



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School Longdendale High School
Spring Street
Hyde
Cheshire
SK14 8LW

Head/Principal Mr Michael Chiles

IQM Lead Mr Michael Chiles

Date of Review 12th February 2026

Assessor Ms Alyson Tolley

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Northwessians

Ambassador Ms Siona Robson

Next Meeting TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2023	4 th December 2023	No
Spring 2024	11 th March 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	4 th July 2024	No
Autumn 2024	13 th November 2024	Yes
Spring 2025	6 th February 2025	Yes
Summer 2025	23 rd June 2025	No

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The Headteacher recognises the importance of attendance at these meetings, however due to staff absence, they have been unable to consistently attend.

The Headteacher has committed to hosting a meeting during the next round of cluster group meetings and is keen to 'showcase' the excellent practice that is taking place at Longdendale.



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Evidence

Discussions with:

- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- Assistant Headteacher -Attendance
- Assistant Headteacher- Behaviour
- Assistant Headteacher- Teaching & Learning
- Pastoral Support Workers
- Head of Year
- Head of Maths
- Safeguarding
- Interim SENDCo
- Deputy SENDCo
- Student Panel
- Informal chat with Year 7 students at break

Additional Activities

- Observation of morning routines – line ups
- Visit to Aspiration Briefing
- Tour of the school
- Lesson visits
- Observation of Aspiration Table and break time activities



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Over the past year, the project has continued to establish culture in all aspects of Longdendale High School (LHS) life. Leaders plan to continue to broaden their approach and use their multi-tiered strategy to continue to enhance the culture in school to support all learners, especially those who are vulnerable.

Target 1: Teaching staff will be empowered to deliver high quality teaching and learning within the classroom. All students, including those with additional needs, will be catered for and no student will be left behind.

Leaders have invested a significant amount of time and resources into the professional development of teaching and learning for Teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs) to ensure they are supported and receive subsequent coaching to ensure they plan and deliver high quality teaching and learning experiences for all students.

The diligent Assistant Headteacher (AHT) for Teaching & Learning facilitates the Teaching and Practice Labs, where teachers learn theory and practise new techniques before using them in class. The school continues to use a highly effective coaching model, and teachers are paired with colleagues from other curriculum areas for coaching, which encourages productive and 'rich dialogue' as well as building trust.

Leaders have added new techniques to the 'core' expectations and both teachers and students talked about the consistent use across lessons, with students able to articulate for example, the purpose of the silent solo task and how this supports their learning.

Leaders have launched pastoral and SEND practice labs focusing on core techniques to support classroom and whole-school implementation. Regular joint labs with the SENDCo take place and a recent focus on assistive technology has enhanced learning opportunities for those with additional needs in classrooms. The Deputy SENDCo leads regular CPD with the TAs to ensure that they have a good understanding of the theory and practice of teaching and learning and this has led to an increasingly effective deployment of TAs in lessons.

A recent NASEN SEND review (October 2025) recognised key strengths in the school's inclusive teaching and learning for students with SEND, 'the school recognises the central role of high-quality teaching for SEND and has embedded research-informed practice;' the exceptional outcomes from the review affirm leaders' self-evaluation of both teaching and learning as well as their provision for those students with SEND and those considered vulnerable.

Target 2: The planned new Aspiration Centre will play a key role within the school. The suite of rooms will contain a triage centre where students in need or crisis, can seek support from Pastoral Support Workers.

The inclusion suite has moved to a different part of the school and now features windows, unlike the previous windowless central location—a subtle change along with its name, and this has had significant impact for both staff and students. The main room has an external door to accommodate those who may find coming through the main



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entrance a challenge, as well as providing access for those students who may need step-out time.

With the development of these new rooms, leaders introduced a clear inclusion strategy, and this was recognised as 'exemplary practice' by NASEN. Leaders describe how their provision 'is woven into our school tapestry.' Their holistic support and provision focus on five core principles, and they use staff expertise to 'continually identify, review, and remove barriers' to safeguard students access to a high-quality education that enables them to achieve their potential.

The deputy leader of SEND explained how the referral process ensures that APDR (Assess-Plan-Do-Review) cycles are fully explored within the classroom before a student is referred to the inclusion suite. This means that high-quality classroom provision is reviewed at the point of referral, to identify those strategies that have already been tried with students. This triangulated with what other colleagues said in relation to meeting the needs of SEND, with the mantra 'attend to SEND, attend to all,' ensuring that all adults are responsible for meeting the needs of students with SEND.

Provision within the suite is structured and purposeful. Students follow clear timetables, and access is planned coherently. The suite is not used as a 'consequence,' instead, it is a supportive well-planned space designed to provide targeted support and intervention.

Target 3: To reimagine the school's student 'internal exclusion' offer to the Respect Room.

The number of students removed from learning to access the Respect Room has decreased with only a small number of learners requiring this level of support. A booklet connects to the values, with sessions dedicated to each element of respect. The goal is to view things from another person's perspective.

The significant reduction in negative behaviours is reflected in the data for both classroom behaviours and suspensions which is lower than at the same point last year. It is interesting to note the reduction in negative behaviour incidents when comparing the same year groups to last year's data. This clearly demonstrates the positive impact of the consistent implementation of whole-school priorities over the past twelve months, particularly in relation to classroom routines, and support and provision for vulnerable students.

Target 4: To strengthen and evaluate how our school culture is experienced by students, ensuring that all learners, particularly those who are vulnerable or have additional needs, feel a sense of belonging, within daily school life.

Leaders revisited their original tier 4 from designing and implementing their own bespoke Internal Alternative Provision to this focus on culture. The Headteacher explained this was because there are significantly less students who need this alternative support as the vast majority are working well and are now engaging in learning.



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Over the last 12 months, leaders have intentionally strengthened their culture drive to further embed their inclusive offer for all students, aware that 'great school culture is not an accident.' This has focused not only on systems and routines, but on ensuring that values are consistently modelled, reinforced, and lived across the school community.

There is a clear sense that the sustained focus on school culture has significantly improved consistency and clarity across the school. There is a shared language that applies to behaviour, learning, relationships, and character, and this was unequivocal in the discussions I had with all stakeholders throughout the review. Because students repeatedly hear and experience the same messages, expectations are clearer and more consistently applied and the student voice indicated that this has been applauded by the majority of learners, with one Year 7 articulating 'this is a good school, and I love it here,' whilst showing me how the contents of his requisite wallet facilitate learning, as well as enabling teachers to reward, and if necessary apply sanctions.

This cultural shift is evident in daily practice. Corridors are calm and purposeful, enabling Heads of Year to visit lessons proactively to reward students rather than spending time reacting to incidents. This has allowed them to interact with a wider range of students in a positive context and further enhanced positive relationships, providing increased job satisfaction.

Next steps

- The Legacy standards curriculum which will be launched in September 2026 to build on their work around a values driven education.



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Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Project Title:

"A Strong Culture Is Taught, Not Caught"

Over the past year, Longdendale High School has strengthened its inclusive approach by focusing on school culture, student belonging, and a shared values-driven ethos, aligned with improving outcomes for all learners—especially those vulnerable to exclusion.

Their next phase of development will focus on:

- Embedding consistency in culture routines across all staff
- Developing the inclusion room as a tiered support hub linked to our new inclusion strategy.
- Refining the Respect Room
- Strengthening family partnerships through targeted engagement
- Using student and parent voice more systematically to evaluate impact
- Behaviour and attendance will continue to be robustly tracked and monitored, along with staff, student, and parent voice.

Target 1: Teaching staff will continue to be empowered to deliver high quality teaching and learning within the classroom. All students, including those with additional needs, will be catered for and no student will be left behind.

This will be achieved through ongoing teacher CPD using the Teaching and Practice labs to continue to develop teaching skills for all teachers at LHS with a particular focus on:

- Scaffolding techniques
- Differentiation
- Staff understanding and the Implementation of IEPs / EHCPs
- LHS Core techniques

Staff coaching will continue – all staff are in receipt of fortnightly coaching sessions. Key areas for improvement and development will continue to be discussed, rehearsed in a safe environment, and then applied in subsequent lessons.

Target 2: The new inclusion suite will be established to continue to be key in supporting all students who require it.

The triage centre will continue to develop to support those who may be in need or are in crisis. The Pastoral Support Workers will continue to enhance their wide range of skills and to be enable them to actively listen and understand student needs. Their aim is to further understand the barriers students face and to put in place research-based interventions whereby these barriers are removed quickly and effectively to support students back into their learning.

- Continue to design the suite of rooms.
- Effective tracking and impact will be robustly measured.



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- To continue to build family partnerships to triangulate the support offer and maximise success.
- Continued CPD for Pastoral Support Workers (PSWs) in triage approaches and bespoke interventions

Target 3: To continue to revisit the student internal exclusion offer in the Respect Room. Here, students who have disrupted lessons will continue to be provided with a space to reflect upon their choices and the consequences of their actions.

Students will be encouraged to work proactively with key pastoral staff in the Respect room to better understand how to change their behaviours so that they stay in lessons and are successful.

- Initial audit will continue to be analysed using CPOMS, behaviour data as well using their knowledge of key barriers to school to ensure they target the issues that their students may present with
- The room will be established as a space which promotes students' independent reflection and working.
- Student and parent voice will continue to be conducted to ensure staff have.
- triangulated the needs of their families and students. This will ensure interventions provided are targeted to their stakeholders.
- CPD sessions, both in house and external will be provided to all PSWs to provide them with the knowledge base and skill sets to fully support students and families.
- To produce new reflection material for students wherein they can identify their behaviour choices and the underpinning reasons.
- To create a mastery family series so that all parents/ carers have a concrete understanding of how to support their child at home.
- 1:1 and group sessions will be planned where appropriate to understand and mitigate barriers to learning and accessing school.



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Overview

The school values of Respect, Resilience and Aspiration continue to be embedded throughout, permeating all aspects of school life. They are evident not only in classrooms and corridors, but in the language that students use and the standards they uphold. Students wear their values badges with a powerful sense of pride and can articulate clearly what these values mean to them and how they influence their actions.

LHS has recently been awarded and recognised for the depth and authenticity of its values-driven approach. It describes how both students and staff strive to “live the values” in their daily interactions, decisions, and behaviours and this was tangible throughout my visit.

Leaders remain relentlessly determined to secure the absolute best education for every learner, and as a result, the culture of success, belonging and high expectation is palpable, and this has resulted in a keen sense of improved morale among staff.

At the start of the day, the daily line up is now embedded. Students are greeted by their tutors and other adults, and leaders are highly visible, ensuring that standards are maintained. The Headteacher welcomed students with a motivating talk about opportunities to gain further rewards in the two remaining days of the half term, as well as celebrating the school's success in a recent school team achievement. Students then entered the building in an effectively organised way, with senior leaders and pastoral staff checking students are organised on entry.

The expectation is that all students wear their lanyard and have their wallets with them. These wallets include a variety of teaching and learning tools, which ensures they are prepared for all learning immediately on entry to school as well as fostering responsibility. It was uplifting to see students wearing their lanyards with pride, and it clear that leaders at all levels of the organisation have worked persistently to make this happen.

The lanyards include individual timetables, which have proven exceptionally effective in supporting students to take ownership of where they need to be throughout the day, significantly reducing lost learning time. In addition, they provide key information relating to mental health and safeguarding, including useful contact details and support links. This ensures that students have immediate access to help and guidance, both within school and beyond the school gates.

I visited several lessons with the AHT, and I saw consistent use of the core techniques to provide opportunities to develop and embed understanding. These learning walks demonstrated established routines, and there is clearly consistency across all curriculum areas. Students remained fully engaged during each lesson, contributing to an atmosphere both in and out of lessons that was both calm and focused. It was evident that leaders promote open classrooms, with both staff and students barely noticing our entrance.

SEND and inclusion are high on the school's agenda; the extremely proficient interim SENDCo along with the strong Deputy is providing exemplary leadership and ensuring



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that systems are strategic rather than reactive. The SENDCo talked about how 'students buy into the ethos of the school,' and this was corroborated in my dialogue with students both formally and informally.

The school is engaged in project-based work with the allocated Educational Psychologist, which supports whole-school development. This work includes ongoing review and refinement of provision. The focus of this year's project is literacy, strengthening literacy strategies across the school and ensuring consistency in practice.

Pastoral Support Workers (PSW) play a pivotal role in fostering inclusion through strong, trusting relationships that guide students positively and encourage meaningful participation across all aspects of school life. Increased team capacity has strengthened this impact, enabling more timely intervention, and they are now increasingly able to spend more time visiting lessons, working proactively rather than reactively with a wider range of students.

Teachers are clear that students belong in lessons and want them to remain there, one colleague explained how a student had asked for 'a minute' that morning and a quick movement break enabled him to re-regulate and return swiftly to his learning. Where a student may need more support, she explained that a short reset with a trusted adult, such as a PSW, has a positive impact but there is always a clear expectation of a return to learning.

It was refreshing to hear from staff that each re-entry into the classroom is treated as a fresh start, reinforcing restoration rather than removal, with students welcomed and supported back into learning. There is no opt-out culture here at Longdendale and there is no doubt that the focus remains firmly on participation, belonging, and sustained engagement in the classroom.

Students consistently report that the school feels calmer and more consistent and this was apparent even at lesson changeover where staff are highly visible, guiding student movement through busy areas. Students talked about feeling safer, with no 'pushing and shoving' as they move around the building, particularly at unstructured times. This improved perception of the environment is having a positive impact on engagement and has contributed to improvements in attendance and whole school attendance is up 3% from the same time last year.

The safeguarding lead is new to post but working collaboratively with the dynamic Deputy Headteacher and she has already proven a strong, initiative-taking presence. She has implemented regular check-ins with students and is facilitating a high number of early help meetings to ensure concerns are identified and addressed at the earliest possible stage. Early help training has also been delivered to the wider pastoral team, strengthening collective understanding and shared responsibility.

The rewards system is firmly embedded and visibly celebrated across the school. The Legacy area in reception has been adapted and continues to highlight and celebrate student achievements, reinforcing the school's values-driven culture. Positioned centrally within the building, this space acts as both a symbolic and practical reminder that effort, character, and success are consistently recognised and valued.



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The environment itself reflects the school's commitment to culture and character. Standing chess tables and a newly introduced piano in reception are available for students to use during break times, promoting enrichment, creativity, and calm social interaction.

Rewards are intentionally built into everyday classroom practice. Golden tickets are used within lessons to acknowledge positive contributions to teaching and learning, helping students associate tangible rewards with academic effort and engagement. The inclusion of a rewards vending machine further reinforces this culture, providing a concrete and motivating link between learning and positive behaviour.

For Year 11 students, a designated revision area has been set up where students can access revision materials and past papers. There are plans to develop this further into a dedicated Year 11 hub, creating a focused and aspirational space to support examination preparation. Although still new, it was busy during break with several students perusing resources and engaging in discussion.

The introduction of Lenny, the school mascot, will support a whole-school initiative aimed at strengthening community identity and belonging. This shared symbol contributes to the sense of cohesion and pride that is increasingly evident across the school.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to revisit Longdendale High School and see the significant impact of the past year. This success reflects a resolute leadership team and hardworking staff committed to providing excellent learning and pastoral care daily. It is a wonderful place to be, whether you are a student or a member of staff.

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: Mrs 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