



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School	Christopher Whitehead Language College and Sixth Form Bromwich Road Worcester Worcestershire WR2 4AF
Head/Principal	Ms Cath Clark
IQM Lead	Mr Jon Hickman
Date of Review	25th June 2026
Assessor	Ms Kate Hazelwood

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group	IDEA 2
Ambassador	Ms Hilary Thompson

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Spring 2025	26th March 2025	Yes
Summer 2025	18 th June 2025	Yes
Autumn 2025	12 th November 2025	Yes
Spring 2026	19 th May 2026	-
Summer 2026	18 th June 2026	Yes



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



The Impact of the Cluster Group

The Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) Co-ordinator is fully committed to collaboration with the Cluster Group. They are a core group member, regularly attending and sharing inclusive ideas and practice and the sessions are attended by a range of staff, as inclusion is seen as everyone's role and everyone's business. The school is demonstrably committed to the value that membership of IQM brings through Cluster attendance and is a much-valued member of the group. Christopher Whitehead Language College has not only hosted a Cluster Group meeting (largely focused around showcasing the EMAB) but have also attended Cluster Group meetings at special schools as well as mainstream, demonstrating how they embrace the sharing of good practice and networking with a range of providers.

Evidence

- IQM Documentation
- School Website
- School Social Media
- Intervention Trackers
- Reading data
- Cluster Meeting Minutes
- External report/ Certificate verifying Trauma Informed Attachment Aware (TIAA) Gold Standard status
- SEND Governor Report
- Curriculum Update Report

Additional Activities

- Meeting with SLT
- Meeting with Parents
- Tour of the School (Learning Support Centre, EMAB – The Beacon, The House)
- Learning Walks (Yr 8 Food Tech - Smoothies, Yr 9 English - Political Campaign)
- Discussion with Intervention Co-ordinator
- Discussion with AHT – SENDCo and Inclusion
- Meeting with Student Voice
- Discussion with Governors
- Discussion with staff



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Christopher Whitehead Language College (CWLC) is now one year into a two-year IQM Flagship project focused around integrating the school intervention programme to ensure all students in all groups make outstanding progress. There is recognition that the progress their learners make is both academic but also inclusive of social and emotional progress.

There has been an impressive amount of work completed in this first year, and the school leaders are right in their acknowledgement that the next phase of the project has to be about embedding the changes that have been implemented, so that improvements can be sustained over a longer period.

The first task that the school wanted to focus on was to ensure accurate identification of the academic needs of their learners and identify any gaps that were there. There has been a focus on assessments and the triangulation of data, to support in identifying pupils requiring intervention and, more importantly, the appropriate *type* of intervention.

The school has always utilised transitional data and have carried out a range of standardised assessments themselves to ascertain where pupils' strengths and areas of need were. However, paper tests, across Years 7–9, were time consuming and not efficient. They have introduced online assessments in the last year, and this has helped them in securing robust data with which to use to identify an increased number of pupils requiring intervention support. It has meant that in the last Year 13 students were able to access reading interventions (18 via Lexonic and 115 utilising the Red Reading Box comprehension resource) and the tracking data shows this has had a positive impact on virtually all learners, with just a few requiring continued support.

In particular, the school wanted to introduce specialist Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) assessments for their learners with English as an additional language (EAL), to better distinguish between language acquisition needs and underlying learning difficulties. Training courses have been completed by leads, to enhance the understanding of the SEND and EAL overlap, so that staff have increased confidence in identifying genuine SpLD needs in students who are also acquiring English. Whilst this is still in its infancy regarding implementation, and the focus has been on training courses and CPD, there are plans to implement a specialist SpLD assessment tool for EAL students in the next academic year (in year two of this Flagship project).

A large focus for CWLC has been based around reading. The school had been 'reading' regularly – but not effectively. Having bought in to the DEAR Model (Drop Everything and Read), they recognised that it was not having a significant impact on either improving their readers or improving a love of reading. There was an acknowledgement that an alternative approach was needed. School leaders were part of an EEF based project, Leadership of Literacy, in the local authority and from that they decided to try a different approach – Richer for Reading!



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



All pupils participate in a half hour weekly reading session, in forms. Unlike DEAR, the new programme is purposeful and meaningful. There is always a text to read, as a class, followed by comprehension questions. The topics are varied – the school have sought contributions from pupils, subject areas, calendar events and current affairs – and the text might be fiction or non-fiction to expose students to the breadth of text they might later encounter in an exam. There is an expectation that every teacher is a teacher of reading, and this new approach has meant an improved consistency across the school and greater engagement from students. Building these solid foundations will support students throughout their educational journeys, including helping them to access exam questions, and leaders recognise that by developing strong readers, they will open far more doors to their students, and this is therefore an inclusion priority for them.

CWLC has introduced a new pathway for students at Key Stage 4, to support students who need an alternative and more bespoke curriculum, to facilitate their acquisition of English and Maths qualifications. Introducing ASDAN qualifications means that identified students are able to complete a more project-based approach to English and Maths, incorporating life skills and a more hands-on practical curriculum. This has been introduced primarily for Foundation learners, and they are taught in smaller groups with some being allowed the option of dropping MFL to focus on achieving accelerated progress in English and Maths. Pupils have engaged well and parents have been supportive of the introduction of an alternative qualification that better suits the needs of their children. The ASDAN qualification has been a way of formalising work students were already participating in (such as hosting MacMillan Coffee Mornings and running Fayre stalls) and the certificate boosts their sense of achievement as well as, in some cases, supporting their applications to colleges.

A particular focus this year has been around the attendance of pupils with SEND. Although the school is above national average for non-SEND pupils, persistent absence of those with SEND is above national average. This is partly due to a high number of pupils awaiting a special school placement and the limited number of local registered, specialist provision. However, the school has been proactive in its approach to tackling the issue and has established a base on site to introduce provision to support the re-engagement of pupils requiring additional social emotional support. Pupils accessing it talked of how the centre helped them re-engage with learning in a smaller, quieter, more relaxed setting, with booths and a greater focus on relational approaches.

Supporting students' emotional needs has been another priority area for CWLC this year. Having recently been awarded 'Gold' standard for being a Trauma Informed Attachment Aware School, they have demonstrated a real commitment to a relational approach and an understanding of the reasons *behind* the behaviours. Nearly 60 students have been able to access ELSA intervention (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant), and many others have utilised external support systems such as WAM (Worcestershire Autism Mentoring) and the Newbridge Mentoring Programme. There is a robust referral system in place which teachers can refer students requiring additional social emotional support through and this structured process and intervention has been impactful across the school.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

This is a two-year project and the focus for the second year is to build on what has already been started and embed it into school life, so that the interventions are both sustained and impactful on a deeper level. The intention is to embed high-impact, holistic intervention model that removes barriers to learning and accelerates progress for all identified students.

Although last year CWLC focused on developing a greater understanding of the assessment data and ensuring the data was purposeful for supporting pupils' progress, this year they want to take this further by really embedding data usage within Quality First Teaching. They want to refine the teaching of pupils with English as an additional language and with additional needs by establishing a holistic CPD programme for all staff to improve the understanding of students with complex needs, and to support swifter and more purposeful intervention. Strategies have already been shared towards the end of last year (such as consistent use of task boards and whole school expectations regarding 'uniform' displays for example) but this will be developed further.

The development of reading has been an important focus for the school over the last year in particular, however, leaders feel there is still work to be done in this area. The previous interventions have very much been about comprehension and students have made a lot of progress. The next stage is to improve fluency and to also develop vocabulary – particularly around Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary. This is something that will roll out across all subject areas so that it is indeed a whole school initiative that students will recognise regardless of what lesson they are in.

Leaders are keen to develop paths of progression from phonics to fluent reading for all students, especially EAL learners, where there may be opportunities to by-pass reading interventions once there is acquisition of phonics.

They are keen to have a big push on developing both vocabulary and oracy in their learners, recognising that this is important to give them additional opportunities on the 'external playing fields', from accessing exam questions to applying and being interviewed for colleges and universities.

The school will be launching a new whole school Reading Strategy incorporating all of these aspects, replacing many of the 'stand-alone' documents, so that there is an explicit and sharp focus on reading, establishing it as an 'ordinarily available inclusion strategy' as opposed to an 'add-on' or a separate intervention.

This target will sit alongside a holistic intervention model where SEND will sit at the heart of the curriculum. Moving forward into year two of the project, there will be a closer alignment between the Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Leads and the SEND and Inclusion Lead so that there is a co-ordinated and joined up inclusion-focused approach across the whole school. The correlation between academic data and SEND data will support both the prioritisation and implementation of appropriate interventions, as senior leaders recognise that too many interventions can be as harmful to a student making progress as too few!



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



The priority for last year focused on literacy interventions (a priority due to the higher-than-average number of students with English as an additional language) and ensuring they were able to access the learning in the classroom more fully and inclusively. The second year of the project will focus on numeracy interventions. Senior leaders will be working alongside middle leaders to improve the acquisition of numeracy skills across all subject areas. CPD will support staff in delivering these skills in lessons more effectively and with greater confidence and therefore the progress of students will be greater.

