Assessor's Evaluation for the IQM CoE Award

School Name	Beech Hill Community Primary School Netherby Road Wigan Lancashire WN6 7PT
Head/Principal	Mrs Michelle McCarthy
IQM Lead	Mrs Alison Saddington
Date of Review	2nd July 2026
Assessor	Mr David Clay

IQM Cluster Programme

Cluster Group	TEAM NW B
Ambassador	Ms Siona Robson
Next Meeting	TBC

Cluster Attendance

Term	Date	Attendance
Summer 2025	23rd June 2025	Yes
Autumn 2025	21st November 2025	Yes
Spring 2026	9th February 2025	Yes
Summer 2026	8th June 2025	Yes

Evidence:

- Tour of School
- Visit to school family breakfast.
- OFSTED Report
- School website
- IQM Action Plan
- Learning Walk

- Tour of outdoor provision
- Translanguaging Intervention Drop In
- Hearing screening information

Meetings held with:

- School Leaders
- School Governors
- Inclusion Team (EYFS SENDCo, Pastoral Lead and School Resource Base Teacher
- Staff (Curriculum Lead, Learning Mentor, Office Manager, Translanguaging Lead, Communication Champion)
- External Agencies
- Pupils (Mental Health Ambassadors, Head Pupils, Eco Council)
- Parents

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Evaluation of Targets for last 12 Months

Target 1: To develop and embed a progressive Engagement Curriculum that provides personalised learning pathways for pupils working significantly below age-related expectations.

The school has made strong progress towards this ambitious target and has demonstrated a thoughtful, research-informed approach to curriculum development. Rather than adopting an existing model, leaders have worked collaboratively with Millstead Special School to explore formal and pre-formal curriculum frameworks and how these can best meet the needs of pupils within the Nursery and the developing SEND Resource Provision. The school's determination to create a bespoke curriculum reflects its unwavering commitment to ensuring that provision is tailored to the unique needs of its learners. As one member of staff explained, *"It has got to be right for our children."*

This collaborative work has provided a strong foundation for the development of an Engagement Curriculum that places individual needs, meaningful learning, and progression at its centre. Staff within the SEND Resource Provision are further developing their expertise through training in approaches such as Attention Autism, Bucket Therapy, Intensive Interaction, and the Curiosity Approach, ensuring that pedagogy is closely aligned with the needs of pupils working within pre-formal and semi-formal learning pathways.

Next Steps:

Over the coming year, the school should continue its collaborative work with its partners in specialist provision and mainstream to design and implement a coherent semi-formal curriculum with clearly defined milestones that support assessment, progression, and curriculum planning. As the curriculum becomes embedded, staff should continue to deepen their understanding of the Engagement Model and how engagement influences teaching, learning, and assessment. Ongoing quality assurance, alongside collaboration with specialist settings, will be essential in ensuring that the curriculum remains robust, responsive, and fully meets the needs of pupils within the SEND Resource Provision.

Target 2: To build on recent developments by embedding effective, evidence-informed practice for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL).

The school has made excellent progress in embedding high-quality provision for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL). Leaders have worked in close partnership with the Wigan Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) team to undertake a comprehensive audit of provision, using this process not simply as a validation exercise but as an opportunity to further strengthen inclusive practice. Throughout discussions, the EMTAS team spoke highly of the school's commitment to ensuring that every pupil can access the curriculum successfully, describing Beech Hill as a team that is always striving to improve and demonstrating a genuine determination to meet the needs of its increasingly diverse community. They commented that it is "genuinely a pleasure to work with Beech Hill," recognising the

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school's proactive approach to identifying need, making timely referrals, and embracing collaborative working to improve outcomes for pupils.

The completed local authority audit highlighted provision that is exemplary and has the potential to inform practice more widely. The staff even shared practice with new members of the EMTAS team to support their professional development. Across the school, classroom environments reflected a consistent and thoughtful approach to supporting bilingual learners. Staff made effective use of visual scaffolds, including colourful semantics, carefully selected images, and vocabulary support, enabling pupils to access learning while maintaining high expectations.

