Flagship Review:

Leaders and all staff want to further embed the training offer and the way it is provided, publicised, and delivered. Widen the delivery Disability Awareness as a priority.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Newfield School are active participants of their Cluster Group and want to host further sessions on physical development.



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Newfield School are attending and leading the next Cluster meeting with a focus on:

- The ASD Provision at Shadsworth and how this has been developed by Newfield School, with cluster members attending both sites.
- Newfield School were able to share experiences of having a school counsellor on site and the benefits of this.
- Cluster events that took place online included discussing the role of staff at Newfield, the school context, learning about other differing cluster schools and future possible venues and hosts. All schools took turns presenting mutually helpful ideas to each other via MS Teams which was a benefit related to locale and timetabling.
- Health and Wellbeing activities have developed even further in other schools due to Newfield's discussion of Nurture Dogs, this evolved into informing other schools about becoming 'Thinking Schools' and more Trauma Informed schools.



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Overview

From initial meetings with Leaders at Newfield School, which had a focus on their vision for the ongoing IQM project it was immediately evident that the school is the embodiment of inclusion in action.

The Headteacher spoke of arriving at the school, which already had a deep culture of wellbeing, as a recently appointed Interim Headteacher and he described the pride he had to join a school with such strong inclusive values. He saw himself as a 'fresh pair of eyes' and was able to highlight to me the progress the school has made on their IQM journey and to also give his vastly experienced viewpoint on the value the school adds to their community.

He explained to me the vast scale of parental support and trust the school holds and supported this by sharing how parents speak of the 'love' they have for the school and how local families 'vote with their feet' by actively choosing Newfield as the perfect destination for their children to attend, with one parent describing a school place as 'like winning the lottery.' Later, when reflecting on this Flagship Review through my research, observations, and discussion with the Inclusion Lead at the school I fully support and agree with the Headteacher's open and honest evaluation.

The Inclusion Lead at the school is the perfect example of the values the school is looking to promote within their Flagship project, armed with decades worth of examples explaining how the school has become (and nurtured) their place as a true flagship school for inclusion in every sense of the word. To expand on that the Inclusion Lead was able to concisely and with tangible evidence explain an overview of the progress made towards their project targets and the choices that have gone into implementing them. The most important part of the project is that it holds the needs of the families the school serves as the overall indicator of success.

She explained the importance placed on 'permanence of care' and how the school and the sheer range of specific care they offer creates a bespoke and vibrant curriculum - where the 'school *is* the curriculum.' Her planning of the day allowed me to see this in action, where each activity I viewed demonstrated an *experience* for the child, which was deeply rooted in engagement, understanding of the individual and highly trained professionals. It simply wasn't enough to tell me of the way the children get the highest quality education, practical life skills and care – I was able to witness this during my tour with the empowered, happy, and confident children.

The consistency of care was immediately evident as I met countless staff, all with the same focus, calm care, word choices, guidance, and skill. The children were trusted to meet me on arrival, to guide me between classes and to explain their lessons – which they did through the 'safe space' provided by Newfield. It was lovely to be embraced into the school during this tour. Children with Autism were able to tell me about the library, how they love outdoor work and it struck me how accepting and understanding the children are of each other. They run cafes for staff and fellow pupils, building communication and self-care skills. In every single session observed it was delightful to see the children are taught that part of looking



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after yourself is being able to look after others. The investment in tactile technology, sensory studios, music, and the creative arts is used to enhance engagement, overall vocabulary and it is utilised to perfection.

Staff meetings were particularly helpful in clarifying the project's progress and in each meeting, there was an excitement to 'keep going' and continue to develop the provision for their pupils, families, and children in other settings and also in the wider community. Staff were able to explain each of their roles (all of which they were perfectly suited to) and were keen to espouse the qualities of other members of staff in a genuine and selfless way. It made it obvious how the children have learnt to be so community spirited and kind to each other. For example, a member of staff described a long-standing member of staff as the children's 'greatest advocate and role model.'

One staff member explained the depth of outreach they provide for older children, that they work outside school creating beautiful green spaces for the whole community, real life skills and helps the children towards their own personalised targets. It is these fundamentals and the evidence-based research and how the strategies are put into place – that creates a wonderful training opportunity for other schools to learn from Newfield, in areas they may need support. For example, their outreach support of other schools showed great awareness of what mentees may require – such as giving other settings opportunities to come into Newfield and observe 'how' to implement strategies by seeing them in 'action.' This also includes parental courses, with the understanding that with education comes understanding, acceptance and common goals.

The school is using the planning and reflective nature of the IQM process and cluster support to enhance their service to the community. The best example of this is in bravely formalising the roles of Family Wellbeing Coordinators which has given clear performance indicators to work to and has clarified and invested in the amazing family support work already being done at Newfield and it was a pleasure to meet both post holders. The lines of communication are clearer, teaching staff feel empowered to share concerns with them as a port of call. Leaders are in constant contact and the holders of these posts work closely with the Safeguarding Leads too. The most important and noteworthy part of the decision to implement these roles, is the fact that it responds to a clear need highlighted by the parents and what they said they wanted during a consultation period. These are not arbitrary choices governed by an outside professional but are wholly addressing what the community asked for in a sensitive and forward-thinking way.

The Deputy Headteacher explained the graduated approach to support the needs of each individual pupil, which would surely clarify and give confidence to any parent of a child at Newfield. Other teaching staff explained the value of children from other settings sharing time and skills with the children of Newfield and the mutual benefits of being able to talk about feelings in the spirit of community, with people who they may never have met in their everyday lives. This then leads to understanding between all parties. Again, another member of staff was able to show the communication links within art, design, and poetry project. So creative and so needed!



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Each act of service, led by a member of Newfield staff showed a clarity of vision, a creative approach and passion from the member of staff leading the area. For example, the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award Lead made sure the children and wider community (especially the most vulnerable members of it) were emboldened to not only make outdoor spaces look wonderful and for the children to learn 'hands on' skills, but also to use this time to meet those with differing lives to their own.

I was given examples of parents, grandparents and previous staff members being given the chance to discuss their worries, concerns through shared experiences. One incredible example was given where an adult was helping with an outdoor activity and was overcome with emotion due to the bonds being built. I was moved that this kind of wonderful community building, and support was presented as a 'matter of fact,' and I believe that says a great deal about the dedication of the staff and commitment to the cause.

It is this kind of dedicated and selfless provision that aids the school in being such a valuable member of their IQM cluster, helping the special needs community through IQM Special Needs online meetings (as one example) and being so proactive in helping others. This was also echoed in my meeting with the School Council – who talked about 'making our own decisions' and 'speaking up for other pupils' as well as telling me about their role in the school news report, the jobs they do during 'Takeover Days' and most of all - they must have been the most friendly and smiley group I have met for a long time! Verbal and Non-Verbal students were able to convey kindness, calmness, and fun during our meeting. Again, their role models within school are pivotal in nourishing the children's inter-personal skills.

Another example of relational modelling was when I was lucky enough to see the children taking part in Wheelchair Dancing. All children were gaining so much from the experience. The happy faces of the children and staff, the opportunity to experience liberating movement and listen to music. All with children and adults from a range of backgrounds and peers. Relationships built and relationships encouraged - in a creative and thoughtful way.

Looking to the future and the growth of Newfield's aims to support local mainstream schools: it was inspiring to discuss a Teaching and Learning Responsibility role (TLR) with a teacher whose main aim was to give back to the school community and share what she has learned herself through her time at Newfield. Her drive to make the most of relationships with local mainstream schools and help both settings was a wonderful end to the day. To hear career progression described as an opportunity to 'give back' is rare and edifying to hear.

The unique place of Newfield in the community is so multifaceted that common occurrences could be missed during a one-day visit, however I was lucky that one young man made sure I didn't miss the bereavement memorial tree. This is where pupils and family members, who have sadly passed away, have their names added to the tree as leaves, along with a sensitive memorial service for each leaf included. The child was able to tell me about his sister who had a leaf on the tree, what it represented and that there was a dedication service for her. He looked proud of his



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family member whilst sharing her memory with me. It is clear that he and countless others are exactly where they need to be. Surely there is no better example of inclusion.

Assessor: Matthew Cuss

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

J. McCann

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