There will be a drive for enhancing Literacy, Numeracy and Social Emotional interventions and support in an equitable way across the school. This will be regularly monitored, and the school will further embed the use of Provision Map to support with this – ensuring all progress information is accessible for all, in one place.

Finally, CWLC want to continue the roll out of the ASDAN qualification and extend the offer of courses that students complete. The intention is to extend the offer of ASDAN qualifications to students in Sixth Form required to complete re-sits in English and/ or Maths and to further the use of the qualification to meet the needs of all students, regardless of key stage.

After a year of lots of new processes and systems – as well as new staff in key roles (such as the SEND and Inclusion Lead and the new Lead for the EMAB) – it is right that the school takes time to ensure consistency and allows for the embedding of new strategies and frameworks. Giving this time will support with the buy in from staff and the overall impact of the inclusion intervention strategy.

Ultimately the school wants to develop a 'Decision Tree' regarding interventions – highlighting the variety of routes or pathways, bespoke to each individual's needs – ensuring high-quality intervention is utilised in the most appropriate, co-ordinated and effective manner, for each individual.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Overview

Christopher Whitehead Language College has now held IQM Flagship School status for several years, demonstrating sustained excellence in inclusive practice, and as their motto says, life is 'Richer' at CWLC – Respectful, Inclusive, Creative, Honest, Empathetic and Resilient). There were numerous examples of these values, evidenced throughout the assessment visit – in the environment, the conversations with staff and pupils and in the provision that is offered.

During the assessment I was able to meet with several parents (some of which also work at the school). There was an overwhelming feeling of gratitude to the school for all that they do to support their children. They believe the staff go above and beyond and they are confident in knowing their child is safe, supported and challenged appropriately to ensure they meet their potential. They talked about the “broad” offer that was in place and the “nurturing” and “calm” educational environment that is tangible.

They discussed how CWLC leaders had been accommodating of the needs of their children and where adaptations have needed to be implemented to support their children accessing education, these have been done in partnership with parents and families.

These sentiments were echoed in the conversations with staff, many of which are long-serving members of staff, grown and developed by the school leadership, or have completed teacher training with them or even attended the school themselves as students. They spoke about feeling “grateful for the opportunity” to work at such an inclusive school and how they couldn’t “wait to get into work”. And one member of staff, emotional at coming to the end of her teaching career, said simply CWLC is like “family” to her.

It was very clear how much the pupils and the school means to so many – it’s not just a job, but a vocation in which they are proud to serve, and with inclusion at the heart of everything they do. This was further evidenced by the fact that a Year 12 student was involved in the IQM assessment day including leading the tour of the school and the learning walks, as she was undertaking ‘leadership’ work experience with the Headteacher.

The Beacon, an Enhanced Mainstream Autism Base (EMAB), provides high-quality provision for up to 12 students, ensuring specialist support within a mainstream environment. This base is evidence of the inclusive culture within the school – as one teacher stated, “it’s the school that likes to say ‘Yes!’” Christopher Whitehead is a school that makes “brave” decisions, when others are too fearful, knowing that it is the right thing to do for their learners.

It also demonstrates the school’s strong partnerships that underpin the school’s responsiveness to need, as they work closely with the Local Education Authority and this also includes collaboration with external partners such as Newbridge Outreach and CAMHS West. The setting has been a real success story highlighting their inclusive practice – and it operates as a genuine ‘part’ of the school. Students are able to dip in



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



and out of the main school site, for lessons as well as for recreational times, to suit themselves and their needs. Teachers from the main school site also teach students in the EMAB, supporting both the professional development of staff (giving them additional experience of working alongside pupils with more complex needs) as well as supporting the transition routes into the main body of the school for

students, who will recognise familiar faces, and this supports the building of relationships with staff. Parents of students attending there talk of the provision being “fabulous” and how they’re able to “map each child individually”, allowing for that bespoke and personalised education of their learners.

I also had the pleasure of meeting with a group of students and hearing about the opportunities that they had through Christopher Whitehead. The learners clearly felt happy, safe and supported at the Academy and were happy to feed back their thoughts. One pupil said the school was “eventful” and another said it was a “chill” school. One young man talked of how the school was “loyal” and when probed further on this, he stated how the staff took time to get to know him and that “when they get to know you it’s like having a new best friend!”

They were happy to talk about the opportunities they had for enrichment and educational visits, and they discussed the adaptations of these planned trips to make them more inclusive and accessible. For example, a recent reward trip to the Safari Park was adapted to support attendance of the students from the EMAB, by travelling in a smaller separate minibus, and arriving and departing at the less busy times.

It was an absolute pleasure to visit Christopher Whitehead Language College and a privilege to see the outstanding work that is going on there.

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 Kate Hazelwood

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH

Chief Executive Officer of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd