

9<sup>th</sup> November 2017



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## **Flagship Review Date: 11 October 2017**

### **Summary**

Ysgol Heulfan has a rich and thorough tradition of operating as an inclusive school, and indeed has a longstanding association with IQM, having already achieved the Quality Mark, Centre of Excellence Status and the Flagship banner. It is important to make this distinction because it makes the continuing journey even more impressive for Ysgol Heulfan: still striving to be ever more inclusive, continuing to improve and grow, unrelenting in its desire to reach more fully its vision of completely inclusive education – there is no sense of complacency here and no sense of an inclusion project that has been boxed off and completed. The entire school, from Governors, staff, pupils and parents, appreciates that inclusion is something that is never “finished” rather it is refined, adapted, improved and nurtured.

Upon arrival at Ysgol Heulfan, one is greeted warmly, and the friendly welcome sets the tone for the school. The entrance is packed with celebrations of what the school does best, valuing everyone and including all children in the life of the school. There are photo-montage displays of the “Super Learning Days” that the school has introduced in recent years, together with accessible information and literature for parents and visitors. Wall-art adorned the lobby with phrases supporting the school’s vision, and this visual approach is replicated around the school, even the Welsh national anthem finds its way onto a wall in the Learning Zones area.

The school’s learning environment is simply spectacular. Every aspect of the interior, each nook and cranny, is considered valuable space to aid the learning process and the devil is in the detail. Asides from quality displays that serve the purpose of being attractive and instilling a pride in those who work alongside them, there is a considered “purpose” to each and every display. Nowhere is this more evident than in the “Learning Zones” which sit in the KS2 area of the building. The school has developed these large-scale interactive areas which incorporate display, challenges for learners and celebration of quality children’s work. Ownership for the various zones sits across a wide range of staff and as such serves to strengthen collaborative working and a sharing of ideas. At learner level, they present opportunities for children to learn independently from the classroom and teacher, though this can happen on an individual level or, as seen more readily, through small group work and active teamwork.

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Of course, as is what matters most in inclusive schools, it is the pupils that add the real magic to Ysgol Heulfan. And what a special bunch they are! During the assessment children were seen in a whole gamut of scenarios – from “mainstream” to “Canol”, from traditional academia to hands-on approaches such as “forest school” – and in each circumstance the pupils were exemplary both in terms of their learning and in terms of their attitude. Teachers at Ysgol Heulfan KNOW the children inside out and upside down. The Headteacher in particular was a source of intimate understanding of each of the 300+ children in her educative care and the pride she exuded in the way she spoke about each of her young charges was inspirational. It was a pride that extended from the senior staff through the entire staff team and reflected in the children themselves. During the assessment many pupils were spoken to and the voice from the students was as unanimous as it was inclusive in its collective love for Ysgol Heulfan. This small record of some of the things the children were noted to have said to the assessor captures the “inclusion heart-beat” of this wonderful school far better than anything else:

*“The teachers are helpful, caring and excellent. We matter.”*

*“There is room for everyone in our school.”*

*“Behaviour is excellent throughout the school.”*

*“The support is good – I joined in March and didn’t know any Welsh. Then it came to Welsh lessons and the support I had was really good, and I’ve progressed with my vocabulary.”*

Some of the young people at Ysgol Heulfan attend the “Canol” and have very profound needs. The teachers who work alongside these children should be justifiably proud of the difference they make to the lives of their pupils. That which impresses the most is that which is the most human, the *knowing* of each individual and the *valuing* of each individual. Here the achievements which to the uninitiated or the ill-informed may appear small or trivial are rightly recognised for the momentous, joy-filling and worthy milestones that they truly are. Against a backdrop of a “data-culture” education system, where “special school” status is not fully afforded, this becomes even more remarkable. For the system tries to make such achievements matter less than the levels achieved in core subjects in the mainstream school – but Ysgol Heulfan refuses to let such a system destroy its inclusive soul. Instead it uses it to revitalise its own purpose and remind itself – and everyone else – why “inclusion” is so important.

