



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



**School:** Ysgol Heulfan  
Sunnyview, Gwersyllt  
Wrexham  
LL11 4HS

**Head/Principal:** Ms Julia Thomas Haigh

**IQM Lead:** Ms Julia Thomas Haigh

**Date of Review:** 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022

**Assessor:** Steve Gill

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

**Cluster Group:** Inclusive Allsorts

**Ambassador:** Sarah Linari

**Date of Next Meeting:** 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Next Cluster Group Meeting Foci: Nurture, Attendance, and ICT to make learning accessible to all.

### **Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:**

Prior to the review the school submitted comprehensive documentation of their evaluation of progress demonstrating progress on the Flagship Project for 2021 – 22. Each document was reviewed and provided comprehensive and detailed evidence, alongside documents and policies from the school's website that positively supported and contributed to an understanding of the school's superb inclusive ethos. Documents shared during the day, including The School Improvement Portfolio, SIP 2021 – 2024, a selection of children's books, Children's Pen Portraits from Y Canol and the impressive In-Service Induction, Training Programme for TAs devised by the Assistant Headteacher, and Pupil Poverty Project Action Plan. From this evidence and discussions, the context and next steps in the Flagship Project for 2022 – 23 were agreed.

Discussions during the review with members of the school community included the following:

- Headteacher
- Assistant Headteacher- ALNCo & SENCo
- Assistant Headteacher – Y Canol
- Year 5/6 Teacher
- Reception Teacher
- Year 1/2 teachers
- Class 2 teacher Y Canol
- Parents & Parent Governors
- Pupils



### Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The school's project focus of '*working together to prepare for the new Welsh curriculum*,' is a continuation and evolution of the project started in 2019 – 2020 to ensure the new Welsh curriculum met the needs of the pupils at the school. Over the last twelve months the schools' actions to achieve their objectives focussed on the following:

Embedding new approaches to teaching and learning such as topic based, cross curricular and pupil led thereby enabling learners to be: Ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives. Enterprising, creative contributors ready to play a full part in life and work. Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world and Healthy, confident individuals ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Staff have worked together both in house and school to school to engage in research activities, critical enquiry, and pilot projects. Thereby ensuring that they will build their own curriculum for their learners. With a focus on being about how they teach and why they teach it. They have continued to develop as a learning organisation, a setting where CPD and research-based study has had a positive impact on learning and pedagogy.

2021 – 2022 has been a very successful year for the school in terms of their Flagship Project. A new curriculum rationale and updated school vision has been introduced. The staffing structure has been updated to reflect the new curriculum for Wales, along with a new approach towards School Improvement Planning and celebrating success. Whole school topics from Nursery to Year 6 and across Y Canol have been successfully introduced, alongside 'Passion Projects' and 'Super Learning Days'.

Other initiatives introduced include the re-introduction of trips and visitors to enhance the curriculum, in the moment marking and monitoring. Teaching Assistant Programme, Teams planning together such as Early Years, Years 1 & 2, Years 3 & 4, Years 5 & 6 and across Y Canol. A revised format for planning and flexible planning led by the children's interests and individual integrations plans. Forest School is now an established feature and links with literacy, numeracy and science.

The school's successes have been shared by GwE (the North Wales regional school improvement service) as examples of good practice and their initial work on poverty has also been hailed as good practice, with Ysgol Heulfan now being a case study.

#### **Next steps:**

Following the formal introduction of the new curriculum for Wales in September 2022 the school and staff will re-introduce their 'Triad Working' project across school, sharing learning activities and with different classes to buddying up and learning together. Along with sharing teaching and learning, classroom observations, and involvement with the FaCE project that aims to develop and strengthen schools' approach to family and community engagement (FaCE). Where the emphasis is on engagement that helps families to actively support their child's learning. With a particular focus on how to engage with families of children who are currently underperforming, children from deprived backgrounds, those receiving less support for



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



their learning at home. The Lead will focus on poverty and consider its implications and how the school can reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

There will continue to be a focus on teaching and learning in mathematics building on their success in 2021 – 2022 and to consider self-evaluation and school improvement engaging in research activities, critical enquiry, and pilot projects.

### **Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project 2022 – 23**

*'Working together to be the best we can be. Embedding their new curriculum for Wales.'*

Building on the successes achieved in 2021-2022, staff will embed and introduce approaches to enhance teaching and learning, self-evaluation, and planning for improvement in 2022 - 23. Over the next twelve months staff will focus on the next steps identified above. The following actions will support the successful rollout of the project:

Staff Meetings will discuss the evolution of the project and establish Triads with the details shared with new staff. Discussion related to the FaCE project and other areas will be put in place. Staff will work together on the aspects identified: shared learning; shared teaching, and the FaCE project. Successes will be celebrated and recorded in the schools innovative and well used School Improvement Portfolio. The impact will be measured across the year and via discussions with staff, children, and parents.

Considering the impact of poverty on educational attainment and to plan for ways to address this the Lead will revise and update the comprehensive Action Plan with all actions to be addressed by the school and staff. She is working with the Children in Wales Organisation to ensure that children's rights are at the forefront of policy and decision making. In Wales, the schools work in respect of this will part of a case study showcasing their work to a wider audience. The impact will be measured via discussions with the Lead and with parents and children regarding initiatives and next steps.

Further development of teaching and learning in mathematics will focus on agreeing the 'Heulfan Approach' and increasing the focus on real life maths and problem solving. The impact will be measured in pupils' books and from discussions with the children. In the 'Moment Monitoring' will also contribute to evaluations.

To continue developing the school's approach to self-evaluation and school improvement staff will engage in research activities, critical enquiry, and pilot projects. They will consider how they should self-evaluate and will pilot a new approach during 2022-2023. While also continuing with their innovative and well used School Improvement Portfolio. Ensuring any new approaches are worthwhile and meaningful and not a burden with over complicated procedures and documentation.

In addition to the project focus identified above the school are committed to the following: Re-establishing links with other local schools in order to share good practice; Continuing to work with the IQM Cluster and to consider the implications of what is



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



learnt for the school; Encourage staff to work on their own research projects. Currently a member of staff from Y Canol is attending leadership training and will focus her work on developing outdoor learning in Key Stage 2 and another member of staff is working on the impact of poverty on educational attainment and continuing to seek the views of their learners, parents, and members of the Governing Body in all they do.

### The Impact of the Cluster Group

The school has been and continues to be an active, and highly valued member of its cluster contributing fully to each meeting and sharing their good practice with other settings. They attended an in-school meeting in March that looked at 'The Inclusive Learning Environment' and aspects were noted and shared with staff back at Ysgol Heulfan. Unfortunately, they were unable to attend the July meeting due to a Covid outbreak in school. However, they will attend the next meeting in early November.

### Overview

Ysgol Heulfan is a larger than average school in Gwersyllt, Wrexham. At the time of the review, there were 340 pupils on roll, taught in 12 mixed age classes. There are also 4 mixed age resource provision classes for children with a wide range of complex, additional learning needs (Y Canol). The school also host Flying Start, Early Education, Nursery and Playgroup Plus on site. It is a superbly vibrant inclusive school, which is ever-changing, with a happy, family-orientated environment where many exciting things happen in and out of the classroom. It is a School that celebrates each child, embraces differences, and this is reflected by the fact that the pupils are listened to and valued, they feel they belong and continue to achieve and grow. It is an outstanding inclusive school whose inclusive nature is deeply founded in its ethos and vision. This is reinforced by their mission to inspire generations of children in the best nurturing and stimulating environment, which is very clearly demonstrated in their stated aim: *'Working together to be the best we can be'* and their vision *'to ensure that pupils are: 'Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives; Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work; Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world and Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.'* These are strong highly inclusive statements that permeate and underscores every aspect of school life.

Conversations during the day with staff, pupils, parents, and a parent governor reinforced the view that there is an immense level of pride they feel in *their* school. The parents and parent governor spoken to were extremely positive about the school and could not fault the support all staff offer them and their children. Nothing is too much trouble and support is quickly offered and issues resolved. They were very clear that their children are very happy at the school as are they. Their relationships with the school are underpinned by high levels of trust and respect. They feel part of the extended *'Heulfan Family.'* Ringing endorsements for the school and its staff.

Staff engage and work with their peers and the children and their families to meet needs, often going above and beyond what is expected of them and in this regard they



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



are exceptional. Achieved through a belief in inclusive education and a belief in a true partnership with families and carers, and when needed external partners providing superb levels of advice, support, and care. This was evidenced in meetings not only with staff, but pupils and parents both in school and in written comments from parents on the school's website. Staff take immense pride in providing superb pastoral care, actively promoting equality and diversity, and thereby ensuring that the school is an extremely welcoming, inclusive, and caring school. Pupils enjoy participating in school life and are fully engaged in their learning, as it is a happy, friendly, stimulating, and vibrant learning environment with a clear focus on helping everyone to develop their potential, whatever that might be and helping to ensure they will become positive members of their community and society. Inclusion occurs naturally and is ingrained in every aspect of the school due entirely to the efforts of the staff, led by the inspirational and aspirational Headteacher and her Leadership Team. Pupils are at the heart of an encouraging and challenging curriculum and environment where everyone recognises and celebrates differences, communicates the importance of learning, and believes that everyone can achieve, and this is underpinned by extremely positive and trusting relationships with parents and the local community.

