



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School:	Marlfields Primary Academy Waggs Road Congleton Cheshire CW12 4BT
Head/Principal:	Ms Sandra Isherwood
IQM Lead:	Ms Sandra Isherwood
Date of Review:	29 th September 2022
Assessor:	Sarah Linari

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: Inclusive Allsorts

Ambassador: Sarah Linari

Date of Next Meeting: 9th November 2022

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: Nurture Provision

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

- IQM Flagship Review documentation
- Ofsted Report 2022
- Academy website
- Tour and learning walk
- Resource Provision
- Pupil voice
- Newsletters
- Media releases
- School Blog
- MacMillan Coffee Morning



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Additional Activities:

Meetings held with:

- Headteacher / IQM Coordinator
- Resource Provision Manager / SENDCo
- Chair of Governors
- Class Teachers
- Teaching Assistants
- School Council Pupils
- Pupil Leadership Team
- Parents, carers and guardians
- Skills Builder Lead
- Holiday Club and After-School Club Provision Leads



Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Summary of Targets from 2021-22

Flagship project Title: *Nurturing independent, resilient, responsible, resourceful and reflective learners.*

The Academy applied for funding through the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and entered a Service Level Agreement with the Local Authority to establish the Specialist Resource Provision. The first pupils were welcomed in October 2021 and the provision has supported five children over the past twelve months. Due to its success, the number of places has increased with the addition of two Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children. The Local Authority has begun consultation with the Academy with the prospect of increasing the capacity further. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Coordinator leads the Resource Provision. The Academy is supporting the development of one of the Teaching Assistants to undertake their teaching training so that they can be the main class teacher in the future. The Headteacher feels that the Resource Provision is already having a positive impact as the "Academy supports the Local Authority to meet the needs of individuals within the local area [...], meeting their parent's wishes for their children to be taught in a mainstream school, where possible."

The Department for Education endorsed 'Skills Builder' programme and it was implemented across the Academy last academic year, to support the development of essential skills which aid learning across all areas. The programme was launched with a training session for all staff in the Autumn Term. To ensure the skills were fully embedded, two skills have been a focus of each half term. Assemblies introduced the skills which were then reinforced in lesson time. To further raise the profile of the skills, the Dojo Rewards System was linked so that pupils were praised when demonstrating the specific skills. Drop-down project days allowed focussed skills sessions which incorporated creativity with problem-solving. The drop-down days were linked to the curriculum, with follow-up activities carried out in class to ensure the learning was meaningful and impactful. One of the project days involved a crashed spaceship with aliens landing in the playground. This engaged the children whilst bringing the learning to life. Pupils in the older year groups completed passports to record their progress against the key skills whereas the younger year groups completed 'Essential Skills Records.' The Academy was successful in implementing the key skills and will now look to continue the success through developing the skills further this academic year. The Skills Builder Team congratulated Marlfields Primary Academy on achieving the Bronze Award and commented that it "puts [you] in a select group of schools and colleges who have demonstrated a commitment to building students' essential skills."

As part of the strategic planning to nurture independent, resilient, responsible, resourceful and reflective learners, the Headteacher agreed for the Year Five pupils to take part in a funded trial of the Children's University Project 2021-23. The focus of the project is to support learning and improve pupils' self-esteem through following their own interests and being responsible for their own learning. The launch of the programme was delayed by a year due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. To start to



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prepare the Year Five children, the staff set them challenges throughout the year including “gain Blue Peter badges and do the Summer Library Reading Challenge 2022”. The IQM Coordinator feels that the “children are beginning to take ownership of work outside the school walls and understand that not all learning takes place in the school building.” This will continue to be a focus for the current academic year.

The ‘Swim Therapy Project’ was implemented last September “to support pupil’s physical and mental health.” Due to the closure of the local swimming pool, the Headteacher had to be proactive and find an inhouse solution. The Academy hired a pop-up swimming pool to provide daily swim sessions. It proved popular with the pupils and families, who were positive about the experience. Even though the local pool remains closed, the Academy has continued to take the pupils swimming once a week at a pool further away. The Governors and Pupil Council are currently exploring the option of purchasing their own pop-up swimming pool so that the intense courses can run for all year groups each year.

The Headteacher was proactive in terms of establishing the Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL) as soon as the Department for Education announced the programme. They have carried out the training, in line with the programme. Alongside the SENDCo, the SMHL has carried out an audit of current provision and identified links to mental health and wellbeing within the curriculum. To further enhance practice in this area, the Academy has employed a graduate child psychologist to support the graduated response. The pupils and parents spoken with as part of the review process feel that the Academy supports mental health and wellbeing needs well. Children feel confident to ask adults for support if they need it. There is a range of mental health and wellbeing interventions in place, such as an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) and Lego Therapy, which offer support to identified groups and individuals.

Flagship Project 2022-23

Project Title: ‘Involving Pupils in our Reflective Practice.’

Outline of Project:

Staff will be asking searching questions to ensure that the Academy systems and procedures take account of all pupils’ perspectives. This will ensure that the School Development Plan (SDP) contains targets which reflect priorities identified by not only some stakeholders, but the most important stakeholders – the pupils. Attention to pupil voice will be a golden thread in all policies, procedures and day-to-day life.

Their voice will become an integral part of the vision and ethos. This may need revisiting as the pupils will have clear roles and be able to give their views as staff will encourage and support open and honest participation from all. This is also linked to the UNICEF Article 12 – “You have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously”.



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Staff will be working to ensure all of the Academy's community respects pupil's views. This will ensure that when adults make decisions that affect pupils, pupils have the right to say what they think should happen and that their views are taken into account. Through pupils being involved in making decisions, they will benefit in a variety of different ways for example, increased confidence; self-esteem; ability and a greater sense of responsibility. This will also bring parents on board, as they will support their children.

Agreed Actions for the Flagship Project

Planned actions will include but will not be limited to:

- Focussed working parties giving pupils specific roles to participate in school development.
- School development planning will take into account the priorities identified by pupils.
- The development of effective curriculum content and pedagogy to improve the climate for learning for pupils.
- Host regular parent and carer group events to gain their feedback.
- Establish three focus groups for pupil voice: School Safety and a Personal Development Group; Decision and Community Team; Learning and Teaching Team.
- Link this body of work into the whole-school oracy development planning.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Although the IQM Coordinator and staff at Marlfields Primary School are fully committed to the Cluster Group, they were unable to attend the meetings last academic year due to unforeseen circumstances in school, including an Ofsted visit on the day of one of the meetings. Fortunately, with the IQM Lead also being the previous Ambassador for the Cluster Group, they were involved in the planning of the meetings and worked closely with the host schools' IQM Coordinators. The week prior to the summer term meeting at Irk Valley Primary School, the Headteacher completed a review of the school, as an IQM Assessor. Thus, the areas of best practice were shared and the Headteacher was able to bring back the ideas to feed into whole-school development at Marlfields. One such area of best practice shared which will now be implemented at Marlfields, was the introduction of focus groups for pupil voice initiative, which inspired this year's Flagship Project.



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Overview

Marlfields Primary Academy was bustling with children and their families on the morning of my visit to celebrate MacMillan coffee morning by enjoying cake and refreshments together. It was a well-attended event, demonstrating the community spirit and ethos. Parents, carers and guardians who were spoken to during the coffee morning event spoke positively about the school. Some of the parents spoken with have recently moved their children to Marlfields Primary Academy from other local schools due to its reputation within the local community for having a nurturing ethos. One child said that there are “no bullies here” with their parent affirming how “accepting” Marlfields Primary children are of each other’s differences. In the May 2022 Ofsted Parent View Survey, to which 30% of parents, carers and guardians responded, 95% of parents and carers stated that their child is happy at school.

Parents, carers and guardians feel that the “teachers are great,” there is a “friendly atmosphere” and there is “always something going on.” Parents, carers and guardians feel that communication with home is excellent as the Academy regularly shares information via the Dojo app, school blog, social media and newsletters. They feel that their children are not only well supported at Marlfields Primary Academy, but they are challenged academically to achieve their potential. There is an overwhelming consensus from the families that the Academy has a “lovely, community feel.”

The Chair of Governors kindly met with me during her visit to the Academy to support the community event. Governors are extremely knowledgeable and have an accurate understanding of the Academy’s context and current evaluation of provision. They are aware of the priorities for this academic year and have worked with the Headteacher to make sure that all Class Teachers’ individual performance management targets feed in to whole school improvement priorities.