Ysgol Heulfan submitted a thorough review of its progress against the 2016-17 IQM targets together with an action plan for improving in areas against all 8 IQM elements. The paperwork was thorough, honest and insightful. It was clear from this, and all of the evidence observed during the assessment that inclusion is something that is lived, breathed and genuinely believed at Ysgol Heulfan. The Headteacher, Julia Thomas Haigh, has been instrumental in coordinating the IQM process and must be praised for the professional way in which she has led on this programme throughout the school. Everyone consulted during the assessment was universal in their praise for her and the high regard in which they held her.

In summary, the review has been undertaken successfully. The school clearly demonstrates its ability to respond to initiatives and to build the capacity essential to moving still further on the Inclusion journey. I wholeheartedly recommend that it retains Flagship Status and is reviewed again in 12 months' time.

**Assessor: Mr. Maxim Kelly**

**Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:**



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



## **Letter to Children**

Thank you to you, the pupils of Ysgol Heulfan! Those of you I was lucky enough to meet spoke with knowledge, pride and enthusiasm for your school. It was a pleasure to meet formally with some of you to discuss all the great things about your school, and to chat informally to lots of you at playtimes, in the dining hall and in your classrooms. Your body of pupil “official helpers”, “sports councillors” and “Head Boy/Head Girl” represent your needs, concerns and interests with sincere recognition of the importance and responsibility their positions carry. Sophie, Jamie, Charlie, Hannah, Elise and Owain were fabulous ambassadors for Ysgol Heulfan during my visit.

You all have a great attitude to learning, and I could see so many of you giving it your very best in lessons when I walked around. I was really impressed with your behaviour for learning – there was so much evidence of your motivation and perseverance. I was most interested to see your work on “Forest School” which was very innovative, as are the developing “Super Learning Days” and “Learning Zones” which are beginning to feature in your language and actions for learning. I look forward to finding out how these initiatives develop further over time.

Thank you for welcoming me into your school, I learned a lot from you and enjoyed my visit very much.

Max Kelly

IQM Assessor



## Sources of Data:

- Tour of the school.
- Discussion with the Senior Leadership Team.
- Meeting with a group of support staff.
- Meeting with a group of parents.
- Meeting with the Chair of Governors.
- Meeting with a group of pupils.
- Interrogation of key documentation.
- Observations (of display, school routines, lunchtime provision, pupil-teacher interactions).

## Assessor Commentary on Targets:

### **Element 1: The Inclusion Values and Practice of the School**

- To work towards creating a whole school ethos (fully incorporating Y Canol: Resourced Provision).
- To set up a new provision for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

#### School evaluation:

It is our judgment that this target has been fully achieved with the successful development of a whole school ethos and the setting up of a new resourced provision for children who have ASD. This will, however, remain as a target as we seek to embed both aspects 2017 to 2018.

Ysgol Heulfan is one school now (rather than three separate ones: Foundation Phase, Y Canol and Key Stage 2). Staff feel part of 'one school' and parents have a clearer understanding of the different departments within Ysgol Heulfan.

#### Assessor evaluation:

The school clearly feels – to someone visiting for the first time – as “one” school. The inclusive spirit flows throughout the buildings and there is a tangible sense of oneness – of togetherness. The school leadership has been instrumental in making this happen, staff openly talked of a strong feeling of loyalty and appreciation to the Headteacher.

*“Leadership values what we do and encourages us to better ourselves. This is always warm encouragement – not a metal rod.”*

The new resourced provision for children who have ASD was visited and observed in operation. It is remarkable that this “new” resource felt so established and is further testament to the quality of leadership, provision and ethos in this school.



## **Element 2: The Learning Environment, Resources and ICT**

- To improve the outdoor planting areas and resources for outdoor play (whole school).
- To resource the new provision.

### School evaluation:

It is our judgment that this target has been fully achieved. The School Council raised funds to purchase new resources for the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2. In addition, School Funds have been used to improve outdoor play in Y Canol. The new provision (opened in September 2017) is well resourced. Any further resource requirements will be addressed 2017–2018, including the installation of a new interactive whiteboard.

Recently, we have purchased new iPods and VR Headsets (for use in our Learning Zones).

### Assessor evaluation:

The quality of the school learning environment is unquestionable. During the assessment one was able to observe staff working on decorating new boards with wallpaper paste and display-backing to cover an area of the interior walls that were not meeting expectations in terms of visual appearance. This level of detail was observed everywhere. Small rooms had been transformed into reading areas, potential “dead-spaces” filled with gym equipment to help make productive use of the energy seen in “fizzy” children and quality learning zones that were planned, considered and well-used by the learners.

The outdoor spaces in Y Canol were visited and some of these areas had been adjoined to mainstream areas to create a sense of inclusion. This links the improvements in this element to those of element 1.

## **Element 3: Learner Attitudes, Values and Personal Development**

- To continue to develop partnership working with Ysgol Brynteg & Ysgol Tanyfron (focus of work: peer to peer learning).

### School evaluation:

It is our judgment that this target has been fully achieved. Three visits took place. Pupils from the individual schools participated in lessons (in the other schools) and provided feedback. Children from Ysgol Brynteg and Ysgol Tanyfron participated in a P.E. lesson and Mathematics lesson in Ysgol Heulfan and provided feedback. The project was valuable and enjoyed by all.



## Assessor evaluation:

The Headteacher and Leadership Team described this project during the meeting with the assessor. There was a clear sense from the leadership team that work of this nature was integral to maintaining an inclusive school, inclusion cannot be done alone! Plans were afoot for becoming more involved in the IQM Cluster Networking Programming as a definite next-step in this element.

## **Element 4: Learner Progress and Impact on Learning**

- High aspirations with regard to standards in learning are achieved.

## School evaluation:

The school had produced a detailed breakdown of its progress towards this target on page 3 of their review of last year's targets. The school judged it will have met all aspects of the target by the end of October 2017.

## Assessor evaluation:

Based on the available evidence, discussions with the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors, this target appears to have been met.

## **Element 5: Learning and Teaching (Monitoring)**

- To organise termly Super Learning Days: pupils working together (in groups) from Reception to Year 6.

## School evaluation:

It is our judgment that this target has been fully achieved with the successful development of Super Learning Days.

Three Super Learning Days were held:

1. Alien Invasion
2. The Rainforest
3. Careers Day

Each Super Learning Day included 'Wake Up, Shake Up!' and inspirational talks by different members of staff or visitors to school.

## Assessor evaluation:

The Super Learning Days have been well established into the culture of the school and are valued by the staff, the parents and the children. As one teacher explained:

*"Inclusion is all about mixing up the children. The Super Learning Days raise aspirations in*



*and around the social deprivation that we see close to school.”*

Each Super Learning day has resulted in a bespoke book – professionally produced and bound – which showcases the journey and measures the impact of the learning.

### **Element 6: Parents, carers and Guardians**

- Building on successes to date; to further develop the FaCE initiative across the school (Families and Community Engagement).

#### School evaluation:

It is our judgment that this target has been fully achieved with the successful development of FaCE projects. This Element has been met to an excellent standard. We have produced a FaCE book which shows involvement of all classes (across the school). The project was met with enthusiasm from parents, pupils and staff. Events were extremely well attended and were very successful.

#### Assessor evaluation:

During the assessment a meeting was convened with a representative group of parents. This meeting evidenced and confirmed the following:-

- The school is very approachable - including the Headteacher.
- Well-being is important to the school.
- School works in genuine partnership with parents (e.g. the support from SENCo to a parent was seamless – *“just like a second mum!”*)
- Parents are always encouraged into school.
- Parents are taken on “learning walks” around the whole school to give that broader sense of what happens in the school.
- Fundraising - door is always open to anyone who wants to help (no “official” PTA - it’s a more informal and fluid setup than that.) Recent events organized by the parents have included a sponsored dance and sponsored walk.
- In terms of school communication there is a monthly newsletter and a Facebook page which is very useful. Parents feel very comfortable about getting in touch with the school.

The school was clearly very proud of its development of FaCE projects and evidenced that it was seen as a “trailblazer” in this approach within the authority. The FaCE book was a spectacular celebration of all that was great about the FaCE initiative and the senior leadership described it as a crucial development in the school’s continuing path of becoming ever more inclusive:-

*“Inclusion is in the heart of everyone. Inclusion is so much more than SEN. FaCE has been important to us because it recognizes that. It recognizes the relationship between parent and child and gives school a role in helping to strengthen this.”*



## **Element 7: Governing Body and Management**

- To further involve Governors in the life of the school; involvement in special events, FaCE Projects etc.

### School evaluation:

It is our judgment that this target has been fully achieved with the successful development of the involvement of the Governing Body. This will, however, remain as a target as we seek to embed both aspects 2017 to 2018.

The Chair of Governors continues to visit the school on a weekly basis. Governors have been involved in Learning Walks and visits to challenge and to support Ysgol Heulfan in all we do.

### Assessor evaluation:

A meeting with the Chair of Governors, Mr Charles Rigby, confirmed that the Governing Body is actively involved in all aspects of the school. Mr Rigby is an impressive character – the longstanding Chair of Governors since 2005, his knowledge, wisdom and affection for Ysgol Heulfan was palpable and his desire to achieve even more was infectious. Tellingly for a school as inclusive as Ysgol Heulfan, Mr Rigby bore all the traits of a leader who knew what mattered most about a school: not the “data” or the pie-charts that are churned out to demonstrate impact; not the paperwork or the inevitable meetings. What matters to Mr Rigby are the people. And whilst staff are vital components – and Mr Rigby spoke with huge insight around staff recruitment and the trust that the Governors place in their staff, most notably the Headteacher – it is the pupils who matter above all else.

The Chair of Governors remains ambitious for the school and for the youngsters on its roll. This included a desire to see education properly resourced by the authority and for the school to spend its money on making a difference to pupils lives in the **here** and **now**. This vision resonated with all that was seen and observed during the assessment, and it was clear that that most vital of relationships between a Headteacher and Governing Body was strong, trusting and effective.

## **Element 8: The School in the Community**

- To complete PASS Survey (Pupil Attitudes to Self and School and to analyse results).
- To further develop the involvement of pupils from Ysgol Heulfan in the local community.

### School evaluation:

It is our judgment that this target has been fully achieved with the successful development of the Pass Survey and Google Survey (2017).

Pupils have been involved in different projects and events:-



- Attending Remembrance Sunday Service.
- Attending events at Church.
- Involvement in 'Open the Book' sessions run by members of the local community.
- Attending the Gresford Disaster Memorial Service.
- Collecting items for the Wrexham Food Bank.
- Raising money for different Charities.
- Fund raising for Hope House (Wrexham).
- Working closely with Tesco (Wrexham).

### Assessor evaluation:

The Pass Survey results were overwhelmingly positive and pay testament to the good work of the school. I have rarely seen such comprehensive results with 100% a regular in terms of positive responses to questions.

The pupils were also keen to talk about their wider involvement:-

*"There are lots of opportunities to get involved with stuff in school like Christmas Concerts, pen licenses, attendance rewards (at whole-class level). There are lots of school trips to places like Chester Zoo and Manchester Airport."*

*"Before the end of the year, Year 6s have a school sleepover - it's a social occasion to remember their time at Ysgol Heulfan."*

### **Possible Areas for Further Development:**

In addition to the detailed self-evaluation of its own progress towards its targets, the school has produced a thorough action-plan showing the developments planned for each of the elements in the 2017-18 academic year.

Several of the targets in the action-plan refer to development points which are linked to the current progress of the school and seek to build on and / or embed ongoing initiatives, in particular this is true of elements 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8.

The assessor agrees with the action plan that has been produced and wishes the school sustained success on its continuing inclusion journey.

In addition, Ysgol Heulfan should begin to participate in the IQM Cluster Programme and should seek to show evidence of ICI processes with a recorded impact log. Ysgol Heulfan has much to offer schools in the IQM family, especially with regards to their Super Learning Days and the FaCE projects.

Finally, in support of development of Element 6, it would be worth giving consideration to the recruitment a Parent Champion to the Inclusion Team. They could provide the extended voice into the community.



## IQM Flagship Review



### **Recommendations:**

The Review has been undertaken successfully. The school clearly demonstrates its ability to respond to initiatives and to build the capacity essential to moving still further on the inclusion journey. I am of the opinion and recommend that the school maintains its IQM Flagship status. There is an additional expectation that the school will:-

- Provide an updated action plan/self-evaluation of progress against targets to be sent to IQM three weeks before the next review.
- School to commit to the IQM Cluster Programme and to show evidence of ICI processes with a recorded impact log. Dr. Wendy Daley would be a good starting point for the school to contact in terms of clusters available to join, or the forming of a new cluster.

Assessor: Max Kelly

Date of Review: 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017