



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name: St Patrick's High School
Middletown Road
Keady
Co. Armagh
BT60 3TH

Head/Principal: Dr Fionnuala Moore

IQM Lead: Mr Simon McGeary

Date of Review: Friday 30th September 2022

Assessor: Mr Kevin O'Neill

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group: Ferrero Roche

Ambassador: Mr Kevin O'Neill

Date of Next Meeting: November 2022

Next Cluster Group Meeting Focus: KS2/KS3 Transitioning

Sources of Evidence during IQM Review Day:

- Inclusion Agenda at St. Patrick's and the wider school context/future plans.
- Pupil Voice and Student Leadership Teams
- LSC Tour and Orientation
- Taking Boys Seriously Programme with University of Ulster
- Student and Staff Wellbeing Team
- Investors in Careers Award
- Inclusive Curriculum Design and Pathways
- Future Plans for Cluster Involvement and moving from Centre of Excellence towards Flagship school status.



Summary of Targets from 2021-2022

The School's targets from the previous year were based on the school development foci towards:

Target 1: Continued focus on introduction of new models of learning

In contemporary education there is little doubt that the focus has shifted from teaching to learning. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused widespread disruption and presented many challenges to our education and training system. Alongside the challenges, however, it has brought rapid change and opened up new opportunities. New ideas around learning and assessment are being debated, along with in-depth discussions around the nature, purpose and function of high-quality education in the 21st century.

Dr Moore is working hard to understand the legacy of the pandemic and discern the best way forward. Her whole team is committed to wide-scale consultation and engagement and want to work alongside schools, organisations and other stakeholders around sustainable capacity-building of key staff in the important area of self-evaluation leading to improvement.

The school development planning process is informed by robust self-evaluation, a purposeful use of qualitative and quantitative data, and meaningful and extensive consultation which embraces all stakeholders including pupils and parents. The accountability arrangements at subject department level include self-evaluations that reflect clearly and align with the key priorities in the school development plan. The continuing focus on pedagogy is informed by evidence-based research.

St. Patrick's has adopted an educational approach that places students at the centre of the process. It has gained in popularity not only because it offers students the choice of what and how they learn, but because its independent approach also equips them with the key skills they will later rely on in life. This is achieved by providing students with greater responsibility for their learning, encouraging more collaboration within the classroom, while ensuring that active and meaningful learning occurs.

Student-led learning in St. Patrick's encourages greater autonomy and helps ease student transition from the classroom to life after school. The high-level aims of the project are anchored around promoting organisational improvement in order to enhance learners' learning experiences and improve outcomes. It is also a pedagogical approach that is becoming more widely adopted in international education and will hopefully become the norm, not the exception.

What's more, when you look at its positive impact, the power of student-led learning should come as no surprise. It steps away from the outdated one-size-fits-all model and embraces the personalised learning ethos and Lasallian by helping students discover their own potential; encouraging learning through trial and error and reducing the negative connotations imbued with 'mistakes'; developing independent and critical thinking and problem-solving skills; and increasing engagement in the classroom.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



Prioritising the student agency undoubtedly breaks the mould of traditional education but it is crucial in providing pupils with a greater voice and empowering them to take a more active role in their education. Importantly, in student-led learning much of the success relies upon a student's ability to be reflective and aware of their own learning process and outcomes.

Self-reflection in St. Patrick's is an important aspect of learning, and by creating opportunities for students to reflect on their progress, the team there are deepening their students' understanding not only of key concepts, but also their personal learning process. It is this self-inquiry that provides valuable insights for teachers and students alike and if conducted periodically can inform an adaptive student-led learning experience that empowers all involved.

The learner is at the centre of all that the staff in St. Patrick's do and the decisions that they make. The School uses a range of internal data effectively, including pastoral and academic information, to track pupil progress across the curriculum and inform the departments' planning to bring about more sustained improvement in outcomes. 'At risk' pupils are well catered for and the barrier they may present within a school is never used as an excuse for the pupil not thriving or excelling.

Performance data and pastoral information is used to identify underachievement and initiate appropriate interventions in order to improve pupil engagement and outcomes. Review, monitoring and evaluation is an important catalyst for raising standards for all learners. It promotes improvement through ensuring that best practice is highlighted and that provision in need of development is identified, supported and improved.

Next Steps: Next cohort of staff are to begin their training whilst existing staff embed and make practice the culture of the school. Individualised models and programmes are establishing themselves and allowing the school to better meet the needs of specific learners.

Target 2: Develop further the role and remit of the Student Leadership Teams

Upon my arrival, two Year 10 students were there to meet and greet me and to show me their school. At St. Patrick's they recognise their students are the leaders of the future and therefore provide a range of opportunities for the young people to develop their leadership skills.

The students articulated that their roles enable them to practice a range of leadership skills in a supportive, learning and calm environment where success and errors are processed and reflected upon. Leaders are required to communicate well, engage in critical thinking, lead groups in problem solving and planning.

Pupil voice is valued and promoted – each academic year, pupils across the school are given a platform to express the views of their school to help shape its development. All students are encouraged to embrace the wide range of opportunities available to them – and to always seek to find new ways that they can further empower their peers. This enables the students to develop as individuals, as a community and grow the school as a whole.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



The leadership framework of the Student Leadership Teams within St. Patrick's High School provides opportunities and experiences that facilitate their student's transition from school life into the community and beyond into the world of work and adult responsibility.

When reviewing the evidence, it was clear to this Assessor that the impact of the Teams was improving learning outcomes for all learners. The Teams afford students the opportunity to play an active part in the corporate life of the School. I observed how a visionary Principal and her colleagues help create the conditions conducive towards the development of interpersonal relationships, a characteristic strength of this School.

The 'big picture' enthusiasm of the Special Educational Needs Coordination (SENCo) has meant that the whole School play a significant role in encouraging students to become self-confident, responsible and caring. This in turn foster in students a sense of loyalty and pride in their School. I could only sit back in admiration at how motivated the students were to make their voice heard and to make a real difference. The showcasing and transparency of their work has meant an improvement of communication at all levels – staff, students and parents.

Next Step: Teams are well established but will need to continually evolve and reflect the changing nature of the new SDP as well as the interests and attitudes of the incoming students. All of these strengths are underpinned by strong strategic leadership and it is in this Assessor's opinion that the school demonstrates a high capacity for continual self-improvement.

Target 3: Progress toward achieving the Investors in Careers Award

"Teachers treat their students with respect and listen to what we are saying. They give us advice and help whenever we need it."

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is distributive, cohesive and collaborative. They have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and work strategically to address very effectively the pastoral and academic needs of the pupils. A high priority is accorded to leadership capacity building at all levels through the professional development of staff, including the opportunity for middle leaders to collaborate with the SLT on a cyclical basis. They lead by example, including at staff development.

CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) at St. Patrick's is designed to prepare students for life in the modern world by providing the knowledge, understanding, confidence and skills that they need to make informed choices and plans for their future learning and career.

Each pupil receives a learning programme informed by the use of rigorous data. Progress is tracked monthly by Raising Standards Teams at KS3, KS4 and Sixth Form to ensure all pupils are making progress.

A particular strength of the School is the highly effective partnership with the local primary schools which supports pupils' transition, learning and development.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



Teachers are committed to providing high quality, impartial information, advice and guidance to every student throughout their school career. They ensure that students come in to contact with employers to encourage students to aspire, make good choices and understand what they need to do to reach and succeed in the careers to which they aspire to. School leavers' destinations are tracked and monitored to inform the school of both subject and cohort attainment, aligned to eventual career destinations.

The personal and social development of the pupils is afforded a high priority by the school and the taught programme is comprehensive, wide-ranging and age and stage-appropriate. The provision is flexible and responsive to both the local context and contemporary issues; it is complemented very well by input from the pupils and the judicious use of guest speakers and external agencies.

Across the key stages, the CEIAG is enhanced through a coherently planned programme of stakeholder events and presentations. Pupils benefit from a range of bespoke work experience programmes and a variety of other supplementary opportunities, which are matched well to their aspirations.

In discussion with myself, Year 14 pupils articulated a clear knowledge and understanding of a range of options and possible pathways that are available to them. The school knows well its individual cohorts of pupils; quantitative and qualitative data informs identification of pupils at risk of not attaining due to a variety of barriers to learning. Well-targeted pastoral and academic interventions are implemented, with clear evidence of the impact for individual pupils, enabling them to secure positive outcomes and progression.

The pupils demonstrate excellent understanding of progression routes. There are excellent links with local employers and HE/FE providers as well as professional careers' advisers who visit the school regularly to help prepare pupils for further study and the world of work.

There is comprehensive curricular provision to meet pupils' abilities, interests and career aspirations. The curriculum provision is reviewed regularly to ensure the curriculum provides good progression for all students.

The Wellbeing Team believe firmly that the right curriculum is essential to making sure that children and young people are prepared for life. But for every child to succeed, they know that a comprehensive curriculum must be accompanied by good teaching practice, focused on the strengths, weaknesses and needs of each. The School provides an appropriately challenging range of subjects at Advanced Level.

Next Step: St Patrick's to be assessed on the evidence that they have submitted for the IIC Award. The assessment is to take place on Wednesday 5th October 2022.

The Assessment will include interviews with the School Principal; Link Governor for Careers; Senior Teacher for Careers; Head of Careers; Year Heads; Head of Departments; and various students from all Key Stages. All of us at IQM wish them well and are looking forward to reading all about your success.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



Target 4: To continue to develop and improve upon levels of pupil and staff wellbeing.

“The teachers are really nice. They would help you through if you need any help. I like the way pupils are mixed together in classes – not according to their abilities.”

Wellbeing is important at school because they have an essential role to play in supporting students to make healthy lifestyle choices and understand the effects of their choices on their health and wellbeing. Childhood and adolescence are critical periods in the development of long-term attitudes towards personal wellbeing and lifestyle choices.

The social and emotional skills, knowledge and behaviours that young people learn in the classroom help them build resilience and set the pattern for how they will manage their physical and mental health throughout their lives.

St. Patrick's High School is able to provide students with reliable information and deepen their understanding of the choices they face. It is also well equipped enough to provide students with the intellectual skills required to reflect critically on these choices and on the influences that society brings to bear on them, including through peer pressure, advertising, social media and family and cultural values.

There is a direct link between wellbeing and academic achievement and vice versa, i.e. wellbeing is a crucial prerequisite for achievement and achievement is essential for wellbeing.

Physical activity is associated with improved learning and the ability to concentrate. Strong, supportive relationships provide students with the emotional resources to step out of their intellectual 'comfort zone' and explore new ideas and ways of thinking, which is fundamental to educational achievement.

One of the challenges of trying to promote young people's wellbeing in school is the multi-faceted nature of wellbeing. There are a number of different types of wellbeing, all of which need to be promoted to some extent to create an overall sense of wellbeing in a person. So, it is not possible to improve students' wellbeing at school through single interventions or activities. Rather it requires the development of a 'culture' of wellbeing throughout the whole school and the active involvement of the whole staff, teaching and non-teaching, which can be difficult to achieve. In this area, St. Patrick's High School is an outstanding pioneer.

Care and welfare impact positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. Throughout the School there is a clear commitment to promoting a culture of care and support for one another. Pupils I met with spoke glowingly of the effective manner in which the Learning Resource Centre Team are nurturing the pupils' social and emotional development, creating a very good basis for them to learn effectively. The School supports well those pupils at risk of marginalisation and has effective structures in place to ensure their inclusion and retention in school.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



The pupils this Assessor met spoke of the very positive working relationships at all levels across the School. They represented the Student Wellbeing Team and engaged in an articulate, mature and personable manner. They reported that they appreciate the support of their teachers and other staff and that they enjoy their learning, particularly practical activities and collaborative work. All of the pupils reported that they feel safe in the School and know what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or wellbeing. They enjoy taking part in a range of extra-curricular activities and would appreciate further opportunities to provide feedback about their learning experiences.

A particular strength of the School is the arrangements for engaging with, and responding to, the pupils' ideas and opinions. The pupils are involved in the School's decision-making process through, for example, their review of key school policies and their input into initiatives to promote pupil health and wellbeing. The pupils' ideas have led to a number of tangible improvements to aspects of school life including canteen provision and timetabling.

Based on the evidence presented, the IQM assessment is that there can be a great deal of confidence in the aspects of governance being evaluated. They combine a wide set of complementary skills which are applied well to challenge and support the strategic direction of the School. They too recognise and are proactive in addressing the mental health and social needs of the pupils.

The progress of the pupils is to the fore of their thinking and they can demonstrate how their decision-making has contributed to improvements in the pastoral and academic life of the pupils.

Addressing student and staff wellbeing at school begins with helping students feel they are each known and valued as an individual in their own right, and that school life has a meaning and purpose for them. At St. Patrick's this has been achieved in a variety of small ways, the cumulative effect of which has had a very powerful influence on students' sense of wellbeing.

These include:

- providing opportunities for all members of the school community to participate in meaningful decision-making in school, e.g. through consultations, opinion surveys, referenda, electing class representatives, student parliaments, focus groups, in-class feedback on learning activities, and an element of student choice in relation to topics taught and teaching methods used;
- developing a welcoming environment where everyone at school can feel supported and safe through access to meaningful activities, e.g. clubs, societies, interest groups and associations dealing with issues of concern to young people, including health;
- taking steps to reduce the anxiety students feel about examinations and testing through the introduction of less stressful forms of assessment, e.g. formative assessment, peer assessment and involving students in the identification of their own assessment needs;



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



- using teaching methods that contribute to a positive classroom climate and wellbeing, e.g. cooperative learning, student-centred methods, self-organised time, outdoor activities;
- finding curriculum opportunities to talk about wellbeing issues with students, e.g. healthy eating, exercise, substance abuse, positive relationships;
- integrating democratic citizenship and education for intercultural understanding into different school subjects and extra-curricular activities, e.g. openness to other cultures in Religious Education, knowledge and critical understanding of human rights in Social Science, empathy in Literature;
- introducing student-led forms of conflict management and approaches to bullying and harassment, e.g. peer mediation, restorative justice;
- improving the physical environment of the school to make it more student-friendly, e.g. new furniture and fittings, carpeted areas, appropriate colour schemes, safe toilet areas, recreational areas;
- encouraging healthier eating by providing healthy options in the school canteen, e.g. avoiding high amounts of sugar, saturated fats and salt;
- working with parents to enhance students' achievement and sense of purpose in school, e.g. on healthy food, safe internet use and home-school communications.

Next Step: Embed training given by AMH at whole school level. Develop a strategic approach to intervention and support to help staff identify pupils with possible mental health problems. Maintain current practices of interventions/ workshops as part of assembly and PSE programme.

Agreed Targets for 2022-2023

Target 1: New Learning Support Arrangements established to meet the needs of all learners. This will form the School's Flagship Project.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

The Cluster Meetings have been successful and well attended. Going forward, it is hoped that opportunities to attend are shared between staff to develop their leadership qualities and areas of expertise. This means that different staff attend the Cluster Meetings depending on the topic.



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



Overview

“St Patrick’s is a great school. There are lots of fun subjects that you can enjoy. I settled in very well and there are lots of after-school clubs that are fun.”

St Patrick’s High School is a truly inclusive school. The Gospel Values of the School are lived out in everyday school life which creates a caring, inclusive and nurturing environment for all students and staff.

As a Catholic School in partnership with parents and the community, St. Patrick’s High School, Keady seeks to provide students of all abilities with a secure, caring, stimulating and happy environment where high values of work, personal integrity and learning can be achieved and where all students are encouraged to develop their talents and character and to contribute positively to home, school, church and society.

Inclusion is at the top of the agenda at St. Patrick’s. Leaders have carefully planned the curriculum in terms of what the pupils need to learn and how best to meet the needs of each child in the cohort.

It was an absolute pleasure to discuss the developments of the CoE Outcomes for 2021 – 2022 and the future aspirations with leaders and middle leaders at St. Patrick’s High School.

It was evident from the discussions that leaders are given the opportunity to develop their leadership pathway in their areas of expertise and interests to support the strategic direction of the school.

I look forward to meeting the staff and children of the school again next year, only by then they will, hopefully, be an IQM Flagship School for Inclusion.

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 pursue Flagship School status. I therefore 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: Kevin O’Neill

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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