



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School Whitley Lodge First School
Woodburn Drive
Whitley Bay
Tyne & Wear
NE26 3HW

Head/Principal Ms Jennifer Palmer

IQM Lead Ms Shereen Walton

Date of Review 8th July 2025

Assessor Ms Lisa Ingleby

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Tyne and Wear

Ambassador Ms Emily Carr

Next Meeting

Meeting Focus

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2023	9 th October 2023	Yes
Spring 2024	3 rd May 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	24 th June 2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	16 th September 2024	Yes
Spring 2025	20 th March 2025	Yes
Summer 2025	3 rd July 2025	



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The Impact of the Cluster Group:

Whitley Lodge First School are active participants in their Cluster Group. The Headteacher and IQM Lead recognise the value of the CPD which is acquired by colleagues who attend the Cluster Group Meetings. The structure of the Cluster Group Meetings is identification of keynote speakers from those schools who have embedded inclusive practices relevant to the focus of the meetings. These professional discussions and sharing of effective inclusive practices are welcomed by Whitley Lodge First School. The Headteacher noted the meetings as inspiring and will regularly cascade the information obtained through whole school staff meetings to support the shaping of inclusive practices further across the school.

The input from Whitley Lodge First School has also shaped the agenda of the meetings through the sharing of their mental health offer in school and their inclusive practices within Early Years. Due to the increasing number of schools across the Northeast, their original Cluster Group has now been organised into schools based in their locality. A recommendation is that across the academic year, the meetings to be a combination of locality based and regionally based at a central location so that CPD is strengthened through access to regional expertise relevant to the agreed actions of their Flagship project.

Evidence:

- Discussions with Headteacher and IQM Lead about IQM Project and whole school priorities.
- Review of Flagship Action Plan for project completed last academic year with the Headteacher and IQM Lead.
- Confirmation of Flagship Project for this academic year including key actions taken and those underway with the Headteacher and IQM Lead.
- Meeting with representatives from Reception and Year 4 who are involved in the Buddy System.
- Meeting with PSHE Lead and the Student Council.
- Meetings with the following Leads: PE, Art, and Early Years.
- Meeting with Representative from the Mental Health Connect Team to discuss their partnership work with the school.

Additional Activities:

- Tour of the school and Learning Walk.
- Access to key school documentation including progress data.



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Target 1: Impact of the development of an outdoor area to be used as a regulation space.

Whitley Lodge First School are committed to recognising and valuing diversity so that the differing learning needs and preferences of individual learners are identified and met. During the Assessment Day, the tenacity of leaders was evident as they articulated how they secured funding from their Local Authority to avert from the approach of an Alternative Resource Provision (ARP) which was exclusive to those children with specific needs to create a regulation space to be accessed by all children. The focus became about the children being a continuous part of the school which started with the placement of the regulation space in the heart of the school. Access to the space by the children is provided as part of their embedded school routine, where access is available throughout the school day and the resources available, for example, bubbles, water and sand provides the safe space for the children to regulate, hence the name, 'The Haven'.

Conversations with the Headteacher and IQM Lead identified the main needs of the children beyond the diagnosis of ASD/ADHD and dyslexia to be dysregulation. Therefore, the interventions delivered to the children through 'The Haven' underpin the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills to enable the children to have full access to the curriculum. Examples of the interventions delivered are Read Write Inc, Time to talk, Number Talks and Social Play. Leaders are passionate about empowering and developing staff and provided examples of how teaching assistants have received bespoke training to enable them to lead specialist interventions. Examples included conducting of assessments and EHCP reviews following modelling by the SENDCO, delivery of art therapy and phonics interventions in collaboration with the language service. However, it was important that all staff felt confident in accessing 'The Haven' and understood how best to utilise the resources available to ensure the children accessed the provision successfully. The Mental Health Support Team delivered whole staff training on how to help children with fears and worries.

The biggest evidence of impact towards achievement of this target as part of the Flagship Project is the voice of the child. When asked what was special about the school, one child said, 'they look after you properly,' whilst another child said, 'taking care and supporting me through hard times.' Leaders confirmed through our conversations that further evolution of 'The Haven' will continue to be paramount. It is a focus of the Flagship Project as the school move into the next academic year, and it remains a key priority within the school development plan.

Target 2: Impact of raising the profile of the school's partnership with the Mental Health Support Team.

Whitley Lodge First School are committed to promoting positive mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing for all children, parents/carers, and staff. Collaborative working with the Mental Health Support Team has meant a preventive approach to be taken which has provided parents/carers with the autonomy to engage in support appropriate for their families. This meant that parents/carers also needed to have the confidence to access the



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support. Through a variety of engagement events held in school, the Mental Health Support Team quickly became a known and trusted presence within the school community. The events included coffee mornings, parent/carers workshops and information sharing at parent/carers evenings. Communication with parents/carers was vital to ensure transparency in the support available which resulted in development of the parent/carers section of the school website to contain key information regarding all aspects of mental health and wellbeing. The impact of this work has been seen in the increased number of parents/carers who have requested referrals to the Mental Health Support Team, for example, a total of 14 parents/carers accessing direct support and 30 parents/carers who attended the managing anxiety programme. Feedback from parents/carers illustrates benefits to their families from the consultations and advice given which has been accessed either through self-referral by the parent/carers or teacher referral following parents/carers sharing their worries with them which is a culture shift.

Target 3: Impact of Mental Health and Wellbeing provision in school.

The partnership with the Mental Health Support Team has also empowered the school to successfully self-evaluate their curriculum through the lens of delivering activities which promote the positive mental health and well-being of the children. The delivery of PE focuses on the acquisition of active skills by the children to keep active minds. The vast array of sports which all children are encouraged to participate in a range of sports including hula hoop, handball, Gaelic football, American football, cross country, skipping and dodgeball. The impact noted by the PE Lead is that the improved physical strength of the children improves their posture and confidence leading to increased concentration in lessons and high standards of presentation in their work as well as the children having the drive and desire to improve their skills.

The delivery of Art provides challenge to the children through the critique of work, asking them to think about how to improve and to celebrate the diversity of skills demonstrated across the work of their peers. The impact noted by the Art Lead was evidenced through parent/carers feedback from the work showcased at the Art Exhibition where comments included, 'clearly see developing skills', 'all work was to a great standard', 'children have shown extreme talent' and 'blown away by the standard of the artwork'.

Conversations with the representative from the Mental Health Support Team identified how the classrooms represent therapeutic environments using music. They have noticed an increase in a communication of feelings by the children. It has been satisfying to see support staff move back into the role of educators due to the participation of all staff being trained in how to manage anxiety in children resulting in emotionally friendly classrooms and children presenting more regulated throughout the course of a school day.



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Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Project Title: To expand the range of interventions delivered through The Haven to meet the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of all children.

Context:

The project intends to relaunch their regulation space known as 'The Haven' to provide an inclusive provision to be accessed by all children, in all age phases. The Headteacher and IQM Lead are keen to bring versatility to this in-house provision so that sensory stimulation activities and self-regulating resources are adapted for all children, in all age phases. There is also the opportunity through this relaunch to dispel the legacy currently associated with this provision. The current access to this provision are those children who previously accessed the Alternative Resource Provision (ARP), which was a specialist support unit within school for children with specific Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) developed in collaboration with the Local Authority, those children currently going through the statutory assessment process where a safe, consistent space has supported their regulation at intervals throughout the school day and for those children primarily in Key Stage 1 to support their transition into Key Stage 2.

A key priority for Whitley Lodge First School continues to be the support provided to families. This recognition by the school of this key area of focus was noted by Ofsted (2022) and there is a secure working partnership between the school and the Mental Health Support Team who work with schools across North Tyneside. Interventions are preventative and work in a way which provides autonomy to the children and support their parents/carers to help manage their children's feelings, so their resilience and can-do attitude is prevalent. This way of thinking is crucial to academic success which is in line with the inclusive ethos of the school which is for the children to reach their full potential in a safe and secure environment.

Target 1: To confirm the inclusion offer for all children which will be delivered through 'The Haven'.

The vision for 'The Haven' is that the use by all children is flexible and dependent on individual needs. The importance of early intervention is recognised. The Early Years Team are skilled at early identification of needs. It has been recognised that a smaller and conducive environment would benefit those children who find it difficult to regulate in the larger classroom spaces supporting the need to extend the use of 'The Haven' to those children in Key Stage 1. However, it is important to expand the range of interventions delivered through 'The Haven' to meet the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of all children.

Next Steps:

- The functionality of the interventions provided are key to the success of the relaunch of 'The Haven.' Therefore, there is further training and development planned for staff utilising the skills and expertise of the Mental Health Support Team and the Clinical Educational Psychology Team so that topics such as transition, self-care, anxiety and



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regulation can be explored so that capacity in staff knowledge and development of bespoke intervention programmes can be achieved.

- To underpin the delivery of these interventions, leaders are keen to determine the assessments to be used with the children to determine the intervention required. Insight from parents/carers is needed so that appropriate interventions can be replicated at home. Transition to Middle School by the children has always been a key success indicator. However, further collaboration with the Middle Schools is envisaged so that preventive work can be embedded early. Leaders are also keen to explore impact measures of the interventions beyond academic achievements. Further collaboration with the Mental Health Support Team would be beneficial to this.

Target 2: To further extend the emotional wellbeing offer for parents/carers.

The partnership working between Whitley Lodge First School and the Mental Health Support Team over the last academic year is a strength of the school. One of the challenges which leaders faced was that due to the admirable reputation of the school based on secure academic outcomes obtained by the children, the underlying anxiety issues often associated with academic demands were sometimes masked.

Next Steps:

- Leaders at Whitley Lodge First School want nothing more than for the children to love being at school. They want to see them develop into resilient young people with the confidence to showcase talents acquired through exposure to subject areas and enrichment opportunities beyond the core curriculum. This approach considers the children's personal development and learning journey as key to achieving academic success both now and in the future.
- Following the success of the intervention programmes delivered by the Mental Health Support Team at Key Stage 2, for example 'Friends Resilience' and 'Fun Friends', there are plans to utilise the offer from the Mental Health Support Team to deliver suitable programmes from Key Stage 1. The school calendar for next academic year already plans to sustain the profile of the Mental Health Support Team at parent/carer events including open evenings and parent/carer evenings. Access to resources produced by the Mental Health Support Team is also planned to be a continued focus to further develop the parent/carer section of the website and to inform intervention strategies to be delivered through the relaunch of 'The Haven.' This will also provide opportunities for further training to parents/carers to replicate the strategies used in school at home. Evidence of this already exists where the Mental Health Support Team have delivered lessons in Early Years and a Parent/Carer Workshop for those whose children are in the Reception Class.



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Overview

Whitley Lodge First School situated in Whitley Bay provides primary education for children aged 3 – 9 years as well as offering nursery provision. It is a large school with approximately 280 children on roll which includes 52 morning or afternoon nursery places. The vision statement of Whitley Lodge First School is to create an active, creative, and inclusive learning environment for all the children. This was echoed by Ofsted (June 2022) who stated, 'Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high-quality support and provision'. The inclusive nature of Whitley Lodge First School is evident as soon as you enter the school. The school is warm and welcoming creating that instant sense of belonging. There is a no exclusion ethos but more importantly, as one child commented, 'the school wants to get to know you as a person.' Leaders have created an inclusive ethos whereby they are committed to celebrating the diverse learning needs of the children to enable them to thrive, whole school attendance is at least 98%.

The school was judged as 'good' in their Ofsted inspection in June 2022. The report noted that 'staff and pupils have positive relationships which creates a harmonious atmosphere' and 'pupil behaviour is exemplary, and pupils are respectful of each other.' Leaders believe that good behaviour is central to a good education. The Headteacher introduced the Wonder League to ensure that the children knew their behaviour is exemplary. The key qualities which underpin this initiative are kindness, courage, resilience, respect, and honesty. These qualities are essential to prepare them for the next stage of their education. During conversations with the children, the Wonder League was mentioned consistently. One child who represents the School Council encapsulated the ethos of this initiative beautifully when they said, 'we get points when we show how good we are with our talents.' The impact of the public praise which the children receive based on achievement of points was considered by another member of the Student Council that 'everyone cares and so they make better choices.'

Another whole school initiative which encompasses Whitley Lodge First School's commitment to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their children is the Reception and Year 4 buddy system. Through conversations with the children involved in the buddy system, I was keen to explore the impact which their involvement has had on their educational journey. The examples which the children provided articulated numerous enrichment experiences which the children had completed together resulting in a both a warm and educational experience for the children in Reception and Year 4. It was warming that the children recognised that they would miss seeing each other every day but all children involved were ready to make the next step in their educational journey whether that meant moving to Middle School or moving into Year 1 at Whitley Lodge.

The coastal heritage of the children is celebrated across the school. There is adaption in curriculum delivery to recognise and celebrate the local community. It was recognised by Ofsted (June 2022) that the Beach School curriculum develops pupils' understanding of the environment and this initiative remains a strong feature of the school's curriculum. The beach is used as an effective teaching and learning resource throughout the academic year and provides practical learning, for example, high tides as well as key content areas relevant to the following curriculum areas, English, History, Geography, PE, and Science. The Pirate Ship which is based in the school grounds which the children can play on was also a talking point throughout my visit to the school. The aim which leaders have for a



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creative curriculum designed to inspire and challenge the children has certainly been achieved.

Whitley Lodge First School pride themselves on providing every child with high quality learning opportunities so that they can attain and achieve to the best of their ability. Progress data shared by the Headteacher for all classes at the end of Term 1 for this academic year showed that every child in every class was making expected progress or higher in all subjects. At the end of Term 2 for this academic year, 81% of the whole school were meeting year group age related expectations in combined reading, writing and mathematics compared to 66% across the Local Authority. This is clear evidence of impact of the early interventions starting in Early Years which focus on the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills to enable the children to have full access to the curriculum.

I have been truly impressed by the work of the Headteacher and IQM Lead to co-ordinate the evaluation document of the Flagship Project which clearly illustrates the collaboration across all staff to achieve the targets which it contains. It is also a very accurate evaluation of the inclusive practices which I saw first-hand during the assessment day. The evidence referred to through the evaluation document were also at hand throughout the process. During meetings with staff, students, and partners across the day, it was evident that inclusion is at the heart of the school's ethos and vision. There is an absolute commitment to the school community.

Having discussed the progress made since the last IQM review and the school's plans for the future, I would recommend that the school should continue to hold Flagship School status and be reviewed again in 12 months' time.

The next review will look closely at how the school have relaunched 'The Haven' to provide access and appropriate intervention strategies for all children across the school and how further effective collaboration with the Mental Health Support Team will extend the emotional wellbeing offer for parents/carers.

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 Lisa Ingleby

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd