



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School	Christopher Whitehead Language College and Sixth Form Bromwich Road Worcester Worcestershire WR2 4AF
Head/Principal	Mr Neil Morris
IQM Lead	Mrs Lindsay Cutress
Date of Review	24 th June 2025
Assessor	Ms Jane Flynn

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group	IDEA 2
Ambassador	Ms Hilary Thompson
Next Meeting	TBC
Meeting Focus	TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2023		No
Spring 2024	03-07-2024	Yes
Summer 2024	06-20-2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	11-13-2024	Yes
Spring 2025	03-26-2025	Yes
Summer 2025	06-18-2025	

The Impact of the Cluster Group

At the Troedhyrhiw meeting, staff were interested in how families can be engaged and practically supported in an impoverished area of 'working poor' and how some of these strategies might be used at CWLC. Information about provision for SEND, EBSA students, those following Alternative provision, and the difference between the provisions, was particularly relevant to CWLC, as Leadership is focussing upon streamlining and targeting specific interventions and also introducing ASDAN within an Alternative Curriculum Pathway.



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Useful approaches to stretch and challenge for able, 'disadvantaged' students were gleaned from St. Edburg's School, with reference to NACE, the EEF '5 a day' and Solo Taxonomy. These might be considered in planning future interventions and good practice to promote attainment of all.

Evidence

- School Development Plan.
- School Website.
- Tour of 'Citizenship' Activities.

Additional Activities

Meetings with:

- Headteacher.
- Assistant Headteacher (Attendance and Behaviour).
- SENDCo, MABCo, Assistant SENDCo.
- Specialist Support and Intervention Co-ordinator; EAL Co-ordinator.
- Foundation Learning Co-ordinator. HLTA, LSA, Learning Support Centre Manager, Worcestershire Autism Mentor.
- Deputy Headteachers.
- A group of students with a range of differing needs.

Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Staff at Christopher Whitehead Language College have been successful in bringing a very ambitious and significant project to fruition. Earlier this decade, they had the vision to create an Enhanced Mainstream Autism Base (EMAB), a provision which would provide high quality teaching for children with an EHCP and diagnosis of Autism, within an inclusive setting of a large mainstream school. This year officially 'concludes' this particular IQM Project but provision will continue to evolve, having been built on such firm foundations.

From the very beginning, the approach to the planning and implementation of 'The Beacon' has been 'forensic' in its attention to detail, ensuring that children receive the very best personal and educational experience possible.

Natural changes of personnel in the leadership of the project took place early on and, subsequently, the project has been extremely ably led by the EMAB Co-ordinator (MABCo), supported by a team including the SENDCo, Deputy SENDCo, HLTAs, Grade 3 LSAs and Senior Leadership.

Effects of the Covid pandemic presented challenges in meeting time targets and, inevitably, there were delays in securing the school's initial bid for funding from Worcestershire Council and subsequently with architects and builders. Tenacity prevailed and eventually an area of 'waste' ground was cleared and a very carefully designed modular structure was erected. Great thought was put into ensuring that the



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spaces within the structure were appropriate for the children who were to use it and that it would be fit for purpose in every respect. Consequently, the building is attractive, welcoming, versatile and well resourced.

Staffing has increased during the time of the project, as The Beacon has gradually reached its full complement of 12 students, and 2 HLTAs and 2 Grade 3LSAs are now employed to work in the base, alongside the MABCo, to specifically support the students. In addition, a Grade 2 LSA works one to one with a particular child.

There is a high demand for places at the EMAB and very great care has been taken in ensuring appropriate placement during the consultation process. Discussions take place with the child's current provision and parents in addition to the use of a range of assessment data. There is close collaboration with Local Authority staff and other specialist professionals. It is ensured that EHCPs not only support the child's need for bespoke teaching, but also their ability to be integrated to some extent into mainstream activities with the appropriate adaptations and support. Consideration is also given to the existing pupils and group dynamics, in order that the experience is positive for all concerned.

The transition process is very bespoke to every child. It includes both meetings at current provision and visits to CWLC and they will number as many as required. Children are phased in gradually on a part time basis to make the process as comfortable as possible for them. Sometimes, this is extended over a lengthier period, in order for positive relationships to be formed.

