



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



**School** West Rainton Primary School  
15 School Avenue  
West Rainton  
Houghton-le-Spring  
DH4 6RN

**Head/Principal** Mrs Alison McDonough

**IQM Lead** Ms Susan Firth

**Date of Review** 15th November 2024

**Assessor** Mrs Emily Carr

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

**cluster Group** Trail Blazers

**Ambassador** Mrs Emily Carr

**Next Meeting** 10th March 2025

**Meeting Focus** Attendance and Careers

### **Cluster Attendance**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Summer 2023</b>	26th June 2023	No
<b>Autumn 2023</b>	09th October 2023	Yes
<b>Spring 2024</b>	03rd May 2024	No
<b>Summer 2024</b>	24th June 2024	No
<b>Autumn 2024</b>	16th September 2024	Yes
<b>Spring 2025</b>	10th March 2025	

### **The Impact of the Cluster Group**

The school Leaders at West Rainton Primary School continue to be committed to the cluster group and to developing strong links with schools within the Inclusive School community. The 2023-2024 Autumn term meeting, at Ponteland Primary, prompted Leaders to consider how they could further support their pupils using the ideas from other schools. Due to issues with not being able to access the cluster group emails, the IQM Lead did not attend the Spring and Summer term meetings, but they did access the resources and read the minutes.

The recent autumn term meeting at New York Primary allowed the IQM Leader to consider how they can further support maths learning in their Early Years. Further to the meeting, Leaders have also considered developing a Nurture Hub and this is something they will consider for the future.



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The IQM Lead discussed how she thinks a real benefit of attending the meetings is the opportunity to network see other settings and learn about their practice. She shared how she likes the fact that the cluster group has a mix of primary and secondary schools as this allows each setting to learn more about the different key stages. The IQM Lead also shared how she enjoys engaging and networking with other Durham IQM schools due to their locality.

The Leaders of West Rainton Primary School are outward-facing and enjoy building strong partnerships.

### **Evidence**

Over the course of the one-day assessment, the Assessor evaluated the school's commitment to inclusion, and progress made against their action plan, through a range of written evidence, including:

- The school's Annual Review and Action Plan document
- School website
- Ofsted report
- School policies
- Curriculum maps
- Previous IQM report

The Assessor toured the school and visited classes, viewed displays, and observed learning. The Assessor also had the opportunity to join the Children in Need Charity Coffee Morning.

### **Meetings held with:**

- Headteacher
- IQM Lead (also Deputy Headteacher and SENDCO)
- Parents/carers
- Pupils
- Governors



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### Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

**Project Title:** Building resilience for independent futures.

Leaders at West Rainton Primary School are committed to ensuring their pupils succeed during their time at the school and also in their future beyond West Rainton Primary School. They are determined to make a difference.

The Flagship Project is based on developing pupils' aspirations for the future and supporting all pupils to engage in education beyond West Rainton Primary School. The initial basis of the Flagship Project was around looking at how staff can successfully support pupils in their transition into secondary school as staff know that many former pupils have become disengaged and struggled in their next steps after West Rainton Primary and know that for lifelong success, it is important to develop a way in which West Rainton Primary School staff can continue to impact positively in children's next stage in life.

As they began to progress with the Project, Leaders identified two key strands to develop as part of the overarching theme: firstly, to further develop the offer whilst pupils are at West Rainton Primary School, including the transition into the secondary offer, to ensure pupils can experience success; and secondly, to create an offer to ensure those who have left West Rainton Primary School and have disengaged from education can have the opportunity to re-engage.

When thinking about the first strand of the Project, Leaders considered how they could use their curriculum to support current West Rainton Primary School pupils in becoming confident lifelong learners who can experience success in their next setting. A key focus was further developing the PSHE and RHE curriculum. At West Rainton Primary School, this curriculum area teaches children empathy, emotional intelligence, and social communication skills, as well as an abundance of knowledge around safety and wellbeing. This curriculum area sets the foundations for being a well-rounded citizen with a strong sense of self-awareness and the confidence and empowerment to voice wants and needs in life. Through this curriculum, staff aim to ensure pupils are equipped with the confidence and skills to debate, challenge and support each other's opinions. The skills learnt within it are fundamental to all aspects of future life. The Headteacher and the IQM Lead shared how they try to foster a growing awareness of where the subject can progress in terms of secondary and further education and potential career paths.

In this subject, children invariably work with different people each session, which fosters adaptability and assertiveness. Through this, pupils can see differences and similarities in how pupils of their age live all over the world. Also, pupils consider the global priorities which will impact and feature in any future career, such as the climate crisis and net-zero targets. Leaders worked with staff to make the changes to the PSHE and RHE curriculum, which now includes more scenarios and problem-solving tasks that may come their pupils' way in the future, and how best to tackle these concerns. RHE and PSHE are taught in a way which thoroughly immerses pupils in their learning, placing a greater emphasis on how it impacts them as pupils, and adults of the future.



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Another area that has been further developed is the introduction of the use of 'FAST 4' (recall of 4 facts that have been taught recently, last term, and in prior years to ensure that knowledge is retained and valued) across all subject areas. Staff have embedded the use of FAST 4 in lessons, as a way of measuring how much information their pupils are retaining, and where more work may be needed. FAST 4 practice was developed through collaboration with Belmont Secondary School, which will support pupils in consistent ways of working when they move into secondary education.

A key area of development has been strengthening the transition offer to prepare Year 6 in their final year at primary, particularly when they leave such a nurturing primary school and face a big change. When pupils leave in Year 6, they are all presented with a knitted green heart, as a reminder that they will always be part of 'team green'. There has been a greater focus on transition through work with the main secondary school, Belmont, through visits (both to the school, and staff members in West Rainton Primary School) to ensure a positive start to the year, and a continuation of provision. This work will continue to be further developed and embedded this year.

In terms of developing the second strand of the Project, Leaders began to work with the Local Authority and Belmont Secondary School, which is the main feeder secondary school. Leaders have developed relationships with Leaders of the school to develop stronger links and agree on a course of action. The commitment from Leadership in both schools is real and incredibly determined.

This part of the Project involves pupils from a range of backgrounds, who have succeeded well in primary school but have started secondary school unprepared for the changes and challenges that it can bring. This also includes Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) and Irish Traveller (IT) families, who do not attend secondary school. West Rainton Primary School Leaders do not forget pupils who leave and move to secondary school, and they have real concerns (and evidence) that some children struggle to continue to thrive once they leave West Rainton Primary School. Leaders shared that they have only had one GRT pupil who has gone on to full-time secondary education in the past five years. They reflected that this is a sad statistic for them, particularly when they work so hard to develop pupils and prepare them for post-primary education.

Leaders were reflective that for their high proportion of Gypsy Roma or Traveller pupils, many of whom do not progress to secondary education, they are currently the one chance they have to secure as much knowledge and skills and gain as many experiences as possible to have the same opportunities as their peers in the future.

To quickly put support in place, as the more strategic element of the Project is being developed through discussion with the LA, Leaders offer support to ex-pupils (and their families) through their open-door policy. Pupils can drop into school and speak with trusted adults and share their experiences, successes, and challenges. Former pupils also continue to come into West Rainton Primary School working as junior coaches. Ex-Year 7 and 8 pupils who were part of the West Rainton Primary School Steel Band are also able to attend practice to encourage them to remain part of the school community. This has included attending events which the steel band have played at on evenings and weekends. It is clear that children who have left are welcomed back and supported and are very much still part of the West Rainton Primary School family.



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The Headteacher conducts visits to secondary schools to see former pupils, allowing them the opportunity to see a friendly face that they know well. Since the last IQM assessment, the West Rainton Primary School Headteacher has been visiting Belmont to catch up with ex-pupils and provide opportunities to see the pupils' progress share in their successes and offer support.

West Rainton Primary School Leaders speak to the local secondary school regularly about pupils who are struggling and share information in a professional, and confidential manner to help the new school understand pupils and support them. Staff at West Rainton Primary School have also developed close links with the Inclusion Lead at Belmont, who appreciates and values their input on pupils. She has met with reluctant children's parents and carers to offer support and build positive relationships.

A key priority area that Leaders have been working on is speaking with parents and carers and working with them as partners. Leaders are keen to listen to and work with families to support positive transition and improvement with their willingness to ensure their children attend and engage in their secondary education. Leaders are working with families to find out about their concerns and the barriers to secondary education. The IQM Lead shared how a lot of the information they gather from parents will be through informal coffee mornings in school to allow parents to chat about their concerns and experiences in a more relaxed way.

The Headteacher shared how they have raised their concerns about the highlighted children with the LA and have shared their vision and suggestions for the future. This will continue to be addressed this academic year.

In discussions about the Flagship Project, the IQM Lead was reflective about the progress they have made and some of the issues they have encountered and shared how they remain committed to ensure that children of West Rainton Primary School Primary experience success throughout their life.

It is clear that the school remains committed to this Project and is being innovative in developing it further.



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### Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

#### Project Title: Inclusive practice beyond the primary school

##### Outline of Project:

This year, Leaders are further embedding some of their work from last year but are mainly focusing on working with Durham Local Authority, and local secondary schools, on their provision for IT, GRT and other non-attending pupils at a secondary level who are not being educated and are opting out of secondary education. West Rainton Primary School Leaders would like to work closely with the Local Authority, secondary school parents, carers, and pupils to raise the profile of education for reluctant pupils, with a big focus on attendance improvement.

West Rainton Primary School Leaders have suggested to the LA that a provision needs to be put in place where these pupils can gain qualifications and continue to develop, which could be supported by West Rainton Primary School staff. Leaders are committed to working with local families on this and will encourage them to allow their children to attend as the majority of them are not in any kind of education.

In discussions, Leaders shared how they know this is a complex situation with a lot of legalities that need to be considered. They reflected that they feel some of the issues are due to a lack of monitoring from secondary schools and traveller services, which have been drastically cut since the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders shared how they want to provide support for parents to ensure that they value their child's secondary education as much as their primary one, and to reduce the number of pupils who become non-attenders at secondary age. This work has begun informally, but Leaders want to develop this further and more formally.

Leaders have identified a number of key actions and next steps to ensure this Project is a success and are committed to working with the wider community to make a difference.

Leaders have identified the following next steps:

- To develop a more positive and proactive transition into secondary school from primary.
- To educate parents and carers regarding the importance of secondary education and the value of it for the future of their children.
- To pursue local authority's evidence of how pupils from GRT and IT heritage are educated, and monitored, when they leave primary school.



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### Overview

Over the last year, Leaders at West Rainton Primary School have continued to ensure that inclusivity is embedded throughout and that children are at the heart of every decision made. Leaders are passionate, skilled, and committed to their community, both inside and out! The Headteacher shared their commitment to inclusion and explained, 'Inclusivity is a culture at West Rainton Primary School. We are committed to providing a holistic and aspirational offer.'

This is a school that values relationships and working in partnership with families. On the school website, the message from the Headteacher, states: 'We care for each other like a big, extended family, and we are proud of our school values, achievements, and every individual within it. We make every school day count.' Staff work effectively with parents to gain a better understanding of their child and involve them in all stages of their child's education. Parents value the package of support and speak highly of staff. Parents talked during the assessment day about how this school is 'like a family.' One family member shared, 'The school is brilliant and feels like family. They are supportive of my child's needs and put things in place.' One parent talked with passion about how the school welcomed her child at a tough point in their life. She described how she has never known a primary like it, stating: 'When you join this school, you join a family. They go above and beyond to help.' Another parent confirmed this explaining, 'This school is brilliant with support and meeting needs. They support the full family.' This sentiment was echoed in conversations throughout the assessment day, with Governors stating, 'Families trust the school because staff take the time with their children and get to know them.' West Rainton Primary School is committed to the families they work with and goes over and above to ensure the best for everyone. Due to the positive reputation of the school, and their inclusive way of working, more families are travelling from out of the area to ensure their child can attend.

The school has a positive and loving ethos. Children and staff are happy at West Rainton Primary School. Throughout the assessment day, the pupil's behaviour was of a high standard. Each class visited was calm and purposeful, and pupils were engaged in learning activities.

Safeguarding is central to everything, and the procedures in place are rigorous and effective. Attendance remains a key priority area and staff have thought carefully about how they can ensure children want to be part of West Rainton Primary School and in school. Staff have recently introduced 'Classopoly' which is a version of Monopoly and allows classes to win awards, which are announced in the weekly celebration assembly. One parent shared how their children want to be in school every day because there is so much going on to engage them. The Governors shared how attendance is a key focus this year and how staff are tireless in their pursuit to ensure all children are benefiting from the offer.

Leadership remains a driving force behind the school's success with inclusion. There is a constant drive for improvement across all areas of school life. The strong Leadership of the Headteacher, and her vision for improving the opportunities for all children, is a strength of the school. Her accessibility and commitment to the community is appreciated by staff, pupils, and parents. She is a visible, hands-on Leader who Leads by example, Leaders have a clear moral compass. Everyone plays their part at this school. The team is small but mighty! The IQM Lead and Deputy Headteacher shared how it is a



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'well-oiled machine with everyone playing their part.' All Leaders, including Governors, share in the inclusive ethos and vision.

The Governing Body provides challenges and support to the school and is a big part of day-to-day school life. During the Assessment day, Governors talked with passion about the school and had high praise for the work of the school. Governors are invested and proud. One Governor explained how they are known in the school and feel part of the West Rainton Primary School family. Their support to the school ranges from formal meetings and lesson observations to activities such as listening to children reading and attending school events.

The curriculum at West Rainton Primary School is broad and balanced. Four key drivers (Aiming High; Skills for Learning and Life; Growing Healthily and Knowledge of the World) underpin learning and are developed through the school's subject curriculum planning, the extensive extracurricular provision, and the rich 'hidden' curriculum. Leaders shared how there is also a focus on pushing traditional skills such as reading books and writing. Leaders were passionate about how heritage is a key focus in this ever-changing world. There is a love of literacy across the school, as staff know that improved literacy skills have a positive impact on a child's future. Children at West Rainton Primary School have the opportunity to learn about Shakespeare by participating in a festival and performing. The annual school show is also a spectacular event that allows children to develop their skills in performing and singing.

At West Rainton Primary School, all pupils access the full curriculum and all that the school has to offer. An adaptive teaching style has been adopted throughout the school. Those pupils identified as having special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) have appropriate support put in place to allow them to make progress and achieve. Staff are knowledgeable about their school and their students, and their differing needs that must guide their practice and curriculum plans.

A clear focus of staff is the work on careers. Staff are keen to raise pupils' aspirations and expose them to a wide range of future career options. The IQM Lead shared how they have participated in a variety of events such as an online careers workshop speaking with pilots. The opportunities to raise aspirations and develop interests are also offered via the school's focus on 'Incredible Individuals' and activities such as the school swimming athletics record day and working with a specialist coach in the gymnastic club. Leaders are further developing links with higher education providers, such as St Aidan's College in Durham and Sunderland University, to ensure children know of the opportunities that are available to them. Staff use every opportunity they can to enrich children's lives and expose them to future pathways.

The school is active in the community and has strong links with community partners. There are a range of opportunities for pupils to extend their learning and develop their character, such as through residentials, school trips and charity days. The school attends regular community events such as the 'Meet Parade.' Staff provides a variety of afterschool clubs which change termly. Displays throughout the school showcase the broad range of activities that are part of the West Rainton Primary School offers. One display titled 'A year in the life of West Rainton Primary School' cleverly captures the offer. Another display highlights how the school is a Dementia Friendly school that links in closely with a local Care Home. On the Assessment day, the school was hosting a Children in Need Coffee Morning. This was well attended by families, who were positive about the school and the caring and welcoming ethos.



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It is clear from the review process that the staff team at West Rainton Primary School continue to be fully committed to inclusive practice. They have proved their commitment to inclusion over their years of IQM accreditation and I believe they continue to have the passion and expertise to continue to drive the inclusion agenda in their school and beyond. I would recommend that the school retains its IQM Flagship School status.

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: Mrs Emily Carr**

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

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