A particular strength has been the school's commitment to practitioner research through its action research programme. As part of this work, a member of staff has further developed and embedded a translanguaging intervention which encourages pupils to discuss and develop ideas collaboratively in their home language before applying this understanding through English. This innovative approach not only strengthens language acquisition and curriculum access but also celebrates pupils' linguistic identities, recognising bilingualism as a significant strength rather than a barrier to learning. During the review, it was a pleasure to observe pupils participating enthusiastically in these sessions. They confidently supported one another's learning, demonstrating high levels of collaboration, communication, and mutual respect. The school's thoughtful use of same-language peer buddies further promotes belonging, confidence and academic success for newly arrived and bilingual learners.

Next Step:

Over the coming year, the school plans to continue its close partnership with the Wigan EMTAS team by piloting an intervention designed to extend and challenge advanced bilingual learners, ensuring that pupils continue to make strong progress beyond language acquisition towards higher levels of academic attainment. Given the quality of practice already established, the school is also well placed to share its work more widely, particularly its innovative translanguaging approach, across the IQM Cluster and the wider local authority, further strengthening its contribution as a Centre of Excellence.

Target 3: To further develop provision for pupils with complex social and communication needs through the establishment of a bespoke Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Resource Provision

The school has made exceptional progress towards this ambitious target following its successful application to establish a Local Authority SEND Resource Provision for pupils with autism. Central to this development has been a clear commitment to meeting the needs of children within the local community. Leaders recognised that too many pupils were travelling significant distances to access specialist provision and were determined to create a high-quality resource that would enable children to remain within their own community while accessing the support they require.

Since receiving approval, the school has moved at an impressive pace to establish the provision. The existing Hub building has been thoughtfully redesigned and refurbished

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to create an environment that is calm, welcoming, and tailored to the needs of autistic pupils. At the time of the review, final decorating and preparation were underway, with careful consideration being given to how the physical environment will promote communication, independence, and emotional regulation. The space has significant potential and clearly reflects the school's aspiration to provide pupils with an environment in which they can flourish.

Leaders have demonstrated a meticulous approach to planning the new provision. Extensive consultation has taken place with parents, the local community, and the Local Authority, while a specialist teacher and skilled support staff have been successfully recruited to lead the provision from September 2026. During the review, I had the opportunity to speak with the newly appointed teacher, whose enthusiasm, expertise, and commitment to developing the provision were immediately evident. Six of the nine pupils are already known to the school through its Early Years provision, enabling staff to plan carefully for transition, while detailed consultation has ensured that the needs of the remaining pupils have been equally well considered.

A notable strength of Beech Hill is the willingness of leaders to seek out expertise wherever it exists. Rather than attempting to develop the provision in isolation, the school has forged strong partnerships with specialist colleagues, including Millstead Special School, to support the design of a bespoke curriculum and progression framework. Curriculum development is well underway, with leaders working collaboratively to ensure that learning pathways are meaningful, personalised, and underpinned by evidence-informed practice. Staff are also engaging enthusiastically in high-quality professional development so that the provision opens with a shared understanding of effective practice. Furniture and specialist resources are currently being sourced and thoughtfully selected to ensure that every aspect of the environment supports pupils' learning and wellbeing from the outset.

Next Step:

Over the coming year, the school should continue to refine its bespoke curriculum and develop assessment systems that accurately capture the small but significant steps of progress made by pupils within the Resource Provision. As the provision becomes established, leaders should continue to work collaboratively with specialist schools and other Resource Provisions to quality assure practice, share expertise, and develop networks that strengthen inclusive provision across the region. The initial months following the opening of the provision will inevitably require ongoing reflection and adaptation as staff respond to pupils' emerging needs, and the school's reflective, research-informed approach places it in a strong position to ensure that the provision continues to evolve and flourish.

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Agreed Targets for next 12 Months.

Target 1: To develop high quality provision at lunch times that supports play and learning.

Comments:

Beech Hill is fortunate to benefit from extensive outdoor space, providing significant potential to further develop high-quality play and learning opportunities. The school is keen to build upon the excellent work already undertaken to create an environment where all pupils can engage in purposeful play during breaktimes and lunchtimes. During the review, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their enjoyment of the climbing frames and outdoor exercise equipment. However, leaders also recognise the opportunity to further enhance the provision by developing experiences that foster creativity, communication, collaboration, and imaginative play.

The school should continue to enhance its lunchtime provision by introducing stimulating play and learning opportunities that encourage independence, social interaction, problem-solving, and physical activity. Planned developments, including the introduction of a large sandpit and mud kitchen, have the potential to significantly enrich children's opportunities for exploration, language development and cooperative play while ensuring that the outdoor environment reflects the diverse needs and interests of all pupils.

Staff should continue to receive professional development that enables them to facilitate high-quality play, recognising and extending learning opportunities while promoting communication, social skills, and pupil independence. Pupil voice should remain central to the ongoing development of the provision, ensuring that children play an active role in shaping both the environment and the experiences available to them.

The impact of these developments should be monitored through pupil voice, observations and behaviour and wellbeing data to evaluate their contribution to engagement, relationships, emotional wellbeing, and readiness to learn. It would be valuable for next year's review to include discussions with pupils about the impact of these developments, ensuring that their perspectives continue to inform the school's ongoing commitment to providing rich, inclusive outdoor learning experiences.

Target 2: To further develop whole-school understanding and inclusive practice to support pupils with DCD (Developmental Co-ordination Disorder) and dysgraphia.

Comments:

Beech Hill continues to demonstrate a proactive approach to identifying and removing barriers to learning. Over the coming year, the school will further develop its understanding of how best to support pupils with Developmental Coordination Disorder (dyspraxia) and dysgraphia, ensuring that staff are equipped with the knowledge and confidence to recognise need early and implement effective, evidence-informed support.

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A comprehensive programme of professional development, delivered in partnership with the Occupational Therapy Service and the TESS team, will develop staff understanding of age-related motor development, the characteristics of DCD and dysgraphia, and the reasonable adjustments and interventions that enable pupils to access learning successfully. This work will also strengthen staff confidence in identifying when specialist support may be required and making appropriate referrals to the Occupational Therapy Service.

Alongside this training, the school intends to develop a practical toolkit to support the identification of pupils' individual needs, guide targeted interventions and provide robust evidence to inform referrals where appropriate. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring that support is personalised, timely and responsive to each child's needs.

The impact of this work should be monitored through work scrutiny, particularly improvements in pupils' written presentation, fine motor development, and independence, alongside observations of pupils' participation and progress within physical education. Together, these measures will enable leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies implemented and ensure that pupils with coordination and handwriting difficulties are able to access the curriculum with increasing confidence and success.

Target 3: To audit and refine provision throughout the school, including within the SEND Resource Provision, for pupils who are autistic.

Comments:

Throughout the review, there were many examples of high-quality provision for pupils with autism across the school. Classrooms consistently reflected an inclusive ethos, with visual timetables displayed in every class, calm and thoughtfully designed learning environments, low-stimulus displays with hessian backing, well-organised classrooms and carefully planned spaces where pupils could regulate their emotions when feeling overwhelmed. These approaches have become embedded within everyday classroom practice and contribute to environments in which all pupils are able to learn and thrive.

As the school prepares to open its new SEND Resource Provision, leaders are committed to ensuring that both the specialist provision and mainstream classrooms represent exemplary practice for autistic pupils. Over the coming year, the school intends to undertake a comprehensive audit of its provision to identify strengths and opportunities for further refinement, ensuring that high-quality support is consistent across all areas of the school.

A particular strength of Beech Hill is its philosophy that effective practice developed for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities should enhance learning for every child. Leaders firmly believe that strategies which remove barriers for autistic pupils create richer, more accessible learning environments for all learners. This inclusive mindset underpins the school's approach to curriculum design, classroom environments, and teaching practice.

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The school also demonstrates a commendable willingness to learn from others. Leaders actively seek advice and challenge from specialist settings and experienced practitioners, recognising the value of collaboration in continually improving provision. This outward-facing approach will ensure that the new SEND Resource Provision is informed by current evidence, specialist expertise, and exemplary practice, enabling the school to continue refining its provision so that it consistently meets the needs of autistic pupils while strengthening inclusive practice across the whole school.

The Impact of the Cluster Group

Collaborative working is a significant strength of Beech Hill Community Primary School. Leaders value the opportunity to work alongside like-minded schools and actively engage in the IQM Cluster, recognising the support, challenge, and professional dialogue that these meetings provide. The school has attended each of the cluster meetings over the past year and has demonstrated a genuine commitment to learning from others while also sharing its own inclusive practice.

The Autumn meeting proved particularly influential. Discussions around SEND Resource Provisions gave leaders both the inspiration and reassurance to pursue their successful application to establish a Local Authority Resource Provision within the school. Seeing high-quality specialist provision in practice reinforced the leadership team's belief that Beech Hill was well placed to offer similar opportunities for pupils within its own community. Sessions focusing on supporting families also provided valuable affirmation of the school's own relational approach and highlighted further opportunities to strengthen partnerships with parents and carers.

The Spring meeting at Outwood Academy focused on curriculum enrichment, student leadership, and subject-specific adaptations. This was particularly relevant to Beech Hill's ongoing work to ensure that learning is appropriately adapted for pupils with SEND and those with English as an Additional Language. The opportunity to explore practical approaches to supporting pupils with literacy difficulties, including dyslexia, complemented the school's wider commitment to removing barriers to learning through evidence-informed practice.

The Summer Northwest Collaborative event provided an excellent opportunity to engage with a broader network of IQM schools from across the region. Conversations with schools already hosting SEND Resource Provisions proved especially valuable, allowing leaders to discuss both the opportunities and challenges associated with specialist provision. These discussions have already led to the development of new professional links and planned visits to other IQM schools, ensuring that Beech Hill continues to learn from established examples of excellent practice. The event also offered valuable professional challenge through sessions on online safety, the Bright Leaders programme, and wider approaches to inclusive leadership, all of which will continue to inform the school's ongoing development.

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Overview

Beech Hill Community Primary School exemplifies what it means to be a true community school. The school has its community firmly at the heart of everything it does, working tirelessly to provide wraparound support for children and their families. Inclusion is not viewed simply as ensuring that pupils access learning; it is about ensuring that families feel valued, supported and part of the school community. Throughout the review, parents spoke warmly about the relationships they have developed during their children's time at the school, describing the staff as "like family". This was reflected in initiatives such as the Family Breakfast, where parents, carers and children are welcomed into school each morning to share a bagel and spend time talking informally with staff. These seemingly simple moments are fundamental to the culture that has been established. Even after pupils have moved on to secondary education, many continue to return to visit staff, demonstrating the lasting relationships that have been built and the profound sense of belonging that Beech Hill creates.

The school serves a community facing significant socio-economic challenges and supports higher than average numbers of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and children who have newly arrived in the country. Despite these challenges, the school is vibrant, purposeful, and full of optimism. High expectations, underpinned by strong relationships, permeate every aspect of school life. Behaviour across the school was exemplary during the review, with calm, purposeful classrooms where pupils were fully engaged in learning and staff consistently demonstrated an unwavering belief that every child can flourish. This culture is underpinned by an ethos where inclusion is viewed as everyone's responsibility and where every child is known, understood, and valued as an individual.

Relationships are undoubtedly the foundation upon which the school's inclusive practice is built. Parents described an open-door culture where they know they will always be listened to and treated with dignity and respect. The trust that families place in the school was particularly striking. Parents spoke openly about their confidence that staff would always "do the right thing" for their child and described how the school understands their children "as well as we do". The pastoral team was frequently praised for the compassionate and highly personalised support offered to families, with flexible approaches such as soft landings, access to a mindfulness room and carefully planned regulation spaces ensuring that pupils are able to access learning when they are emotionally ready. Parents reflected that leaving Beech Hill for secondary school can feel "like losing family", illustrating the depth of the relationships that have been established and the impact the school has on the wider lives of those it serves. Parents and external agencies alike commented that the school is willing to "try anything" if it will improve outcomes for a child, reflecting an ethos where no barrier is considered insurmountable.

Throughout the school, meeting the needs of every pupil remains central to decision-making. Consistent inclusive strategies, including visual timetables, visual prompts, colourful semantics and carefully adapted classroom environments, were evident across the school. Leaders are rightly proud of this work but continue to demonstrate a relentless commitment to refinement rather than complacency. Plans to further audit

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and strengthen consistency, particularly in preparation for the opening of the new SEND Resource Provision, reflect a leadership team that continually asks how provision can be improved still further. This commitment to continual improvement, alongside a willingness to seek support and challenge from specialist settings and external agencies, is a notable strength of the school.

