



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name Laxey School
Quarry Road
Laxey
Isle of Man
IM4 7DU

Head/Principal Mr Max Kelly

IQM Lead Mr Max Kelly

Date of Review 26th January 2023

Assessor Ms Sarah Linari

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group CIN NW

Ambassador Ms Sarah Linari

Next Meeting 1st March 2023

Meeting Focus Attendance, wellbeing (staff and pupils), marking and feedback and sensory integration.

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Spring 2022	6th April 2022	No
Summer 2022	4th July 2022	No
Autumn 2022	6th October 2022	No
Spring 2023	1st March 2023	



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The Impact of the Cluster Group

Unfortunately, representatives from the school have been unable to attend Cluster Meetings over the past twelve months due to the ongoing disruptions caused by the Covid pandemic. The Executive Headteacher has been an Ambassador for IQM previously and is committed to Laxey's participation in the Cluster Group.

In the school's reflection as part of the Centre of Excellence review, the IQM Lead explained the reason behind not being able to attend. "We had been placed in the Northern Ireland Cluster Group during Covid restrictions, and unfortunately it coincided with a reduction in air travel opportunities from the Isle of Man to Belfast, so we found it very difficult/impossible to attend Cluster Meetings".

Leaders maintained contact with the Ambassador and kept abreast of meeting notes and minutes but recognise it has been a challenge. The school has now been placed in the CIN NW Cluster Group moving forward and have confirmed attendance at the next meeting in March 2023.

The Leaders will ensure that a member of staff from Laxey attends the planned Cluster Meetings for the remainder of this academic year.

Evidence

- IQM Centre of Excellence Review Document
- Validation Report
- School Website
- School Policies
- 2021-2022 Performance Data Analysis Report
- Learning Walks
- Learning Environment audit
- Cornerstones Curriculum Map
- Medium-term planning documentation

Meetings Held with:

- Executive Headteacher
- Head of School
- Assistant Headteacher / Key Stage 2 SENDCo
- IQM Coordinator/Class Teacher
- Forest School Lead
- Parent Forum Lead
- Curriculum Lead
- School Council Representatives



Summary of Targets from 2021-2022

Target 1 - The Learning Environment, Resources and ICT

To explore, cost and plan a Sensory Garden. The Eco committee will have input to ensure it becomes a growing and wildlife area for everyone to enjoy with an element of relaxation and mindfulness.

The Leaders explored the costs of creating a Sensory Garden on site which led to the decision to offer a Forest School provision free of cost. They have adopted the use of a local woodland area. The Forest School Practitioner looked at ways to improve pupils' mental health and wellbeing and decided that the 15-minute walk to the woodland area would be ideal in terms of providing additional exercise and fresh air.

Forest School was initially trialled with Year 3 pupils then rolled out to the other classes. In Forest School sessions, pupils have been learning fire skills, tool work, den making and activities which focus on physical development. Parents and carers volunteer to accompany the children to the Forest School sessions and many families have revisited the area outside of school hours, having been inspired by the lessons. The Forest School Lead said that during the sessions, "children come into their own and you see the benefits of being outdoors".

Next Step:

- Due to the positive impact of the provision to date, Leaders plan to continue to develop Forest School and increase the number of Forest School Practitioners amongst the staff.

Target 2 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

For representatives from the Parents' Forum to be able to meet and welcome new families.

The Head of School has developed the Parent Forum and expanded it to include more diverse representation of families, such as fathers. Meetings are regular, at least once per half term, with additional meetings when events are being planned. Through the Forum, the school has been encouraging family members with particularly skills to come into school to support extra-curricular activities.

Parents and carers are consulted on any changes or new school initiatives. Before sending out surveys home, the Leaders liaise with the Parent Forum Representatives to source initial feedback.

Parents and Carers engage positively with whole-school events. At the most recent 'play and stay' session for the families of Reception children, 100% of parents/carers attended.



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The school has a high profile on social media, which it employs to share regular information about what the children have been doing during the day as well as celebrating achievements. Parents and carers engage actively with posts and feedback is always positive.

Next Step:

- Leaders will continue to increase the opportunities for parents to be actively involved in school life.

Target 3 - Learning and Teaching

Full review of the current school curriculum. This is a big project and will take place across both Laxey School and Dhoon School. It will involve research, school visits, stakeholder engagement, and a variety of task and finish groups. The new curriculum will need to be fully inclusive and remove as many barriers to learning as possible.

Senior Leaders carried out a full audit of the curriculum and decided to invest in the Cornerstones Curriculum. The previous curriculum had been skills-based but Leaders felt it lacked depth of knowledge and progression over time. The introduction of Cornerstones has led to a more consistent approach which ensures full coverage of content across the subjects.

The Curriculum is now fully mapped until the end of the Summer Term. Leaders have incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals, which are a core aspect of provision at Laxey School. Although the Curriculum is prescriptive, there is still capacity to respond to any local or global issues which may arise, or tailor the learning to pupils' interests.

Teachers are expected to take the Cornerstones long-term planning documentation and personalise it to their class through the half termly plans. Bespoke data sheets have been created by the Senior Team to monitor and evaluate progress within the new Curriculum.

Next Steps:

- Twilight training session in the Spring Term to evaluate the impact of Cornerstones to date and show how the platform can be utilised to teach core skills.
- Look at the possibility of creating enquiry-based project work within the curriculum.
- Raise the profile of reading further through carefully selected Class Texts across a diverse range of authors and inclusive themes.



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Agreed Targets for 2022-2023

Target 1: *The expansion of our Federation and to collaborate with and include Willaston School within our IQM Network.*

Comments

In January 2023, the Executive Headteacher took on the leadership of a third school within the Federation. Therefore, Leaders from Laxey will be invaluable in the support they can offer to develop the inclusive provision at Willaston. They will be involved in best practice sharing and collaborative developmental opportunities with the new school.

Target 2: *Developing the core elements of teaching and learning and how they are delivered through the curriculum.*

Comments

An Education Consultant from the UK has been commissioned to visit the school to support the evaluation of teaching and learning and offer suggestions to further improve practice. Following the visit, Leaders plan to review the Teaching and Learning Policy.

The IQM Lead will be attending the next Cluster Meeting in Liverpool. I will introduce them to the Leaders from Knotty Ash Primary School who have recently redesigned their curriculum and have mapped the class texts out, taking into account culture and diversity. It will be a mutually beneficial link for both IQM schools to share best practice regarding teaching and learning, as well as curriculum development.

Target 3: *Improve attainment in Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening.*

Comments

The Executive Headteacher carried out a detailed analysis of progress data for all year groups in Laxey School. As part of this full evaluation, attainment levels in reading, writing and speaking and listening were identified as an area for development. Although outcomes data remains positive overall, there has been a decrease in progress in these areas in some year groups due to the impact of Covid. The school has invested in the Pobble platform to support assessment and moderation of writing. Reading displays and a Reading Corridor will be developed to raise the profile of reading and instil a strong reading culture across the school.



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Overview

Laxey School is part of a Federation of three schools with Dhoon and Willaston, all located in the Isle of Man. The three schools are led by an Executive Headteacher, with a Head of School responsible for the day-to-day running of Laxey. Laxey School serves Laxey village, which is located on the east coast of the Island. Laxey is mainly a residential and tourist area today but was a thriving fishing and mining village in the past. In the academic year 2021-22, Laxey School reported the 12th largest primary school roll on the Isle of Man, with currently around 191 pupils on roll. 11% of the pupil population are eligible for free school meals (FSM).

When the Executive Headteacher was asked to describe the inclusive ethos at Laxey, the word “people” was chosen, with particular regard to the importance of relationships and community. “People” refers to all in the school community and beyond. The Executive Headteacher explained that, “children are a vital component in schools but, [that] on its own is not enough for a school to function in a highly inclusive way”. He explained further how you “have to bring parents, carers, guardians, relatives etc. on board” and develop a “staff team who buy into the inclusive vision and share the philosophy. It must come from all members of community”.

The Head of School selected “relationships” to encapsulate the inclusive core of the school, aligned to the Executive Headteacher’s beliefs. There has been a significant turnover of staff over the past few years, which has led to the current, settled team of like-minded professionals who are 100% bought into the school’s inclusive vision. Pupil and staff wellbeing is prioritised by Leaders who genuinely care for everyone within the school community on an individual level.

Being part of a Federation brings many benefits to Laxey School, such as the collaborative partnerships and best practice sharing opportunities. Most staff meetings take part together, with staff from across the settings attending. Both Heads of School at Laxey and Dhoon work together closely, supporting each other in their roles. This support network amongst Senior Leaders has become particularly beneficial as the Executive Headteacher has recently taken on the leadership of the third school within the Federation.

Community engagement plays a key role in life at Laxey. Not only is the school supported well by the surrounding community, but the vision is for the school to be a “driver and play an active role within the community”. The Executive Headteacher is passionate about “bringing the lifeblood of the community into the faces of the children”.

The vibrant and well-designed learning environment at Laxey reflects the school’s inclusive ethos. An extensive, open-plan learning environment lends itself to collaborative and inclusive learning strategies. Classrooms are spacious, with purposeful areas which provide variety of learning styles and spaces throughout the day, catering for all preferred learning styles and more specifically, those pupils who benefit from a change of approach. Within classrooms there are open-plan learning spaces, collaborative seating plans and displays which promote the core messages, such



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as growth mindset and learning habits, providing support for the learning, which remains the focus throughout the school.