Arrival at the school for Beacon students has been made as attractive as possible, including a lovely path, flanked by sensory shrubs, trees and greenery. It is away from the main entrance, facilitating a calm, quiet walk into school, just after the main body of students has arrived. This is mirrored at the end of the day when Beacon students leave slightly earlier than other students, thus preventing sensory overstimulation at very busy transition times. At the beginning of the day, students have a 'soft start' through the playing of games which promote language and communication. This also allows staff to assess how regulated children are, how fit for the day and to address any issues. Staff also go through visual timetables for the day with each child and prepare them for any foreseen changes to routine.

Lesson timings follow those of the school day to facilitate integration into mainstream when possible. Sessions on Social and Emotional Awareness are based on the school PSHE curriculum and include the use of resources such as 'Talkabout' and 'Zones of Regulation'. Children have some choice of personal activity built into every day. The academic side of the curriculum has evolved since the first entry of students in 2023, when there was a focus on Year 7 schemes of work adapted to interests and needs of the students. This then became Yr 8 the following year and ultimately a rolling KS3 programme will be in place, with adaptations made for each child. The versatility of the space facilitates flexible and appropriate groupings of students, depending upon the learning objectives. In addition to English and Maths, specialist teaching in The Beacon has been extended and now includes Science, PE, History, German and Music. Staff have been trained in the needs of Beacon children. A wealth of Resources is available on the



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Team Drive, which means that with the use of lap tops and tablets, pedagogy can be adaptive and mobile.

Low demands are made on students from The Beacon to participate in mainstream activities, however, they have increasingly done so, as appropriate. They are part of the House system and are involved in their own events, which sometimes reflect those of their mainstream peers and are sometimes bespoke to them. For example, they had their own Beacon Boules tournament and points went to each of their respective Houses. They have also participated in a whole school cycling challenge. During the course of the project, a garden area has been planted between The Beacon and The Learning Support Centre, enabling students to see each other when they are outside and have friendly interaction. They are taught Science in a Laboratory in the main building and have English lessons fortnightly in the LSC, as do all KS3 classes. Staff have been trained in various aspects of Autism, neurodiversity and appropriate teaching strategies. This has enabled students to access mainstream activities, according to their interests and strengths. Careful thought is given to making matches with teacher and group and students are supported to access a range of subjects and learning opportunities, be it individual piano lessons or foreign language learning. The peak of successful integration to date is a student who gradually was supported to attend classes during Year 8 and is now full-time mainstream in Year 9 and planning a KS4 pathway, which will include GCSE Spanish, having been supported in moving through the sets with 1 to 1 intervention sessions with a Spanish Speaking TA. This is just one example of bespoke interventions enabling students to achieve their very best in an inclusive setting.

A key development during the last year has been the fostering of social relationships, as Beacon students are supported in attending clubs in mainstream and they are positively encouraged to do so if they so wish. In addition, they have their own extracurricular activities in Beacon, such as a Card Club. It is heartwarming and reflects the success of the club in promoting social skills of students, that a boy who has left and now lives in Cornwall, joins his former peers on line as part of this club. Their popular 'Dungeons and Dragons' Club is run with them by a Year 12 student. Beacon students are kept abreast of 'Weekly News', and Beacon staff make it accessible to them. Some students are able to join a Form group at some points during the week and mainstream children often visit The Beacon at breaktimes. It is clear that there is now a gentle 'ebb and flow' of students between The Beacon and main school, as a consequence of the very strong net of individualised support which has been put in place for them. In mainstream Music lessons, Beacon students access an electronic Drum kit and key board with headphones, which help them to regulate and some students now have background music during exams. Confidence in social mixing has grown and mainstream students sometimes call to 'collect' their Beacon peers. This is extended into the community by a Social /Life Skills programme, during which students are taken to shop in a supermarket and order drinks in a café.

Awareness raising of Autism as a 'difference, not a deficit' across the school has continued to be embedded. The MABCo contributes to the whole school SEND Bulletin and shares Beacon successes with staff. She has also worked with staff, notably the Head of Science, to review their environment to make it suitable for Beacon students.



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Working with parents is ongoing and trusting partnerships have been developed, as a result of close professional relationships. Positive achievements are recorded and exchanged on a daily basis between school and home. In addition to accessing all the normal communication systems of the school, Beacon parents receive a weekly 'SWAY' newsletter, specifically about Beacon activities. Meetings take place as and when appropriate and involve other professionals, as necessary. Bespoke support for Beacon students has been commissioned from Therapists in Speech and Language and Play, a Sports Mentor, Educational Psychologist, CAMHS, Occupational Health and the Local Authority.

Beacon students experience the same Expectations and Rewards system as those in mainstream, with some adaptations. Personalisation has again proved to be the key to motivation and positive behaviour. Children are met with, individually and regularly, to discuss their points balance on the whole school Edulink system. Students are consulted on what kind of rewards they would like – these are low cost and easily accessible. The various kinds of supportive input students receive to foster and help them manage appropriate behaviour, are clearly enabling the young people to be happy and thrive in the context of a mainstream school site.

In a concluding commentary on this overall project, I would summarise by saying that the approach taken by CWLC in setting up The Beacon, the constant awareness of challenges facing children/students, parents and staff and the addressing of these in a calm, thoughtful manner has resulted in the creation of a centre of excellent professional practice and provision. Curriculum and pedagogy have been designed, planned, resourced and developed to provide an extremely positive learning experience for children with some complex and challenging needs. The ongoing reflective, evaluative determination to keep seeking effective strategies is very impressive. This has led to an ethical, 'experimental' approach to meeting the needs of students, parents and the management of sometimes unexpected situations. Beacon Staff are willing to amend/abandon strategies and employ new ways of securing the best possible outcomes for their students. They are actively now planning for the transition of students to KS4, including ASDAN, GCSE courses and appropriate training in work and life skills. Training of mainstream teachers to work with Beacon students in either the EMAB or mainstream and the mirroring of 'Support First' strategies used in The Beacon will, hopefully, continue to be spread and become embedded across the school. This will enable the integration of Beacon and mainstream students, both socially and academically to continue developing.

All stakeholders have been considered at every step of this process, ensuring that The Beacon serves its students, the school and the local community well. The fact that it is significantly oversubscribed is testament to its success. When I first visited CWLC in 2022, 'The Beacon' was a mere vision and the ground for its location had not yet been cleared.... now its 'light' shines brightly and long may it continue to develop and thrive. Every congratulation to all involved!



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Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

CWLC will be commencing a new project in line with its School Development Plan.

Project Title:

Integration of the school intervention programme to ensure all students in all groups make outstanding progress.

Over the course of 3 years the intention will be to improve students' reading skills, including accuracy, fluency and comprehension, ultimately raising levels of achievement, not only in English and Maths, but across the curriculum. Up to date pedagogical research will inform interventions and strategies used. Furthermore, all students will have gained a qualification in both English and Maths and will have exceeded, or at least met their target grades. Attainment for all groups will exceed or meet National Average. As a necessary target to achieve these aims, attendance of irregular school attenders will have also improved and be at or above national measures.

Outline of Project:

Year 1

Leadership will:

develop a rigorous process of identification of students' academic and emotional needs with the prime focus on literacy and numeracy.

- This will involve a review and establishment of comprehensive data collection procedures to identify both the academic and social needs of all incoming students. It will include a robust screening and monitoring programme to establish the needs of EAL students and differentiation between EAL and any potential SEND needs.
- Online Literacy Assessment will be introduced for all students. Data will be analysed termly and interventions implemented to address gaps and progress concerns.
- Termly meetings with each of Heads of English and Maths and SLT will facilitate discussions of progress and impact of interventions.

Improve the reading skills of students: accuracy, fluency and comprehension

- Introduce a whole school Literacy Intervention Programme.
- Create a Literacy Intervention programme which can be delivered by Mentors during guidance Time and is bespoke to students' needs.
- Ensure that all staff recognise and implement their roles as teachers of literacy and numeracy within their subject areas across the curriculum.



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- Review and adapt the use of timetabled Library periods to more robustly target the reading needs of individual students.

Support identified students in improving their academic results and achieve maths and English qualifications.

- An alternative KS4 curriculum pathway, to include ASDAN, will be established. It will also provide for the improvement of Maths and English skills with a focus on numeracy and literacy.
- Heads of English and Maths to introduce targeted interventions and monitoring procedures in each of their respective departments.

Years 2 and 3

Support the academic progress of students who do not attend regularly.

- Design a comprehensive reintegration process, including online tuition and on-site interventions.
- Create an overall, inclusive learning environment which is attractive, supportive and promotes a growth mindset.
- Attendance team to establish strong, positive, working relationships with families.

Establish a comprehensive approach to supporting the emotional needs of all students.

- Identify and address students' emotional needs at an early stage.
- Implement intervention programme(s) which will focus on mental health awareness, life skills and emotional resilience.
- Ensure that students have access to counselling, support groups and other mental health resources.

Leadership has detailed clear lines of responsibility in meeting the above targets. Progress and impact will be monitored, analysed and reported to SLT and governors on at least a termly basis and amendments made accordingly.



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Overview

Christopher Whitehead Language College, situated close to the centre of the city of Worcester, continues to serve 1600 students with a very wide range of social, economic and academic needs. It prides itself on its mantra, 'Excellence for All' which drives its development. The care for every child and the desire for all to achieve and have the very best choices and opportunities in life are at the heart of the school's ethos.

There have been particular, recent challenges at CWLC, as the school has very sadly suffered the bereavement of two students within two years. The strong Pastoral and SEND structures enabled students, staff and families to be supported through the experiences. A 'Mental Health Pathway' is mapped out with footprints, which students can follow on the large school site, as they lead to sources of support. Students feel very cared for and relationships between staff and students are positive. Students with whom I met, all with varying needs, were all able to identify when they had required help to enable them to engage and participate fully in school, how they had received this support and the impact which it had on their wellbeing and achievements. One student explained how they had found it psychologically impossible to attend school but how through a very gradual, personalised programme, involving online and part time face to face learning and counselling, they had been able to take a range of GCSEs, are expected to achieve very good grades and will be continuing into the 6th Form to follow 'A' Level courses. Their gratitude was almost tangible! The personalised approach to supporting students and constantly trying to provide something for everyone, has impacted positively upon attendance which has increased across all key groups of students and by 2% overall. Furthermore, there are no students not in education or training upon leaving CWLC; they all follow high quality Apprenticeship, University or specific courses, or planned 'Gap Year' routes. Alumni photographs and pathways are now publicly displayed, promoting aspiration, celebration and achievement for all.

This year has seen consolidation of 'The Beacon', as a centre of excellence for children with Autism. It is now playing an important part in the culture of the school and its inclusive nature, as was demonstrated when proceeds for a whole School Baking and Cake sale were split between The Beacon and The National Autistic Society. Autism is promoted and perceived as 'a difference, not a deficit'. Pedagogical practice in The Beacon is now informing adaptive teaching in mainstream classes, aiming for Quality First Teaching for all and there is increasing integration of Beacon and mainstream students.

CWLC continues to offer an ever-broadening curriculum and learning experiences for students. These include courses as diverse as Mandarin, Classics, Health and Social Care, Criminology, Performing Arts, Hair and Beauty, Politics, Computing etc. The formal, Subject-based curriculum is supplemented by the Impetus Programme of guest speakers, together with a wealth of extra-curricular activities and trips.

On the day of this Review, all students were involved in a 'Citizenship Day'. Some were on an offsite trip to see animals and Year 10 was attending sessions at the local college. Years 7 and 9 were involved in a carousel of activities on the school site. I was able to see students of all abilities, including those identified as having a variety of SEND needs, participating together and engaging in a range of activities which challenged them



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physically, emotionally and socially. They were largely focussed on physical and mental health and teamwork. Some activities were internally run, whilst external agencies and organisations led others. These included 'Steer Clear and Fire Safety' from the Fire Service, Dancing and Drumming, Water Safety, Orienteering, Kooth – a Mental Health support organisation for young people and a session on Safer Gaming. Some Year 9 students were very much enjoying a team competition, involving the use of archery skills, led by representatives from the Army, whilst others were encouraging and praising each other in a Parkour activity, irrespective of natural ability. The support young people were receiving from their peers and staff gave them the confidence to challenge themselves and push beyond previous limits. Students were visibly shocked and moved during a session entitled 'Stand against violence – Lloyd's story', based upon a true story about the death of a teenager as a result of spontaneous violence. They were also given the opportunity to express themselves through Zine Making. Students who might not always be keen to participate in Sports, were learning about functional Fitness and taking part in exercise along with peers. The planning of the day resulted in students having a rich, enjoyable experience which facilitated their personal development and wellbeing. It was notable that some students, whose attendance was erratic, attended on this particular day, enabling staff to engage with them and encourage further attendance. One of these students described to me how he was reluctant to come to school but now he attends and enjoys planting, tidying and helping in the garden.

CWLC has various interventions in place to help students to be fit to learn and to support them in their social and academic learning. 'The House', 'The Beacon' and the LSC offer different kinds of provision for students. The latter provides flexible support for students experiencing a range of barriers to learning. Staff are ELSA trained and are timetabled to work with students in this area for part of their time. In addition, they support students with work either in the LSC or mainstream classes. Staff are skilled in finding 'what makes students tick'. I met a child who explained to me how he had often been dysregulated, struggled to concentrate and behaved inappropriately which was a real barrier to his engagement in school and positive learning. However, he had been able to paint and fit out a 'quiet room' in the LSC, which he had very much enjoyed, whilst on a 'package' of learning there. He was proud to show me the excellent job he had done. This achievement had clearly raised his self-esteem, confidence and belief in his ability to complete and accomplish things positively. He went on to tell me how he will be embarking upon a Bricklaying and Construction course at college next year. A Worcestershire Autism Mentor works with students in the LSC who have a diagnosis of Autism. She follows a structured programme, helping them to understand their neurodiversity and has also set up a group in which students from the LSC and The Beacon are able to mix socially. Staff in the LSC work hard in supporting parents and children in obtaining a diagnosis of SEND, when appropriate, and in managing any medication requirements.

During the past year, there has been a pedagogical focus on developing the oracy skills of students, using 'Oracy 21' in Year 7. A whole school Oracy review was conducted, staff from different departments observed each other's practice in the classroom and 'Oracy Champions' now lead in each subject area. Oracy cards are used as a structure to promote discussion and trialling of Oracy assessment is taking place. The Oracy skills of



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children are now being discussed with Primary Schools as part of the Transition process. Strategies acquired are now being used by some staff with other Year Groups. There is a current focus upon robustly streamlining and targeting interventions for maximum impact. The Intervention Co-ordinator and Literacy Lead is adopting a rigorous approach to assessment and up to date good intervention practice. This involves termly Additional Needs training for staff, in liaison with the SENDCo and EAL Co-ordinator and is a major part of the School Development Plan and future IQM Project.

In the wake of recent 50 within year admissions of students with EAL, all staff have been trained in Bell Foundation Adaptive Teaching strategies for EAL students. The Diversity and Inclusion Team, which includes the EAL Co-ordinator, launched 'Community as a Superpower' during Refugee Week this year and during Literacy week, all students were involved in writing poems in their Tutor/Guidance groups. They were asked, "How can 'I' become 'We'?" and invited to write a 'Question Poem' and to think about what questions should be asked to promote mutual understanding and knowledge between different cultures. Students were shown videos, myths were clarified and students learned the meanings of key terms, which are often misunderstood and/or misused. They were involved in putting themselves in the situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers. To enhance the quality of writing further, staff used materials from The National Literacy Trust, with examples of Question Poems, in order that students had a model and scaffold, if required. The quality of poems produced reflected students' depth of thought and emotional empathy. This proved to be a very valuable activity in promoting knowledge, understanding and inclusivity across the school. Staff have also worked with parents and children on understanding and participating in British Culture, part of which was a visit to London to see key sights and learn about their significance in Britain. In addition, parents are given Bell Foundation Information Packs in their relevant language as well as English.

Staff continue to work closely with parents and encourage their participation and support. Links to advice, guidance and organisations are easily accessible on the school's website. Staff are aware of, and sensitive to, the needs of many parents and go out of their way to make meetings as comfortable and fruitful as possible, several taking place in a relaxed atmosphere in the garden, rather than in offices. A recent consultation with parents and the support and advice offered them in managing their sons' and daughters' use of Smartphones and screen devices are creditable.

Students continue to support a range of charities, locally, nationally and internationally and they are a positive presence in their community. The atmosphere in school is relaxed, yet focussed, promoting respect for, and appreciation of, each other, the environment and learning. Students understand the high expectations placed on them and are supported in meeting these. The House System provides *all* students with a framework which fosters a sense of belonging, responsibility and healthy competition.

CWLC is an educationally rich, inclusive, happy, constantly developing school, never complacent or deterred by ongoing and new challenges – staff 'get things done'. Upon the retirement of the current, longstanding Headteacher at the end of this academic Year, the school will, no doubt, continue to evolve under new leadership, as a current Deputy at CWLC will 'take up the baton' as Head in September.



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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 Christopher Whitehead Language College and Sixth Form 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: Jane Flynn

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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