



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School Marfields Primary Academy
Waggs Road
Congleton
Cheshire
CW12 4BT

Head/Principal Mrs Claire Sleath

IQM Lead Mrs Claire Sleath

Date of Review 16th June 2026

Assessor Mr Mike Bousfield

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Inclusive Allsorts

Ambassador Ms Alison Williams

Next Meeting TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2025	11 th Nov 2025	No
Spring 2026	17 th Mar 2026	No
Summer 2026	8 th Jun 2026	No

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Due to staffing changes and intense school improvement work at Marfields, there has been a hiatus in the school's IQM work, and they have not been able to send representation to cluster meetings. Because all senior staff are new to the school, there was limited awareness of the cluster meetings and their function and importance.

Happily, the school is now in a strong position to contribute to these groups and there is a firm commitment from the Senior Leaders in school, and the CEO of the Academy Trust to attend. Discussions included ensuring that leaders were aware of how information about the group is communicated and selecting the most appropriate staff representative for cluster meetings, based on the agendas in future.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Evidence

- School Self Evaluation
- School website
- Learning Walk accompanied by Headteacher
- Focused drop-ins of lessons and interventions
- Focused book look with senior leaders

Meetings with:

- Parents
- A range of school staff
- Senior Leaders
- CEO of the Multi Academy Trust
- Pupils

Additional Activities:

- Observation of Beginning on the School Day/ meet and greet
- Observation of Assembly – focused on pupil leadership roles
- Observation of lunch and playtime



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The school's Flagship Project is entitled 'Implementing the 'Triple A Strategy' to eliminate barriers for our disadvantaged pupils.' The three 'a's referred to are 'Ambition, Aspiration and Achievement' and this document informs the trust wide approach to tackling disadvantage and ensuring that the school addresses the needs of all and allows every pupil to thrive and succeed. Triple A was described by the CEO of the Trust as 'an equitable model for all children', and the approach places emphasis on the development of the whole child, not solely academic attainment. Elements such as attendance, well-being and leadership are given equal priority and attention to academic progress. The action plan identified four major workstreams:

1. Improving Quality First Teaching across the school:

The school evaluation is that provision for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged learners has been strengthened through a clear Graduated Response for cognition and learning, improved use of assessment information, and more consistent approaches to teaching and intervention. Leaders use Arbor and termly pupil progress meetings to analyse gaps, identify pupils at risk of falling behind, and agree timely, targeted actions, including book moderation and bespoke teacher support. Clear lesson pathways, live marking, assessment for learning and Trust-led scaffolding training have increased staff confidence in adapting teaching and deploying support effectively so that pupils can access learning and misconceptions are addressed promptly. A progressive curriculum now provides clearer expectations for key knowledge, vocabulary, prior learning and assessment end points, while the SENCO-supported review cycle for PLP targets ensures that provision is measurable, purposeful and responsive to individual needs.

Attainment for disadvantaged pupils has improved markedly over the academic year, demonstrating the positive impact of the school's graduated response and targeted support. Current data indicates that, when pupils with SEN are removed from the comparison, pupil premium pupils are achieving in line with or above national disadvantaged averages in reading, writing and mathematics across most year groups, with particularly strong outcomes in Years 1, 2, 3 and 5. Although Year 4 remains an area for continued focus, the wider data shows that gaps between pupil premium pupils and their peers are narrowing over time, with many cohorts making accelerated progress from lower starting points between autumn entry data and March assessments. This provides clear evidence that leaders are using assessment information effectively to identify need, address barriers and improve outcomes for vulnerable learners.

2. Implementing an Aspirational Mindset for all pupils:

The school has implemented a coherent, whole-school approach to raising aspiration for all pupils, with a clear focus on identifying and removing barriers for disadvantaged learners. Termly Triple A Disadvantaged Child, or TADAC, meetings provide a structured mechanism for reviewing each pupil's attendance, pastoral needs, wellbeing, academic profile and curriculum entitlement, ensuring that support is precise and responsive. The



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



appointment of a dedicated Pupil Premium and Inclusion Lead within the senior leadership team has strengthened accountability, enabling regular analysis of data, close collaboration with class teachers, subject leaders, the SENCo and attendance lead, and consistent monitoring of agreed next steps. Alongside this, the embedded 'I do, we do, you do' model provides a shared pedagogical approach that supports pupils to keep up with learning through explicit modelling, guided practice and carefully planned independent application.