In lessons, pupils are engaged in the learning, motivated by the teachers' enthusiasm and nurturing approaches. Teaching and learning provision at Laxey are highly effective. There is a tangible buzz in the classrooms where all pupils are fully engaged and enjoying the learning. It is refreshing to hear that teachers are trusted as professionals with autonomy over lesson planning and the opportunity to show their individuality and flare. In terms of commonalities observed during the learning walk as part of the review process, teachers and pupils use the learning habits language throughout the lessons. Pupils are challenged at an appropriate level and have been explicitly taught to push themselves out of their comfort zones. All pupils are included in the lesson and feel safe to be involved in question answering and reading aloud.

Central to the effective care provided to its pupils is the connection to the school which the staff and pupils enjoy. A cognitive and emotional connection for staff is encouraged as there is a shared belief that raising standards comes from the heart. Leaders are "ambassadors for a school who believe in investing in the children, knowing them and their families" to provide care which exceeds expectations.

Children at Laxey are given many opportunities throughout the day to develop their independence. They are encouraged to make choices regarding their learning. Chances to grow independence skills are also created during breaks and lunch times. In the Dining Hall, pupils serve themselves the sides and desserts and eat with 'proper' plates and cutlery, showing them that they are trusted, which helps develop their confidence. The Dining Hall itself is a joyous place to be and reflects the school's inclusive ethos. Pupils all sit and chat together; there is a lovely atmosphere.

Behaviour at Laxey School is exemplary; classrooms are calm and purposeful, as are transition times. At breaktimes, pupils are afforded the freedom to play and have fun. Their behaviour is safe, and they are kind towards each other.

Each Friday, pupils' achievements are recognised at the Celebration Assembly where rewards are based on the learning habits. 'Magic Moment' awards are awarded to recognise pupils' 'light bulb' moments when they grasp a new concept for the first time. 'Learning Hero' awards recognise pupils who demonstrate excellent learning habits consistently over time. Award winners take part in a further celebration with the Senior Leaders whereby they are invited to attend the meeting room to enjoy hot chocolate and biscuits whilst they celebrate their achievements. This praise culture enhances the positive atmosphere around the school.

Staff morale at Laxey School is high. The happiness amongst the staff is infectious and influences the happy children and overall positivity across the school. With homely decor, the staffroom is an oasis for staff to provide some down time during the busy working day. Staff also have the Hub, a meeting room where they can meet to plan collaboratively or work quietly when they need to focus.

Pupils at Laxey are confident and friendly. During the review day they were all keen to talk to me about their school. They said the best thing about Laxey is that "everyone is



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kind” and “the teachers are the best”. One child explained that the best thing about Laxey is that their teacher “pushes you but not past the limit where you think I can’t do this, and also supports you, especially when you have problems”. The growth-modest culture is fully embedded and a real strength of the school. This is reflected in dialogues with the pupils who explain that, “you can learn if you try your best and never give up, even if it is tricky”.

The highlight of my visit to Laxey has to be the meeting with the School Council Representatives. The pupils are a credit to the school and a delight to converse with. When asked about their future aspirations, they all had at least one career aspiration in mind (some had up to three!). Of those aspirations, some children would like to pursue a career as an interior designer, art teacher, Youtuber, author and even a salt-water mermaid swimmer. The pupils talked a lot about how their creative talents are promoted through the artistic opportunities on offer within the Curriculum and beyond. I found the children at Laxey to be friendly, inquisitive, polite, and well-mannered.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. One parent commented, “my children love this school, and they never have a morning they don’t want to come.” Another parent talked about their child who has special educational needs (SEN) and how they have “thrived” at Laxey. Parents and carers endorse the education around growth mindset: “what is so powerful about the growth mindset is that the teachers believe it. It is the same language used in all classrooms and the children start to use the growth mindset outside of school when facing a challenge or to problem solve”.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Laxey and was particularly inspired by how the children are allowed to be themselves and explore their interests. The work around the learning habits and growth mindset is developing confident, self-assured and ambitious learners who, I am certain, will have very successful futures.

It is clear from the review process that the staff at Laxey School continue to be fully committed to inclusive education, with many areas of excellent practice. Laxey continues to be a highly inclusive school, with dedicated staff who nurture and care for the pupils, and Leaders who prioritise inclusion.

Over the past 12 months, Leaders have continued to move the school forward therefore I whole-heartedly recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence Status. The next review will look closely at how the Leaders have fulfilled the objectives outlined in this year’s IQM Action Plan and how they engage with the IQM Cluster Group.

Assessor: Ms 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