One of the most impressive aspects of leadership at Beech Hill is the way in which staff are empowered to engage in professional enquiry. Rather than relying on traditional performance management targets, staff undertake action research projects that enable them to investigate aspects of inclusive practice, evaluate impact, and share successful approaches with colleagues. This has created a culture in which innovation is encouraged and evidence-informed practice flourishes. A particularly impressive example of this is the school's translanguaging intervention, which enables pupils to discuss and develop ideas in their home language before completing tasks in English. Observing this intervention during the review was a genuine highlight. Pupils confidently supported one another's learning, drawing upon their linguistic strengths while simultaneously developing English language skills. Importantly, the intervention affirms pupils' cultural identities and reinforces the school's belief that bilingualism is an asset to be celebrated. This ethos is visible throughout the school, where the many languages and cultures represented within the community are proudly acknowledged through displays and the prominent display of national flags, ensuring that every child feels represented, welcomed, and valued.

Another notable strength of Beech Hill is its unwavering commitment to collaboration. Leaders and staff recognise that the best inclusive practice is developed through working alongside others and are continually seeking opportunities to learn from, and contribute to, the wider educational community. Throughout the review, local cluster colleagues and a wide range of external agencies spoke enthusiastically about the school's openness to support, describing a team that is reflective, outward-looking, and always willing to embrace new ideas if they will improve outcomes for children. This collaborative approach enables the school to develop practice both rapidly and effectively, ensuring that improvements are informed by specialist expertise and current evidence rather than being developed in isolation.

Importantly, collaboration at Beech Hill is reciprocal. Alongside drawing upon the expertise of others, the school is equally committed to supporting schools across the local authority and the wider IQM network. Staff have shared their own inclusive practice through professional development, including training in Precision Teaching, and are recognised for the depth of expertise that exists within the staff team. Leaders have created a culture in which professional learning is valued, and staff are supported to develop their own knowledge and confidence before sharing this more widely. It was particularly telling that one member of staff who had moved to another school spoke warmly about their desire to return to their "school family", illustrating the exceptionally positive culture that exists within the organisation. This culture of trust, collaboration and continuous improvement not only strengthens provision for pupils at Beech Hill but also enables the school to make a meaningful contribution to improving inclusive practice across the wider educational community.

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The school's commitment to becoming increasingly trauma-informed further exemplifies its determination to meet the needs of every learner. Leaders have recognised that many children have experienced adversity and have therefore invested significantly in developing staff expertise. It was particularly noteworthy that the office staff were among the first to complete trauma-informed training, recognising that, for some children, the first interaction of the day may be the most important. This whole-school commitment has resulted in a consistent approach to supporting pupils' social, emotional, and mental health. In addition, pupils themselves have been empowered to contribute through their roles as Mental Health Ambassadors. These pupils spoke thoughtfully about the importance of supporting one another, recognising when adult help is needed and contributing positively to the caring culture that exists throughout the school.

Pupils described Beech Hill as a "safe space", "kind" and "a truly inclusive place where people don't judge each other". These comments were reflected consistently throughout the review. Equally striking was pupils' recognition that the school provides opportunities that extend well beyond the classroom. Leaders are determined that children's aspirations should not be limited by their circumstances. This is exemplified through the school's growing partnerships with STEM organisations and local industry, including its successful participation in the First LEGO League. These opportunities enable pupils to develop problem-solving, teamwork and engineering skills while broadening their understanding of future careers. As leaders explained, the ambition is for pupils to "see themselves in the wider world of work", ensuring that they recognise the opportunities available within their own community and beyond.

This Centre of Excellence review demonstrates that Beech Hill Community Primary School continues to provide an outstanding model of inclusive practice. Leaders have created a school where relationships, aspiration and evidence-informed practice combine to ensure that every child feels valued and able to succeed. Particularly impressive is the school's refusal to stand still. Whether through practitioner research, the development of its bespoke SEND Resource Provision, innovative work supporting bilingual learners, or its willingness to seek and share expertise with others, leaders consistently demonstrate a determination to refine and strengthen provision in response to the changing needs of their community. The school's active engagement with its IQM Cluster, partnerships with specialist settings, local authority services and external agencies further reinforces its position as a school that not only embraces collaboration but also contributes positively to improving inclusive practice beyond its own setting.

During the next review, particular attention should be given to the implementation and impact of the new SEND Resource Provision, the school's continued leadership within its IQM Cluster and the extent to which its innovative practice continues to influence inclusive provision across the wider IQM network.

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 Centre of Excellence. I therefore recommend that the school retains its Centre of Excellence status and is reviewed again in 12 months. The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its

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Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Centre of Excellence status.

Assessor: Mr David Clay

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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

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