Reading is at the forefront of the curriculum at Marlfields Primary Academy. Children are also encouraged to read outside of school through Academy-wide competitions. One competition entailed the promotion of the library summer reading challenge whereby the Academy rewarded any pupils who completed the challenge. The Academy takes every opportunity to promote reading for pleasure. At the MacMillan coffee morning, popular fiction books from the World Book Day reading list were available to buy at cost-price, making reading accessible to all families whilst raising additional funds for the MacMillan charity. A love of reading is also evident through the displays in corridors and classrooms as well as dialogue with the pupils.

Pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are supported well through the Academy’s newly established Resource Provision. Specialist staff provide a balanced curriculum and a range of therapeutic interventions to a group of children from the local area. When I visited as part of the review, the atmosphere in the Resource Base was calm and welcoming. Pupils were engaged in learning activities, supported by the Teaching Assistants (TAs). One child who was dysregulated was carefully supported by a one-to-one TA, using a range of strategies to calm them down and successfully reintegrate them back into the learning activity. Each child has their own work station, with appropriate resources according to their interests and needs.



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The room is well-designed with designated areas for the different tasks. It benefits from the proximity of the Sensory Room which allows the staff to plan therapy sessions into the daily schedule as well as offer responsive support to pupils who are dysregulated throughout the day, as required.

During the review visit, I met with the School Council Pupils, Head Boys and Head Girl. When asked to describe Marlfields Primary Academy in just one word, they chose "friends, knowledge, excitement, proud, respect, learning and happy." When talking about their favourite aspect of school life, one child said how they "love the variety of clubs such as science, archery and football." All of the inhouse after school clubs are free and accessible to all, ensuring money is never a barrier.

Pupils feel that the teachers help them understand the learning through the use of group modelling, sentence starters and question prompts on the board. The Year Six pupils also appreciate the use of the 'Red, Amber and Green' trays where they place their books at the end of the session. This allows the teacher to know who found it easy (green tray), who may have found some aspects challenging (Amber) and who may have struggled (red).

When asked about the staff, pupils used the adjective "respectful" to describe them. There is a mutual respect amongst pupils and staff upon which positive relationships are built. The approach from staff is centred around care and nurture. Marlfields Primary Academy look after their pupils during the school holidays too and offer a safe place for pupils to attend throughout the day, with no costs to those families in receipt of free school meals funding. They provide food and an action-packed programme which includes activities such as pizza making, farm visits, sports activities and gardening. The children spoken to during the review day who attended the club over the summer holidays talked with excitement about what they did. Long-lasting memories are provided through enrichment activities during term time and over the holidays.

Pupils at Marlfields Primary Academy particularly enjoy the extra curricula opportunities afforded to them throughout the year. Some of the activities last year included a whole school trip to the outdoor adventure place 'BeWILDerwood,' a visit to Chester Zoo, flower planting at Tatton Park and a visit to the Town Hall in Congleton. When asked what it is they like most about the enrichment activities, the pupils said, "you get to learn things you can't learn in school," the trips "are fun" and you "get to see stuff you don't usually get to see."

Following the sad news of Queen Elizabeth II's passing in September, Marlfields Primary Academy pupils honoured the Queen in a unique way. They created a mural of Her Majesty using the different coins which have her portrait on. All of the money raised to complete the mural was then donated to a local charity, the East Cheshire Hospice. The Congleton Chronicle featured an article on 22nd September which celebrated the Academy's special dedication to the Queen.

The Academy's most recent Ofsted report (May 2022) recognises the inclusive culture of the school. It states that "Leaders ensure that a caring and nurturing ethos underpins



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all aspects of the school's work. They have high expectations regarding pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well and get on with one another."

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Marlfields Primary Academy and experiencing a community event in person. All staff, pupils and families were polite and friendly. Pupils engage fully with the wider curriculum and take advantage of the plethora of enrichment opportunities on offer. The Academy has continued to move from strength to strength in terms of its inclusive practice. I therefore recommend they continue to hold Flagship status. The next review will look closely at the implementation of this year's Flagship Project.

Assessor: Sarah Linari

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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