



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School	Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School Glenburn Road Skelmersdale Lancashire WN8 6JW
Head/Principal	Mrs Mary Henshaw
IQM Lead	Mr Ryan Hughes
Date of Review	25 th September 2026
Assessor	Ms Katie Pritchard

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group	No Limits / Secondary Schools
Ambassador	Mrs Sarah Linari
Next Meeting	14 th October 2026

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2025	13 th Nov 2025	Yes
Spring 2026	5 th Feb 2026	Yes
Summer 2026	8 th Jun 2026	No

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The school continues to play an active role within the IQM Cluster Group, valuing opportunities to share and learn alongside colleagues who are equally committed to inclusion. Contributions have included discussions around SEND provision, transition support and partnership working with families. Engagement with the cluster has provided a helpful forum for reflection and has supported leaders in refining existing practices to further enhance belonging, wellbeing and support for pupils.

Participation in cluster discussions has contributed to ongoing developments within the school, particularly around inclusive practice, SEND provision and strengthening support for pupils and families. Leaders have used ideas gained through these opportunities to reflect on existing provision and consider further refinements that enhance pupils' experiences and sense of belonging.



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The school has also contributed to the wider work of the cluster, sharing examples of effective practice relating to SEND, personalised transition arrangements and family engagement. This willingness to contribute openly reflects a collaborative ethos and a recognition that schools are strengthened through working together.

Although the impact of cluster involvement is difficult to separate from the school's wider improvement work, it is evident that engagement with the network continues to provide valuable opportunities for reflection, professional learning and the continued development of inclusive practice.

Evidence

Meetings with:

- Head Teacher
- Deputy Head Teacher for Pastoral
- Deputy Head Teacher – IQM coordinator and Curriculum oversight
- TA Lead on Literacy and library provision
- Behaviour mentor
- Assistant Head Teacher – Teaching and Learning
- Lead Practitioner – Maths
- Assistant Head Teacher – Safeguarding and Careers

Documents:

- Teaching and Learning Handbook 2026 – 2027
- Foundational Knowledge planner
- Foundational Knowledge Action plan 2026 - 2027
- Baseline testing data for current Year 7
- Thrive online action plan for a pupil
- One-page profiles for a variety of students
- Subject guidance for areas of need
- Examples of whole school training

Additional Activities:

- Tour of the school
- Visits to Thrive, Aspire, Reflection, BASE and library
- Lesson observations
- Break time observation



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Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Throughout the review, it became increasingly clear that Thrive has come to represent much more than the original aims of the Flagship Project. Whilst the project itself focused on strengthening support for students experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, the wider impact can be seen in the way leaders and staff now talk about children, families and inclusion.

Leaders reflected openly on the school's journey over recent years. They spoke honestly about a period where significant school improvement work understandably required a strong focus on systems, procedures and compliance. Those foundations were necessary and have provided the stability from which the school now operates. However, there was a genuine sense that the school had reached a point where it wanted to build upon those foundations and further strengthen the relational culture that sits at the heart of effective inclusion. One leader described this aspiration as wanting to "bring back the joy to learning", a phrase that remained with me long after our conversations had ended.

In many ways, Thrive appears to have provided the vehicle through which this next stage of development has been realised. It has given staff a shared language, greater confidence and a deeper understanding of the barriers some young people bring with them into school each day. More importantly, it has strengthened an already strong belief that behaviour should be understood within the context of the individual child and their experiences.

What was particularly striking was the way leaders spoke about relationships. Discussions rarely centred on interventions or programmes. Instead, conversations focused on trust, belonging, consistency and ensuring that young people feel genuinely supported. The phrase "where relationships are good, teaching and learning is good" featured prominently within the school's evaluation and feels embedded within its day-to-day practice. It was evident that Thrive has helped strengthen this shared understanding across staff, creating greater consistency in the way young people are supported throughout the school.

The school's investment in whole school Thrive training has clearly played an important role in this. However, the impact feels less about the training itself and more about what has happened since. Leaders described staff who are increasingly curious about the reasons behind behaviour and more confident in responding with both empathy and consistency. This sits comfortably alongside the school's high expectations and commitment to ensuring that all young people can experience success. Encouragingly, this cultural shift is beginning to be reflected in the school's wider outcomes. Leaders shared evidence of fewer suspensions than in previous years alongside a reduction in the number of students requiring repeated suspensions. They also highlighted that most Class Charts points awarded throughout the year were positive. Whilst leaders were rightly cautious about attributing these improvements to one initiative alone, there was a strong feeling that Thrive had supported a more consistent and relational approach across the school, helping young people feel understood and supported before situations escalate.



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One of the aspects I found most refreshing was the honesty with which leaders reflected on the first year of implementation. There was no attempt to present the project as perfect or complete. Instead, leaders openly discussed the lessons they had learned and the changes they had made along the way. The evaluation demonstrates a school that has been willing to listen, reflect and refine its approach in response to the needs of its students. In many respects, this willingness to learn has been one of the project's greatest strengths.

The development of specialist Thrive practitioners has enabled increasingly personalised support for some of the school's most vulnerable learners. Whilst only a relatively small number of students accessed direct Thrive interventions during the year, leaders spoke thoughtfully about the complexity of need presented by many of these young people. There was a clear recognition that meaningful progress cannot always be measured through data alone and that supporting vulnerable young people often requires patience, consistency and an unwavering commitment to relationships.

Perhaps the most powerful evidence of impact comes through the feedback shared by the school from those students who accessed Thrive support. Leaders described young people who felt "heard and seen" and who knew they had "someone who would always support them". These are simple words, yet they speak volumes. They remind us that for some young people, feeling safe, understood and valued is often the foundation upon which all other success is built. I was equally encouraged by the school's reflections on the development of the "soft landing" approach. Staff recognised that some students arrived each morning carrying challenges that could make learning difficult before the day had even begun. Their response was thoughtful, practical and rooted in understanding rather than judgement. This willingness to adapt provision around the lived experiences of young people is evident throughout the project and reflects a school that continues to listen carefully to those it serves.

During discussions, leaders also spoke about wider changes they have observed across the school community. References were made to improved staff retention, a stronger sense of community and a calm, purposeful environment across classrooms, corridors and social spaces. Whilst no single initiative can claim responsibility for these developments, there was a shared belief that Thrive has contributed positively to the inclusive culture that now permeates the school. It has helped support a consistency of approach, strengthened relationships and reinforced a collective commitment to ensuring that young people feel both supported and valued.

What stays with me most from this review is the sense of a school that understands that successful inclusion is built through relationships. Thrive has not provided a quick fix, nor was it ever intended to. Instead, it has helped strengthen a culture where young people are increasingly understood through their needs rather than their behaviours, where staff remain curious and compassionate in their approach, and where support is offered with both care and high expectations. The project has clearly evolved throughout the year and will no doubt continue to do so. However, the foundations now in place feel strong. Most importantly, this work is helping to create an environment where young people know they matter, where they feel part of the community and where they are given every opportunity to succeed. That, ultimately, is the most compelling measure of its success.



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Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Throughout discussions, leaders spoke positively about the progress made through the Thrive Flagship Project and the way it has helped strengthen a culture built on relationships, consistency and belonging. Whilst there is a shared recognition that Thrive provision will continue to evolve, particularly in reaching more students and further developing intervention pathways, leaders were confident that its principles are now embedded within the day-to-day life of the school.

As part of their ongoing self-evaluation, leaders have identified the next stage of their inclusive journey. They recognise that many students arrive with gaps in the foundational knowledge and skills needed to access the secondary curriculum successfully. Building on the strong relational foundations established through Thrive, the school's next Flagship Project will focus on ensuring that these barriers are identified early and addressed through targeted support, adaptive teaching and timely intervention.

Agreed Actions:

- Introduce enhanced Year 7 baseline assessments to identify gaps in reading, writing, numeracy, oracy and scientific knowledge as early as possible.
- Use stanines and clear RAG-rated information to ensure that students' learning needs are easily understood and accessible to staff through existing school systems.
- Develop targeted intervention programmes for students identified with significant gaps in foundational knowledge and skills, ensuring support is personalised and reviewed regularly.
- Strengthen literacy provision through the identification of students requiring additional support with reading, spelling and handwriting, alongside the implementation of appropriate intervention programmes.
- Support curriculum leaders in Mathematics and Science to use assessment information to identify common gaps in learning and adapt curriculum planning accordingly.
- Continue to develop adaptive teaching approaches by providing staff with practical tools and strategies, including the use of technology and AI, to make learning more accessible for students with varying levels of need.
- Introduce class profiles that provide teachers with clear information relating to reading, writing, spelling and numeracy strengths and areas for development, enabling support to be embedded within everyday classroom practice.
- Monitor the impact of interventions and classroom adaptations termly to ensure that identified gaps reduce over time and that students can access, engage with and flourish within the wider curriculum.

These next steps reflect a school that continues to think carefully about removing barriers to learning. The relational culture strengthened through Thrive now provides a strong platform from which leaders can further develop curriculum access, ensuring that all young people are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to succeed.



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Overview

What became increasingly evident throughout the review was that inclusion at Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School is not driven by a single initiative, intervention or team. Rather, it is woven through the fabric of the school and reflected in the way staff speak about young people, the decisions leaders make and the relentless determination to remove barriers that may prevent students from succeeding. The school serves a community facing significant challenges. Leaders spoke openly about the realities that many families experience, including poverty, health inequalities, limited transport links and wider social barriers that can impact daily life, attendance, engagement and aspirations. However, throughout the review there was no sense of these challenges being viewed as excuses or limitations. Instead, there was a shared determination to understand the lived experiences of young people and respond in ways that are practical, compassionate and ambitious.

What stands out is the extent to which staff consistently go above and beyond for the young people in their care. Examples of this could be seen throughout discussions, from daily attendance meetings and home visits to carefully planned transition arrangements, targeted support for vulnerable learners and practical solutions that enable students to participate fully in school life. Leaders described taking active steps to remove barriers to enrichment, including supporting attendance at after-school activities through transport arrangements and ensuring that opportunities are genuinely accessible to all. This attention to detail reflects a school that understands that inclusion is often found within the small but significant actions that help a child feel they belong and can participate alongside their peers.

Relationships are undoubtedly a defining feature of the school. Whether discussing behaviour, attendance, teaching and learning, safeguarding or student wellbeing, conversations consistently returned to knowing young people well and ensuring that they feel listened to, valued and supported. Staff spoke warmly about students and demonstrated a genuine curiosity about understanding the needs that may sit behind behaviour or barriers to learning. There was a clear sense that the language used across the school has evolved, becoming increasingly focused on understanding, regulation and support whilst maintaining high expectations for all. Leaders reflected positively on the impact that Thrive has had upon professional dialogue and practice, helping to strengthen a culture where young people are supported through relationships rather than simply managed through systems.

The school's inclusive culture is also reflected in its growing focus on curriculum access and aspiration. Inclusion is not viewed solely through a pastoral or SEND lens. Instead, leaders are increasingly considering how literacy, oracy, adaptive teaching and foundational knowledge enable young people to fully participate in learning. There was a strong sense that staff believe every child should have access not only to learning but also to the experiences that broaden horizons and raise aspirations. Discussions highlighted the school's use of alternative provision pathways, including opportunities linked to areas such as bike mechanics and hair and beauty, ensuring that young people can engage with meaningful pathways that reflect their strengths and interests. Strong partnerships with local post-16 providers also support students in making successful transitions beyond school and help reinforce a culture of ambition for every learner.



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Perhaps most encouragingly, there is a strong sense of collective responsibility across the school. Inclusion is not the responsibility of a few individuals. It is understood as everyone's role. This is reflected in the consistency of approach described by staff, the investment in professional development and the commitment to continually strengthening practice. Leaders spoke proudly about the opportunities available to staff at all levels, including extensive professional learning and leadership development. The school's support for additional staff to the school SENCo to undertake qualifications such as the NPQ SENCO reflects a long-term commitment to building expertise and capacity, ensuring that both staff and students continue to benefit from high-quality practice. The result is a school where people feel valued, supported and invested in, creating a strong sense of community and shared purpose.

The school's commitment to its wider community was also evident throughout the review. Leaders and staff described a range of initiatives that connect the school closely to local families and the community it serves, including fundraising activities, harvest collections, food bank support, coffee mornings and opportunities for students to engage with the local area through visits and experiences beyond the classroom. These activities are not viewed as additional extras but as an important part of helping young people develop a sense of social responsibility, belonging and connection to the world around them.

Ultimately, this is a school that understands its community well and responds with both care and ambition. Whilst leaders are rightly proud of the progress made, there remains a strong sense of reflection and continual improvement. The school's inclusive practice is not static. It continues to evolve in response to the needs of its young people and families. What remains constant, however, is the unwavering commitment to ensuring that every student is known, supported, challenged and given the very best opportunity to flourish. In a community where barriers can be significant, this commitment shines through in the countless daily interactions, decisions and acts of support that collectively make Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School such a highly inclusive school community.

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 Katie Pritchard

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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