



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



**School:** New College Leicester  
Glenfield Road  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
LE3 6DN

**Head/Principal:** Mrs Jane Brown

**IQM Lead:** Mrs Karen Simpson

**Date of Review:** 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**Assessor:** Jane Flynn

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

Cluster Group Inclusion Fusion

Ambassador David Bowden

Date of Next Meeting Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: Curriculum development

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

- Self - Evaluation document
- A wealth of documentation pertaining to the Project and other aspects of school curriculum to demonstrate cohesion

### **Additional Activities:**

#### **Meetings with:**

- Headteacher
- Director of Learning Inclusion Co-Ordinator
- Teacher of DT, leading on Research Project
- Teacher of DT, leading on Research Project
- Head of Health and Wellbeing
- Teacher i/c Careers across the Curriculum
- Representatives of Student Parliament

#### **In addition:**

- Break and lunch with random staff
- Attendance at Student Lunch Club



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



### Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Understandably, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the capacity of New College to complete its original project, as planned, but appropriate decisions have been made to review and adjust activities and focus in line with new findings.

Leading staff-initiated research into the project just prior to lockdown. In wishing to develop student engagement in school and their community, whilst also fostering a greater understanding of citizenship. A survey was conducted with all students on topics of their feelings of safety, happiness and engagement within school.

Staff made the judicious decision to review the results of the first survey post lockdown to identify the new situation and how students were now feeling following the impact of the pandemic. Students were asked to complete a further survey entitled, 'Thinking about your life at school' which drew on self-image and strengths and difficulties profiles.

Discussions took place with the Student Parliament with regards to the data around the needs of students. There appeared to be links between feelings of positive wellbeing and participation.

A robust presentation of evidence was created to identify the concerns and action which could be taken to address them.

From the research on 'belonging', it was identified that those students who had a greater sense of belonging to the school prior to the pandemic were not as affected as much as those who initially stated that they had only 'some' or 'little' sense of belonging. This then became a 'baseline' for an action plan to further identify barriers to participation.

It is intended that there should now be a whole school approach to developing a sense of belonging through New College's 'This is Us' journey, involving strategies which permeate all aspects of the curriculum, notably careers and employability, health and wellbeing, sport and physical activity and arts and culture.

New College provides a wide range activity for students. Research has shown that students want to take part but there has been limited take up. The aim is for students to understand why participation is important. In addition to a traditional range of options, the school is facilitating access to wider opportunities. For example, 'Team Hub' is a breakfast club which offers youth club type activities and aims to build leadership skills. Students are involved in looking at diversity through the work of the Stephen Lawrence Centre and 'Safe Hands', a Refugee Centre. Liz Kendall has visited the school to speak with students and George Cole, the country's first British African Mayor, is a Governor and actively involves students in discussions regarding citizenship, agency and contributing to the community.

The Student Parliament groups are actively involved in working with staff and students on marrying activities to needs of students and promoting awareness and active



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



participation among their peers of opportunities to develop personal knowledge, skills and wellbeing alongside community responsibility.

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

Staff are now reframing their approach to delve more deeply into developing students' sense of belonging based upon published academic research of Baumeister and Leary (1995) and an OECD study conducted by Dimitrellou and Hurry (2019). This will be based around 5 main themes of: community inclusion and extra-curricular activities; friendships and relationships; teaching and learning; contact and interaction; self-perception, self-concept and well-being; pupil voice.

With a focus on the above, New College will aim to:

- Understand the impact of the school's provision on its young people.
- Address barriers to participation.
- Increase access for all young people.

The project is clearly linked to the school's arts and culture strategy of 'Engaging our Community' as well as detailed strategies promoting health and wellbeing through positive choices with regard to careers, lifestyle and citizenship. These documents/programmes will drive and underpin the work.

Leading staff will:

- Rebrand the project to all staff and students in discretely relevant ways.
- Use training and reviews to ensure that there is ongoing development of school and community participation across the curriculum.
- Produce a booklet identifying impact and proposed provision for the next academic year by June.
- Create a 'road map' of research process and action planning for other schools to use.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



### The Impact of the Cluster Group

Inclusion Fusion had 2 Virtual meetings during 2020 – 21 – New College delivered at the first one on 13.10.20, presenting their lockdown strategies. Discussion took place around the challenges of lockdown and the return to school for pupils.

On 03.12.2020 three schools shared their experiences of how they functioned on the second return to school. There was general consensus that all were doing as much as possible and were similar in their strategies.

There was then another lockdown and no meeting in the Summer Term. New College staff were unable to travel to the December 2021 meeting in Birmingham owing to staff absence and requirements of cover.

### Overview

New College Leicester is a secondary school which exudes positivity, care and kindness towards all students and staff. This is evident in its approach to managing the challenges of the Covid Pandemic and its effect on students and their community. Leicester was uniquely placed under long term lockdown as a city experiencing a particularly high number of infections and deaths. Pupil Premium students comprise 55% of the school's cohort and 178 of 970 students are identified as having SEND, whilst 63 different languages are spoken by students and their families. The school community was profoundly affected by the local experience.

Prior to lockdown, New College was 'motoring well', as an Ofsted judged 'Good School' and was continuing to develop quality of provision even further, following a significant period of massive improvement in all areas. It is a common, non-negotiable commitment to inclusivity which addresses all barriers to learning within a culture of kindness and responsibility as an individual and a global society which has enabled staff to keep the school on track during recent difficult times.

Every effort is made to ensure that learning is deep and pervasive across the curriculum. There are clear interlinking strategies covering all areas of the curriculum to promote this. These have been carefully designed, as evidence is sought to assess need before deciding upon the most appropriate, reflective action.

Clear systems are in place to address barriers to learning both strategically and operationally. A range of carefully targeted support and interventions exists to address positive behaviour for learning, cognitive, academic, SEMH and physical needs. Among these are 'Drawing and Talking therapy'; a 12-week re-tracking therapy programme; 'Boost' programme; Girl's self-esteem; Respect and Responsibility; Money and the Working World; 'Love Life' for vulnerable students at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation.

A rigorous meeting review structure enables the needs of students to be addressed both immediately and strategically and there is evidence of a strong 'weaving of warp and weft' in order that pastoral care supports academic and social learning in a targeted and



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



effective way. The fusion of high expectations and support drives the learning of academic content, central skills and development of personal qualities. The involvement of a member of staff who is a whole school lead on Teaching and Learning within the Inclusion Team, reflects the understanding and implementation of strategies to support individual students through high quality provision in the classroom. Teaching Assistants have been trained within faculties, whilst teachers have been trained in the effective use of Teaching Assistants, in order to make the most of staff resources. It is notable that during lockdowns, staff produced 12 videos on inclusive practice for staff and parents.

The average reading age of New College students on entry is 9 years. In addition to traditional strategies to improve literacy, New College is in its third year of an Oracy Project (Voice 21) and has been designated as an Oracy Hub School. Oracy strategies have been embedded in English and Humanities and are now being extended across the curriculum.

Displays around the school, reflect the 'talk' of inclusion and exemplify values, learning and support. Following a discussion with leading staff, consideration is being given to focusing even more deeply upon the promotion of critical thinking in displays, linked to students' learning about citizenship, wellbeing and belonging, thus underpinning the work of the current IQM Project.

The importance of learning about careers, within the context of local and national opportunities, as a motivational factor in encouraging students to develop skills, knowledge and qualities, is being embedded within the curriculum. The PE and science departments have worked together to share resources and have mapped out a curriculum to deliver complementary messages and skills.

The importance which New College places upon PSHE cannot be overestimated. All students at KS3 receive a total of 1 hour a week over 3 tutor periods, during which time trained staff deliver a rigorous and robust programme. A carousel approach is adopted at KS4, including Citizenship, SRE, Careers, IT and RE, in which all students receive 4 lessons of each. In addition, the Arts are considered crucial and central to students' rounded education, formally, professionally and socially.

Furthermore, the New College values underpin the 'This is Us' school statement. This embodies a comprehensive range of personal and human qualities. The professional positivity and strong cohesion of staff in their shared values and determination to ensure that these are manifested, which I witnessed, provide the 'super glue' holding the school together. Very strong, yet sensitive, highly respected leadership, steered from the centre by the Headteacher, ensures that every student and member of staff knows what kind of person a member of New College is or aspires to become. This was reflected in my meeting with members of the Year 10 Student Parliament who were able to speak confidently but with humility and eloquence about their school, their current and proposed activities, their community and aspirations to bring about positive change in society in a variety of ways. As a complement to this, my informal lunch, chatting and playing a board game with some younger, vulnerable children at their lunch club, reflected the care and support for individuals is at the heart of provision at New College.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



This is a very open-minded school with a big heart and the resilience and perseverance to ride the storm of the last two years, adjusting focus and practice to meet current needs of students, with particular regard to their wellbeing and that of staff. Whilst doing so, leadership continues to look forward realistically, ensuring ongoing development of academic and vocational provision to meet the needs of all. Thus, the intention is that New College students will be empowered through having positive choices in their adult lives.

Consequently, it is my opinion that New College Leicester should retain its status as a Flagship School for Inclusion.

**Assessor: Jane Flynn**

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

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