



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



**School Name** Horizon Community College  
Dodworth Road  
Barnsley  
South Yorkshire, S70 6PD

**Head/Principal** Mrs Claire Huddart

**IQM Lead** Ms Cathy Collins

**Date of Review** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024

**Assessor** Ms Alyson Tolley

### **IQM Cluster Programme**

**Cluster Group** Inclusion Pioneers 2

**Ambassador** Mr Dirk Pittard

**Next Meeting** 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Meeting Focus** HCC PD offer

### **Cluster Attendance**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Summer 2022</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	Yes
<b>Autumn 2022</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	No
<b>Spring 2023</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2023	Yes
<b>Summer 2023</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> July 2023	Yes
<b>Autumn 2023</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	Yes
<b>Spring 2024</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Yes
<b>Summer 2024</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	

### **Evidence**

In advance of the review, the school submitted an extremely detailed evaluation of their targets from last year along with an action plan for their flagship project for the coming year, and I was able to scrutinise these in advance.

During the review, I was able to meet with a variety of stakeholders, and the extensive discussion and tour of key areas enabled me to gain a thorough insight into exceptional inclusive practice.

### **Discussions during the visit:**

- Meeting with the Principal and two associate Principals.
- Student voices from across Years 7–10 (Year 11 was in exams).
- Meeting with Associate Vice Principal, Personal Development, and Assistant Principal, Student Engagement, to review Target 1.



## Assessor’s Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



- Meeting with Governors.
- Meeting with Associate Assistant Principal—Literacy, Associate Vice Principal, and Associate Assistant Principal—Head of English—to review at Target 3.
- Meeting with Associate Assistant Principal—Attendance to Review Target 2.
- Flagship Project Meeting with Assistant Principal, Head of Upper School Pastoral, Assistant Principal, Safeguarding and wellbeing and Assistant Principal, SENCo.

### Impact of Cluster Group Meetings

Date of Meeting	Location of Meeting	Topic(s)	Outcome(s) for School
Wed 29 <sup>th</sup> November	Outwood Primary Academy, Littleworth Grange	Send Systems, Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Tracker, Comprehensive Program Plan (CPP) Tracker and learning support	A good opportunity to reflect on SEMH practices.
Wed 24 <sup>th</sup> April	Shafton	Interventions and bespoke learning packages (such as, alternative provisions both external and internal)	Had a good discussion regards Alternative Provision.
8 <sup>th</sup> July	Horizon to host	How we are an Inclusive school, Our Personal Development Offer, Supporting students with SEND, Our reading offer. How we support English as an Additional Language (EAL) students	

The college continues to be an active, supportive and valued member of their cluster group, and that reflects their clear ethos and values as a college that is open to different ideas and is committed to supporting others.

### Summary of Targets for 2023–24

#### Target 1: To further increase participation and engagement with enrichment experiences across the college.

The enrichment experiences are led by a dynamic and committed Assistant Principal who has made a significant impact this year by increasing participation in enrichment activities and experiences. There have been an increased number of trips out of college, including abroad to New York, Spain, France, and Italy. The trips are run by a variety of curriculum areas, including Careers, Physical Education (PE), Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), Science, History, Geography, and Business, Program Advisor (PA), English, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and these exceeded 151 trips by the end of April.

There are 20–30 clubs offered to each year group every week, and attendance is registered on Edulink, so this can be carefully tracked and monitored, enabling students to be rewarded for their participation. The timetable of experiences changes monthly, and



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



students are involved in the review of the different clubs. Many of the clubs are curriculum-linked and run by staff on a voluntary basis.

So far, this academic year, 96% of students have engaged in enrichment, trips, or interventions, and while this is outstanding, the commitment of the enrichment lead is that he will not be satisfied until 100% of all students engage in activities. To support this process, he regularly holds student meetings to enable them to provide feedback as to what the barriers to engagement are, and subsequently, because of the key cohort student voice, he has arranged bespoke intervention with LAC, SEND, and EAL students who had not previously engaged with intervention.

There have been several inter-form activity programmes at lunchtimes, including football, countdown, dodgeball, table tennis, Mario Kart, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), sports day, and darts (which have become increasingly popular over recent months due to Luke Littler). The Enrichment lead talked about the use of promotional videos that are shown in the theatre, for example, Mario Kart videos, to entertain the 'audience' while students compete on the stage. This has increased attendance, and the students love it!

The college participates in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, and the fact that there are three consecutive weekend expeditions again highlights the enthusiasm and commitment of the lead, who will be attending all of them. There is also a student experience passport (based on the Duke of Edinburgh recording system), and the logging of student experiences shows an increased uptake compared to 22/23. The college is also planning to work with the Children's University (Sheffield) in September, and this will digitise the experience of passport tracking and formalise the rewarding of students, as well as provide even more recognition and celebration of the engagement of students externally.

As well as the electronic systems that are robustly tracked and evaluated, the college also records evidence in a scrapbook-type format which includes photographs of events, and the pictures demonstrate the high levels of engagement as well as lots of happy faces. This is a creative way to record events and is accessible to all stakeholders.

The student voice was animated as they talked about the opportunities the college provides for them. They talked with enthusiasm and a real understanding of the value of these opportunities. They were all able to articulate a wide range of activities on offer, and each of them has been involved in at least one club or activity during this academic year. They shared their experiences of the 'Ten-pound challenge' and their contributions to charity, which were in excess of an impressive £10,000 with a few weeks still left to go.

Further recognition needs to be acknowledged for the leadership of enrichment due to the fact they have been recognised for their exceptional practice, having recently been contacted by a local school and have subsequently shared their systems and strategies to support this neighbouring school on their journey.

### **Next Steps:**

To continue to review the available offers and to seek out new opportunities to continue to motivate and engage all students.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



### Target 2:

#### **To further drive whole-college attendance to pre-COVID levels of 95% cumulative attendance.**

Attendance has continued to be a key priority this year, and while whole school attendance has decreased by 0.7% compared to the same point last academic year, this is 1% above the current national figure and 2.1% above the local authority average. The Associate Assistant Principal with responsibility for this area acknowledges that while the school is in a strong position nationally, it remains committed to raising these figures. The attendance leader is rigorous in tracking the data, was able to provide a range of figures to demonstrate impact and is working tirelessly to find new ways in which to address absence, particularly among those who are persistently absent. A severely absent panel takes place each half term, attended by attendance, SEND, and wellbeing, to discuss all students who sit below 50% and the strategies and interventions that need to be trialled to improve their attendance.

Interventions this year have included: wellbeing calls on the day the student is absent; this is to see how they are and when they will be returning to school. These calls are made by a range of staff, such as tutors, the attendance team (if a student has PP status), or the SEND team if the student has an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). This highlights the effective use of staff because these key staff have established supportive relationships with students and parents/carers, so the approach is perceived as supportive rather than potentially judgmental if communicated by a less familiar member of staff. The same process is applied to home visits, and again, students and families meet with faces that are familiar and who know the bigger picture.

Other strategies are used in a staged approach, triggering different letters determined by the stage the students are on. Again, the process reinforces the positive approach to encouraging students to attend.

Staffing levels show the commitment of the principal to support this key area; they currently employ a full-time Education Welfare Officer (EWO), and she holds a caseload of 30 students, working with the students and families to improve attendance. To date this year, college staff have completed 680 home visits undertaken by the EWO and other Horizon staff depending on the individual student's needs.

Students are consistently encouraged to track their own attendance during the weekly form time attendance activity; this informs students of their cumulative attendance, the number of days they have missed the previous week, and the number of lessons they have missed the previous week. Both students and parents/carers are made aware of how many sessions have been missed (rather than just sharing a percentage), and this makes it more 'real' and ensures a better understanding of data in terms of lost learning, which clearly has much more impact.

The Associate Assistant Principal (AAP) has devised an attendance rewards calendar, which is an excellent visual that highlights key dates on the school calendar to raise awareness for all stakeholders. This includes concise information on key dates as well as showing reward opportunities. In addition to the weekly form period where students track their attendance, they are provided with their own copy of the attendance reward



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



chart, events calendar, and useful information on attendance in their student planner. The focus on rewards provides incentives for students: a weekly reward chart in students' planners; rewards for the most improved attendance both on a half-term and yearly basis; rewards for forms with 100% each week; 'themed' months such as 100% March, 100% December, and the Y11 Exam run-up. In addition, there are half-term attendance reward assemblies, and students in Years 7 and 8 are awarded pin badges based on their attendance. There are bronze, silver, and gold pin badges available, and I observed many students wearing them with pride.

### **Next Step:**

Continue to drive attendance and look at new ways to promote parental awareness and engagement.

### **Target 3:**

#### **Support students with weak literacy**

Students in Years 7-9 have all been screened using a group reading test to establish baselines and identify those in need of intervention and/or additional support in the classroom. Following the baseline assessment, further screening takes place using a range of tools to identify the most appropriate intervention pathway. The Associate Assistant Principal with responsibility for literacy has a strong understanding of the strengths and possible weaknesses of different screening tools and so consistently monitors student engagement and she and her team robustly check that provision is meeting need.

The college has identified a significant minority who require support and the lead has provided whole school staff training on phonics and the early reading journey and this has ensured a sound understanding of the skill deficits that some students may have. A range of interventions are offered, and these include Phonics with Fluency; fluency; comprehension; bespoke 1-1 fluency intervention for harder to reach students including some in Key Stage (KS) 4 students. Progress is tracked and monitored, and reassessment shows that there has been significant impact in improving reading for most students.

#### **Promote disciplinary literacy.**

All staff have accessed significant training on the importance of reading and are aware that it underpins everything. This academic year lesson drop-ins have seen improvements in literacy development in lessons and there is clearly substantial collaboration between subject areas to further support this development.

There is a literacy lead within each curriculum area who, along with the subject leader, drives literacy and this is having a huge impact in lessons. Literacy leaders have developed a toolkit which incorporates strategies that have been underpinned by training. 'Reading expectations' are embedded in all learning with a range of core strategies to ensure accessibility for all learners and there are also 'teach meets' which support staff to reflect on their practice.

Science, history. English and more recently geography have all established their reading spine texts which are the guaranteed texts that they will read with different year groups, I



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



was able to see how students use these, and they are an excellent way of promoting and deepening understanding of vocabulary. Maths, science, and geography have developed a cross-curricular list of vocabulary that are taught explicitly to students using for example, the Freyer model. Maths have also prioritised the development of vocab and reading fluency in questions.

### **Develop a culture of literacy for power.**

In my discussions with leaders, the passion for literacy is palpable, with all stakeholders valuing literacy. The college consistently promotes literacy at every opportunity with recommended reads and reading discussion questions featured on the student bulletin. The college runs reading weeks to continue to raise the profile of reading in different subjects, and reading assemblies take place during these weeks with staff reading extracts from books aloud to the students. During reading weeks, staff are also encouraged to 'grab a book.'

There have been local library visits during reading weeks, both with staff coming into school and students going to Barnsley Library. The local bookshop comes into the school to sell books during reading week, and the school purchased a book for all Year 7 students last Christmas. Reading journeys are in place within the college library to encourage students to read around a range of genres, and these are open before school, at lunch, and after school daily. There is a book vending machine to reward students with further reading opportunities.

The college also invited a travelling theatre into the college for a full week to celebrate World Book Day with live performances that were aligned with the curriculum. A further celebration is that 121 students have had their work published in national competitions, including Young Writers.

Without a doubt, the college has made huge progress towards its targets this year, and this was evident from all aspects of the review and from discussions with staff and students. They have a clear and ambitious flagship plan, and work is already underway on establishing the relationship policy.

### **Agreed Targets for 2024-5**

#### **Project Title: The Introduction of a Relational Policy**

The core purpose of Horizon Community College is to develop their students into young people who are "school-read, work-ready, and life-ready' and can, therefore, be successful in achieving their goals. Leaders aspire to move on from 'good practice' and for staff to have the knowledge and understanding of trauma-informed approaches in order to become part of the universal offer.

The college's outlook is firmly rooted in the development of student character by:

- Supporting students to build their awareness of not only their rights but also their responsibilities.
- Building a community that values kindness and empathy for others.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



- Supporting students to understand how they can regulate and manage their behaviour and contribute to a safe environment where all can learn.
- Providing guidance to staff, parents, carers, and governors about how to support effective regulation.
- Creating inclusive systems that support early identification and access to support so that behavioural needs can be met in a timely manner.

The college recognises that wellbeing and behaviour are inextricably linked, and therefore, in addition to providing high-quality teaching, recognising and rewarding achievements, providing opportunities for all, and creating clear boundaries through upholding high standards of discipline, attendance, and punctuality, their project will strive to further develop the emotional development of their students.

Therefore, through the refinement of policies, the implementation of staff training, and Thrive Practice, the college seeks to offer:

- “Right time” development by consistently evaluating the ethos, curriculum, and environment to ensure that the needs of students can be met as they appear.
- Effective response at “key times,” for example, when students are affected by change, loss, or significant life events.
- Interventions to repair interrupted development involve creating opportunities for students to access targeted reparative work to fill gaps that have not been met at the right time in their development.

The college aims to develop and implement the policy through the following:

### **Development of Relational Policy**

- Attendance at the Inclusion SEND Forum.
- Research existing guidance and policies.
- Audit of inclusive practice.
- Co-construction of finalised policy with college leaders.

### **To widen the implementation of Thrive practice into established procedures through trained Thrive practitioners.**

Further working groups to refine practice with regard to Thrive interventions:

- Following reintegration meetings.
- Supporting students who are accessing reflection.
- Supporting students who are accessing Timeout.

### **To evaluate and update the relationship policy.**

- Edit to include further examples of good practice.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



### Overview

Horizon Community College is a larger than average mainstream 11-16 secondary school and is part of the Hoyland Common Academy Trust (HCAT) and the Principal describes it as being 'fully comprehensive' in its intake. The college opened in 2019 as part of the academy conversion. The college has 2004 students on roll; 30% of students are eligible for the Pupil Premium, 8 students are eligible for the Service premium and 25% of students are currently eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). The school has approximately 8% of students on the SEND register, which is lower than the national average, however, this is due to the outstanding teaching and learning that takes place which means that most student needs are catered for through high-quality teaching. The college is a Champion School for EAL and there is a dedicated team of EAL staff linked to MFL. EAL students speak over 45 different languages and there has recently been a 10% rise in new arrivals.

The school recently had a Section 8 Ofsted inspection with the following outcome: 'There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good ...However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now.' This is a testament to the fantastic, resolute staff team who work diligently to provide exceptional experiences for all their students daily.

The college vision is 'School Ready; Work Ready; Life Ready' and this permeated through every aspect of my experiences during the visit and the strong inclusive ethos is similarly evident through their excellent website and social media. On arrival at the school, I immediately felt welcomed as I received my own personal car parking guide!

I had the opportunity to meet with a variety of stakeholders throughout the day as well as take a tour around the school. It was evident throughout my interactions with leaders that there is a powerful sense of pride in being part of HCC. The commitment to reflect and self-evaluate underpins everything they do. The passion for inclusion percolates through all areas of the school and from every member of the team.

The Principal talked about college staff with pride; many of her team have been 'built from the bottom up' and promoted to key positions. There is a low staff turnover and there are staff who have left but then returned to the college. All staff are listened to and complete regular surveys and these are analysed by the leadership team. There is a dedicated 'staff wellbeing' area on the college website which provides information and guidance on workload and wellbeing. She emphasised how leaders look at the 'whole staff' and do not distinguish between teachers and support staff. This highlights that not only do leaders acknowledge and appreciate their staff but that they care and as accurately described by the Associate Principal, 'wellbeing is embedded.'

Due to the number of students on roll, the college has a staggered start and finish with two different start and finish times. In the summer term staff are asked which year group they would like to be attached to. This means that staff who have children have time at the start or the end of the day to be able to drop off or pick up their own children. They are also consulted in advance on the school calendar and have time to feedback their views. Training Tuesday is when CPD currently takes place and it is also when parents' evenings are scheduled.





## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



The college runs a model of overstaffing especially in core subjects as well as in Humanities and MFL. They also have a team of cover supervisors who are attached to curriculum areas. The college do not use supply agencies and this means that the Quality of Education is protected and students continue to receive quality first teaching from staff who know them, even when there is unavoidable staff absence.

The Quality of Education is reviewed regularly and this academic year has seen the introduction of what was described to me as 'classrooms of the future' boards in many rooms with the rest of college following suit this summer. This involves two interactive whiteboards at the front of each room with the whole of the wall painted black to minimise distraction. On seeing this in practice it has massive impact in ensuring focus is on the boards. The students like it, stating it also supports the flow of the lesson as students have capacity to finish tasks whilst others can move on. Students also talked about how teachers are approachable and they can communicate with staff if they need help in lessons and they showed me the RAG traffic lights in planners which can be used for those who aren't able to articulate verbally the need for help.

The college prioritises student health and wellbeing and the Principal has been interviewed for BBC Breakfast talking about mental health. There are clear systems in place to address bullying and there is a QR code in the planner that students can use to alert staff of any issues. The students spoke about this and said it was better for them because they could access staff without fear of being overheard or seen by other students. They also talked about the Wellbeing Centre which offers support for students including counselling, as well as offering a 'safe space' at lunchtime.

Rewards are very firmly embedded in college processes. Students are consistently rewarded through achievement points and these accumulate to provide an excellent variety of rewards from postcards home to afternoon tea with the Principal.

Celebrations of student work take place as part of Proud Thursday in which students are rewarded by teachers and showcase their work in a central space that is decorated by balloons; students receive a certificate and a message is sent home. Students are awarded gold pin badges for effort. Staff who do duties have yellow dot badges and when they spot a student doing something that is linked to the core values, they are given a badge and five achievement points. Other rewards include star cards, Praise Friday, the Principal's Award and the formal red-carpet event, the Celebration of Achievement. Student voice demonstrated how much they value the rewards' systems and were able to articulate how well they are rewarded. Students across both key stages value Proud Thursday and older students like the fact they are able to email their work if they prefer rather than attending in person.

Bells have recently been introduced to support movement around the building. Staff are highly visible at lesson changeover and during break and lunch to ensure students feel safe and are moving through the building with purpose. Whilst behaviour was good before, this has improved things even more, with the Principal explaining that behaviour in lessons is 'very calm and settled' and this was evident as I visited classrooms. This was reinforced by student voice with a Year 7 student using the words 'I feel safe'. The students also talked about how the bell means that things 'flow' better and they like the fact that there are more staff on stairwells because this means there is no pushing.



## Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



The students spoke about the ambassador programme and this is clearly valued by them and provides a variety of leadership opportunities such as 'attendance ambassadors' as well as students helping at events such as school performances and supporting in local primary schools.

The college has excellent support for SEND pupils and this was recognised by Ofsted. 'Leaders give teachers clear guidance on how to best support pupils with (SEND).' The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) is fairly new to post and works tirelessly to ensure students receive the support they need. Her background is in teaching and learning and this is reflected in the support offered to students, both in and out of classrooms. Those students who require more bespoke support, some of whom are at risk of permanent exclusion, access a two-tier system of help through the Base and Hub. Both areas are led and managed by experienced teachers and students access the full curriculum through high quality teaching and a qualified SENCo is also attached to the area. In addition, they also access a range of interventions and there is an opportunity to engage in activities to develop life skills. Leaders talked about the retired teacher who comes in to cook with the students on a 1-1 basis and how, for some families, the end product is their weekly treat.

When I visited the Base and Hub I was impressed with the calm, purposeful atmosphere and all students were fully engaged in learning. The Principal describes the relationships as 'strong' and this was evident as soon as I walked into the areas. One student was eager to talk to me and he told me 'I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for him', gesturing to the teacher, then quantifying that to talk about how close he had been to being permanently excluded.

The governors that I met with were very keen to emphasise the pride they have in being part of the college Governing Body. They described it as being 'a big school where there is individual acknowledgment of each student.' They spoke highly of the Principal stating how she 'looks to the future' when planning and how much she cares about her staff, discussing the open-door policy and how staff feel they can talk to her if they have a problem. They talked about how leadership at all levels has a moral purpose and despite the ongoing successes of the college, there is no complacency or resting on laurels.

It was a real privilege and a pleasure to visit Horizon Community College (HCC) and witness the outstanding practice. Inclusion occurs naturally and is rooted firmly in every aspect of the college due entirely to the efforts of the staff, led by the inspirational and aspirational Principal and her extremely effective leadership team and staff.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark to pursue Flagship School status. I recommend that the school moves to 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 Alyson Tolley**

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

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