Discussions with members of staff, pupils, and parents and parent governor proved extremely useful in confirming that the school continues to meet the criteria of the IQM award. Discussions and evidence provided throughout the day focussed on key aspects of the school allowing a highly positive and extremely inclusive picture of the school to emerge. The passion of everyone I met during the day in both formal and informal settings shone through and was clearly demonstrated in the way that they work with each other, with children, and families. Everyone spoken to described themselves as part of *'The Heulfan Family.'* It was clear as the review unfolded that this is truly the case. They are at the heart of their community and are a true community hub. Superb levels of collaboration are the reason the school is so successful alongside the superb teamwork displayed by the staff who naturally promote equality and diversity and see their educational roles within the school as a vocation. They should be justifiably proud of their success in this respect, where no-one is left out or behind and where everyone is included.

The extremely wide-ranging and in-depth meetings and discussions during the review focused on a review of last year's Flagship Project as identified in the report above, the Flagship Project for the year ahead that is already being successfully enacted and discussions about how staff ensure that all pupils, families, and staff are nurtured and cared for and supported. and the way that they support each other and work with external partners. Discussions focussed on the following areas:

An introductory meeting with the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher looked at the school's current context, developments ongoing from last year, current initiatives and new projects and plans undertaken, and an opportunity to look at their innovative and well utilised School Improvement Portfolio. In my opinion it is a document that should be given a wider audience and many schools would find useful. This was followed by a tour of the school with the opportunity to see the school in action, have informal conversations with staff and children in their well thought out and spacious learning environment, with bright airy spaces and excellent displays in evidence both inside and outside learning areas. It is clear to see the pride that staff take in their learning



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



environments both internally and externally and their pride in demonstrating how they are continuing to develop and evolve what they offer.

Further scheduled meetings with staff, pupils and parents allowed me to focus on the rationale and reasons behind the continuing flagship project for the year ahead and to understand very clearly what they are hoping to achieve for the school and its pupils.

Discussions clearly demonstrated the passion and drive of the staff to ensure successful outcomes for their pupils, their families and themselves and where necessary were supported by documentary evidence. Meeting focusses included. An in-depth discussion with the School Lead on the poverty research project linked to FaCE and how it was developing to support children and families in the school with the possibility of a wider national audience as it progresses, and plans put in place to address poverty linked to children's educational opportunities, attainment, and aspirations. There was also the opportunity to talk with the member of staff who was directly involved in providing support for children and families affected by poverty in terms of local food banks and providing uniform items for those who need them from other families and from local shops. The school are actively involved in their community and provide the opportunity for children to visit a local care home and interact with the aged community as well as visits to local homes of the elderly. Feedback provided by pupils and written communications from those who had been visited clearly show how much the visits mean and how mutually beneficial they are. It will be interesting to see how these initiatives have developed at the next review and clearly show the inclusive, caring nature of everyone involved with the school.

I had a wide-ranging conversation with a number of pupils to get their views on their school and what they enjoyed about the school. They were a pleasure to talk to and were very mature and articulate giving their thoughts freely and clearly, I can see they enjoyed being at Ysgol Heulfan. They were explicit that staff make lessons interesting but also educational and push each of them to be the best they can be. They felt listened to and are part of '*the Heulfan Family.*' They felt that their teachers knew them including SLT and that they were always approachable. It was a pleasure to talk to them, they were superb advocates for the school and the opportunities it is providing for them in and out of the classroom. The school should be extremely proud of them.

I met staff from across the school to discuss their differing roles and inclusion as it related to them and their pupils. From the conversations it was clear that they see their work in the school as a vocation and not as a job. They are dedicated hardworking staff who are keen to make a difference to their children's lives and prepare them for the future. Every child matters to them and they work exceptionally hard to make a difference. They were also clear that the inclusive ethos supports them. Their wellbeing is paramount, and they feel supported by their peers and by Senior Leaders. They are justifiably proud of what is offered naturally across the school and of the work that each of them contributes to, often going above and beyond what is expected as a matter of course.

It was a privilege and pleasure to conduct the review and to hear their differing but supportive opinions of the school and their involvement whether as a member of staff, parent, or pupil. It is clear from these conversations and from the evidence presented



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



that the school is a superbly inclusive place and that it will continue to evolve and change to meet the need of its community. Everyone involved with the school should be extremely proud of what they continue to achieve, and the emphasis placed on ensuring everyone is nurtured and included.

I continue to be 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 continuing cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Flagship status.

**Assessor: Steve Gill**

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

.....

Joe McCann MBA NPQH

Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd