



Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award



School Name Westacre Middle School
Ombersley Way
Droitwich
Worcestershire
WR9 0AA

Head/Principal Mrs Donna Evans

IQM Lead Mrs Catherine Doolin

Date of Review 2nd December 2025

Assessor Ms Jane Flynn

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group IDEA 2

Ambassador Ms Hilary Thompson

Next Meeting 19th May 2026

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Autumn 2023	19 th November 2023	Yes
Spring 2024	7 th March 2024	Yes
Summer 2024	20 th June 2024	Yes
Autumn 2024	13 th November 2024	Yes
Spring 2025	26 th March 2025	No
Summer 2025	18 th June 2025	Yes

Evidence

- School Self-Evaluation document
- School Website
- A wealth of documentation including:
- School Development Plan
- Behaviour Policy



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- Restorative Justice document
- Westacre as a Trauma Informed School document
- Adaptive Teaching Strategies document
- Attendance data used to target extra-curricular involvement
- Pupil Premium Training Materials
- Support Group Impact data relating to Reading and Spelling
- Analysis of focussed learning walks in Maths, depicting strengths, areas for development within each year group, RAG -rated to denote actions taken and developments made
- Governor Monitoring Form related to Adaptive Teaching
- Tour of school and classroom drop-ins

Meetings with:

- Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion)
- Deputy Head (Inclusion), Assistant Head, Pastoral Lead and Year 7 Class teacher
- An ECT in first year of teaching
- Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) Assistant Head T&L and English Lead, SENDCo
- Assistant Head (Pupil Premium Lead), Year 6 Teacher
- Pastoral Lead

Evaluation of Targets for last 12 Months

Target 1: To embed consistency of Behaviour Policy in all areas with an underlying understanding of different behaviours.

To continue to develop and embed the high standards at Westacre, Leadership has adopted a holistic approach, considering behaviours of both staff and children, needs of pupils, resources for support, engagement with parents and how they all mutually impact upon each other.

A new Assistant Head role was created to support the Deputy Head with leading on Behaviour Management and a fresh strategy was introduced in focussing upon a Relational approach to behaviour. The Pastoral Lead is just completing a Diploma in Trauma Informed Practice. Staff have been trained in causes of behaviours, including Adverse Childhood Experiences, in addition to other cognitive, communication and SEMH needs. Staff joining the school also receive the training, ensuring that there is joined up understanding and a cohesive approach to building positive relationships with pupils and enabling all to learn.

Great efforts have been made to ensure that staff have as full an understanding as possible, of every child's background and needs, both social and cognitive and there is much communication with First Schools during the year prior to children joining Westacre. Some children will receive extra visits, from staff to their home and will also be able to visit their Middle School several times before joining, if appropriate. Parent and child are greeted on their first day at Westacre and a meeting takes place to ensure that both child and parent(s) feel safe. Support is immediately put in place. All class teachers are at the door of their classrooms from 8.15am onwards every day, to greet and welcome each child individually and make an on-the-spot assessment of their well-being and 'fitness to learn', as well as encouraging and enthusing them for the new day. Pre-emptive referrals are made to Pastoral Staff, if a child is not judged to be ready to immediately begin the day in class. Fortnightly Pupil Strategy Meetings ensure that children receive a range of interventions and support and that no child 'falls through the net'. These are supplemented by Team around the Child Meetings, when appropriate.

The personal values of the 6 'R's are clearly visible around the building and are echoed in conversations with pupils and staff: Respect, Resourcefulness, Reasoning, Readiness, Resilience and Responsibility. Large displays in common areas also focus on positive, kind behaviour. e.g. 'What makes a good friend?' Children are encouraged to consider their own well-being and that of others. This is reflected in the attractive Library area where accessible books on subjects of mental health, feelings and diversity are invitingly and clearly displayed, along with other popular fictitious titles. This area is open and popular with children at break and lunchtimes. I also witnessed many pupils dancing to music on a large screen and clearly expending energy enjoying themselves in a fun, yet self-controlled manner.

Knowing every child well is at the heart of Westacre's strategy and children share information about themselves during a 'special time' every 6 weeks, thus enabling staff to praise, support and have more conduits through which they can understand and engage with children. Equally, they can react appropriately to any concerns which might

be raised, as a consequence of these conversations. Pastoral staff are working with discrete small groups of pupils, such as a quite anxious group of Year 7 girls and a group of boys struggling with Social Skills. These are taught in a focussed and explicit way, e.g. through the playing of board games.

Staff are aware of the importance of a calm quiet space for children to self-regulate, with supportive resources to enable them to do so. There is a 'Calm Corner' in every classroom and, although they are all age appropriate, they reflect a common approach across the school, thus embedding similar practice by all staff and a similar understanding for children of the importance of structure, regulation and the 6 Rs.

Testament to the school's commitment to an individualised approach to fostering positive behaviour through meeting children's needs was the example I witnessed of a quite complex jig saw, set up and in progress in a breakout area, which could be used by a particular child with a passion for jigsaws, should he need it, in order to help him self-regulate.

Following training in Restorative practice, all members of staff have conversation prompts on their lanyards, together with regulation strategies. The Pastoral Team, including recently recruited Inclusion Teaching Assistants) also supports in classrooms and at break and lunchtimes. Staff are very visible, helping to promote a positive and kind ethos, in an environment in which all can learn.

Public displays of 'The Roll of Honour', exhibiting names and photos of pupils who have been recognised for positive actions and achievements are changed on a weekly basis, helping to develop children's self-esteem and motivation. Celebrations and endorsements take place in Assemblies, every week. Similarly, during my tour of the school, I passed a child wearing a bright sash with 'Yes U Can' written on it, across his body. He informed me that these were special awards given in Maths for perseverance and progress. Pride in not just oneself, but in a knowledge and appreciation of the local community is also fostered through engaging displays relating to the local area and its history.

Staff have found the establishment of a drop-in Behaviour Surgery once a fortnight to be very supportive and helpful, although those I met were very quick to inform me that there is a total open door policy at Westacre and they feel confident and able to discuss any issues with colleagues, at any time, and they will always receive a positive listening ear. Lesson observations evidence a positive, relational approach to behaviour management, demonstrating an embedding of a common approach and deepening understanding of children, their needs and triggers for certain behaviours. There are clear expectations of staff and pupils, and both parties are supported in meeting these.

In the event that a child needs to be 'excluded' from learning temporarily for a short time, (this is decreasing in the wake of recently introduced strategies, although Leadership acknowledges that there needs to be further reduction of such instances) a detailed Personal Support Plan is put in place upon re-entry. This is implemented for a period of 12 – 20 weeks and is reviewed regularly, ensuring that the child feels secure, ready and able to manage his/herself and learn more independently.

This deeper knowledge and versatility of strategies to help children engage with teachers, their peers and their learning positively, have also helped Leadership to determine when 'Early Help' needs to be introduced.

It should be noted that Targets 2 and 3 – Adaptive Teaching and Pupil Engagement with extra-curricular activities - have also impacted upon embedding a calm and productive learning culture, through the creation of a web of joined-up strategies and practice.

Next Steps:

- Leadership wishes to extend the Relational Approach to Behaviour Management and increase documentation for staff being inducted into Westacre, whatever their experience.
- There will also be a continuation of reviewing classroom practice and updating/revisiting training. This will include the Pastoral Lead training the Pastoral Team in Trauma Informed Practice, following completion of her training.
- There will also be continued practice in Restorative Conversations, in order that staff can become increasingly confident and skilled in navigating these, having seen them modelled by Heads of Year. Pastoral Staff will attend 'Making Scripts' Training, to help with language in managing social situations.
- Leadership also plans to extend and develop the school's internal provision for SEND through the creation of 'The Hub'. (proposed Flagship project)

Target 2: Development of adaptive practices to address the increased level of children's needs

Leadership has reviewed Teaching and Learning pedagogy to address pupils' barriers to learning, which are varied. A 'forensic' approach to identifying needs of children and 'gap' analysis has been adopted and staff are continuously developing their knowledge and 'toolkits' of strategies to enable them to adapt their teaching strategies accordingly. This involves judicious, versatile and flexible use of Assessment for Learning techniques based upon an understanding of approaches required for each student.

The SENDCo has received Education Endowment Foundation training in Adaptive Teaching and has shared this with staff through training, for example, use of oracy, group work techniques, Question Analysis, avoidance of overload etc. An Occupational Therapist has worked with staff on the effective use of 'brain breaks'. 'Improving Literacy' strategies are used as appropriate across the school. Phonics work continues throughout the school, as necessary. Widgets are now in common use. The employment of collaborative and consistent approaches across the school has led to Teaching Assistants being able to support children as part of the whole class experience. This consistency can be seen in supportive Quality Assurance observation notes.

Although an emphasis is placed upon 'Quality First Teaching for all' in the mainstream classroom, following staff training in various aspects of need, a robust approach to identifying required support and intervention is now used. One consequence of this is

that there has been an increase in the number of Referrals made. Each is discussed and, where appropriate, a child can either be included in a Support Group, be placed upon the SEND Register and/or receive external Level 3 support. Support is built around a child's progress towards carefully identified SMART Targets. Every one of the 43 pupils with an EHCP has a bespoke, individualised timetable. Additional Teaching Assistants have received training in Autism, which enables them to work closely with children who have a diagnosis of exhibit symptoms. Furthermore, each Year Group now has a member of staff specialising in SEND.

Each Year Group of classrooms has a very attractive 'Breakout' room close by, where children in need of specific targeted support can receive this, for part of the day whilst also feeling very much part of their main class, into which they are integrated for the remainder of the time: The Pod (Yr5), 'The Studio' (Yr7) 'The Lodge' (Yr6) is a particularly inspiring facility, consisting of a beautifully furnished log cabin, where children were working very happily and productively. In addition, identified cohorts of children are able to benefit from the on-site Forest School, to enhance their learning experience.

Weekly Curriculum Strategy Meetings are now attended by the SENDCo, ensuring that the focus is on enabling all children to follow the same curriculum through the use of effective adaptive strategies to facilitate access for everyone. In addition, Subject Leaders have Adaptive Teaching as the main priority in their Action Plans.

Next Steps:

- The role of the SEND specialist in each Year Group will be developed to include support and advice for staff and to ensure that suitable adaptations are made across the curriculum.
- Leadership wishes to develop Adaptive Teaching in the foundation with a particular focus on scaffolding.
- The Adaptive Teaching strategies document will be revisited, developed and shared with all staff, including those new to the school, as part of their induction process.
- Team Meeting agendas will be revised to include specific time for collaboration and sharing of good practice, including the recording of lessons.
- There are plans for the Curriculum Leader to work closely with the 'More Able' Leader, in following NACE guidelines to facilitate further stretch and challenge for those pupils working above Age Related Expectations.
- Leadership also plans to extend and develop the school's internal provision for SEND through the creation of 'The Hub'. (proposed Flagship project)

Target 3: Engagement of vulnerable groups in the wider life of the school.

A senior member of staff leads on provision for 'disadvantaged' pupils at Westacre, whose cohort comprises 27% of children in receipt of additional funding. She has delivered training on the nature of 'disadvantage' and its implications, school attainment and consequential life chances for children. Every PP pupil now has an individual profile, enabling staff to be aware of the potential barriers which children in their classes might have. Strategies to promote engagement and hooks for each child are included. Furthermore, within the AFL routes which have been introduced for all pupils, there is an emphasis on PP children, ensuring that they, along with those with SEND, experience timely and appropriate intervention to check and promote learning. Learning walks confirm the use of the AFL route with vulnerable children.

Much effort has been put into working with both children and parents to increase attendance generally, but especially of vulnerable children, whose attendance is lower than average, in line with national statistics. Leadership took the decision to make appointments for Parents' Evening meetings, rather than merely inviting parents to attend. Meetings include one face to face, one digital and with follow up telephone calls. Following the introduction of this strategy, 33 more families attended Parents' meetings during the last year than previously. The Deputy Headteacher liaises with the Attendance Administrator daily and the Education Welfare Officer and Attendance Team weekly. In line with the policy of building positive relationships, the most appropriate person will 'take on the case', do home visits and ensure that barriers to attendance of an individual child are understood and addressed, through academic and/or social support.

It is clear that staff are committed to making Westacre an inviting, attractive and a safe and happy place where children want to be. Huge efforts have been put into providing extra-curricular and enrichment activities and opportunities for school community involvement and leadership responsibilities. These are acknowledged through celebrations and awards.

A member of staff has the role of involving children with SEND in the above, several of whom are also PP. She targeted children who, in response to an audit, had not attended any of the 50 available clubs that are all free. She looked at how access could be made easier by considering where it took place, when it took place and whether the child knew and had a positive view of the member of staff leading it. By including a photograph of the staff, adjusting time and venue, attendance of this cohort increased. A successful example was the creation of a 'Silent Disco' during 'Just Dance' time, held at breaktime, for those children who did not like the noise and/or could not stay after school.

For those children reluctant to make a longer-term commitment to a club, staff have introduced a 'Golden Ticket'. This is personalised, makes the child feel special and allows them to attend one session of an activity as a 'taster'. This has then led to pupils attending regularly. Fifty seven percent of 'disadvantaged' children attended at least 1 club. When a small group of PP pupils with low attendance was targeted and encouraged to attend a club, 40% of them improved their school attendance from mid 80% prior to the start of Summer Term to 100% during the first half of Summer Term 2025. The other children in the group averaged an increase in attendance of 11.6%. Overall, there has been a closing of the gap in attendance between PP/SEND pupils and the remainder of the school cohort.

It should be noted that a Young Carer has been personally supported to attend an extra-curricular club. Furthermore, 28% of places on the main residential trip are taken by PP pupils, reflecting the percentage of the school cohort. Families are able to pay by instalments over a long period of time. For those who don't attend, a significant on site 'Experience Week' is planned. Considerable effort is made to ensure that it is not inferior to the Residential trip.

Children are encouraged to feel important, needed and valued at school. The 'Westacre Good Citizen Award' comprises 8 challenges and can be achieved at bronze, silver and gold level. It focuses upon life skills, developed through graduated tasks. The local Councillor formally presents the Awards, which are given gravitas and children have 'T' shirts recognising their achievements.

Pupils can join a range of Leadership groups, some of which make presentations in assemblies: respectively: World Watchers (News and Current Affairs); Digital Leaders; Eco Warriors; Wellbeing Ambassadors; Librarians; Music Ambassadors. Westacre works with the Sports Partnership, which trains and supports Sports Leaders. Prefects take on the roles of general responsibilities in supporting staff and students every September, but to retain motivation throughout the year, extra Prefects are appointed for January. Staff positively promote roles to PP and SEND children, resulting in the fact that 40% of the School Parliament is identified as 'disadvantaged'.

Next Steps:

- Leadership will embed current strategies to engage even more vulnerable children into school life. The emphasis will be on relationships with the individual child and families and unpicking their barriers.
- In providing for a group of children with SEMH needs, it is hoped that the proposed 'Hub' project will facilitate attendance and participation.

Targets for the next twelve months.

Rationale

A major part of Westacre's School Development Plan has been to create a holistic and tightly dovetailed provision to support a n increasing number and wide range of children's needs, including bespoke onsite learning areas for children who are struggling to access the mainstream classroom fulltime.

The first part of the development has now taken place i.e. the creation of 'The Pod,' 'The Lodge' and 'The Studio' as Supplementary Learning Spaces for each Year Group. (See last year's IQM Targets)

The second part of the vision has begun: the creation of 'The Hub', a self-contained learning space, located within the school grounds but separate from the main building, designed to support pupils with SEMH needs. The objective is to create a personal curriculum, individualised for each child and providing a balance of SEMH support and academic learning. Leaders have visited a range of different educational providers, including Primary, Middle, High and Special Schools along with Alternative Provision, in order to research best practice.

Project:

A superb Learning Space has now been created in a former Site Supervisor's house. It contains various rooms, each furnished with a particular purpose in mind. The building has been beautifully equipped with great thought, care and input from both staff and children. Leadership is now ready to embark upon the process of enabling the building to function for purpose. The Headteacher and her team would like this part of the SDP to take the form of Westacre's IQM Flagship Project.

Title: Establish a centre of learning and curriculum for children unable to access mainstream learning full time, which effectively supports their SEMH, personal development and academic progress and attainment.

Following on from the Inclusion Team's initial plans and our discussion, staff now intend to proceed with appointing specialist staff and creating a comprehensive, structured, effective curriculum, which provides strong content and is both versatile and flexible, with the aim of ultimately enabling children to participate in mainstream learning full time.

It is envisaged that this will initially be a two-year project, to facilitate the strong embedding of curriculum and processes. Staff recognise the importance of not sacrificing thorough planning in an understandable desire to have the facility fully up and running. A potential time-line was discussed during our meeting and the following actions were agreed:

- Leadership to update staff on the status and direction of The Hub - December 2025
- Specialist Staff to be in post in January 2026

- 'Hub' Lead staff will research various SEMH programmes and select for implementation in 'The Hub', appropriately - Spring 1
- Literacy and Numeracy to be timetabled around the chosen SEMH programme. - 'Hub' Led, in collaboration with Curriculum Lead, Literacy Lead, Numeracy Lead – Spring 2
- Establish entrance and exit criteria and assessment procedures – 'Hub' Lead, in collaboration with SENDCo, Pastoral and Curriculum Leads - Spring 1
- Research into outdoor learning and horticultural activities for children and build these into the curriculum - Spring 1.
- Develop outdoor space to include 'allotment' type area - Spring 2
- Ensure resources, including staffing for all aspects of curriculum, are available and in place by end of Spring 2 – 'Hub' Lead, in collaboration with Headteacher, Timetable Lead, Literacy Lead, Numeracy Lead, SENDCo
- Have full curriculum up and running in Summer 1
- July 2026 - Senior Team to evaluate impact and review to amend, develop with appropriate colleagues and embed commencing September 2026.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Staff from Westacre have found the meetings to be interesting, enjoyable and helpful, not just in specific content but in providing 'thinking time' and in sharing ideas with others.

Westacre took away the idea of the Pupil Voice newsletter from Troedhyrw School, along with the school's forensic approach to involving Pupil Premium children in enrichment and extra - curricular activity, through close involvement with parents. The development of Troedhyrw's nurture provision was also of interest and has fed into some of Westacre's thinking in developing its own provision. Following a day at Christopher Whitehead College, Westacre has now incorporated some age-appropriate work on 'misogyny' into its PSHE programme. Regency School sensory rooms have helped to inform provision at Westacre.

A major impact has been the close working relationship which Westacre has formed with Prince Henry's School, following the meeting focussing upon its 'Bridge' House' and 'Lodge' provision. This has been influential in Westacre's plans for its own facilities to support children's learning, particularly in the setting up of 'The Hub'. Further visits have taken place and mutual conversations continue.

Overview

Westacre Middle School is a five-form entry Middle School for children in Years 5, 6 and 7. It is situated in the town of Droitwich Spa in Worcestershire. The social and economic backgrounds of the children vary, from deprived to economically quite wealthy. The percentage of pupils in receipt of 'disadvantaged/Pupil Premium funding is 27%. Children identified as having SEND constitute 29%, which includes 43 children with EHCPs. The demographic is very largely White British but also comprises a very small number of Eastern European children who are very well integrated into whole school life.

Although built in the 1960s, there has been much investment in the school buildings and facilities, the result of which is an extremely bright, airy, environment. It has been designed to use space to the best advantage in creating a functioning, inclusive environment to meet the increasing and varying needs of pupils.

Upon entry one is immediately aware of the importance of Pupil Voice and a strong sense of belonging and responsibility. 'Inspire, Challenge, Achieve' is clearly visible and sets the tone for the West Acre Experience. Emblems of the recently newly named School Houses, chosen by pupils, are boldly and proudly displayed, near two other boards, displaying photos and names of Members of the School Parliament and members of various Pupil Voice groups.

Classrooms are spacious, consistent in design and well-resourced to support a variety of learning needs, whilst still allowing each classroom teacher to put their individual mark on the surroundings. A distinct 'break out' room for each year group, provides a space where those children requiring extra targeted interventions receive focussed support. This has been a recent development and facilitates specific support for children during mornings, whilst still being very much part of their class, whom they join for afternoon activities. A large new Kitchen/Cooking Room enables children to have a high quality, practical learning experience. This area is also used for informal parental coffee mornings and workshops, as it is comfortable and separate from the main school buildings.

Much work has taken place on building positive relationships and developing appropriate behaviour for learning. A revised policy and investment in training in Adaptive Teaching have resulted in excellent pupil behaviour. Classrooms are calm, focussed and appropriately active. Children appear aware of expectations and work well together. Staff practice is rooted in knowing their children very well and using AFL techniques effectively to lead learning and motivate, even reluctant children.

Summative assessments identify gaps in children's learning, and these are analysed and addressed through scaffolded learning, targeted interventions on numeracy, phonics, writing etc.

Westacre has strategies in place to scoop up children and entice them into participating fully in the life of the school. They have a wealth of extra-curricular and enhanced opportunities. It is recognised that this might be a small step by step process for some pupils, but a range of support is in place and continues to develop even further, in order that no child is 'lost.'



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Whilst there is still a gap in measures of attainment and attendance between 'non-disadvantaged' and 'disadvantaged' pupils, this is in line with 'disadvantaged' Combined ARE Measure for Summer 2026, from 45% to 61%. At KS2, in 2025, there was an improvement in the overall Combined Age-Related Measure for all pupils from 52% to 57%.

An increased number of children with Special Needs attending Westacre has provided challenges for staff which they have met and continue to address with vision, determination, passion and total commitment to the welfare and progress of *all* their pupils. There is fully joined up thinking across a broad Inclusion Team, each person providing a solution focussed approach to both short- and long-term issues.

Governors are included in the monitoring of the implementation and impact of initiatives. The proposed 'Flagship' project is visionary, necessary, challenging, exciting and built upon sound foundations. It reflects the willingness of leadership to take decisions which will support the evolution of its cohort and needs of its community, whatever they might be.

Westacre is a very caring, fair, structured and happy environment, in which children are supported in their personal, social and academic development in order that they can be included in ongoing education and ultimately have positive opportunities and choices in life. In conclusion, therefore, I congratulate Westacre on its achievements to date.

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: Jane Flynn

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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