



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School Dhoon Primary School
Maughold
Isle of Man
IM7 1HA

Head/Principal Mr Max Kelly

IQM Lead Mr Max Kelly

Date of Review 25th January 2023

Assessor Ms Sarah Linari

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group CIN NW

Ambassador Ms Sarah Linari

Next Meeting 1st March 2023

Meeting Focus Attendance, wellbeing (staff and pupils), marking and feedback and sensory integration.

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Spring 2022	6th April 2022	No
Summer 2022	4th July 2022	No
Autumn 2022	6th October 2022	No
Spring 2023	1st March 2023	

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Unfortunately, representatives from the school have been unable to attend Cluster Group meetings over the past twelve months due to the ongoing disruptions caused by the Covid pandemic. The Executive Headteacher has been an Ambassador for IQM previously and is committed to Dhoon's participation in the Cluster Group.

In the school's reflection, as part of the Centre of Excellence review, the IQM Lead explained the reason behind not being able to attend, "we had been placed in the Northern Ireland Cluster Group during Covid restrictions and unfortunately it coincided with a reduction in air travel opportunities from the Isle of Man to Belfast so we found it very difficult/impossible to attend Cluster meetings".



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Leaders maintained contact with the Ambassador and kept abreast of meeting notes and minutes but recognise it has been a challenge. The school has now been placed in the CIN NW Cluster Group moving forward and have confirmed attendance at the next meeting in March 2023.

Evidence

- IQM Flagship Review document
- Validation report
- School website
- School policies
- 2021-2022 Performance Data Analysis report
- Cornerstones Curriculum

Additional Activities

- Learning walks
- Learning Environment audit
- Observation of assembly
- Observation of breaktime and lunchtime

Meetings held with:

- Executive Headteacher
- Head of School
- Teachers
- Business Manager
- School Council representatives



Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Review and redevelopment of the school curriculum, incorporating the 'Dhoon High Five' and school values.

Senior Leaders at Dhoon were aware of the need to refocus their previous curriculum. Before deciding to invest in the Cornerstones Curriculum, they carried out extensive research and visited other schools around the island. Leaders were keen not to lose the personalised element of the previous curriculum. They also felt it was important for the teachers to still have a sense of ownership and to trust them, as professionals.

During the review day, the Head of School explained how, "Cornerstones act as a spine and gives building blocks for the curriculum". Staff are still steering the learning with children's prior knowledge and interests in mind. The curriculum is still unique to the school with local links and Manx heritage as key aspects. Teachers are expected to use Cornerstones as a tool to meet the needs of the children in their class and build on where they are at in their learning. The Executive Headteacher explained that they, "want people to feel that there is a framework to hang [learning] on, with resources to use but teachers have to bring it to life".

Lesson observations show that the implementation of the Cornerstones Curriculum has had a positive impact. Lessons are tailored to the needs of individuals. Learning is now better sequenced with a focus on knowledge acquisition.

Leaders have developed a template for the start of every topic for each child to complete with key vocabulary and what they already know, as a baseline. There has been a drive to support the children to assess their own learning and have more autonomy over it.

Dhoon's curriculum is underpinned by the 'High Five' learning values. When the values were devised, the Leaders consulted staff from the local secondary schools to find out what they feel are the personal attributes which make Dhoon's pupils stand out.

In summary, since September, the Cornerstones Curriculum units have been trialled across all classes. The next step will be to finalise the road map for the remainder of this and next academic year. Joint training sessions with the other schools from the Federation will support further curriculum development.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Project Title:

To expand the Federation to collaborate with and include Willaston School within the Federation's IQM network.

As of January 2023, Willaston School became part of the Dhoon and Laxey Federation.

To support the development of an inclusive vision at Willaston, the Executive Headteacher plans for every member of staff to visit each other's schools. Tours of the schools as well as hosting best practice sharing sessions will allow the staff to learn from each other.

There will be a meeting held for Willaston staff to introduce them to the IQM principles. An action plan will then be implemented to support Willaston in completing the IQM Self-Evaluation Report (SER) document. Areas where practice requires further development will be identified. Support to develop any areas will be provided by the partner schools. It is hoped that Willaston School will be successful in achieving Inclusive School Award status next academic year.

A staff recognition scheme will be introduced to encourage the staff to take ownership of the future developments. The Executive Headteacher will invite staff to suggest ideas and will empower them to lead on specific areas in collaboration with colleagues from across the schools. I have suggested that the Leaders look at developing a professional portfolio of the impact of staff's individual projects to share the practice across the staff in all schools.

Future plans to bring all three schools in the Federation together may involve the staff teams teaching across the different schools. The plan is to also introduce further opportunities for the pupils to visit the other settings and work together.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Overview

Dhoon Primary School is a smaller-than-average primary school in Glen Mona, a rural village in Maughold, in the northeast coast of the Isle of Man. It boasts idyllic, panoramic views of the coast on one side of the building, with mountainous terrain on the other side. Dhoon School is part of a Federation of three schools with Laxey and Willaston, all located in the Isle of Man. The three schools are led by an Executive Headteacher, with a Head of School who is responsible for the day-to-day running of Dhoon. With around 70 pupils on roll, the school has mixed year group classes. Reception, Year 1, and Year 2 children are currently grouped together, with two further classes of Year 3 and 4 pupils, and Year 5 and 6 pupils respectively.

Dhoon Primary School's community is one big, happy family. At the start of the review visit, the Executive Headteacher referred to the "family" ethos which is the golden thread binding all aspects of school life. This ethos is evidenced from the start of the school day where pupils and their families are greeted individually, by name, by the staff out on the playground. It is clear from the positive interactions that the relationships between school and home are strong. Dhoon is a close-knit community where everyone cares for each other. The Head of School explains how "relationships" are key to everything at Dhoon. The close partnerships between staff, pupils, families, and the wider community, mean that every child feels loved and valued, with a deep sense of belonging.

Dhoon Primary School's inclusive culture is underpinned by its values and 'High Five' learning attributes. The 'High Five' characteristics, "independence, curiosity, determination, collaboration and creativity", underpin pupils' holistic development. The values are taught explicitly from when children join in Reception. They are displayed everywhere around the school; in corridors, classrooms, offices, on the website and even on teachers' coffee mugs! Leaders are proud of how the values develop the children as whole, preparing them for life beyond Dhoon. When asked about 'High Five', pupils can state the values and explain why they are important. Year 6 pupils have designed posters using Comic Life software to demonstrate how you can apply the 'High Five' values to everyday situations. 'High Five Superstar' pupils are recognised each week in assembly, through certificates and posts on the school website, which ensures that pupils aspire to live the 'High Five' traits daily.

Relationships with parents and carers are a strength of the school. Class teachers collect their class from the playground in the morning so that parents and carers can pass any messages or relevant information on, and vice versa. This is replicated at the end of the school day, ensuring a smooth transition to and from school, with excellent communication to ensure the child's individual needs are met. In addition to the daily opportunities to meet with parents and carers, there are calendared 'Coffee and Chat' after school sessions for parents and carers to attend. The Senior Leaders serve tea and coffee in an informal environment which proves particularly beneficial at the start of the year to welcome the new parents and encourage them to forge connections.

Pupils arrive via the main entrance which has various artistic displays produced by the children, including a beautiful piece of art of a mermaid on a beach, inspired by a Manx traditional story which is set locally. It is made from wool and is the product of a collaboration between all pupils who worked with the fleeces, carded, combed and dyed



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



the wool using natural processes to create the special piece. Pupils are proud of their artwork and it gives the school's building a unique identity. Children also contributed to the painting of Dhoon's dolphin for the Isle of Man's 'Big Splash Project' which saw their creation included in the 2022 art trail.

The School Council pupils very kindly met with me during the review day to talk about their roles and responsibilities. During the conversation, we discussed what they like most about their school. Responses included, "the singing assemblies because they are fun and get everyone moving" and the sport curriculum offer. Children described the staff as "funny" and "kind", with one pupil stating, "they are easy to talk to and helpful if you have any questions". Staff are "caring and they understand you". The children take their roles as School Council representatives seriously and are an extremely proactive team. They meet once per week and have a folder to record information about all their endeavours, including their agendas, minutes and financial records. All pupils are invited to put forward suggestions to the School Council via a 'Suggestions' Box' in the main reception area.

A current project which pupils at Dhoon are involved in is the Isle of Man 'Active Travel' competition to design posters and slogans to encourage road users to slow down on roads near schools. As part of their campaign, School Council representatives have carried out surveys of the traffic on the main road outside of school and the car park. The School Council is also heavily involved in raising money for charities. At Christmas, they raised £150 through their Christmas performance and placed buckets with tokens in the main reception for pupils and staff to vote for which local charity to donate to. Children enjoyed participating in the vote, which has now closed. The Manx Breast Cancer Support Group was the charity with the most votes. Pupils are proud of their charitable donations and are clearly making a difference to the lives of people in their local community and further afield.

Pupils are included in decision making processes at Dhoon. An example of this is the development of the library area, which pupils named as the Lighthouse Library. Children chose the name following a project they were involved in where they visited the local lighthouse to take photographs from the top. Pupils are proud of their Manx heritage and local area. The Lighthouse Library is an excellent example of the ownership pupils have of their school experience as well as the connection they forge with the local area.

There is a strong reading culture at Dhoon. As well as the vibrant, central library which offers a wide range of texts and is updated with the latest books, each classroom has a reading corner. Children are involved in decisions about how the reading areas look. The Reception and Key Stage 1 classroom's reading corner, for example, has recently been transformed into a 'Jurassic World' to bring their topic to life. There are displays about famous authors and books around the school, promoting a love of reading. Elderly members of the community go into Dhoon Primary School to listen to the children read. Reading is high profile and enjoyed by all.

The whole-staff approach at Dhoon Primary School is child-centred. Learning is personalised to suit the needs and interests of the individual pupils. Strong relationships with the children allow staff to "understand the context of them and their experience" which enables teachers to tailor the curriculum to their needs.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Learning at Dhoon is exciting. The daily updates on social media and the school website feed demonstrate the plethora of engaging learning activities the pupils enjoy throughout the school day. Recently, a geologist was invited into the school to launch the new topic, Rocks and Relics, in geography with Year 3 and 4 pupils. The geologist brought the children fossils and rocks from the Isle of Man, to bring the learning to life.

The highlight of my visit to Dhoon has to be the observation of the 'Singing Assembly'. It was a joyous, uplifting activity which brought the whole school together to take part in a collective event, which I can only describe as 'good for the soul'. Singing is recognised as having a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. During the assembly, each child and teacher had a huge smile on their face throughout. With an interactive and fun approach, the Year 6 teacher played the guitar whilst children sang a mixture of folk music, classic pop and rock songs, as well as rhymes, rhythm games and traditional songs which involved dancing with partners. The 'Singing Assembly' provides pupils with the opportunity to interact with older and younger children, developing their confidence, whilst having fun.

Singing and music are an important part of the Dhoon Primary School community. Children are encouraged to play instruments and there are many musical enrichment clubs on offer, such as the Penny Whistle Club. The idea for the Penny Whistle Club originated from suggestions put forward to the School Council. In the club, Year 5 and 6 pupils lead the session and teach the younger children how to play.

Performance is enjoyed by all pupils at Dhoon. In November 2022, the children performed for Children in Need in a choir with pupils from their partner school, Laxey. They were filmed on location by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) with the video broadcast across the United Kingdom during the live Children in Need show. Despite being a small school on a small island, Dhoon pupils have big ideas and are afforded big opportunities.

It was a delight to meet the pupils and staff at Dhoon School. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit, especially seeing how the school's values and culture promote a holistic, well-rounded educational experience for the pupils. The staff care deeply about the children and encourage them to pursue their interests. Dhoon is a lovely, family community where children thrive in a safe, inclusive environment.

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 unequivocally recommend that Dhoon Primary School continues to hold Flagship status and is reviewed again in 12 months. The next review will look closely at the impact of this year's Flagship Project.

Assessor: Ms Sarah Linari

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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