



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School
Newfield
Oldbank Lane
Blackburn
Lancashire
BB1 2PW

Head/Principal Ms Rachel Kay

IQM Lead Ms Jenny Riley

Date of Review 27th June 2025

Assessor Ms Sue Wight

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group TEAM NW B

Ambassador Mrs Sarah Linari

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Summer 2023	23 rd June 2023	Yes
Autumn 2023	21 st November 2023	Yes
Spring 2024	14 th March 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	7 th June 2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	12 th November 2024	No
Spring 2025	4 th February 2025	Yes
Summer 2025	23 rd June 2025	

Evidence

Discussions with:

- Head teacher
- Deputy Head teacher
- Assistant Headteachers
- Family Wellbeing Coordinators



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- Teachers
- Parents
- Pupils

Additional Activities:

- Tour of school
- Scrutiny of website, social media, School Development Plan (SDP)

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Newfield School actively engages in cluster group meetings, demonstrating a commitment to collaborative professional development. The participation of the teachers in these networking sessions has provided invaluable insights into best practices observed in mainstream schools. This exposure has prompted the development of thought-provoking, long-term strategies that enable Newfield to share its specialist knowledge effectively, thereby assisting mainstream colleagues in addressing the complex needs of their students.

In addition to fostering collaboration, Newfield has undertaken a reflection on the texts currently in use within the curriculum. Through this critical evaluation, the school has identified opportunities to enhance the multicultural representation of materials and incorporate LGBTQ+ literature. This initiative not only enriches the learning experience for all students but also cultivates an environment that promotes inclusivity and diversity.

The most significant impact of their engagement in the cluster groups has been the robust networking opportunities that have emerged. By comparing practices with other schools, Newfield has gained a deeper understanding of effective teaching methodologies and innovative approaches to supporting diverse learners. This collaborative spirit underscores the outward-facing philosophy and highlights the enthusiasm for sustained partnership with colleagues from various educational settings.



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

The school's progress from the previous year is anchored in the project focus of further developing links to the community and embedding independence and trauma-informed working throughout the school. This includes the development of therapeutic classrooms, all with the intention of promoting a positive outlook towards disability.

It was evident throughout my visit that significant advancements have been made towards the cultivation of independence and the enhancement of community links within the Post-16 provision, following a thorough review of the Post-16 offer. The students have actively engaged with the local community by visiting the allotment to grow food for consumption, as well as visiting local shops where they utilise self-checkout facilities. Additionally, they have taken part in selling produce at the local market, thereby gaining valuable experience in real-world transactions.

Work experience opportunities have also been successfully implemented within the school, exemplified by the 'Take Over Day', where students shadow staff in their professional roles. The introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh Award has further facilitated pupils in applying the life skills they have acquired throughout their time at Newfield. Furthermore, Post-16 pupils have taken on the responsibility of running a tuck shop each week, generating funds for various events, including their prom, thereby promoting entrepreneurship and financial literacy.

Transition pathways have been established for Post-16 students as they progress from Newfield into local colleges and training providers. These opportunities include relevant educational packages encompassing BTEC courses, Asdan qualifications, and internships tailored to individual needs. Additionally, residential trips have been offered, where pupils engage in a variety of outdoor activities such as walking, swimming, cycling, climbing, and traversing zip lines. The use of High Nook Cottage has been instrumental in the development of independent living skills, allowing students to undertake tasks such as making beds, ironing, and cleaning in a home-like environment.

The school has made commendable strides in enhancing Learning Outside the Classroom. Notable improvements have been made to outdoor spaces, ensuring that every child has access to an inclusive environment. Noteworthy features include wheelchair-accessible equipment such as ramps on the racing track and wheelchair swings, as well as a sensory garden designed to support pupils in line with the MOVE curriculum. The introduction of climbing facilities further enhances students' opportunities for physical development. Shelters have been erected to enable students to enjoy outdoor learning activities in all weather conditions, complemented by the provision of ponchos. The positive impact of these developments has been apparent, fostering friendship-building across classes, encouraging turn-taking, sharing, and nurturing independence skills as students responsibly manage equipment use.

Collaborative links with other educational institutions have flourished through ongoing partnerships. Notably, the continued collaboration with Stonyhurst College has led to the continuation of the wheelchair dancing sessions and has facilitated support for students learning physical education skills via their sports coaching leaders. Connections with Blackburn College, Purple Patch, Olive Trees, and Youth Zone have



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broadened the opportunities and pathways available to students, ensuring their transition beyond school is well supported.

Local and international links have also been fortified through numerous events organised throughout the academic year, all aimed at raising awareness and funds to support various charitable causes. Partnerships established with an orphanage in Kenya, through letter exchanges and the sharing of photographs, have fostered a global perspective amongst students. Events commemorating World Autism Awareness Day and Eid al-Fitr celebrations have contributed to the school's cultural inclusivity and awareness.

The school has made noteworthy progress in becoming a Trauma-Informed establishment over the past 12 months through the establishment of therapeutic classrooms that implement the Thrive approach. The creation of a 'reset' room provides students with additional support by offering a regulated environment away from the classroom, thereby allowing pupils to re-establish their composure prior to engaging with the educational curriculum. The markedly positive outcomes from this initiative have prompted the formation of a Regulation Support Team, dedicated to delivering interventions and assisting staff in addressing students' needs effectively.

Parental engagement remains a significant strength across the school and has been further developed through initiatives such as workshops focusing on Adverse Childhood Trauma, assemblies, and coffee mornings. The continuation of the 'Dads and Lads' group has seen increased participation and engagement, fostering a sense of community among families. A food larder and voucher scheme has also been implemented to provide additional support for families requiring further assistance, reflecting the school's commitment to holistic welfare.

The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offer has evolved to include a week-long induction programme concentrated on behaviour management, complemented by training sessions focused on multi-sensory impairment, Makaton, and MOVE methodologies. The school is keen to disseminate its expertise further by facilitating opportunities for both staff and Early Career Teachers (ECTs) to observe outstanding practice, thereby contributing to a culture of shared learning and professional growth.



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Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Project title: Promoting Positivity about Disability

Aim:

The objective is to foster a vibrant and inclusive school environment that celebrates children and young people with disabilities. Our initiative aims to ensure that staff members feel both appreciated and supported, while also cultivating meaningful connections with the local community that enrich the experiences of all participants.

Objective:

The project will focus on strengthening collaborations with families, local organisations, and the broader community to increase awareness and understanding of disability, while engendering pride in Newfield School. In parallel, they will prioritise the recruitment, retention, and wellbeing of staff to ensure a skilled, motivated, and compassionate team that takes pride in being part of our therapeutic, trauma-informed, and inclusive setting.

Project Outline

Community Connection

After School and Holiday Provision

Young Peoples Services (YPS) & Newfield

They aim to establish connections with Blackburn with Darwen YPS to serve as the new venue for after-school and holiday programmes for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the area. This initiative will facilitate relationships with children and families who do not currently attend Newfield, enhancing the community ties. Additionally, they will develop the provision in terms of resources and activities designed for out-of-school hours.

Link Schools and Colleges

The goal is to further strengthen relationships with local universities to offer placements for students in medicine, education, and social care. This engagement will allow these students to learn from the exceptional children and gain insights into their future aspirations. Furthermore, it will present Newfield pupils with opportunities to collaborate with individuals from diverse backgrounds, fostering their understanding of self and society, and enabling them to utilise their skills with new partners.

Learning Outside the Classroom

Newfield will continue to provide opportunities for students to engage in learning beyond the traditional classroom setting, maximising the use of outdoor spaces. Further enhancements will be made to outdoor areas surrounding the school, including



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increased access to external providers and supporters to promote physical development.

RRSA Local and International Links

Newfield plan to host multiple events throughout the year aimed at raising awareness and funds to support an orphanage school in Kenya. This initiative will educate both Newfield students and their Kenyan counterparts about their similarities, differences, and Children's Rights on a global scale. The focus for Autumn 2025 will be on reaccreditation from UNICEF, led by TLR Laura Walmsley in collaboration with the RRSA Steering Group.

Trauma-Informed School

Newfield will continue to create additional classrooms designated as 'therapeutic classrooms' to enrich the offerings for students. Emphasis will be placed on promoting an understanding of the 'trauma' that may arise from disabilities affecting children, families, and communities, and exploring how they can better support and manage these experiences to facilitate positive outcomes. They will also offer disability awareness training to mainstream schools and local businesses, thereby illustrating that a commitment to understanding disability extends far beyond standard practices.

Staff Recruitment, Retention, and CPD Training and Development Offer

Outreach and Training

Newfield will overhaul the current recruitment strategy by implementing open days, utilising social media, sharing staff experiences, and engaging with local authorities. Furthermore, they will participate in broader recruitment events across the Blackburn with Darwen area. A formalised CPD training and development offer will be established at Newfield, available both in-house and to other educational settings.



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Overview

It was a genuine pleasure to return to Newfield School and engage with the dedicated staff, inspiring pupils, and supportive parents that together create a vibrant educational community. The visit reinforced my long-held view that Newfield School is not only a place of learning but also a nurturing environment that embodies inclusivity and a sense of belonging for all. Upon entering the school, I was immediately struck by the warm and welcoming ethos that permeates the air, creating an atmosphere that encourages both students and visitors to feel part of the extended family.

Newfield School's values of inclusion and respect were palpably evident throughout my interactions, reflected not only in the ethos of the school but also in the concrete actions and behaviours of the pupils and staff. The leadership demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that every pupil is valued and supported. This commitment is mirrored in the accountability mechanisms in place, where staff are encouraged to take ownership of their responsibilities towards fostering an inclusive environment.

During my interactions with the pupils, it became abundantly clear that they are not only a credit to Newfield School; they are also a testament to the effectiveness of its inclusive teaching strategies. The children I spoke with enthusiastically shared their experiences and highlighted various aspects of the school that they cherished. From their involvement in helping younger pupils to participating in 'Take Over Days', the love for subjects such as Mathematics, and their appreciation for the staff, meals, cooking sessions, and camaraderie with friends, the pupils' testimonials were infectious and heart-warming. This level of pupil engagement reinforces the school's curriculum structure, which is thoughtfully designed to cater to diverse learning needs and interests.

The learning environment at Newfield is akin to a supportive community where teaching and learning go hand in hand. The staff are committed to creating a pedagogy that is both adaptive and responsive to individual pupils' needs, ensuring that lessons are tailored to maximise engagement and learning outcomes. Their approach includes innovative planning and the effective use of resources that facilitate an enjoyable and enriching educational experience. Pupils expressed how the staff are instrumental in their learning journey, ensuring they are safe, encouraged, and guided towards being kind and compassionate individuals. It is this commitment to personal growth and social responsibility that sets Newfield apart as a pioneering institution for pupils with multiple and profound needs.

When given the opportunity to voice any additional support they would wish for from Newfield, students showcased their aspirations, suggesting horse riding lessons, travel training, and the creation of an outdoor sports area. Such suggestions not only reflect the students' desire for further engagement and skill development, but they also indicate the school's efficacy in cultivating an environment where pupils feel empowered to express their needs and wishes.

The sentiments echoed by the pupils were equally mirrored by the parents I had the pleasure of meeting. Their overwhelming praise for Newfield School was pronounced,



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with many complimenting the evident progress their children have made since enrolling. Parents articulated their appreciation for the workshops available, the unwavering support they receive, and the exemplary communication that characterises their relationship with the school. One parent poignantly expressed that they *"felt blessed"* to be part of the Newfield community, while another remarked on the remarkable dedication of the staff, asserting that *"all the staff know my child, not just their teacher"*. Such endorsements highlight the individualised attention given to each pupil, reinforcing the inclusive ethos that underpins all aspects of Newfield School. The strong links with parents, carers, and guardians are clearly seen in the robust channels of communication established, ensuring that families feel involved and informed about their children's education.

In a testament to the exceptional quality of education and care provided, Blackburn with Darwen have taken the commendable step of requesting that Newfield expand its capacity to accommodate an additional 60 pupils. Plans are underway to increase building capacity, a clear indication of the school's impact within the community and its reputation as a leading institution for pupils with complex needs. Furthermore, the proposal to develop a satellite provision further underscores the trust placed in Newfield's capabilities and the effectiveness of its inclusive practices.

Newfield is proud to be part of both the Northwest Special Schools cluster and the Burnley Schools cluster for sports, engaging in a wide range of events that promote competitive sports as well as overall physical health. The pupils' involvement in diverse activities such as bowling, curling, basketball, athletics, and dodgeball not only fosters physical well-being but also enhances teamwork and social skills. Recent sessions, including Lancashire's five-week cricket programme and Bike ability lessons, exemplify the school's commitment to providing varied opportunities for physical development and personal growth. Additionally, collaborations with Blackburn Rovers for skill development football sessions showcase the school's proactive approach to creating first-rate learning opportunities. These engagements enrich the educational experience of the pupils, emphasising the importance of sport and play as essential elements of a well-rounded education.

The inclusive ethos extends to CPD opportunities for staff, with a focus on enhancing pedagogical practices and mirroring the expertise of external providers. This robust investment in staff training ensures that educators are equipped with the latest methodologies and practices, further enhancing the learning environment for pupils with multiple and profound needs. The collaborative effort among staff reflects strong leadership and management practices that prioritise the continuous improvement of both teaching and learning.

Beyond academic and sports initiatives, Newfield offers numerous extracurricular clubs available at lunchtime, ensuring that pupils have the chance to engage in physical activities every day. These initiatives reflect the school's recognition of the importance of holistic personal development. Additionally, events such as Sports Day, MOVE Day, MOVE sessions twice weekly, hydrotherapy, and orienteering underscore the school's commitment to fostering not just academic success but also physical and emotional well-being, thus contributing to a rounded educational experience.



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As I reflect upon the remarkable ecosystem that is Newfield School, it is evident that the institution is not only meeting the educational needs of its pupils but also exceeding expectations by fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. The strong community links, evidenced by the involvement of parents and the expansion plans initiated by Blackburn with Darwen, further cement Newfield's role as a beacon of excellence in the field of special education.

In conclusion, my visit to Newfield School reaffirmed the school's unwavering commitment to inclusivity and its ability to cater effectively for the diverse needs of pupils with multiple and profound needs. The warm, welcoming ethos, coupled with the collaborative spirit exhibited by the staff, pupils, and parents, strongly reflects a community committed to fostering growth and achievement for all. The school's proactive approach in engaging with parents, listening to pupils, and expanding its facilities demonstrates a forward-thinking attitude that is essential in today's educational landscape. It is evident that Newfield not only nurtures academic excellence but also inspires personal growth, kindness, and inclusivity, standing as a model for schools catering to children with complex needs.

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: Ms Sue Wight

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH

Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd