



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



School Phoenix Primary School
Birchfield Road
Liverpool
L7 9LY

Head/Principal Mr Peter Kelly

IQM Lead Ms Jade Morris

Date of Review 24th June 2026

Assessor Ms Louise McCallion

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group All Inclusive

Ambassador Mrs Sarah Linari

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Spring 2025	12 th March 2025	Yes
Summer 2025	23 rd June 2025	Yes
Autumn 2025	10 th October 2025	Yes
Spring 2026	29 th January 2026	Yes
Summer 2026	8 th June 2026	Yes



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



The Impact of the Cluster Group

The school has actively engaged in the cluster group meetings this academic year and expressed how valuable they find being part of 'All Inclusive.' They recognise that participation in the cluster group has enabled them to widen their links with several schools with similar values and commitment to inclusion. Leaders at Phoenix recognise the value in collaboration, sharing best practice and the professional development opportunities afforded by being a long-standing member of the IQM family. They look forward to further collaboration and networking opportunities moving forward with a new IQM lead in post.

The Deputy Headteacher attended the meeting at St Margaret's Primary School in the Autumn Term. A number of items were discussed and presented during the meeting including an insight into their Personalised Learning Centre which has influenced some of the decisions at Phoenix around implementing a more bespoke provision for complex pupils in the mainstream. They have developed a learning space where some pupils, who benefit from more specialist approaches and a quieter learning environment, can complete targeted interventions, access sensory diet, and personalised therapeutic approaches. Information about supporting language development for EAL children was also a key feature that has influenced decision making back at Phoenix.

In Spring term, the IQM Lead attended the cluster meeting at Stockton Wood Primary School where the focus was around strategies to support pupil regulation with a particular focus on SEMH pupils. This inspired the team at Phoenix to consider changes in their learning environment to provide safe, therapeutic spaces where pupils who need to self or co-regulate are able to do so in a conducive and safe environment.

In Summer Term, the IQM Lead attended the highly acclaimed Cluster Collaborative event held at Edge Hill. The day provided much 'food for thought' and a valued opportunity to collaborate with a wide range of colleagues from varied settings. The opportunity for 'table discussion' and sharing of good practice was particularly valued by the colleague at Phoenix.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Evidence

- Evaluation of Progress and Flagship action plan documents
- General discussion with school leaders – current context
- General discussion with school leaders - overview of the school journey this academic year
- Discussion and evaluation of Behaviour policy – intent, implementation and impact including next steps
- Learning Walk
- Discussions with wider staff team – evaluation of IQM Flagship target *“To further refine approaches to behaviour.”*
- Discussions with parent representatives
- Discussions with Governors
- Discussions with IQM lead around impact of Cluster Group participation.
- Discussions with SLT around future targets and forthcoming year

Additional Activities

- Observations and interactions with staff and pupils during lunchtime
- Assessor undertook review of available documents and on-line information prior to assessment day.
- Verbal feedback and further discussions with SLT at the end of the assessment



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Evaluation of Annual Progress towards the Flagship Project

Project Title:

Target 1: To further refine approaches to behaviour, ensuring consistency of application throughout the school.

This has been a transitional period for the school with a new Headteacher and leadership team in place, however they have made significant progress towards this target, successfully embedding a clear, consistent, and values-led approach to behaviour management across the school. A revised behaviour policy, introduced at the start of the academic year, has provided staff with a shared framework that is understood and applied consistently. Whole school CPD and regular reinforcement through staff briefings, learning walks and ongoing monitoring by senior leaders has ensured that expectations remain high and that practice is consistently implemented across all classes.

The school's values of *Ambition, Kindness, Responsibility and Resilience* underpin everyday interactions and are highly visible throughout the learning environment. Weekly values assemblies, classroom displays, and regular discussions ensure that pupils understand both the expectations placed upon them and the reasons behind them. Pupils spoke confidently about the school's values, explaining that they are encouraged to make good choices and are rewarded in many ways including Dojo points, stickers, and celebration assemblies. They clearly understand the behaviour system and recognise the link between demonstrating the school values and receiving rewards. A pupil 'Values Team' has been established to act as role models who can encourage and support their peers to demonstrate these values.

During the assessment, staff reported that the simplified, tiered approach to behaviour, combining clear consequences with restorative conversations, has brought greater consistency and confidence in responding to pupils' needs. Leaders have thoughtfully adapted strategies for individual pupils using visual reminders and personalised approaches, helping to minimise dysregulation while maintaining consistent expectations. Environmental changes, including calmer, therapeutic classroom displays, and structured mindfulness activities, alongside an enhanced personal development offer, have further contributed to a more settled learning environment. Half termly, whole school Thrive Art Mornings have been implemented to support pupils to transition back from holidays smoothly. Staff and pupil voice both indicate that classrooms are noticeably calmer, with positive relationships at the heart of behaviour management.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Target 2: To further refine and define the graduated approach for mental health.

The team at Phoenix have further strengthened its commitment to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of every pupil in the school. Leaders have adopted a carefully considered graduated approach that combines high-quality universal provision along with targeted and specialist interventions, ensuring support is matched to individual need. Significant investment has been made in professional development, with all staff receiving training in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma-informed practice and Thrive approaches. As a result, staff demonstrate an impressive understanding of pupils' emotional needs, which was evident throughout the assessment day.

A notable strength is their proactive approaches to identification of need. Whole class Thrive profiling is carried out at the start of each academic year. This enables staff to identify gaps in social and emotional development early, informing high-quality classroom practice and targeted intervention. Thrive action plans are reviewed termly to ensure support remains responsive and effective, while an internal triage process ensures pupils receive timely intervention. A comprehensive range of support, including Thrive, ELSA, Chatty Groups and individual or small-group interventions, provide a range of opportunities for those pupils who require support above and beyond their universal offer of high quality, adaptive teaching. Leaders have invested to increase the number of trained Thrive practitioners, further enhancing the school's capacity to deliver specialist support.

The school's investment in the learning environment further demonstrates its commitment to emotional wellbeing. Dedicated Thrive rooms provide calm, nurturing spaces for therapeutic work, while calming areas and Zones of Regulation resources are embedded consistently across classrooms. Pupils confidently articulated their understanding of the Zones of Regulation and spoke positively about the strategies that help them manage their emotions. Leaders have also created a bespoke classroom for pupils with complex SEND and significant emotional needs, enabling them to access learning alongside high-quality sensory support in a calm and carefully adapted environment.

The impact of this work is evident in the views of pupils and parents alike. Pupils spoke warmly about the kindness and support they receive from staff and demonstrated genuine empathy towards peers who require additional emotional support. Parents echoed these sentiments, expressing great appreciation for the care shown to their children. One parent shared that their child had been so inspired by the school's daily meditation sessions that the whole family had adopted the practice at home. The school's strong partnerships with external agencies further enhance this graduated approach, ensuring pupils and families receive timely specialist support when required.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Target 3: To carefully manage changes in school leadership to ensure that all staff feel supported, cohesive, and united behind a clear vision.

Since taking up post in September 2025, the Headteacher, together with the senior leadership team, has led the school through a significant period of transition with sensitivity, clarity, and purpose. Recognising the importance of supporting staff throughout this change, leaders have prioritised open communication, staff wellbeing, and collaboration, successfully fostering a culture in which staff feel valued, informed, and empowered. The vision established during the September INSET days has remained consistent throughout the year, with leaders demonstrating a strong commitment to turning ambition into action. A governor representative commented, *"He has set the vision and taken the team along with him."*

Discussions with staff during the assessment day reflected overwhelming appreciation for the leadership team's approach. Staff consistently described leaders as approachable, empathetic, and solution-focused, highlighting the high levels of support available when managing challenging situations, particularly around behaviour. They spoke positively about the cultural shift that has taken place, describing a genuine sense of teamwork where colleagues readily support one another and no one feels isolated.

Professional development has also played a key role in strengthening the team at Phoenix. Collaborative approaches, including triad coaching groups, regular learning walks and constructive feedback, have enabled staff to feel both professionally challenged and personally validated. Leaders have established clear expectations around workload and wellbeing, introducing sensible boundaries for communication and ensuring that staff welfare is given careful consideration when decisions are made. Staff commented that they feel listened to and that reasonable adjustments are made whenever possible to support individual circumstances.

Governors also recognised the significant progress made during the year, acknowledging that: *"while much has been asked of staff, leaders have successfully united the team behind a shared vision and common purpose."* Stakeholders, who met with the assessor on the day, shared that there is *"a genuine sense of optimism"* across the school, with staff describing a real *"feel-good factor"* that is evident not simply in words but in the daily actions, relationships and collaborative culture that now permeate the school.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Agreed Actions for the Next Steps in the Flagship Project

Project Title: Developing Parental Engagement to Support Inclusion and Mental Health

Despite the significant changes that have taken place at Phoenix Primary School over the past 12 months, it is evident that substantial progress has been made towards all of the Flagship Project targets. Leaders and stakeholders recognise that this period of transformation has laid solid foundations and stands them in good stead for the next phase of development. There is a shared commitment to further refining and embedding these initiatives, ensuring that consistency of practice is fully established across all areas of the school and that recent improvements are sustained over time.

To further refine approaches to behaviour, ensuring consistency of application throughout the school

The team are committed to further embedding the school's values-led approach to behaviour, so that high expectations are evident across every aspect of school life, including classrooms, transitions, lunchtimes, and playtimes. The Pupil Values Team will play an increasingly important role in promoting and modelling the school's values, gathering pupil voice, and ensuring that pupils feel heard, respected and have a genuine sense of equity and belonging. Alongside this, Phase Leaders will provide ongoing coaching, modelling, and professional development to further strengthen staff confidence and ensure consistency of practice across all phases.

Leaders will continue to support and empower staff through regular professional dialogue, learning walks and coaching, ensuring that behaviour systems are implemented confidently and effectively. Governors will play an active role in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the behaviour strategy, providing both support and challenge as the school continues to refine its approach.

Building on the school's strong knowledge of individual pupils' needs, leaders will further strengthen early identification and intervention for those requiring additional behavioural or emotional support. Through careful monitoring of behaviour trends, pupil voice and ongoing evaluation, the school will ensure that its graduated, trauma-informed approach remains responsive to pupils' needs. This work will continue to promote a calm, inclusive learning environment where every pupil feels safe, respected, and fully supported to succeed.

To further refine and define the graduated approach for mental health.

The Headteacher and his team are dedicated to ensuring that they continue to refine and further define the school's graduated approach to mental health and wellbeing. Ongoing investment in professional development, particularly around Thrive approaches, trauma-informed practice and the Zones of Regulation, will further strengthen staff confidence and expertise in identifying needs early and delivering effective support. Leaders will continue to enhance the school's universal, targeted and specialist provision, ensuring that interventions remain responsive to the changing strengths and needs of pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable or have SEND.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



The school is committed to continuing its investment in creating nurturing, therapeutic learning environments that promote the wellbeing of both pupils and staff.

Opportunities for parents and carers to develop their understanding of children's mental health and wellbeing will be further expanded, enabling families to build on the successful strategies used within school and strengthen support at home. Leaders will also continue to draw upon best practice through collaboration with the IQM Cluster, local schools, and external agencies. Leaders are working closely with the Local Authority to further refine the Resource Base, aiming to clarify admission criteria to ensure that the provision remains appropriately targeted and sustainable.

Through regular evaluation of wellbeing provision, pupil voice and partnership working with families, the school will continue to respond proactively and creatively to pupils' evolving needs. Maintaining the exceptionally strong relationships that exist with parents and carers will remain central to this work, ensuring that every child continues to receive the personalised emotional and mental health support they need to flourish.

To carefully manage changes in school leadership to ensure that all staff feel supported, cohesive, and united behind a clear vision.

Leaders are committed to sustaining the positive culture established during this period of change by ensuring that all staff continue to feel valued, supported and actively involved in shaping the future direction of the school. Opportunities for staff voice will be further strengthened through regular anonymous surveys, staff forums and structured feedback following professional development and policy implementation. This will ensure that decision-making remains collaborative and responsive, enabling leaders to refine practice while maintaining the strong sense of trust and shared purpose that now characterises the school.

The school will continue to develop its distributed leadership model by further empowering Phase Leaders and Middle Leaders to lead improvement, coach colleagues and drive the school's vision consistently across their teams. Ongoing learning walks, professional dialogue, coaching, and monitoring activities will ensure that the school's inclusive vision is reflected consistently.

Recognising that staff are the school's greatest asset, leaders will maintain their proactive commitment to staff wellbeing and workload management. Communication systems will continue to be reviewed and refined to ensure they remain clear, consistent, and efficient, while preserving the open, approachable culture that staff value so highly. By continuing to invest in leadership capacity, professional growth and staff wellbeing, the school is well placed to sustain its strong team ethos, ensuring that all stakeholders remain united behind a clear, inclusive vision and are equipped to lead the next phase of the school's continued improvement.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Overview

Phoenix Primary School is a welcoming, inclusive, and vibrant school which proudly embraces the rich diversity that makes it such a special place to learn and grow. The Headteacher and his team are unwavering in their commitment to ensuring that every child is known, valued, and supported to flourish. This one form entry school, in the heart of Liverpool, faces many challenges; around 50% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals, approximately 48% speak English as an Additional Language and there is an ever-increasing number of children with complex needs. The percentage of pupils requiring SEND Support and those with EHCPs are both higher than the national average. The school also runs a SEND Resource Base for thirty pupils from across the city who receive a place via EHCP consultation processes.

The Headteacher and his team speak about their pupils with immense passion, pride, and affection, describing them as *"the fabric of our school"*! During discussions on the assessment day, many staff members reflected that, despite the challenges, the team at Phoenix are a passionate, committed, and dedicated team who will go above and beyond to support their pupils and families. There is a genuine family feel, underpinned by strong relationships, mutual respect, and a true sense of identity, belonging, and community. This ethos is evident throughout every aspect of school life. The school's motto, *"Where we rise to the challenge,"* is far more than a slogan; it is reflected each day as pupils and staff overcome barriers together, support one another and celebrate every success, no matter how big or small. Phoenix is a school where inclusion is not simply an aspiration but the foundation upon which its thriving community is built. The school is proud of its cultural diversity and embraces the range of languages, cultures and traditions that make up the school.

Discussions with parent representatives were overwhelmingly positive, with parents expressing deep appreciation for the care, support, and sense of belonging the school provides. They described a genuine *"family feel"*, where trusting relationships and open communication are at the heart of the school's work. During discussion with the assessor, praise was given to the Home School Link Officer, whose knowledge of local services, approachable manner and strong relationships with families has created an invaluable source of support. Parents commented that they have complete confidence in the support the school provides for themselves and their children. They know that any concerns will always be listened to and acted upon. Communication was described as excellent, with messages responded to promptly, while the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher were praised for their compassionate and approachable leadership. One parent spoke proudly of the significant progress their child had made, attributing this to the school's nurturing, inclusive ethos, and unwavering commitment to every family. She stated, *"To see the progress from not wanting to access school to being really calm and enjoying school is amazing!"*

Phoenix Primary School has successfully navigated a period of leadership transition, with a new Headteacher taking up post at the start of the Autumn Term. Since his appointment, he has quickly established a clear vision for the school, building on its inclusive ethos while working collaboratively with staff, pupils, and the wider community to sustain and further develop the school's many strengths. The recent



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



introduction of Phase Leaders has been well received by staff who see this as an extremely positive and supportive mechanism. Discussions with a range of staff members highlighted that they feel there has been a genuine *"cultural shift"* which is really evident and has led to the development of a true sense of togetherness and the school community feeling like *"one big family!"* Staff feel supported and that leaders are supporting their wellbeing in a variety of ways. One staff member stated that *"no one walks past you, if support is needed someone is always there for you."* This further reflects a sense of collective responsibility that characterises the school.

The assessor met with 'The Values Team,' a group of pupil representatives who are passionate about "spreading" the school's core values - Resilience, Responsibility, Kindness, and Ambition. They described this role as giving them a genuine voice in school improvement as they positively encourage others to model the school's values. Further discussions were held with wider pupils during lunchtime and during a learning walk. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their school, describing their teachers as kind, understanding and always willing to help. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of the school's values, explaining how these are reinforced through assemblies, rewards, and daily interactions.

Pupils value that they are given opportunities to take on a range of leadership roles including OPAL leaders, monitors, and sports captains. They also highlighted the wide range of enrichment opportunities available, including educational visits, visitors to school and sporting events. Pupils explained how teachers provide the right level of challenge and assistance, making effective use of sensory spaces, working walls and classroom resources to help everyone succeed. Overall, pupils conveyed a strong sense of belonging, pride, and responsibility for contributing positively to their inclusive school community.

Teaching and learning at Phoenix Primary School are underpinned by the unwavering belief that "education changes lives." The inclusive curriculum continues to evolve and be designed to ensure every child, regardless of their background, starting point or additional need, achieves success and develops a genuine sense of belonging. Reflecting the rich diversity of the local community, the curriculum builds knowledge and skills progressively while placing equal emphasis on developing confident communicators, resilient learners, and responsible citizens. Enrichment opportunities, educational visits, and visitors further enhance learning, broadening pupils' experiences beyond the classroom.

Collaboration is a significant strength of the school's inclusive practice. Leaders work proactively with a wide range of external professionals, including health services, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, mental health practitioners and the Local Authority SEND team.

The school also values collaboration beyond its immediate community, drawing on expertise from the IQM Cluster, local schools, and city-wide partnerships to enhance teaching, wellbeing, and inclusion. This has resulted in a wealth of opportunities for pupils, including inclusive sporting events, anti-bullying initiatives, oracy projects, and enrichment experiences that broaden aspirations and strengthen personal development.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM Flagship Project



Leaders actively encourage staff to seek out new partnerships and share best practice, fostering a culture of continuous improvement that benefits both pupils and the wider school community. This commitment to collaboration is further evidenced by the length of time the school has been part of the IQM family – this being it's fifth Flagship Status Review!

It was a delight to be welcomed into the 'Phoenix Family' for the day and wish the team every success in their on-going journey!

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 Louise McCallion

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH

Chief Executive Officer of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd