



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name Hopefields School
16 High Force Road
Riverside Park
Middlesbrough
Cleveland
TS2 1RH

Head/Principal Ms Emily Greenhalgh-Stone

IQM Lead Ms Emily Rose Isbell

Date of Review 5th November 2025

Assessor Ms Susan Firth

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group Inclusivators

Ambassador Ms Annette Sowden

Next Meeting 23rd March 2026

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Spring 2024	25 th January 2024	No
Summer 2024	3 rd July 2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	13 th November 2024	Yes
Spring 2025	12 th March 2025	No
Summer 2025	3 rd July 2025	Yes
Autumn 2025	25 th September 2025	Yes

The impact of the cluster meetings

Staff in school were positive about the impact of the cluster meetings. In particular, the value of the inclusion conference was most impactful, as the opportunities to hear ideas from a range of settings was valuable.



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Evidence

This was Hopefield School's second annual review, as part of their Centre of Excellence status. The school submitted a detailed report of their achievements over the past year, and the leaders of the school were specific in their intentions for the future.

During the visit to the school, evidence of their progress included:

- Tour of the school, including classrooms and additional spaces
- Participation in 'Join up' at the start of the school day
- Conversations with a range of staff members, including headteacher, inclusion lead and teaching staff
- Student's workbooks including art sketch books
- Lesson walk throughs
- Informal conversations with students at lunch time
- Telephone calls with parents and carers
- Meeting with local authority inclusion officer
- Floor books from the Montana project
- General culture and 'feel' of the school in operation

Evaluation of Targets for last 12 Months

Target 1: Embed the new IQM co-ordinator into the Hopefields model.

The school have detailed in their self-evaluation that Emily Isbell, the school's new IQM co-ordinator, has been embedded strategically into the school's ethos and has developed her own leadership skills in beginning the NPQ in inclusive practice. This demonstrates the school's commitment to having Senior Leaders with appropriate experience and qualifications in place. The school are very complimentary regarding the new IQM lead, believing that she has become a valued part of the team. She has shown her developing IQM leadership skills through her delivery of CPD, including all aspects of SEND, to staff in school, as well as the expected requirements of a school SENDCo with EHCP reviews. As the new IQM lead is primary trained, she is able to disseminate her knowledge throughout the school's practice, particularly for students who are achieving at a KS1 and KS2 level. Her practice is reflective and responsive to need, regularly asking staff members 'What do we need?'

The school have a newly developed system in place in regard to costed provision, which is planned for in groups to allow financial decisions which will impact on greater numbers of students, as well as individuals. This allows for changes to be made in a swift, strategic manner, supporting all students successfully. By looking carefully at what individuals need, as part of their EHCP, (if applicable) staff can quickly adapt to and improve on each child's potential.

Next Steps:

- Involvement in the planning of April 2026 conference for visiting speakers, utilising IQM as a platform for change and re-imaging education. The school also intend to begin to collate evidence to support the assessment for Flagship School status in October 2027.

Target 2: Further consolidate the wider curriculum offer with a particular focus on vocabulary. Ensure that children remember their learning and know how this relates to everyday life.

Two inset days at the start of the new academic year provided opportunities to model teaching and learning strategies to staff, with a clear focus on expectations and narrowing the vocabulary gap. The leaders of the school are working hard on narrowing the gap, ensuring that all students are making small steps of progress towards age-related expectations in reading. A short period of time to allow new strategies was a key part of this process, to assess the success of what has been taught, allowing for timely progression, which is critical for all students, particularly older ones who have not previously reached age-related expectations in reading. Students are all exposed to vocabulary teaching relentlessly in all lessons, ensuring that every opportunity is exploited.



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Next Step:

- Further imbed the vocabulary teaching expertise across all subjects and age phases, with a view to moving on to questioning in term two.

Target 3: Continue to upskill subject leads in their departmental areas with targeted professional learning development and monitoring, moderation, evaluation and quality analysis.

It is very clear that the targeted monitoring and professional development focus is a crucial part of the school development plan for the year, which demonstrates their commitment to improvement for all. The use of a rapid development plan for underachieving subjects after this investment further demonstrates this commitment. The external support from the school improvement partner and outside agencies is used effectively to ensure prompt and strategic improvement. In regard to upskilling staff, there are strategic placements in terms of staff, which allows for people's skills to be used most effectively. Some staff members have QTS, others are working towards QTS whilst working at the school. Staff members are fully invested in direct coaching, which allows the establishment to grow from the inside, in a supportive environment. Through the school's reflective capacity, they are developing their middle managers, which further demonstrate their commitment to being a supportive and proactive workplace.

Next Step:

- Embed quality first teaching to narrow the vocabulary gap of learners in all subject areas.

Agreed Targets for next 12 Months

Target 1: Further develop The Montana Project to support other local schools and educational organisations to increase capacity within the local area.

Comments

The school intends to incorporate an outreach offer for students who cannot attend Hopefields School due the constraints of oversubscription or not having the required EHCP or being on enrolled in another setting. The leaders of the school have shown that they would like to make a difference with more students than they currently do, demonstrating their commitment to the local community. Part of this includes a home education group session, which would support students who are not under the close supervision of the local authority education system. Once again, this shows great commitment to making a difference. The school wishes to offer qualifications at level 1 to these students through a vocational approach.

Target 2: Promote the Hopefields model, working with stakeholders to commit to a 'cradle to career' educational offer, ensuring clear transitions throughout key points in a child's life.

Comments

The school plan to consider developing their current buildings, potentially relocating the current setting positively into a new community. Their plans to continue to develop links with other settings, such as the Reach Foundation and Feltham Academy will form a key part of this, as they continue to develop the long-term prospects of students in the community.

Target 3: Promote the Nurtured Heart Approach with parents and carers, improving parental relationships and communication.

Comments

Raise the profile of the NHA in the UK and across the region, working closely with Howard Glasser to develop staff training and PLD to other organisations and schools who will benefit. Parents who were spoken to mentioned this and were very complimentary of the ethos.

Target 4: Improve the health offer of young people to ensure that they can lead lives that are long and full of hope and opportunity.

Comments

The school have many areas of focus within this target, including the toothbrushing scheme to help reduce tooth decay in students who attend the school. It is clear that the school are visionary in their approach to ensuring that their students have a healthy start to their adult life and are taught skills that they may otherwise have. This includes a commitment to PE lessons for all students. Therapy including Lego



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Therapy will be part of their plans to improve mental health and wellbeing. Ambitious plans on how students will be tracked at key stages of their life will be a key part of this target.

Target 5: Encourage local stakeholders to complete Re: imagining Education conference for planning April 2026.

Comments

The school have five external speakers to support with the conference already and to support the engagement in local education.

Overview

Hopefields School in a unique and inspiring educational facility. With over 700 students waiting for a place, it is clear that the reputation of the school is excellent. Their approach is regarded by Senior Leaders as 'transitional' for families, which is most certainly true. In fact, the Headteacher quoted that families believe that the school provide 'extremely transformational outcomes' for their students. Students attend the school to provide them with a future life of 'hope and opportunity'. The themes of 'hope' and 'determination' run through the school seamlessly. Students loved coming to the school, which was shown during student discussions, as they were incredibly complimentary of the school's offer and the changes that attending here have made to their lives. One student had not attended school in primary yet, had an attendance of 75% at Hopefields which was an impressive improvement. The extra provision on offer for this student is also exemplary, including after school sessions.

Such progress is not without hard work and commitment from staff members, as they strive to ensure that every student has an appropriate and fulfilling education during their time at Hopefields, and beyond. From the very beginning of the day, when a 'Join up' session was introduced to school, based today on the theme of courage, it was abundantly clear that the students have great respect for the staff in the setting. The careers lead led the session, which was an inspirational start to the day. This sense of inspiring students was evidence throughout the day, and it is clear that staff motivation is at a high and consistent level. Naming students individually and showing knowledge of their individual needs during this session was impressive and clearly is second nature to this staff member. The fun, fair and interesting approach was echoed in all other staff members too. Positive relationships with students form a key part of the offer at Hopefields, and it is evident throughout. A focus on resilience is key and providing the students with the skills to arm themselves with these vital skills, forms a huge part of the curriculum.

