

# St Helens Local Authority School Review

Name of school	Haydock High School
Date of last S5 Ofsted inspection	February 2013 - overall effectiveness judged good.
Date of this review	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2017
Dates of previous reviews	November 2015 – (PDBW) March 2016, September 16
Focus of this review	<p>This review had a different format from previous LA reviews. The team started the review by undertaking a detailed analysis of the school’s own self-evaluation and supporting documentation in order to test the clarity and accuracy of the evidence base. This was then followed up by a detailed discussion with the Headteacher.</p> <p>Follow up activities were then undertaken to further test the findings. At the request of the Headteacher, interviews and joint observations involved middle leaders.</p>
Activities undertaken to gain evidence	<p>Discussions with the Headteacher. Discussions with senior leaders. Discussions with middle leaders. A discussion with the chair of governors. Observations of pupils’ learning in lessons, including joint observations with middle leaders. Scrutiny of pupils’ work in lessons. Detailed reviews of documentation. Observations of pupils at informal times of the school day.</p>

## Findings of review

### 1. Pupil outcomes.

The overall performance at GCSE level for students in 2016 did not match up to predictions, but it represented an improvement from the results in 2015. The new Progress 8 measure, which introduced as a national headline figure for secondary schools, shows that Haydock is currently performing just below the national floor standards.

Senior Leaders have analysed this performance, and incorporated the learning into their future planning. A detailed report of this analysis and the subsequent action that has been taken following the 2016 results is almost complete. Leaders are monitoring the impact of new actions carefully. It is expected that changes made to the curriculum in the past year will also begin to have a major positive impact on achievement. Data provided for the current Year 11 students demonstrates improvements in progress and leaders evaluate that results will improve significantly in summer 2017.

Key Stage 3 tracking and monitoring is now more comprehensive throughout all year groups, with a much greater emphasis placed on monitoring levels of progress. Many departments have used external moderation to demonstrate that data is more secure and internal moderation is used

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extensively. Improvements that have been made to systems provide more accurate information and assist in the planning of well targeted teaching and learning. Specific strategies have been put in place to improve outcomes for disadvantaged students and groups of under-performing boys and monitoring data indicates that these are having a positive impact. The 'Rising Stars' project has a focus on improving the achievement and attendance of specific pupils and early indicators show that it is having a very positive impact. It is crucial that these improvements are sustained and that the school's data, along with evidence benchmarked against external partners, is used to provide assurance about rates of progress.

Pupil numbers are increasing quite dramatically in Years 7 and 8 and forecasts for the new intake in September 2017 demonstrate that trend is continuing. The increased numbers are an indicator that the school is gaining in popularity in the local community.

## **2. The effectiveness of leadership and management.**

Leaders are determined to bring about improvement to pupil outcomes. The school's improvement priorities are clear and aimed at delivering high quality teaching across the board. Those priorities are underpinned by well-structured systems and a comprehensive range of CPD and interventions, which have been welcomed by staff. However, the impact of these measures is variable at this stage, including the quality of feedback to staff that sometimes lack depth and precision.

Performance management has enabled senior leaders and most middle leaders to tackle weaker teaching effectively. Progress in some departments has been slowed due to staffing absence, mainly associated with illness. Middle leaders are developing their expertise and are more effective, taking ownership of departmental developments. There is still further to go for leadership at this level to be consistently good as there is some variability in judgements on the quality of teaching and of analyses of work scrutiny (for instance, a lack of quantifiable next steps).

The emphasis on increased accountability of middle leaders has, nonetheless, aided improvement in leadership at this level. The priorities in departmental action plans are aligned with the school's overall key priorities and middle leaders now need to play a part in refining them as, along with better data systems, they are providing the tools to make earlier interventions at student level. These staff would also benefit in increased partnership work with leaders in other schools, in order to share effective improvement activities. Haydock has taken a whole school approach towards appraisal; however, further work needs to be undertaken to demonstrate the impact of appraisal processes on students' achievement.

An external party has assisted governors' appraisal of the Headteacher, whose targets include quantifiable measures, enabling sharper tracking of progress. Governors' background and in school training has provided them with the skills to test the effectiveness or otherwise of the school's work to improve outcomes for specific groups, such as disadvantaged students or specific cohorts (for instance, boys' achievement during Key Stage 4).

The Headteacher has ensured that the recommendations of the last LA review were incorporated into wider improvement plans and the positive development of the roles of middle leaders provides a good example of the progress that has been made. The quality and clarity of recording systems and documentation has greatly improved, especially in areas associated with personal development, behaviour and welfare. This ensures that all leaders are able to plan and evaluate progress more accurately.

The high expectations and determination of senior leaders is very evident and they are successfully

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building ambition amongst staff. The increasing voluntary staff involvement in teaching and learning and behaviour working groups provides evidence of this in action. Partnership working with other schools and organisations continues to develop and the Headteacher also accesses external support to give expert advice in improving specific areas of provision.

### **3. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment.**

Thirteen part lessons were observed during this review including a range of subjects, year groups and ability groupings. Over half of these observations were undertaken jointly with subject leaders. On the whole leaders accurately recognised strengths and areas for development, but in some cases judgements were overly generous. This implies that further development work is required to ensure that the evaluation of teaching across the school is securely in line with Ofsted criteria.

In the most effective lessons, pupils were actively engaged in interesting tasks that were well tailored to their learning needs, and they particularly benefitted from collaborative learning with a partner or group of pupils. Questioning was well targeted and this enabled staff to assess understanding and adjust learning activities if necessary. There was evidence in books that marking and feedback is used to good effect to help pupils to improve their work. Where learning was most effective pupils showed positive attitudes and are well supported by good routines and clear expectations that are reinforced where necessary. Some individual pupils reported that the support from mentors has enabled them to focus on their learning and improve their outcomes.

In some lessons, however, pupils were not fully engaged in their learning. This was usually because the tasks set were not differentiated sufficiently to provide an appropriate level of challenge for different groups of pupils or because some pupils did not fully understand what was expected of them. There were not enough opportunities for pupils to use their initiative or take an active part in lessons through explaining their ideas. It would help pupils if teachers modelled possible answers or strategies in order to help them to gain insight into what they need to do. In a few lessons a scrutiny of pupils' work showed that books had not been marked regularly enough.

Some teachers have worked hard to provide a stimulating and informative learning environment, which, despite the challenges posed by the limitations of the school site, serve to make the best use of facilities and provide a useful reference point for pupils. However, other classrooms lack care and attention and fail to provide useful information or to celebrate pupils' work and achievements. Establishing an agreed standard for classrooms would help to demonstrate that everyone cares about the school and values the work that goes on in lessons.

The teaching and learning working party has been highly effective in shaping the teaching and learning offer and in aiding staff to have more ownership of developments. It has a clear focus and actively consults all staff on improvement proposals.

Leaders have established good monitoring systems for teaching with clear processes and procedures to follow. At present the quality of feedback from monitoring and evaluation is variable, with some lacking precision. Feedback to individual teachers should provide clear information about strengths and what is needed in order to improve further. CPD is more bespoke now as it is tailored to meet the needs of individual staff and departments.

### **4. Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of this aspect has continued to improve and the impact of new systems is becoming more apparent.

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The school's data demonstrates that there has been a marked decrease in the need to use sanctions across the school. This applies to the full range of strategies that are in place, from 'on call', the use of detention, the use of internal support systems through to the use of fixed term exclusions. This demonstrates that the behaviour policy is working effectively. Pupils and parents value the rewards system and the school celebrates the positive behaviour of the pupils. Support systems are now targeted on early intervention and providing appropriate support for pupils who face particular challenges with managing their behaviour.

Movement around the school is calm and orderly, despite the challenges posed by narrow corridors and doorways. At breaks and lunchtime pupils make the best of the limited facilities available to them. The small size of the dining facilities is a particular problem, and the management of lunchtime is becoming more challenging as pupil numbers increase. It is to the credit of both staff and pupils that behaviour remains sensible and safe at this time.

Pupils show respect and courtesy and the Attitudes to Learning (ATL) data shows a general trend of improved behaviour for learning across the school. In most observations this was evident in the pupils' prompt arrival to lessons and their focus on learning. However pupils still need more support to develop greater self-confidence so that their pride in their work and achievements is more apparent in their behaviour and contribution to lessons. It is suggested that all staff should positively reinforce expectations so that pupils feel secure in showing positivity. Where a small amount of low-level disruption was evident in lessons, this was linked with the type of learning activities that pupils were involved in.

Support for the wider personal development of pupils is continuing to grow, with more emphasis placed on providing opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and contribute to the life of the school. There is a lot of excellent visual evidence around the school that shows some of the activities and experiences that pupils benefit from during their school years.

Leaders are making good use of their analysis of data to inform the choice and range of interventions that are provided for pupils. The impact of support for vulnerable pupils is monitored carefully to ensure that underlying safeguarding problems or barriers to learning are addressed. The school ensures that staff and pupils are fully aware of specific issues through training and the curriculum and links with relevant support agencies are well developed. A good example of this is the recent work to raise awareness of the needs of young carers.

Considerable progress has been made in improving attendance. Overall attendance and persistent absence rates have improved and are currently in line with the national averages. Whilst a notable reduction has been seen in the very high persistent absence rate of disadvantaged pupils, the figures remain too high and the school rightly intends to continue to prioritise improvements in this area. The 'Rising Stars' project has been an excellent focal point for this work.

In order to capture evidence of the range and impact of the school's provision in this area it is suggested that data is supplemented by a succinct narrative evidence base that includes reference to all relevant areas of school life, e.g. the contribution of PSHE and CIAG. In addition a few case studies should be used to demonstrate the school's impact on individual children's needs.

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## Summary

The Headteacher and his senior leadership team have an excellent knowledge of the strengths and priorities for development in the school and have ensured that efforts are firmly focused on securing improvements in the key areas that will make the most difference to pupil outcomes.

There has been a major investment in developing wider leadership in the school, particularly at subject level and this is strengthening the capacity to secure improvements in the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes. Whilst staff absence has slowed progress in some areas, this represents positive progress and developments should be continued.

Notable improvements in behaviour and attendance underpin the focus on raising achievement, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

## Recommendations

In order to further improve overall effectiveness the school should:

1. Ensure that data systems are refined and secure external moderation of data and evidence of progress.
2. Ensure that all SEF judgements reflect the best fit with Ofsted inspection criteria.
3. Continue to focus on the key priorities identified in the school's improvement plan, ensuring that structures, systems and procedures are fully embedded across the school
4. Further develop internal moderation procedures across all departments and ensure that external moderation also takes place.
5. Build on the positive developments that have taken place in developing the role of middle leaders, ensuring that all accountability measures are implemented consistently and that they these staff have access to relevant CPD opportunities, including the chance to work with departmental leads from other schools.
6. Continue to take action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that the best practice is more consistently evident across the school and the achievement of all pupils is maximised.
7. Ensure all leaders use Ofsted inspection criteria to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and that written feedback to teachers provides clear guidance on areas for improvement.
8. Continue to focus on reducing the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in achievement and attendance.
9. Further improve behaviour for learning by establishing a high profile whole school system of positive reinforcement of good learning behaviour.
10. Continue to prioritise improvement in attendance, especially of disadvantaged pupils.
11. Enhance the evidence base of PDBW by providing an analysis of data and a wider picture of school activities, including the production of a few case studies.

***The school should now produce an action plan showing how these priorities will be addressed using the template provided. Please return this to C. Addison by 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Thank you.***