



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



<b>School</b>	Dhoon School Maughold Isle of Man IM7 1HA
<b>Head/Principal</b>	Mr Max Kelly
<b>IQM Lead</b>	Shannon Bridson
<b>Date of Review</b>	24th January 2024
<b>Assessor</b>	Ms Sarah Linari

### IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group	All Inclusive
Ambassador	Ms Sarah Linari
Next Meeting	20 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Meeting Focus	Wellbeing and parental engagement

### **Cluster Attendance**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Summer 2022</b>	4th July 2022	No
<b>Autumn 2022</b>	6th October 2022	No
<b>Spring 2023</b>	1st March 2023	Yes
<b>Summer 2023</b>	15th June 2023	Yes
<b>Autumn 2023</b>	17th October 2023	Yes
<b>Spring 2024</b>	20th March 2024	
<b>Summer 2024</b>		

### **The Impact of the Cluster Group**

Cluster meetings are attended regularly by representatives of the school. Leaders are fully committed to the cluster programme, and the staff who attend the meetings engage with the best practice sharing. Dhoon School will jointly host the summer term meeting this academic year, alongside Laxey School. The focus will be on the use of Artificial Intelligence in education, pupil voice (School Council) and the 'Families Task Team' initiative.



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When reflecting on the impact of the last three cluster meetings, the IQM Lead was extremely positive. The school's participation in the cluster programme is valued highly by the leaders.

The spring term meeting supported the school with ideas to develop the Forest School provision. The Class 1 Teacher has now completed Forest School accredited practitioner training and all Reception, Year 1 and 2 children access Forest School provision on a weekly basis. The IQM Lead felt that the session on Marking and Feedback provided "great food for thought" when considering their current marking and feedback policy.

The summer term inspired the staff to develop the use of outdoor spaces. The autumn term meeting served as a useful reminder on growth mindset. The IQM Lead has looked into the Five Foundations of Effective Attendance shared at the meeting at Yew Tree Primary Academy.

### **Evidence**

- IQM Flagship Review Documentation
- School Website
- Social media sites
- School Policies
- School Development Plan
- Cornerstones Curriculum
- Maestro Curriculum planning tool

### **Additional Activities**

- Lesson drop-ins
- Observation of play time

### **Meetings held with:**

- Executive Headteacher
- Head of School
- Teachers
- Business Manager
- School Council Representatives
- Governor
- Parents and carers



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### Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

#### **Project Title: *The expansion of our Federation and to collaborate with and include Willaston School within our IQM Network.***

In January 2023, Willaston School became part of the Laxey and Dhoon Federation. As such, the leaders from Dhoon and Laxey have worked with the staff at Willaston to share the IQM vision and support them in their journey towards achieving Inclusive School Award status. It is hoped that Willaston will be assessed and successfully achieve IQM status in June 2024.

Across the Federation, a unified set of standards and approaches has been implemented across all settings, ensuring consistency while allowing individual schools to retain their unique characteristics. The Executive Headteacher leads the Federation with inclusivity at the heart of all decisions. This ensures each school remains focussed on their unique demographic, tailoring provision to suit their individual context.

The leaders have made excellent progress with regards to the Federation of the three schools and the inclusive development of provision and standards across all settings. At Willaston, the same inclusive standards and approaches have been introduced but with a bespoke perspective to suit the school's individual context and demographic. For example, the same assembly format has now been introduced at Willaston, and the rewards system has been replicated, but instead of the 'Dhoon High Five' awards, for example, they have the 'Willaston Wow' and 'Willaston Wonder' awards.

There has been a restructuring of leadership to support the growth of all schools, with the Executive Headteacher having strategic oversight of all settings. The Heads of School work collaboratively, with regular meetings, as do the other Senior Leaders. This has led to improved professional development opportunities. The Federation has allowed for a distributed leadership model and best practice sharing across the schools. For example, the IQM Lead developed a new Writing Framework which has been shared with all Writing Leads across the schools.

The Cornerstones curriculum has continued to be embedded across all three schools. This has led to improved standards and consistency of teaching and learning. The Maestro curriculum planning programme provides a robust framework which is then adapted to suit the learners in individual classes. Teachers use the schemes of work and lessons to support planning, especially in terms of reinforcing subject knowledge and planning for progression. During the review days at Laxey and Dhoon, it was evident that the teachers personalise the curriculum to their school context and life on the Isle of Man. Teachers spoke about how the curriculum provides a framework with flexibility in its structure, allowing them to "put their own spin" on the curriculum, infusing it with creativity and innovation. Teachers link the curriculum to the local area, allowing pupils to draw connections between their learning and the rich heritage of the Isle of Man. Teachers are also guided by the genuine interests and curiosities of the children.

During the review, leaders spoke at length about the impact of working as a Federation of schools. The shared viewpoint is that the creation of this network of schools has been transformative for all, marked by the opportunities for collaboration and shared expertise. One of the most significant advantages is the integration of staff across schools, fostering a sense of unity and cooperation.



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Senior leaders benefit from peer support within this “tight-knit” network, with offsite Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings providing a conducive environment for open and collaborative discussions. The Federation's commitment to breaking down barriers has created an open and sharing atmosphere, facilitating professional dialogue across the different schools. This approach has not only strengthened the leadership within each institution but has also resulted in a collective growth of leadership capabilities across the entire Federation.

The Executive Headteacher is inspirational, leading the way in developing each school within the Federation. The inclusive approach, combining best practice sharing and allowing schools to maintain their unique identities, is a key success factor.

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

**Project Title: *To adopt 'WalkThru' as an approach to develop staff CPD to support inclusive practice.***

During the review day, the Executive Headteacher and Head of School talked about the decision for the new focus of the Flagship Project. The Federation has invested in the 'WalkThrus' toolkit to develop a consistent approach across all three schools within the Federation. The intention is for the shared vocabulary and steps from the WalkThrus, alongside the related professional development methods, to aid in enhancing teaching practices, making it simpler to pinpoint areas for development and define solutions.

The Flagship Project implementation plan involves introducing the WalkThrus during weekly staff meetings, building teacher expertise in the 150 teaching techniques. The plan is to gradually embed the WalkThru techniques into daily practice to enhance teaching quality and pupil outcomes.

The Executive Headteacher has already introduced the WalkThrus at a whole staff meeting in the autumn term. Staff have been provided with the handbooks and access to all training materials. The training will be revisited continuously in staff meetings to maintain the focus over the next twelve months.

At Dhoon, staff have been granted ownership of the implementation process. They have been asked to introduce one element initially, carrying out further research around it, before trialling it in their classroom. They will then evaluate the effectiveness of the approach before sharing the impact at a whole staff meeting. The idea is for staff to observe each other and organically develop the practice together.

Leaders have created a lesson 'drop in' template which centres on the WalkThrus to implement as part of their ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The focus of the 'drop ins' will be agreed with staff in advance. The idea is to support the implementation by providing the teachers with effective feedback on what has worked well and identifying any areas which need further development. The intention is to support the staff in developing their practice within an open and reflective culture.

The Flagship Project represents a holistic and systematic approach to improving teaching and learning practices across all schools in the Federation. Through research, staff engagement, targeted training, and ongoing professional development, the project aims to create a culture of excellence, where every member of the school community is dedicated to continuous improvement.



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### Overview

Dhoon School stands out as a truly special school where inclusivity is fully embedded in its core values and ethos. The pupils are incredible, and this sentiment is attributed to the school's success in instilling positive habits and values. A real sense of togetherness is evident, creating an environment where children flourish and support one another, generating a strong sense of unity. The leaders show genuine passion and love for the school, its staff, children, and parents/carers. Their commitment to prioritising relationships and ensuring the provision is ever evolving to support the changing demographic is instrumental in maintaining the excellent standards. Staff build meaningful relationships to create a supportive environment for all. During the review visit, it was evident that the school has successfully cultivated a positive and inclusive atmosphere, promoting collaborative efforts among its teachers and ensuring the holistic development of its pupils.

The community feel that permeates throughout the school is palpable. Parents and carers expressed extreme positivity about the school, particularly highlighting effective communication and family involvement in school life. One parent described the experience when their child started in Reception as the point at which the whole family became part of the local community. The school serves as the hub of the community, bringing families together and forging strong bonds. The recently established and innovative 'Families Task Team' goes beyond traditional parent-teacher associations or forums. It will play a vital role in enhancing the overall inclusive environment through the expanded involvement of parents, carers and extended family members in extra-curricular experiences. Recognising that relationships are fundamental to everything at the school, the initiative arose from a desire to include families in school life in a meaningful way. The Families Task Team encourages parents and carers to feel a sense of ownership and contribute their unique skills and passions, whether it be gardening, baking, or any other interests. The goal is to make all families, including grandparents or other family members, and those relocating to the Isle of Man, feel equally a part of the community. The initiative is not prescriptive, allowing families to be as involved as they wish and in ways that suit them. With a growing number of people interested, and the school relying on parent volunteers for events, the Families Task Team seeks to ensure that everyone feels that this school truly belongs to them, creating a sense of empowerment and community cohesion.

During the meeting with parents and carers, we had the opportunity to discuss the positive experiences their children have at Dhoon. Families who have recently joined the school said that the decision to enrol their children has proven to be the right one, as each child is given individual attention, ensuring they settle in well. The school is not only small and quiet but also maintains a friendly and approachable atmosphere. It was reassuring to learn that open communication channels are actively encouraged, and parents and carers are always welcome to talk to the staff without hesitation. Communication with home is robust, with updates regularly shared through various platforms such as the school's Facebook page and a monthly newsletter.

In discussions with the teachers, they consistently communicated the sense of camaraderie and interconnectedness, again emphasising the importance of relationships within the school community. As one teacher remarked, "everyone plays their part," reflecting the shared responsibility that each staff member feels towards the success of the entire school. Teachers feel a strong sense of professional trust, enabling them to work together proactively as a unified team. The commitment of the staff was summed up by one of the teachers who



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commented, "we do not just have responsibility for our own class – we take ownership and responsibility for the whole school". Weekly staff meetings serve as a platform for collaborative discussions, facilitating the sharing of best practice in an informal setting.

There is a strong sense of trust in the Leadership Team's ability to make informed decisions. The leaders are noted for their deep understanding of the school's needs, ensuring that decisions align with the school's values and contribute to its continuous improvement. Leadership strength at Dhoon has grown, with the supportive network created through the Federation cascading throughout. The school boasts effective staff deployment, underpinned by a strong team approach. Since the last IQM review, the school has undergone significant changes in staffing, including welcoming a new Year 5/6 teacher who has also taken on the role of Special Educational Needs Coordinator. The school is currently placing a spotlight on pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), closely tracking their progress. The progress meeting overview templates have been updated to include an enhanced focus on specific groups of pupils, enabling tailored discussions.

Dhoon School offers a safe environment that encourages risk-taking, innovation, and exploration. This approach is applied not only to pupils but also extends to the staff, promoting a culture of continuous improvement and creativity. Leaders encourage staff to innovate and embrace technological advancements to enhance the learning. In terms of technology, staff have been inspired to be "*Eduvators*", embracing the use of innovation combined with their own imaginations as educators. Open conversations on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its application in education have also been encouraged. The Class Two teacher has produced a document on the use of AI within the classroom and how it can be maximised to enhance practice in a safe yet effective manner.

New staff members have brought a refreshing energy to the school while aligning seamlessly with the existing values and ethos. The supportive environment allows staff to pursue their interests, contributing to a diverse and motivated team. The confidence instilled in teachers is a significant positive.

Dhoon is an outward facing school which regularly seeks opportunities to collaborate and share best practice with other schools. The Isle of Man Heads of School network is regularly attended by Dhoon's Head of School, facilitating professional dialogue and networking across different schools. The Executive Headteacher from Dhoon, and its federated partner schools, recently organised a whole-staff training session which involved all Governors and teachers. Staff from another school on the Island were invited to attend in support of their school development. This demonstrates the leaders' desire to support and collaborate with other schools, including those not in the Federation, to help develop inclusive practice for all children, not just the pupils at Dhoon.

A key strength of Dhoon School is the abundance of enrichment activities and whole school events, all of which contribute to the vibrant school culture. Clubs such as computing, knit and stitch, and tag rugby provide pupils with diverse opportunities for personal growth and exploration. The emphasis on participation and inclusivity was highlighted by teachers, who noted that children are confident to get involved and take risks, leading to their flourishing as individuals. Each child is given opportunities to thrive and feel included in school life. Teachers talk about the importance of creating an environment where diversity and uniqueness are celebrated. This approach contributes to the overall confidence and development of the pupils.



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In Class 1, Forest School is now integrated into the curriculum to promote outdoor learning on a regular basis. Each week, the pupils eagerly venture outdoors to engage in this enriching experience. To ensure the success of the provision, the Class 1 teacher underwent Forest School practitioner training, equipping them with the necessary skills to facilitate a dynamic outdoor learning environment. The acquisition of resources for Forest School was a whole-school, collaborative effort. The School Council worked with parents and carers to reach out to local businesses and parents, successfully raising over £3000 to purchase essential equipment. A parent volunteer generously contributes their time to support the Forest School activities. The incorporation of well-defined routines and boundaries has been pivotal in embedding a sense of structure during these outdoor sessions. This weekly venture into nature not only provides a refreshing change of scenery but also presents a fantastic opportunity for all participants to develop crucial life skills. The Forest School experience plays a pivotal role in forging a deeper understanding of Dhoon's 'High Five' values and cultivates transferable skills that will serve the pupils well beyond their early years.

The emphasis placed on pupil voice is another significant strength at the school, exemplified by the active School Council. During discussions with the School Council Representatives, the Assessor gained valuable insights into what the pupils appreciate most about their school. One pupil commented, "I feel like it is a nice safe environment", highlighting the importance of a secure and welcoming atmosphere. Another mentioned, "learning is really fun", indicating the positive impact of the engaging and enjoyable educational experiences afforded them. The pupils consistently praised the school's friendly and supportive community, with one expressing that it "feels like home". When asked about their motivation for joining the School Council, responses centred around a desire to contribute to the school's improvement, and the aspiration to be involved in enjoyable activities while representing their peers. The School Council members explained their individual roles within the Council, outlining how they operate the weekly meetings, organise displays such as the 'Dhoon High Five' photo arrangement in the main corridor, and plan various fundraising activities. Notably, they talked about the 'Slow Dhoon' campaign to promote road safety which was recently praised through an article featured in the local newspaper. The pupils also described their involvement in selecting and bringing a Christmas tree to the school, following a whole school vote on which one to buy, highlighting the pupil body's participation in the decision-making processes. Overall, the meeting with the School Council demonstrated the pupils' genuine enthusiasm for their school, their commitment to positive change, and their pride in being active members of the School Council.

Dhoon pupils were an absolute joy to meet. The Assessor spoke to them in lessons and during playtime and was blown away by their impeccable manners, and the incredible kindness they show towards adults and their peers. Promoting good manners and kindness is not just a curriculum at the school, but a lively and enjoyable experience for the pupils. One such initiative is the Very Important Person (VIP) table for lunch held once a month, where pupils who have displayed exceptional manners in the dining hall are treated to an exclusive dining experience with 'posh' tablecloths, flowers, and a touch of elegance. Additionally, the school is currently actively participating in the "30 Days of Kindness" challenge. Throughout the month, pupils engage in various acts of kindness, documenting their thoughtful deeds daily. The culmination of this initiative is the "Kindness Matters" display, showcasing examples of deeds like reading a book to a friend or designing a thank you card. It serves as an uplifting platform to celebrate the pupils' efforts in spreading kindness. These initiatives not only instil good manners but also make kindness an integral part of the school culture.



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In conclusion, Dhoon School stands as a beacon of inclusive provision, where the wellbeing, growth, and development of every individual within the school community are paramount. The school's commitment to inclusivity, dynamic leadership, and the positive impact on pupils and families make it a model for educational institutions striving for excellence in inclusive education.

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 unequivocally recommend that the school retains its Flagship Status and is reviewed again in 12 months. The next review will look closely at the impact of this year's project plans on the quality of teaching and learning.

**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