



## 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** Dr Alex Glancey

**Date of Review** 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Assessor** Ms Alyson Tolley

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

Cluster Group Northwessians

Ambassador Ms Siona Robson

Next Meeting TBC

Meeting Focus TBC

### **Cluster Attendance**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Autumn 2023</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	No
<b>Spring 2024</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Yes
<b>Summer 2024</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	No
<b>Autumn 2024</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	Yes
<b>Spring 2025</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	Yes
<b>Summer 2025</b>	TBC	



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### **The Impact of the Cluster Group**

**04.03.2024 The Grange**

**Topic:** Best practice, sensory, school ethos and SDP

#### **Outcome**

'Understanding the approaches of other schools to engage in pupils with the school ethos and looking at autism friendly approaches helped us to reflect and adapt how we work with our students with ASC and how and what we require in respect to our school culture'.

**13.11.2024 Irk Valley Community School**

**Topic:** School of sanctuary, pupils' physical development, speech and language development and staff well-being.

#### **Outcome**

'Eye opening discussions which have provoked discussion on how we use spaces in our school for students who need to regulate'.

**6<sup>th</sup> February 2025 The Deans Primary**

**Topic:** Managing Complex Needs, Pastoral Support and Staff training

#### **Outcome**

'Extremely useful in understanding how other schools manage students with complex needs. This has helped us to reflect on our approaches with some of our most challenging students'.

In the absence of the previous IQM lead, there has been some debate about who should attend. The SEND team have represented the school during the last year and have found these meetings extremely useful; the opportunity to network has enabled them to reflect and evaluate on their own practice.

Leaders will discuss and determine who attends subsequent meetings.



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### Evidence

Due to several factors the school reviewed and evaluated their previous plan for the year 2024-25 in the summer term. The innovative 'new' plan is in line with the school's transformational improvement plan brought about with the appointment of the new Headteacher.

In advance of the review the school submitted a brief evaluation of their previous targets as well a detailed evaluation of their revised targets, alongside a robust plan for the year ahead.

The day's schedule was unique, and I was able to consolidate information from various sources. During the review I was able to meet with a variety of stakeholders and the extensive discussions, tour of the school and learning visits enabled me to gain a thorough insight into the outstanding inclusive practice.

During the visit discussions took place with the following:

- Headteacher
- IQM Lead/ Assistant Headteacher (Attendance)
- Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour)
- Assistant Headteacher (Teaching & Learning)
- Teachers
- Pastoral leads
- Safeguarding lead
- Attendance lead
- SENDCo
- Deputy SENDCO
- Students

Documentation & additional activities:

- IQM Flagship review documentation
- School website and policies
- Observation of Practice Labs
- Learning visits



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- Learning environment
- School documentation for staff
- School documentation for parents
- Behaviour and standards data



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### Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Due to changes in circumstances, whereby the previous IQM lead has been absent from school for a significant period, alongside the appointment of a new Headteacher, the original project was adjusted to connect with the significant changes undertaken to drive school improvement.

#### **Project Title: "A strong culture is taught and not caught"**

**Outline of Project:** In June 2024, the new Headteacher began working with the Senior Leadership Team to realise his vision for the school in readiness for September 2024. A priority for him was to engender a culture upon the school community where high expectations of staff and students are mandatory.

The school has become values-driven where every aspect of school life is based upon their core values. The vision was to foster an environment of Excellence and Ambition for all, where 'all students can surpass their potential to become successful learners and future contributory members of society.'

Leaders have collaborated with all stakeholders to relaunch the school's vision and core values: Respect; Resilience; Aspiration; with the strong belief that these will empower everyone to be 'the best version of themselves.' These values are discernible throughout the school, with the consistent message being reinforced to all stakeholders throughout the day. Leaders believe in the power of routines which demonstrate the three values, thus ensuring consistency across all areas of school leading to students being able to realise and achieve their potential. In cultivating and integrating a robust culture, 'the Longdendale Way,' leaders employed a tripartite approach involving students, families, and staff with an emphasis on 'what does the culture look like and how is it experienced....' 'how can our families support' and 'how do staff contribute...'