The evidence indicates that this approach is having a positive impact on both academic progress and wider pupil development. Progress data shows that many Pupil Premium pupils are making expected or better than expected progress, and in several year groups they are matching or exceeding the progress of their non-disadvantaged peers, particularly in reading, writing and maths. TADAC and Triple A evidence further demonstrates improvement across key areas, with strongest gains in Healthy Mind and Body, Curriculum Entitlement, Pastoral Profile and Academic Profile. These outcomes suggest that the school's targeted systems are helping to close gaps, improve access to the curriculum and strengthen pupils' readiness to learn, while also identifying attendance and writing as ongoing priorities for pupils with more complex SEND and SEMH needs.

This evidence aligns strongly with IQM inclusion criteria by demonstrating sustained whole-school inclusive practice, clear systems for identifying and removing barriers to learning, and measurable impact on the outcomes and wider experiences of disadvantaged pupils.

3. Implementing a consistent approach to improve attendance and behaviour:

The school has embedded a consistent, inclusive approach to behaviour through a positive behaviour policy, clear expectations, staff scripts and regular CPD. Staff, including teaching assistants and midday supervisors, have been supported to apply the policy confidently, with behaviour working parties enabling feedback to shape practice. Leaders monitor behaviour incidents weekly and use this analysis to identify patterns, strengthen provision and respond proactively, including through structured playground zones, individual risk assessments and personalised management plans. Parental engagement has also been strengthened through behaviour meetings and collaborative support plans, while advice from external agencies is incorporated into SEN targets to ensure pupils receive appropriate support.

To improve attendance, the school has implemented a graduated response that provides clear systems for attendance letters, parent clinics and personalised support for persistently absent pupils, with a dedicated attendance officer working alongside leaders to analyse patterns, address lateness and support safeguarding where needed. Strong relationships with families are prioritised through Early Help documentation and practical support such as uniform assistance, funding and regular meetings with senior leaders.

Evidence indicates positive impact: persistent absence has reduced by 12.9% between November 2025 and April 2026, pupil voice shows that children understand the



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



behaviour policy and feel listened to, and adaptations made in response to feedback have strengthened pupils' sense of safety. Personalised risk assessments and regulation plans have also contributed to significantly fewer distress behaviours among disadvantaged pupils across the Spring and Summer Terms.

4. Broadening our range of Cultural Capital experiences:

The school has strengthened its cultural capital offer through a more purposeful and diverse programme of trips, visitors, enrichment activities and community events, closely linked to the newly developed curriculum. Opportunities such as curriculum-linked texts, explicit vocabulary development and a wider range of pupil leadership roles are broadening pupils' experiences, confidence and participation across school life.

Targeted monitoring through TADAC meetings and a detailed Pupil Premium (PP) tracking system has helped identify pupils who may not be accessing clubs or wider enrichment. Pupil voice has informed provision, leading to invite-only clubs, free sibling places where needed and lunchtime clubs to reduce barriers to participation.

Club attendance for disadvantaged pupils has increased from 50% in the Autumn Term to 76% in the Spring, representing a 26% rise across the year.

In summary, the school has provided robust and detailed evidence to support its evaluation that its plans have had great impact and have improved outcomes for pupils. Evidence on the day of the review aligned with this evaluation, particularly for strands one and two. Classroom environments are consistent and support learning for all pupils. Learning walls, personalised resource banks, personal workstations, visual timetables and sensory provision were among the elements of the Quality First offer seen across the school. Pedagogy could be seen to routinely incorporate flexible grouping, co-operative learning (also known as 'assessment for learning'), extensive modelling and support, live marking and feedback and reasonable adjustments for the needs of learners. This makes learning accessible to all and creates the expectation for pupils to achieve. Staff are highly skilled and exceptionally flexible. Needs are responded to instantly, with expertise and care, and an 'everyone is responsible for everything' approach is tangible. Debrief sessions, in which events are reviewed and learning identified, are led by the behaviour lead and the SENDCo and are an everyday part of the routine, demonstrating the deep commitment to removing barriers to success for all learners. Pupils' books demonstrate the clear intent of the curriculum, the way that learners are supported to achieve and the accelerated progress some pupils have made as a result. Clear targets and visual cues make learning objectives sharp and focused. Scaffolding is used extensively to allow all pupils to demonstrate understanding, and the way that this is gradually reduced over time is also evident.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Marlfields Primary School is planning to implement the Children First Learning Partnership (CFLP) Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Graduated Response to strengthen its inclusive practice and provide a consistent, graduated approach for pupils with SEMH needs. This work responds to the high proportion of pupils with SEND, including 38% of pupil premium children, identified as having additional needs. Aligned with the school's Behaviour Policy and core rules, 'Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Ready', the approach supports early identification, timely intervention, relational practice, restorative responses and clear escalation routes. The planned development of nurture groups, including provision for pupils in the Resource Provision (Bluebell Class) and mainstream classes, will potentially further enable tailored emotional support, curriculum adaptation and safe, structured opportunities for pupils to regulate and re-engage with learning.

The plan demonstrates a clear, whole-school commitment to strengthening inclusive practice through consistent classroom expectations, targeted staff training and a graduated response matched to pupils' individual needs. Key actions include implementing SEMH classroom non-negotiables, gathering pupil and staff voice, completing learning walks, developing a training matrix, improving diagnostic assessment and referral processes, and creating nurture spaces and bespoke intervention timetables. Ambitious plans are in place for adapting the environment in one part of the school to provide break out spaces and individual learning zones, as well as to mitigate for the flight risk identified for some pupils. Responsibility for the plan is shared across senior leaders, the SENCo, Behaviour Lead and ELSA-trained staff, with milestones running from September 2026 to April 2027. The intended impact is to secure greater consistency in classroom support, improve pupils' progress against Personal Learning Plan (PLP) and SEMH targets, reduce behaviour incidents, suspensions and part-time timetables, improve attendance for pupils with SEMH needs, and embed the Bluebell Blueprint (Resource Base curriculum) and Zones of Regulation, so that pupils develop stronger emotional regulation, engagement and confidence in learning.

As part of the review, it was recommended that the success criteria be checked so that leaders are confident in the identified intended outcomes, and that these can be readily evaluated and evidenced. This will ensure that the evaluation of this action plan maintains the very high level of rigour and detail that is evident for the plan currently coming to completion.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Overview

It was a privilege and a pleasure to conduct this review at Marlfield Primary School. The school provides a nurturing environment in which needs are systematically identified and met, and ambition and expectation are high. Staff work very effectively as a team, and they are prepared to 'do whatever it takes' on behalf of children and families. They talk about the pupils with love and respect and take pride and joy in their progress. Leadership is very strong and focused, with well identified goals and clear implementation strategies. Leaders exemplify the school ethos and staff attribute the strong teamwork that is in place throughout the school to this positive modelling. The way in which the pupils sit in assembly provides an excellent illustration of the school's key characteristics. Rather than in horizontal lines in their age groups, as is typical in most schools, they form vertical lines, so that they end up sitting next to someone from a different class. This enables better collaboration and talk for learning during the assembly and demonstrates the qualities that sum up the school: innovative, outcomes focused and effective.

The warm and nurturing atmosphere is created from the moment pupils arrive at school from 8.45 each morning. There is evidence of strong relationships in the interactions between school staff and parents and their children as the day begins. The school provides a breakfast club, and this is available to all, with special arrangements made to suit need, such as anxiety or emotionally based school avoidance. The gradual start, with low key welcoming activities, bespoke arrangements for specific needs and 'soft start' sensory and nurture activities where needed provides a calm beginning to the day. In one classroom, it was evident that, although a substantial group within the cohort had arrived in a dysregulated state, they were all fully accessing the first lesson of the day a short time later.

Parents have a very positive view of the school, and particularly recognise positive changes made recently, which they attribute quite specifically to individual members of staff. Their views reflect the school's planned development, in that they have noted the increased personalisation of their child's learning experience and also that the ambition for them and the expectation of what can be achieved has increased. One parent said that teachers were 'gently challenging' her child, which sums up the school's approach nicely, "the school has helped my child to understand and speak about his feelings, and this has improved his focus and attention." Another parent shared, "my child used to struggle with social situations, but he now loves coming to school and he has developed lots of confidence. I can send him to school, and I know his needs will be met." They like that teachers know the children very well and build on their strengths and interests. They also say that communication, both informal and formal, is excellent.

The behaviour observed during this review was exemplary. Pupils are polite and respectful. They are focused during their lessons and mix well with each other in unstructured time. Teaching staff model enthusiasm and a positive energy which impacts the behaviour of pupils. They also go to great lengths to ensure that all pupils experience 'leadership' and this is part of the holistic approach, with 'leadership' being one of the strands of the 'Triple A' approach that is monitored and tracked alongside other areas of achievement. During an assembly lead by the 'House Captains', they explained how they had helped others in the past year in their roles, the qualities



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



needed and details of how they got these roles. Other pupils in Year 5 were then invited to apply for the roles in the next school year, and details were given as to how they could do this. At the same time, they were reminded to think about the other leadership roles that would be available and to think about what they might be suited for. The assembly demonstrated the pride and confidence that had been developed for these pupils, but also the careful support they have received to achieve this. In the playground, children look after each other, for example if someone is hurt, and there is a calm and happy atmosphere. Pupils have helped to create 'zones' within the outdoor space, where different kinds of play and recreation can take place.

The enrichment offer from the school is extensive. The provision map for trips and visitors has been reviewed to ensure range and variety. These activities include visits to the opera, museums, the airport, the local library and an opportunity to perform with the Halle orchestra. Regular visitors such as firefighters, the police and an animal show enrich the curriculum within school. Finance is sought and made available so that every pupil can enjoy each experience regardless of the financial circumstances in their family. After school clubs are seen as an important part of the learning journey at Marlfields, and attendance is monitored. Where pupils are not accessing the extracurricular offer, staff investigate the reasons for this and take action to ensure that something accessible is offered. For example, a Lunchtime Hub offers activities for those children who cannot attend outside of school hours.

Teamwork is exceptionally strong with a strong prevailing ethos encouraging members of staff to be flexible and do what needs to be done to meet need. Staff attribute this to the training opportunities that they are regularly offered, the willingness of everyone to help each other and an open-door policy, which as one member of staff put it, "applies to every door in school, not just the head teacher's". They highlight the informal debrief sessions which happen on a daily basis as an example of how committed everyone in school is to provide the very best for pupils and ensure that they can succeed. They are very proud of the positive difference that has been made for specific pupils, and this in turn appears to motivate everyone to be the best they can be.

Leaders support and challenge effectively, providing a strong ethos, detailed models and resources, effective monitoring and very strong strategic planning. The evidence provided for this review demonstrates the rigour of leaders and their clear understanding of the cycle of establishing intent, planning, implementing and reviewing. The evidence within school strongly supports their self-evaluation. Likewise, planning is specific and relevant, and accountability is clearly established within plans. Leaders also display admirable courage in following their values and beliefs, and faith in those within school to be able to create bespoke solutions to the challenges they identify. This is demonstrated through the writing curriculum, which does not follow a commercial scheme. Whilst there is good structure and support for teachers, ultimately the school places value on teachers' knowledge of their pupils and their professional expertise and experience and acknowledges that 'one size rarely fits all' when it comes to teaching and learning.

The Children First Learning Partnership, which is the multi-academy trust to which the school belongs, has provided an excellent template for inclusion practice in the form of its 'Triple A' model. The core principles of this model include its broad definition of



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



achievement, and the equality of emphasis on wellbeing, pupil leadership and cultural capital in addition to academic achievement. The approach recognises that good academic achievement is dependent on factors such as safety, wellbeing and confidence being in place. The package allows leaders to analyse strengths and gaps and provides resources to address any issues identified for every pupil. It also provides assessment, tracking and monitoring tools. Key staff regularly meet for TADAC (Triple A for Disadvantaged Children) meetings, which result in robust and effective actions plans and meaningful progress.

Marlfields has been on a journey of rapid change in its recent past and the vast majority of staff members are new to IQM. This review visit has confirmed that inclusion in the school continues to be of the highest standard and that there is capacity to sustain this and develop further. The whole school is truly committed to inclusion and there is a willingness to be innovative and creative to find the best solutions for children and their families. The school is very well deserving of its Flagship status.

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 Centre of Excellence. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence 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 Centre of Excellence status.

Assessor: Mr Mike Bousfield

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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