The commitment to clubs at lunch time is impressive; it allows students to have other interests and provides them with an element of choice in their own education. The focus on physical education is a key part of this too, as the school endeavours to ensure that physical and mental health are accounted for successfully. Senior Leaders comment on the use of 'deliberate practice' through providing students with what they really need.

The focus on the teaching of vocabulary was evident throughout the visit today, with staff member exploiting every opportunity to encourage students to develop their language. Lots of collaborative teaching supports this well, with the added layer of an individualised offer for each student. Clear procedures are in place in terms of what is expected from the students who attend, the parents of these students and what the staff at Hopefields will provide. Clarity is a key part of this, and shared agreements between these parties allow for a successful educational offer. A particularly impressive concept of 'reset' is a key part of the routines in place, allowing students a room to access when they feel the need to reset how they are feeling. This forms part of the agreement between the students, parents and staff, that students can access this in a lesson, with clear boundaries and expectations in place.

The Montana Project is an impressive vision, which clearly works very well for the staff and students at Hopefields School. The students who were interviewed mentioned it as being a great 'hands on' approach to school and learning. The therapeutic approach allows students to access learning opportunities which are catered for their individual needs. This may be in the form of feeding the animals, cuddling them or talking to adults about what they are doing. Some students engage in forest school activities, and others are interested in the equine aspect of the farm. Both approaches allow students to engage in sensory-led activities, and they support the dexterity of the students too. The vision was created by the directors of the company and forms a key part of the educational offer. There is also outreach work planned with the school's link with an educational psychologist, who is keen to engage parents as well. The leader of The Montana Project commented on the students great team work on the farm, and she believes wholeheartedly that they 'just love it'. The animals engage the young people well and bring a new dimension to the school's inclusive practice. The local authority has also commissioned an outreach programme, which is offered to the students who cannot access a place due to space limitations, which allows them to experience some of the fantastic provision on offer. This further highlights the school's commitment to the wider community.

Discussions with parents were incredibly positive and complimentary. One parent commented on the great communication from staff, through feedback orally, postcards home and a genuine focus on progress throughout. They love to hear what has gone well, and the staff team at Hopefields do this exceptionally. Parents commented on the 'lovely staff team' who are friendly and welcoming at all times. It is regarded as being a 'really good school.' Another parent talked about the school being amazing, and that they are 'blown away' by the positivity and hard work of the staff team. They said that they cannot fault the school in any way, and that they 'never want their child to leave'. This parent talked emotionally about the impact that the school and the staff team have had on their child, and that they will be forever grateful for the opportunity to attend the school. The final parent talked about the way in which the school makes a 'huge difference' and that the relationships in school are second to none. The comments from all three parents were overwhelmingly positive.

A highlight of the day was meeting some of the brilliant students. They had lovely comments to make about the school, the theme of staff members being very positive and understanding was evident throughout. Learning is viewed as being interesting and fun. In particular, the comments made about staff members who 'get me' was heart-warming. There are genuine, trusting relationships between the staff and students at their school, and this level of commitment from both parties should be commended.

Finally, it was lovely to hear that all members of the staff are so invested in outcomes for their students, and that they believe in a culture of being 'all in'. There are no limits to this, Senior Leaders have embedded this succinctly in their team building practice. Members of staff commented on the use of clear expectations by all, how appropriate the culture and ethos of the school is for the students, and that the environment allows students to succeed.



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It was an absolute pleasure to spend the day at Hopefields School. It is simply inclusion at its very best. Thank you to everyone at Hopefields and The Montana Project for such a welcoming, enjoyable and informative day.

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 Centre of Excellence. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence 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 Centre of Excellence status.

Assessor: Ms Susan Firth

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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