Students were introduced to a range of initiatives including line-ups; at the beginning of each day students line up in form groups, alongside their year group. I was able to see this during the review and it undoubtedly offers a structured beginning to the day, where core values are reinforced, uniform is checked, and daily messages are conveyed. Each year group has their own entry point, and students enter the building in a calm, consistent approach and this is clearly an established routine which leads to a settled start for all.

The Longdendale 7 was introduced at the beginning of the academic year with all students being provided with a pencil case including the key equipment needed for learning. All students wear a lanyard containing their timetable and more recently students have been provided with a zip wallet that contains the previous equipment with the addition of a white board and a whiteboard pen. This equipment removes the worry of not having the correct equipment and guarantees students are immediately ready for learning at the start of each lesson. This approach is proving highly effective, and it was encouraging to observe all students using the wallets, demonstrating their commitment to learning.



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I had the pleasure of visiting an Aspiration Briefing with Year 7 students; these are led by a senior leader and the pastoral lead for the year group. Students arrived in a calm and organised way and started with the STEPS model which underpins how stakeholders communicate with each other, and this is also embedded consistently in lessons and assemblies. Students then started their task which was focusing on the recall of 'core substantive knowledge' from their Mastery sheets. The purpose of the briefings is to provide the core knowledge base, which students then expand upon during lessons and it was inspiring to see the high level of stretch and challenge in the geography activity. Key Stage 4 students shared how the Aspiration Briefings strengthens learning in lessons, and they were keen to articulate its effectiveness in promoting learning.

The prominence of 'Rewards and Appreciations' were highlighted throughout the day and the impact is palpable. Student leaders articulated legacy points as part of 'leaving a legacy when you hang up your blazer when you leave!' Undoubtedly the rewards process is contributing to the promotion of good behaviour in lessons and around school. During the tour of the school, the corridors were calm with very few students out of class.

The Longdendale Legacy is visible throughout the school; Legacy points are linked to the school values, and both staff and students can reward each other with appreciation cards, celebrating when someone has gone beyond what is expected. Highly visible year group totals are updated each week to encourage the competitive element. The Legacy Pyramid illustrates what students can achieve as they progress up the pyramid, culminating in the Headteacher award, followed by the Executive Principal award.

Students' spoke enthusiastically about golden tickets which are awarded at the end of every lesson to a student, these are celebrated with the class showing appreciation using the double clap routine. They talked about the central post boxes where rewards and appreciations can be placed, and these are logged electronically and shared with families.

Every break time the Aspiration Table is staffed, usually by the Headteacher and senior leaders; students queue to show staff their Masters of Knowledge handbook; they are rewarded and achieve Legacy points. These are well attended and during my visit I observed students across all year groups queuing to show their work and they confidently communicated the rationale behind the process. It certainly demonstrated the worth that students place on completing their home learning.

The school have launched an exceptional enrichment programme; the elective programme is designed to instil their vision of 'Excellence and Ambition' for all. This provides an opportunity to take part in activities beyond the curriculum and encourages them to develop new skills and 'realise their talents, reach their full potential and nurture their professional cultural capital.' The students have three broad pillars to choose from, Academic, Physical Health & Wellbeing and Community and Leadership Electives. Students are expected to choose one pillar per term, linking in with core values and future study and careers.



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Students spoke animatedly about their experience in the elective programme; one student spoke about her participation in set design, where she has been creating pieces of art for the Matilda production. Other students have engaged in campcraft, where they have learned to use a compass, and made dens, with this linking to the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. One student modelled cheerleading and was supported to talk about his role in teaching signing to the group, he undoubtedly enjoys his experiences and the opportunity to share one of skills.

The electives programme is on a Wednesday and because it is built into the curriculum, all students take part. They like the fact it is in the middle of the week because it breaks the week up and it is something to look forward to. A Year 10 student spoke about the peer support she will be offering in the childcare elective; peer teaching will reinforce her knowledge, skills, and understanding of the programme and will boost her confidence and provide her with new skills.

The deputy SENDCo explained that electives have encouraged students with SEND, helping with new friendships and allowing them the opportunity to form friendships with students in different year groups. She illustrated how the sessions are structured in the same way as lessons, with the same established routines and expectations.

In developing and embedding a strong culture with families, leaders want to accentuate a welcome to parents and for them to feel a powerful sense of belonging. At the start of the year, 'The Family Handbook' was shared with all families and this contains valuable information in an easy-to read format. Essential information is communicated about 'The Longdendale Way' including attendance, school rules, uniform, rewards, and celebrations. This means there are no surprises to parents with expectations and routines explained and rationalised. This further encourages positive relationships and fosters partnerships.

Communications with home such as the half termly newsletter, always begin with a warm welcome from the head teacher and senior leaders. Each year group has a newsletter highlighting events and achievements specific to that group, making it more relevant and engaging for parents.

Working in partnership with families is critical in driving good attendance; the school has shared new guidance on the impact of low attendance, whilst emphasising the positives of excellent attendance to school. Attendance is celebrated in a range of forums including communication with home and student leaders spoke about reward breakfasts and how these motivate students to support each other to attend.

The school is extremely supportive in their approach to attendance, demonstrating their understanding of the local context and the needs of their community. The attendance team work diligently to track and monitor attendance, working pre-emptively with families to mitigate barriers to attendance and this is clearly having impact as attendance is currently in line with national average.

Driving a culture of high expectations involves a strategic focus on teaching and learning and staff are provided with a platform from which highly effective lessons are being planned and delivered. Leaders have developed a core set of teaching and learning



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techniques that all teachers deliver consistently to their students. Leaders invest heavily in Continued Professional Development (CPD) using a variety of means to 'achieve teaching excellence.' During my visit I observed a practice lab where the focus was on seating plans; earlier in the week staff had received training in the theory of appropriate seating, and the labs provide time for teachers to apply this theory into practise using a coaching model. At the conclusion of the session, staff members completed their CPD log, a crucial component of the teaching and learning strategy.

Staff use the Culture Playbook and Teaching and Learning Playbook to enhance the culture of expectations, in conjunction with CPD. These playbooks are part of a stimulating toolkit and are invaluable; they include a breadth of techniques and include how to support students with SEND and promote positive behaviour for learning.





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### Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

#### Project:

The project aims to reinforce and consolidate the considerable progress already made and the plans aims to broaden culture and the sense of inclusion.

The school aims to develop its culture in all aspects of life by embedding it through three established pillars. They plan to broaden their approach and ensure a multi-tiered strategy to enhance the culture at Longdendale High School (LHS).

**Tier 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.

School will facilitate this through ongoing CPD; they will continue to use the practice labs to develop and embed teaching skills for all teachers with a particular focus on the following:

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

LHS will continue to use the effective coaching model, with all staff in receipt of fortnightly coaching sessions. Key areas for improvement and development are discussed, rehearsed in a safe environment, and then applied in subsequent lessons and I saw evidence of this during my visit.

#### Impact:

- Staff will continue to use their CPD logs to record and evaluate their practice
- Steplab data
- Staff voice

This will be led by the AHT (teaching & learning).

**Tier 2** – The planned new Aspiration Centre will play a key role within school. The suite of rooms will contain a triage centre where students in need or crisis, can seek support from Pastoral Support Workers. This will enable staff to identify and understand barriers and to ensure appropriate interventions can be implemented, whereby these barriers are removed quickly, and students can effectively be supported back into learning.



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There has been a review of the current Aspire Centre, and the school invited an educational psychologist to be part of this. Subsequently the planned Aspiration Centre will be fit for purpose, located in a main area, and will have a suite of rooms. It is currently in the planning and design stage and will be a welcoming room with the focus being on support. Leaders spoke excitedly about the proposed changes and how this will impact on individual students as well as whole school.

Key Staff will be responsible for the design of the room, including which resources will be the most effectual, including furniture and amenities. After finalising the design, necessary renovations will be made to ensure the room is suitable for both students and staff from both a set-up and a functional perspective.

Pastoral Support Workers (PSWs) will receive CPD in triage approaches, and to support the work they already do, they will receive additional training on bespoke interventions as well as training to enhance their knowledge and skill set to fully support students and families.

An initial audit will use CPOMS, behaviour data, and knowledge of key barriers to target those at risk. PSWs will work closely and collaborate with families to enhance support and success. Student, and parent voice will be conducted to ensure they have triangulated the needs of families and students. This will ensure interventions provided are targeted to the 'right' students.

Impact will be measured by tracking data and identifying trends and lead to a reduction in use of the room for repeat students.

Impact:

- Parent Voice
- Meetings
- Reintegration sessions
- Behaviour and intervention logs

This tier will be led by members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Pastoral team.

**Tier 3** – To reimagine the school's student 'internal exclusion' offer to the Respect Room.

The strategy is to offer students who have disrupted lessons an opportunity to reflect on their decisions and the resulting consequences. They will be encouraged to collaborate with key pastoral staff, who will be scheduled in the Respect Room, to gain insights into how they can adjust their behaviours to stay in lessons and become successful learners. They will set up the Respect Room to be a space which promotes students' independent reflection and working.



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Leaders will ensure that new reflection material is available for students wherein they can identify their behaviour choices and the underpinning reasons, in discussion with pastoral staff. Students who are regularly placed in the Respect Room will access bespoke interventions using a range of resources as well 1:1 and small group work.

### Actions:

- Review of current and previous practice to ensure that room setup is fit for purpose
- Review and update students' reflection materials and processes
- Review and update student work in line with new curriculum designs and booklets to ensure learning is not lost

### Impact:

- Student and parent voice specific to students who have accessed the Respect Room
- Student Voice
- Parent Voice

This will be led by SLT and pastoral staff.

**Tier 4** – To design and implement their own bespoke Internal Alternative Provision (IAP) incorporating the “Resilience Curriculum” for students who are at risk of serious sanctions as a mechanism to drive their reintegration into the main school culture.

Like many schools, LHS spend a significant amount of its budget on external Alternative Provision to support students ‘at risk.’ In developing their own Internal Alternative Provision, they will ensure students continue to feel a part of their school and benefit from school systems and routines, as well as in the long-term, the school will be able to divert the current funding in a more impactful way.

The goal is for students to engage with the Resilience Curriculum in school in a personalised way, where individual goals and achievements, supported by LHS staff, will help them integrate into the broader school culture. The focus will be on key academic success in addition to a more skills and life attributes model. The school intends to provide students with the tools to become successful young people leading to becoming successful citizens in society. What is key, is that leaders want to develop a sense of belonging with the resilience curriculum, whilst maintaining their connection with the wider school.

Students will access English and maths, and key life skills such as Food Technology (cooking skills), Forrest School (Team building skills), Art (Expression skills), PSHE (personal, social, healthy living, healthy relationships, and citizenship) and CIEAG (job skills and how to access next steps).



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### Actions:

- Small group and 1:1 bespoke intervention delivered by key pastoral staff and led by the Pastoral Manager
- Room "open for business"

### Impact:

- Assessment data
- Student voice
- Staff voice
- Sense of belonging for students
- Careers advice and next step data
- Implementation of interventions
- Outcome data of interventions

This will be led by SLT and the pastoral team.



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### Overview

The school's core values 'Respect, Resilience, Aspiration' have transformed the school in a short space of time. Leaders pride themselves on the impact of their vision and values stating that they 'are an inclusive community that embraces choice, opens doors and create opportunities,' and this was explicit throughout the day.

I had the opportunity to meet with a variety of stakeholders as well as taking a tour around the school and participating in learning visits. Staff and students interact positively; there is mutual respect both in and out of classrooms, alongside genuine warmth. Leaders know and understand the students,' and this was highlighted by feedback from both staff and students. During my interactions with staff, it was clear that there is a notable sense of pride in being part of the 'new' LHS and they spoke highly of the impassioned Headteacher discussing the open-door policy and how staff feel they can talk to him or other leaders if they need to.

On meeting the safeguarding lead /DSSL she described how she now benefits from external supervision which helps her to manage her own emotional health and wellbeing. She is now working to raise staff awareness of the available support. She is also a mental health practitioner, and she noted that some students have faced challenges with the changes in school. For some, these changes have caused anxiety, but with substantial support, many have adjusted and now follow the new routines. She discussed her positive relationships with families, stressing the importance of excellent communication especially in the early help stage.

Safeguarding data allows the DSSL to identify trends and coordinate with colleagues to create tailored PSHE curriculum provisions for specific year groups or student cohorts. For instance, data on vaping led to the school hiring an external trainer to work with students.

Leaders have meticulously developed and refined core teaching and learning techniques that are consistently implemented by all teachers. Their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme extensively focuses on these methods through Teaching and Practice Labs, as well as coaching sessions. Additionally, Departmental Leadership and Student Information sessions are dedicated to explaining the theoretical aspects and demonstrating how these practices contribute to enhanced and enduring learning experiences for students.

During learning visits, various core teaching and learning techniques were observed. In a Key Stage 4 maths lesson, students effectively utilised whiteboards, allowing the teacher to promptly address any misconceptions. In Year 11 RE, students participated in a mastery recap as part of the 'Do Now' activity. I noted the teacher's excellent study technique to help remember key ideas and an effective use of the 'no opt out' technique, and it was evident from the student's response that this is routine in lessons. An ECT in Year 7 English demonstrated the effectiveness of the exceptional CPD programme in the way she efficiently and effectively used core techniques, even though she is new to teaching. All learning observed was purposeful, with effective stretch and challenge, and the AHT described this as 'typicality.'



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I met with student council members who proudly shared their school experiences. They discussed leading committees on rewards, mental health, anti-bullying, and curriculum. New processes include agenda setting, minute writing, and 'meeting leadership' training, enhancing their leadership and public speaking skills. The students were warm, welcoming, intelligent, and articulate and it was a privilege to meet them.

Students explained how LHS is a 'rewarding school,' and that there have been 'massive improvements' which have brought a sense of belonging. They articulated how staff are consistent and spoke about how effective routines are in helping them to learn. They love the Aspiration Table and enjoy the celebrations that take place in assemblies to recognise and reward students. They were looking forward to the end of term whole school assembly having heard rumours of confetti cannons, space hopper races and abundant Easter eggs!

Rewards are firmly embedded in school processes. Students are consistently rewarded using the standards cards, Legacy points and aspiration cards; these then lead to a hierarchy of further rewards and these are clearly valued by the students. Being given physical cards means it is more tangible for some students, and many collect them to take home to show parents rather than post in the central boxes.

Students collectively expressed that rewards have positively influenced behaviour. They believe that these incentives have resulted in greater focus among all students, leading to more consistent behaviour conducive to learning. They discussed the increased participation in lessons, with more students raising their hands. Additionally, routines have become immediate, such as holding up pens, without the need for reminders.

Staff and students engaged in discussions about the badge culture with great enthusiasm, and as I conversed with students at The Aspiration Table, they could clearly explain their purpose. Whole school assemblies play a crucial role in recognising student achievements. Students are commended for their accomplishments in front of the entire school, fostering a sense of pride and community. The school has successfully dispelled the perception that rewards and recognition are 'uncool,' which is a notable achievement, especially at Key Stage 4.

Behaviour and standards data demonstrates the significant impact of the changes; to date a higher proportion of Legacy points have been issued compared to last year's achievement points; there is a notable reduction in disruptive learning across all groups, with students with SEND seeing the highest percentage decrease. An analysis of suspension data reveals a 34% reduction in suspensions compared to the same period last year, including a 25% decrease in suspensions among students SEND. This suggests that the established routines and core techniques are highly effective in supporting all learners.

It was a real privilege and a pleasure to re visit LHS and witness the changes that have been implemented. It is an exciting place to be, whether you are a student or a member of staff! The Headteacher is a remarkable leader who unambiguously cares about staff and students, and under his passionate and expert leadership, leaders consistently think 'outside the box,' they use their initiative to challenge expectations and preconceptions of what young people can achieve. This ongoing work is a testament to a fantastic,



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tenacious staff team who have responded wholeheartedly to the changes and who work diligently to provide exceptional learning and pastoral experiences for all their students daily.

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 Alysson Tolley**

**Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:**

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