



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



School Name: Dovecot Primary School

School Address: Grant Road
Liverpool
Merseyside
L14 0LH

Head/Principal: Mrs Karen Barr

IQM Lead: Mrs Karen Barr

Assessment Date: 12th February 2025

Assessor: Mr Max Kelly

Sources of Evidence:

- IQM Self-Evaluation Report (SER)
- Learning Walk and Tour of the School
- School's IQM Evidence File via school laptop
- OFSTED Report (6th June 2024 and 7th June 2024)
- Observation of Playtime
- Observation of lunchtime, including eating with the children

Meetings Held with:

- Meeting with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Safeguarding Lead
- Meeting Samantha Dunning, Governor
- Meeting with a group of parents
- Meeting with a group of parents and community partners, including CoG Christine
- Nurse
- Meeting with the Pupil School Council
- Meeting with a group of teachers
- Meeting with a group of support staff



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Overall Evaluation

Nestled in the heart of Liverpool's Knotty Ash ward, Dovecot Primary School stands as a shining example of how an inclusive ethos, unwavering commitment, and strong community ties can create a nurturing and aspirational educational environment. Dovecot is not just a school -it is a family, a support network, and a transformative force in the lives of the pupils and families it serves. Every aspect of the school's provision is underpinned by a steadfast dedication to inclusion, ensuring that every child, regardless of background, ability, or circumstance, is given the opportunity to thrive.

The school's inclusive vision is deeply embedded in its daily practice and is felt in every classroom, corridor, and conversation. The ethos of "*We Learn Together and Grow Together*" is not just a motto but a lived reality, evident in the strong relationships between staff, pupils, and the wider community. Leadership, staff, governors, parents, and pupils all contribute to a shared culture of acceptance, ambition, and empowerment, creating an environment where diversity is celebrated, barriers to learning are removed, and every child is supported in achieving their full potential.

Dovecot Primary School serves a community facing significant socio-economic challenges. With high levels of deprivation, a large proportion of pupils with additional needs, and a significant number of families requiring safeguarding support, the school's role extends far beyond the classroom. It is a cornerstone of the community, offering not only high-quality education but also pastoral care, outreach programs, and a compassionate, wrap-around approach to family engagement. The leadership team has taken proactive steps to ensure that inclusion is at the heart of the school's development, demonstrating resilience, strategic vision, and a clear moral purpose in their pursuit of excellence for all.

At Dovecot, inclusion is more than just an abstract concept - it is woven into the very fabric of the school. From adaptive teaching strategies and specialist interventions to bespoke pastoral support and innovative enrichment opportunities, the school ensures that every pupil's unique needs are met. Staff are highly attuned to the social, emotional, and academic development of their pupils, employing a holistic approach that recognises the whole child rather than focusing solely on academic outcomes.

The school's commitment to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision is exemplary. The dedicated leadership of the SENCO and Pastoral Lead ensures that staff are well-trained, confident, and equipped to deliver targeted interventions that have a meaningful and measurable impact. The Rainbow Room, a dedicated space for emotional and sensory regulation, provides pupils with a calm, supportive environment where they can regroup, reflect, and regain confidence before re-engaging with their learning. In addition, the school has introduced structured sensory circuits, allowing children with additional needs to develop their self-regulation skills and build resilience in a structured yet flexible manner.

Moreover, the Reading Mastery approach, introduced by the Headteacher, reflects the school's innovative mindset in making literacy accessible, engaging, and inclusive. By integrating visual and digital elements, staff have created a reading culture that



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



empowers all pupils, particularly those with additional learning needs or English as an Additional Language (EAL). This approach exemplifies Dovecot's belief in high expectations for all, ensuring that every child has the tools to develop into confident, capable learners.

One of Dovecot's greatest strengths is its deep-rooted connection with parents, carers, and the wider community. The PTFA is beginning to play an active role in fundraising and creating a strong sense of belonging, while school-led initiatives such as multicultural events, coffee mornings, and parent workshops further reinforce the message that families are valued partners in the educational journey.

The school's approach to pastoral care is both proactive and compassionate, with staff working tirelessly to identify and address barriers to learning. The Priority Youth Project, which provides on-site counselling services, ensures that mental health support is available to pupils without the delays associated with external referrals. Likewise, ongoing partnerships with local services, charities, and initiatives such as the ADHD Foundation and the Liverpool Learning Partnership further enrich the school's support network, providing a comprehensive safety net for children and families in need.

During my visit, parents spoke with deep appreciation and trust in the school's ability to support, advocate, and nurture their children. They described Dovecot as a lifeline - a place where staff genuinely listen, respond, and act in the best interests of every pupil. This unwavering trust is a testament to the strong leadership and dedicated team, who work tirelessly to create a school environment that is both aspirational and compassionate.

Pupil voice is another defining feature of life at Dovecot Primary School. The School Council and Head Boy / Head Girl Leadership roles allow children to actively shape school policy and practice, instilling a strong sense of agency and responsibility. The ethos of mutual respect, kindness, and perseverance permeates the school, with pupils demonstrating pride, ownership, and enthusiasm for their learning environment.

Dovecot ensures that every child has access to broad and enriching experiences, whether through residential trips, outdoor learning opportunities, cultural celebrations, or leadership initiatives. The belief that education extends beyond the classroom is a cornerstone of the school's philosophy, allowing pupils to develop confidence, independence, and a strong sense of belonging.

A particularly striking element of the school's inclusive approach is its commitment to early intervention and tailored support. The ROAR Rainbow check-ins, an emotional well-being initiative, provide a structured and supportive framework for pupils to express their feelings, while the structured behaviour policy rooted in restorative practices ensures that children feel heard, valued, and supported rather than punished.

The current Headteacher and senior leadership team are leading a period of transformation and growth, consolidating the school's strengths while addressing key areas for further development. Their vision is clear, their approach strategic, and their dedication unwavering. Despite the challenges of high pupil mobility, economic



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



hardship, and complex safeguarding demands, the school remains resolutely focused on its mission to provide an outstanding, inclusive education for all.

While Dovecot faces ongoing financial and structural challenges - particularly in sustaining its current high-quality provision amid budget constraints - the school's leadership is actively engaged in securing future sustainability. Their commitment to continuous improvement, staff development, and innovative resource allocation ensures that the school's inclusive approach remains both impactful and resilient.

Dovecot Primary School is an outstanding example of what it means to be truly inclusive. It is a place where barriers are dismantled, where potential is nurtured, and where every child is seen, heard, and celebrated. The strength of leadership, staff expertise, community engagement, and pupil empowerment make this a school of exceptional warmth, ambition, and impact.

As I left Dovecot, I carried with me an overwhelming sense of admiration for the remarkable efforts of every individual within this school community. Dovecot is not just a place of learning - it is a place of belonging, growth, and opportunity, and it stands as a powerful testament to the transformative power of inclusion in education.

I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark's Inclusive School Award. There are only minor areas requiring development and the school is aware of these. I recommend that the school be awarded the Inclusive School Award and be reassessed in three years.

I also recommend that the school should consider applying for Centre of Excellence status subject to the inclusion within its plans of the appropriate areas for development and the completion of the Centre of Excellence documentation. If the school chooses to pursue this status and it were to be awarded the school would be subject to annual review from this point forwards.

Assessor: Mr Max Kelly

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 1 - The Inclusion Values of the School

“I feel part of a real family here.” That sentiment, expressed by a parent during my visit, was echoed time and time again - by pupils, staff, governors, and community members alike. At Dovecot, inclusion is not just an aspiration; it is an everyday reality, lived and breathed by every person in the school community.

I saw it in the welcoming embrace of the staff, who know each child not just by name but by their story, their strengths, and their needs. I heard it in the voice of a teacher, who reflected on a pupil’s transformation, saying, **“He’s a completely different child now.”** I felt it in the genuine pride of the leadership team, who spoke passionately about removing barriers and building bridges to ensure that every child, regardless of background or need, thrives, belongs, and feels seen.

Parents described the school as a lifeline, a place where they feel heard and supported, where staff go beyond the call of duty to ensure their children’s success. Pupils shared how they feel safe, accepted, and empowered, with one child proudly explaining how they had helped shape the school’s values through the School Council.

Dovecot Primary does not just talk about inclusion - it embodies it in every interaction, every decision, and every classroom. The ethos of **“We Learn Together and Grow Together”** is not just a motto; it is a guiding principle woven into the very fabric of the school’s culture.

At the core of Dovecot Primary School is a deeply embedded culture of inclusivity, where diversity is not only accepted but actively celebrated. The school community - comprising staff, pupils, and families - works together to create an environment of mutual respect, understanding, and empowerment. This ethos is palpable throughout the school, from the welcoming atmosphere to the carefully structured support systems that ensure no child is left behind.

From the outset, the school’s mission statement, ‘We Learn Together and Grow Together,’ sets the tone for an inclusive educational experience where each child’s individuality is recognised, supported, and celebrated. The school’s leadership ensures that inclusion is not merely a policy but a fundamental principle that informs curriculum design, pastoral care, and wider community engagement.

One of the most striking aspects of the school’s inclusive ethos was the celebration of neurodiversity within the learning environment. I saw a carefully curated display that highlighted the achievements of well-known individuals who have embraced their neurological differences, including Stephen Wiltshire, Yayoi Kusama, Billie Eilish, Emma Watson, and Pablo Picasso. Each of these figures serves as a powerful reminder that differences are not barriers but strengths, reinforcing the message that every child has unique potential waiting to be unlocked.

The school’s active promotion of positive role models from diverse backgrounds ensures that children see themselves reflected in stories of perseverance, talent, and success. The accompanying statement, “Celebrating our unique strengths and differences,” encapsulates the school’s ethos of empowerment, belonging, and individual



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



growth. This visible commitment to embracing all learners and challenging stigma ensures that neurodivergent pupils feel valued, understood, and capable of achieving greatness.

During the visit, it was evident that inclusivity is at the heart of classroom practice, behaviour policies, and school-wide initiatives. Teachers and support staff are highly attuned to the diverse learning needs of their pupils, ensuring that each child has access to a curriculum that is both ambitious and adaptable. Interventions, such as the Rainbow Room and sensory circuits, provide children with tailored spaces that support emotional regulation and well-being, allowing them to re-engage with learning in a structured yet compassionate manner.

Furthermore, the school has built an environment where pupil voice is actively encouraged, with Junior Leadership Teams and School Council initiatives ensuring that children play an active role in shaping their school experience. The children themselves spoke with confidence about the ethos of kindness and respect, demonstrating a clear understanding of the school's inclusive culture. This is the only school where a School Council member has met me with an offer to sing to me! Albeit a chant from the football terraces!

Parents, too, echoed these sentiments, sharing how the school has provided an invaluable sense of belonging and partnership. Many parents highlighted the school's commitment to open communication, accessibility, and genuine engagement with family needs, reinforcing Dovecot's role as a pillar of community support.

Key strengths observed include:

- A clearly articulated and consistently applied inclusive ethos embedded into all aspects of school life.
- Tailored interventions such as sensory circuits, the Rainbow Room, and structured well-being check-ins that support a range of learning and emotional needs.
- Pupil engagement in leadership roles, encouraging ownership and responsibility.
- Strong home-school relationships, with parents feeling valued as partners in their children's education.
- An emphasis on continuous professional development for staff, ensuring that inclusion remains at the forefront of teaching and learning practices.

Next Steps:

To further enhance its already exemplary commitment to inclusivity, Dovecot should continue to refine and expand its adaptive teaching approaches, ensuring that best practice is consistently embedded across all classrooms. Developing even more opportunities for parental engagement in curriculum-based workshops could further strengthen home-school collaboration, empowering families to support learning at home while reinforcing the school's inclusive values.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 2 - Leadership and Management and Accountability

“They know exactly where the school is going, and they bring everyone along with them.” This remark, made by a member of staff, perfectly encapsulates the strength of leadership at Dovecot Primary. The leadership team has developed – in a relatively short space of time - a culture of trust, clarity, and shared vision, ensuring that every member of staff feels valued, empowered, and part of the journey toward excellence.

I saw a team that is deeply reflective, constantly evaluating its practice and striving for the best outcomes for children. Leaders spoke passionately about their commitment to inclusion and school improvement, demonstrating deep knowledge of their pupils and community. Governors I spoke to echo this sentiment, praising the leadership’s transparency, ambition, and determination to break down barriers for all children.

Staff described feeling supported and professionally developed, with one teacher remarking, **“We’re given the tools and the trust to do what’s best for our children.”** This emphasis on distributed leadership has created an environment where innovation thrives, ensuring that inclusion remains at the heart of the school’s mission.

Dovecot Primary School has undergone a transformational journey in recent years, establishing a strong, stable, and forward-thinking leadership team that has revitalised the school’s vision and strategy. Under the direction of the Headteacher, the leadership team has worked diligently to embed a culture of high expectations, professional development, and inclusive practice at every level.

The past turbulence in leadership, with multiple Headteachers in a short span of time, presented challenges in establishing continuity. However, the current leadership team has swiftly and effectively implemented systems that provide structure, stability, and ambition. This is evidenced in the school’s strategic planning, inclusive policies, and commitment to staff and pupil development.

Leadership at Dovecot is characterised by distributed responsibility, ensuring that all staff members are actively engaged in decision-making processes and school improvement initiatives. Subject leaders have been empowered to drive curriculum improvements, and all staff members are held accountable for high-quality teaching and learning.

Governors and community representatives also play a critical role in shaping the strategic direction of the school. Their engagement ensures that inclusion remains a key priority, reinforcing the school’s mission to provide an environment where all children, regardless of background or ability, can succeed.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Key Strengths Observed:

- Strategic and stable leadership with a clear focus on long-term school improvement.
- Empowered subject leaders, ensuring strong accountability and curriculum consistency.
- High levels of staff engagement and professional development, generating a shared vision of excellence.
- Strong governance and community partnerships, reinforcing the school's inclusive mission.
- A proactive approach to supporting staff well-being, recognising that an effective workforce is the key to successful inclusion.

Next Steps:

To sustain and further develop these strengths, the leadership team should continue embedding its distributed leadership model, ensuring that middle leaders receive ongoing training to drive subject-specific improvements. Additionally, encouraging greater parental engagement in leadership initiatives could enhance transparency and reinforce the school's inclusive ethos.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 3 - Curriculum – Structure, Pupil Engagement and Adaption

“Learning here isn’t just about lessons - it’s about experiences.” That was how one teacher described the **engaging, hands-on, and inclusive** curriculum at Dovecot. The school’s **broad, balanced, and ambitious approach** ensures that every child, regardless of starting point, has access to **meaningful and enriching learning opportunities**.

During my visit, I saw **pupils fully engaged in their lessons**, excited to discuss their learning and share their achievements. A Year 6 pupil’s reflection on a recent trip, displayed as, “We had such a good time playing together and having fun without using electronic devices” stood out. This simple yet powerful statement speaks volumes about Dovecot’s belief that **learning happens everywhere - not just in the classroom, but in relationships, interactions, and experiences beyond school walls**.

Subject leaders demonstrated **strong curriculum knowledge and ownership**, ensuring that each subject is delivered with **intent, coherence, and adaptation for all learners**. Staff spoke about **curriculum design rooted in the needs of their pupils**, ensuring that learning is **accessible, inclusive, and engaging for every child**.

Dovecot Primary School’s curriculum is broad, ambitious, and designed with inclusivity at its heart. It has been carefully structured to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their starting points, receive an education that is both enriching and accessible. The leadership team has made significant strides in ensuring that the curriculum is not only aligned with national standards but also reflective of the diverse needs and aspirations of the school community.

The curriculum is structured progressively, ensuring that pupils build on their prior knowledge and develop deeper conceptual understanding. Teachers plan carefully sequenced lessons that enable pupils to make connections between subjects and apply their learning across different contexts. Subject leaders are well-supported and play a key role in driving improvements, ensuring that their subject areas are both engaging and challenging.

A strong emphasis on reading and vocabulary acquisition is evident throughout the school. The introduction of Reading Mastery and structured phonics interventions has had a transformative impact, helping to close gaps and instil confidence in learners. The school’s literacy-rich environment, combined with a focus on oracy and comprehension, ensures that all pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, develop strong foundations in reading and communication.

Dovecot also prioritises real-world learning and enrichment experiences. Pupils benefit from an exciting range of educational visits, outdoor learning opportunities, and cross-curricular projects that bring their learning to life. The curriculum is further enhanced by a diverse range of extracurricular activities, allowing children to explore their interests, develop new skills, and build confidence in a range of contexts.

While walking through the school’s central library space, I came across a reflection from a pupil about a recent school trip, which captured an essential aspect of Dovecot’s



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



approach to learning: the joy of social interaction and play. The child expressed how much they had enjoyed playing games such as hide and seek and spending time with friends, highlighting how much fun they had “without using electronic devices.” This simple statement encapsulates a key principle of the school’s curriculum - ensuring that learning extends beyond the classroom into meaningful, real-world experiences that promote collaboration, communication, and emotional well-being.

By actively encouraging outdoor play, teamwork, and experiential learning, the school provides children with rich opportunities to develop resilience, social confidence, and problem-solving skills - all of which are vital components of a well-rounded education. This focus on human connection over digital dependency is a notable strength of Dovecot’s approach to holistic child development.

The school’s adaptive teaching strategies are key to ensuring that all pupils can access the curriculum. Teachers use scaffolding, differentiated instruction, and multi-sensory resources to support pupils at different ability levels. Assistive technology and visual aids are integrated into lessons to support learners with specific needs, ensuring that every child has the tools they need to succeed.

A noteworthy feature of Dovecot’s curriculum is its emphasis on pupil voice and leadership. The School Council actively contribute to curriculum discussions, sharing their perspectives on what works well and how learning can be improved. This creates a sense of agency and ownership among pupils, further strengthening engagement and motivation.

Next Steps:

Moving forward, the school should continue to develop assessment strategies that enable teachers to track progress in foundation subjects as effectively as in core areas. Additionally, embedding more opportunities for pupil-led learning and inquiry-based projects could further enrich the curriculum and deepen engagement. The P4C initiative is certainly one worth exploring.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 4 - Teaching and Learning – Learning Environment, Planning Resources, Pedagogy

“Every child here gets what they need to succeed.” That simple statement, made by a senior leader, perfectly encapsulates the inclusive and responsive approach to teaching and learning at Dovecot.

During my visit, I observed classrooms that were calm, structured, and highly engaging. I saw teachers using adaptive strategies to meet diverse needs, ensuring that all pupils - regardless of ability or background - had access to high-quality learning. Pupils themselves expressed confidence in their teachers, with one saying, **“They make sure we understand before something new starts.”**

Staff shared their pride in lesson planning, use of assessment, and adaptive teaching, ensuring that pupils feel challenged, supported, and inspired. Across the school, I saw an unwavering commitment to high expectations, inclusion, and the belief that every child is capable of success.

The quality of teaching and learning at Dovecot Primary School is characterised by high expectations, strong subject knowledge, and a deep commitment to inclusive practice. The learning environment is carefully designed to ensure that all pupils feel safe, valued, and motivated to succeed. Classrooms are engaging, well-resourced, and reflective of a broad and balanced curriculum that caters to the diverse needs of learners.

Teachers demonstrate a strong understanding of their pupils' needs; planning lessons that are carefully scaffolded and differentiated to ensure all children can access and engage with the learning material. Adaptive teaching strategies are embedded into practice, enabling teachers to respond flexibly to the needs of pupils with SEND, EAL, and other additional requirements. There is a strong emphasis on oracy and collaborative learning, ensuring that children are actively involved in their education and encouraged to articulate their thinking.

Assessment for learning is a key feature of teaching at Dovecot. Teachers use ongoing formative assessment, including questioning, peer assessment, and structured feedback, to tailor their teaching and ensure that each pupil makes sustained progress. The use of technology and assistive resources further enhances accessibility, allowing pupils with additional needs to fully participate and engage with the curriculum.

In addition to high-quality teaching, the school's learning environment supports positive behaviour for learning. Classroom expectations are consistently reinforced through clear routines, structured support, and positive reinforcement strategies. The implementation of restorative approaches to behaviour management ensures that all pupils feel heard and understood, building a culture of mutual respect and shared responsibility.

Dovecot has also prioritised professional development for staff, ensuring that teachers remain up to date with best practices in pedagogy, curriculum development, and inclusive teaching.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



During my visit, I observed classroom environments that radiate warmth, safety, and belonging. A powerful statement, “This is a safe space to be who you are,” was displayed prominently in one such classroom, reinforcing the school’s unwavering commitment to inclusion and emotional security. This ethos was further reflected in structured visual supports, including daily schedules, communication tools, and behaviour guidance systems, ensuring that all pupils - regardless of need - could navigate their day with clarity and confidence. Additionally, the presence of soft toys and sensory resources demonstrated an awareness of emotional regulation and comfort, catering particularly to those who may require additional reassurance.

The classrooms clear approach to setting expectations for behaviour and engagement exemplified a structured yet flexible environment, allowing all children to feel understood and supported. This careful balance of routine, accessibility, and emotional support allows for a culture where pupils feel safe, empowered, and fully engaged in their learning.

Next Steps:

To build on these strengths, the school should further develop adaptive teaching approaches that allow for deeper, more interconnected learning experiences. Building AI into staff expertise and child use would further enhance the curriculum.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 5 – Assessment

“We know our children inside and out, not just academically but as individuals.” This sentiment, shared by a senior leader, underscores the depth of the school’s commitment to assessment as a tool for progress, not pressure. Throughout my visit, staff spoke about their robust, responsive, and inclusive approach to tracking pupil progress, ensuring that no child is overlooked or left behind.

I observed teachers using real-time formative assessment, adjusting their teaching to meet the needs of each pupil in the moment, skilfully demonstrated by a teacher using a role-play technique with another pupil to recap and check learning at whole-class level. Leadership described pupil progress meetings as a collaborative process, where teachers, support staff, and leaders come together to identify barriers, celebrate achievements, and plan the next steps. One teacher remarked, **“It’s never just about numbers here - it’s about knowing the story behind every child’s journey.”**

Pupils, too, play an active role in their own learning, with self-assessment and peer feedback embedded into daily practice. One child from School Council told me **“we get to check our own work and see how we can do better,”** reinforcing the school’s belief that assessment should empower rather than intimidate. At Dovecot, data informs practice, but relationships drive progress.

Assessment has been a key focus for development at Dovecot Primary School, following recent Ofsted feedback. As a priority in the School Development Plan, the school has made significant strides in refining its assessment processes to ensure that data is used meaningfully and effectively to drive teaching and learning forward.

A structured approach to assessment underpins classroom practice. NFER tests are conducted at the end of each term, with Question Level Analysis (QLA) and gap analysis used to inform planning and identify areas where pupils require additional support. Alongside this, half-termly teacher assessments are carried out and reviewed in pupil progress meetings, allowing staff to track progress, identify learning gaps, and implement targeted interventions.

For pupils with SEND, assessment is embedded into the school’s graduated approach, ensuring that learning needs are continually reviewed and addressed through targeted interventions. The school uses PIVATS as an assessment and target-setting tool, helping to track small steps of progress. Where necessary, the school seeks advice from external agencies to refine support strategies and provide tailored learning experiences for pupils requiring additional guidance.

In Early Years, the school implements WELCOMM assessments, enabling staff to monitor language development and plan early interventions that support speech and communication skills. Across all phases, schemes of work are designed to identify prior learning and incorporate end-of-unit assessments, ensuring that pupils achieve clear progression milestones in every subject.

A whole-school review of marking and feedback policy has resulted in a consistent approach to live marking and verbal feedback, enabling staff to address misconceptions



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



in real time and provide immediate, meaningful guidance to pupils. This ensures that assessment is not only about tracking data but also actively supports pupil progress on a day-to-day basis.

To strengthen assessment practices further, the Curriculum Lead has worked closely with subject leaders to establish a structured system of regular checks on pupils' understanding, particularly following key teaching points. This process is reinforced by a collaborative lesson structure, consistently applied across the curriculum, ensuring that pupils recall and retrieve prior learning as part of their routine.

One of the school's most impactful initiatives has been the introduction of the Friday Recall Quiz, designed to embed knowledge retention. This strategy ensures that pupils regularly revisit and consolidate core learning from the week, previous half terms, and even prior academic years, strengthening their long-term understanding and knowledge retrieval skills.

These refinements in assessment ensure that pupil progress is rigorously tracked, teaching is informed by evidence, and learning gaps are swiftly identified and addressed. Moving forward, the school remains committed to further refining assessment strategies to enhance teaching and ensure that every child is supported in reaching their full potential.

Next Steps:

Embedding a more structured approach to moderation will ensure that progress across all curriculum areas is captured effectively, accurately and securely.

A continued focus on metacognitive strategies and pupil self-reflection could also further develop pupils' ability to assess their own learning effectively.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 6 - Behaviour, Attitudes to Learning and Personal Development

“They never give up on you.” These words, spoken by a pupil, exemplify Dovecot’s approach to behaviour and personal development. Throughout the school, I witnessed a calm, respectful, and nurturing environment, where staff work relentlessly to support, guide, and encourage pupils to be their best selves.

During discussions with staff, they described their restorative approach to behaviour management, ensuring that consequences are not just punitive but transformative. A member of staff explained, **“We take time to help children understand their actions, rebuild relationships, and make better choices next time.”** Pupils feel heard, valued, and respected, contributing to an atmosphere of mutual trust.

I also observed how well-being is woven into the school’s ethos, from morning emotional check-ins to targeted interventions for pupils who need additional pastoral care. A visiting professional who had worked closely with the school reflected in an email I had sight of, **“This is a place where children are loved and accepted for who they are.”** Dovecot’s holistic approach ensures that pupils leave not only with academic achievements but with the confidence, resilience, and emotional intelligence needed for life beyond school.

Behaviour, attitudes, and personal development at Dovecot Primary School are underpinned by a culture of respect, responsibility, and resilience. The school has created an environment where pupils feel safe, valued, and empowered to develop both academically and personally. Staff, pupils, and families work collaboratively to develop an atmosphere where positive behaviour is the norm, emotional well-being is prioritised, and aspirations are nurtured. OFSTED recognise this aspect as “good.”

The school’s behaviour policy is clear, consistent, and restorative in approach, ensuring that expectations are well understood by all members of the school community. High expectations for behaviour are evident across classrooms, corridors, and playgrounds, with pupils demonstrating courtesy, kindness, and a strong sense of responsibility towards themselves and others.

Key features of Dovecot’s behaviour approach include:

- Restorative justice practices, allowing pupils to reflect on their actions and understand the impact of their behaviour on others.
- Positive reinforcement strategies, celebrating pupils’ achievements and reinforcing desired behaviours through praise and reward systems.
- Clear and structured routines, ensuring consistency and predictability, which particularly benefits pupils with additional needs.
- A graduated response to behavioural support, with targeted interventions for pupils who require additional guidance and mentoring.

Teachers and support staff adopt a calm and measured approach to managing behaviour, demonstrating an understanding of individual pupil needs and tailoring their responses



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



accordingly. The school's commitment to early intervention and support mechanisms ensures that challenges are addressed promptly and effectively.

Dovecot places a strong emphasis on emotional well-being and mental health, ensuring that pupils are equipped with the resilience and self-regulation skills necessary for lifelong success. The school has developed an impressive framework of pastoral care and targeted support, which includes:

- Access to counselling services, such as Tony from the Bus Project, allowing pupils to discuss their concerns in a safe, confidential setting.
- Mindfulness and well-being initiatives, helping pupils develop emotional awareness and coping strategies.
- Mentoring programs, providing pupils with role models who support them in building confidence and self-esteem.
- The 'ROAR Rainbow' check-ins, enabling staff to monitor pupils' emotional well-being and intervene when needed.

These initiatives have been instrumental in reducing anxiety, improving behaviour, and developing a positive school culture, ensuring that pupils feel supported in every aspect of their development.

Pupil voice is a key strength at Dovecot, with the school actively involving children in shaping school policies and decisions. The School Council and Head Boy and Head Girl Team provide platforms for pupils to:

- Express their opinions on school matters and contribute to decision-making processes.
- Lead initiatives focused on well-being, inclusion, and school improvement.
- Support their peers, acting as mentors and role models.

Through these leadership opportunities, pupils develop confidence, communication skills, and a sense of responsibility, preparing them for future roles as active citizens in their communities.

Dovecot's commitment to holistic education is reflected in its broad range of personal development opportunities and enrichment activities. Pupils benefit from:

- Outdoor learning experiences, encouraging teamwork and resilience.
- Extracurricular clubs and activities, allowing pupils to explore new interests and talents.
- Trips and cultural visits, broadening pupils' horizons and deepening their understanding of the wider world.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



The school's PSHE curriculum plays a pivotal role in personal development, covering topics such as healthy relationships, online safety, and emotional intelligence, ensuring that pupils are well-prepared for life beyond primary education.

Next Steps:

As part of Dovecot Primary School's continued journey towards embedding inclusive, pupil-centred practice, the following key areas have been identified for further development:

- Review the Positive Behaviour Policy to ensure alignment with the Fiveways Network collaborative workarround Paul Dix's 'When the Adults Change, Everything Changes'. This will strengthen consistent, relational behaviour management strategies across the school and further embed restorative practices.
- Embed a deeper understanding of the Protected Characteristics by actively engaging in the Anti-Racism project and No Outsiders initiative. This will ensure that pupils develop a strong sense of equality, inclusion, and respect for diversity.
- Continue to expand opportunities to develop and stretch pupils' talents and interests, ensuring a broad and balanced enrichment offer that nurtures both academic and non-academic strengths.

These steps will further strengthen the school's inclusive culture, enhance pupil development, and deepen engagement with the wider community, ensuring that every child feels valued, challenged, and empowered.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 7 - Parents, Carers and Guardians

“This school is a lifeline for so many of us” These powerful words from a parent encapsulate the deep and meaningful relationships that Dovecot has built with its families. The school is more than a place of learning; it is a pillar of community support, a hub of opportunity, and a trusted ally to families navigating challenges.

During my visit, I had the privilege of attending a parent meeting, where families spoke openly about their experiences with the school. They praised the open-door policy, the proactive communication from staff, and the level of care that extends beyond the school gates. One parent shared, **“They don’t just support the children - they support us too.”**

Dovecot takes an active role in the wider community, working alongside charities, safeguarding professionals, and mental health organisations to ensure that families receive the right support at the right time. Staff go beyond their statutory role, ensuring that parents feel included, empowered, and valued as key partners in their children's education.

Dovecot is not just a school - it is a vital thread in the fabric of its community, providing stability, support, and opportunity for all.

Dovecot Primary School has built a strong and enduring relationship with parents, carers, and the wider community, recognising that meaningful engagement is essential for pupil success. The school’s welcoming and collaborative ethos ensures that parents feel valued, supported, and actively involved in their children’s education.

During the parental meeting, it was abundantly clear that families at Dovecot deeply appreciate the school’s open and supportive approach. Parents spoke highly of the school’s commitment to inclusion and accessibility, highlighting how the staff go above and beyond to support not only their children but also their families as a whole. Many parents shared personal stories of how Dovecot had provided crucial assistance during difficult times, reinforcing the school’s role as a lifeline for the community.

Common themes that emerged from the discussion included:

- Trust in the leadership and staff: Parents felt that the school’s leaders were approachable, compassionate, and always willing to listen.
- Strong communication channels: Parents praised the school’s transparent and proactive communication, particularly the informal discussions with staff.
- Personalised support for families: Many parents spoke about how staff had taken the time to understand their individual circumstances, offering tailored guidance and referrals to external support services.
- A sense of belonging: Several parents highlighted how Dovecot feels like an extended family, where everyone is included and valued.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



The school encourages this strong partnership with families through:

- Regular coffee mornings and drop-in sessions, providing a space for parents to engage with school staff informally.
- Workshops on key topics, such as literacy strategies, behaviour management, and mental well-being, equipping parents with tools to support their children's learning.
- Dedicated parental engagement staff, who act as key points of contact for families needing additional support.
- An open-door policy, allowing parents to share concerns, ideas, and feedback at any time.

Dovecot has developed strong partnerships with community organisations and external agencies, further enhancing its provision and ensuring that families receive the support they need. Notable collaborations include:

- Local charities and support groups, offering assistance with food, clothing, and financial hardship.
- Mental health and well-being services, ensuring that both pupils and parents have access to counselling and therapeutic interventions.
- Links with local businesses, providing enrichment opportunities, work experience, and sponsorships for school initiatives.
- Strong partnerships with secondary schools, ensuring smooth transitions for pupils moving to the next stage of their education.

The school is also proactive in its outreach to newly arrived families, ensuring that they are welcomed, integrated, and given guidance on how to navigate school life. Language support and cultural orientation sessions are provided where needed, ensuring that every family feels included.

Dovecot's commitment to celebrating diversity and promoting social inclusion is evident in its community events and cultural initiatives. These include:

- Cultural heritage days, where pupils and families share their traditions and backgrounds, celebrating the sense of pride and belonging.
- Community celebrations and seasonal fairs, strengthening relationships between school and home.
- Parent-led initiatives, such as reading partnerships and fundraising events, where families contribute to school life in meaningful ways.

The school's commitment to inclusion ensures that no parent or carer is left feeling disconnected, creating a true sense of partnership in every aspect of school life.



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The school's governing body plays an active role in maintaining strong relationships with parents and the wider community. Governors:

- Regularly attend parental meetings and community forums, ensuring that parental perspectives are reflected in decision-making.
- Engage in community initiatives, offering strategic guidance and advocacy for the school's outreach work.
- Monitor the effectiveness of engagement strategies, ensuring that the school's approach remains relevant, inclusive, and impactful.

Shared values, strengthening school-family partnerships, and ensuring that inclusivity is deeply rooted in both the school's ethos and wider community engagement.

Dovecot's approach to embedding its core values - Equality, Resilience, Acceptance, Kindness, and Determination - into the fabric of everyday school life was evident in a dedicated display outside the Rainbow Room that visually represented these principles. Each value was accompanied by real pupil reflections, demonstrating that these aren't merely aspirational words but actively lived ideals within the school community.

This values-driven approach ensures that pupils develop a strong moral compass alongside their academic learning, equipping them with the personal and social skills needed to thrive both in school and beyond. The clear integration of pupil voice into this space further reinforces the sense of belonging, ownership, and shared responsibility for maintaining an inclusive and respectful school culture.

Next Steps:

To further enhance parental engagement and community partnerships, the following areas for development as identified in the SER, have been endorsed by the assessor:

- Strengthen the role of the PTFA by expanding its presence within the school community and developing new opportunities for parental involvement. This will ensure that the PTFA continues to act as a positive force for school improvement and community cohesion.
- Enhance communication with parents through Arbor, ensuring that all families are effectively informed about school events, learning updates, and key information. A focus on accessibility and usability will maximise engagement.
- Develop a structured Induction Process for new parents, ensuring that families feel welcomed, informed, and supported from the outset. This process should include an assessment of the whole family's needs, allowing for tailored support beyond the pupil.
- Increase parental engagement in academic workshops, creating a culture where parents feel empowered to support their child's learning. This will strengthen home-school collaboration and pupil outcomes.

By embedding these initiatives, Dovecot will further develop its strong community links, deepen parental engagement, and ensure that families feel fully integrated and supported within the school environment.



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



Element 8 - Links with Local, Wider and Global Community

Dovecot Primary is more than just a school - it serves as the heart of the local community, building strong, lasting connections between staff, pupils, families, and external partners. There is a collective sense of responsibility in ensuring that every child and family is supported, understood, and valued. During my visit to Dovecot Primary School, I had the opportunity to meet with a wide cross-section of stakeholders, including parents, external agencies, governors, and local councillors. What became immediately evident was the depth of commitment the school has to its community and the strength of its relationships with local partners. Dovecot is not just a place of learning - it is a central pillar of support, inclusion, and opportunity within the local area.

Dovecot says of itself that it “is widely recognised as a non-judgemental and supportive resource” offering a trusted environment where families feel valued and children are nurtured. The school is actively engaged with the local neighbourhood council, attending monthly meetings and contributing to community-based initiatives that directly benefit pupils and residents alike. One such project has seen every pupil given the opportunity to plant their own tree, either in their garden or in a designated area of Dovecot - an initiative that not only encourages environmental responsibility but also strengthens local pride and community cohesion.

The local councillor, who serves as a school Governor, is an active advocate for the school and its work within the wider community. Through intergenerational learning projects, the school welcomes local pensioners into the classroom for active learning sessions with pupils, a fantastic initiative that reinforces social connection, mutual understanding, and shared experiences across generations. The school choir, for example, performed at the local pensioners' Christmas party, providing both entertainment and an opportunity for children to engage with and appreciate their wider community.

Dovecot has also formed strong partnerships with secondary schools, faith groups, local businesses, and community organisations, further embedding itself as an influential presence within the area. The local youth worker holds a weekly youth group on-site, supporting children in developing positive social behaviours while engaging them in initiatives such as the Dovecot Litter Group, promoting responsibility and care for their environment. Additionally, the local youth service, Priority Youth, delivers an after-school club and provides ongoing support to families in need, including holiday and weekend trips for pupils who may not otherwise access such experiences. These collaborations ensure that pupils receive a wide range of enriching and supportive opportunities beyond the school day.

The school's charitable ethos is strong, with pupils actively participating in fundraising initiatives for both local and national charities. The school has supported Claire House Children's Hospice, Save the Children, Comic Relief, and Macmillan Cancer Trust, embedding a culture of social responsibility and empathy in its pupils. These fundraising events are not just about raising money - they are about building awareness, understanding, and a sense of civic duty.

Dovecot's Pastoral Lead and SENCO play a vital role in connecting families with external agencies, ensuring that support is available for those facing challenges. Through their



Report on IQM Inclusive School Award



dedicated work, parents receive guidance, advocacy, and direct support, strengthening family resilience and improving outcomes for pupils. Access to external services is streamlined, and the school acts as a central hub for signposting families to key provisions when needed.

Beyond the classroom, Dovecot places a strong emphasis on enrichment opportunities that provide pupils with experiences beyond their immediate surroundings. The school has worked tirelessly to ensure residential visits remain accessible, offering subsidised trips to PGL in Lancashire for Year 6 and fully funded residentials to YHA Ilam and Malham for Years 5 and 6. Additionally, all KS2 pupils benefitted from a free educational visit to Chester Zoo, further broadening their learning beyond the school gates. These experiences provide children with valuable social, cultural, and outdoor learning opportunities, supporting their personal development in a way that extends far beyond the academic curriculum.

Dovecot also takes a proactive approach to celebrating cultural diversity, generating an inclusive environment where all pupils and families feel valued and represented. The school's Multicultural Celebration Day was a vibrant example of this, bringing together children and parents from diverse backgrounds to share food, dance, writing, and music. Events such as this help to create a strong sense of identity and belonging within the school community, demonstrating a true commitment to inclusion in both words and actions. Parents, in particular, spoke with a genuine love and appreciation of the events involving food!

The PTFA has played a growing role in supporting the school, successfully forming partnerships with local businesses to secure raffle prizes, sponsorships, and stalls for school fairs. Their work has strengthened fundraising efforts and community engagement, further embedding parental voice and participation in school life.

Next Steps:

Dovecot Primary School should continue to embed itself at the heart of the community, strengthening its role as a central hub for support, enrichment, and partnership. Building on its existing outreach and collaborative work will enable the school to position itself as a vital, inclusive, and proactive force within the local community. Dovecot will further enrich the experiences of its pupils and families, ensuring that education, well-being, and opportunity extend far beyond the classroom.