

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	3 rd March 2016
Dates of previous reviews	November 2015 – Personal development, behaviour and welfare.
Focus of this review	The effectiveness of leadership and management The quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Progress in implementing recommendations from the review of personal development, behaviour and welfare.
Activities undertaken to gain evidence	Discussions with the Headteacher. Discussions with senior leaders. Discussions with middle leaders. Discussions with governors. Observations of pupils' learning in lessons. Scrutiny of pupils' work. Discussions with groups of pupils. Review of documentation. Observations of pupils at informal times of the school day.

Findings of review

1. The effectiveness of leadership and management.

The Headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and the governing body are highly enthusiastic and totally committed to improving the school. They recognise that there has been a period of significant change over the last 18 months and that there is a need to review, revise and embed school systems to bring together the whole school community. They have a clear vision of the improvements that are necessary and have begun to make appropriate changes. However most of these are in the early stages of development and need to be translated into systems and actions that are carefully monitored to ensure consistency of application and positive impact across the school.

Most of the senior leadership team (SLT) are quite new to their strategic positions and they should be allocated clear roles and responsibilities that are carefully aligned with each other and linked to the management of staff. They are keen to develop their expertise and are beginning to work with other local schools to share systems and ideas. This is a positive development that is benefitting staff and pupils.

Leaders have a good grasp of the performance of different groups of pupils and have improved data systems used to plan and monitor actions intended to improve the achievement of all groups of pupils. This means that staff now have more confidence in their ability to predict outcomes accurately.

Governors are well informed about developments in the school and they hold leaders to account through a well-developed approach to challenge and support. They use performance management effectively to drive improvements in key aspects of leadership.

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School leaders are beginning to identify and share expertise across the school. For example, three lead practitioners have been identified to provide support for colleagues in English, maths and science. This is a positive step and encourages staff to become more involved in sharing effective practice and supporting each other.

The overall leadership structure should include clear systems for SLT members to lead and manage middle leaders, holding them clearly to account. At present, middle leaders are not taking sufficient responsibility for leading and monitoring developments in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement and to ensure the consistent application of policies by all teachers.

Pupils talk very positively about the relationships that exist in the school between staff and pupils and they appreciate the wide range of activities that are available to them, both within and beyond the formal curriculum. They recognise that the school is changing and see that improvements have taken place and that the expectations of pupils' behaviour, attendance and appearance have risen. Pupils also comment on the increased expectations of them in terms of learning and outcomes, although they do not see that this is consistent across the school.

A particular strength of the school is the commitment to developing partnerships with feeder primary schools. This work has improved the quality of transition and is helping to enhance practice in both primary and secondary settings.

The review of personal development, behaviour and welfare undertaken in November 2015 found that safeguarding systems are robust and that pupils feel safe around the school site. School leaders have worked hard to implement a number of the recommendations made at that time, including making changes to the behaviour policy. It was very pleasing to see a large number of pupils gaining recognition for excellence in behaviour and attendance in a year 7 assembly on the review day.

2. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Teachers have a good level of subject knowledge and are well organised in lessons. Communication by adults is clear but not all teachers are providing learning activities that challenge all groups of pupils in order to improve their achievement. As a result the pace and depth of working in some lessons is not always well tuned to the needs of pupils.

Assessment points are clear and there has been an improvement in the use of data across the school. Pupils appreciate that they are now given aspirational targets and that there are many opportunities to attend focused additional learning activities that are intended to help them to achieve the best possible outcomes. In most classes teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils who have additional learning needs.

There is some evidence of assessment for learning being used effectively to plan differentiated activities that engage and challenge all groups of pupils. Some teachers were seen to use questioning very effectively to probe pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding and then to adjust subsequent tasks accordingly. However, this is not always the case and many pupils are not stretched sufficiently in their learning.

Marking is inconsistent across the school, with some pupils' work left unmarked for long periods of time. Pupil self-assessment and marking is used too frequently and there is often little emphasis on ensuring the presentation of work in books is of high quality. Many teachers use worksheets too frequently and this has a negative impact on learning. Where teachers provide written comments

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and request action there is often no evidence that feedback is used to improve the quality of work in books.

Most pupils focus well in lessons but some pupils do not concentrate consistently on their learning and this hinders their progress. In some cases this is because teachers do not engage them in interesting and challenging learning and they are allowed to go 'off task'. In other situations, teachers are working hard to provide stimulating and relevant learning activities but a few pupils arrive with negative attitudes and are disruptive throughout lessons. Pupils say that behaviour is improving but they recognise that there is further to go to ensure that low level disruption becomes unusual in lessons.

There remains some variation in the use of the school's behaviour management strategies and this serves to undermine the value of rewards and sanctions. Consistency of behaviour management should form part of the monitoring of teaching and learning, with each subject leader taking responsibility for behaviour for learning in their department. Pupils should understand clearly exactly what good learning behaviour looks like and what is expected of them in every classroom. It is only if problems in the behaviour of individual pupils escalates that other staff should become involved.

Teachers are benefitting from the support given by leading teachers within the school and by their involvement in wider continuing professional development opportunities, including joint working with other schools. These are positive developments that encourage teachers to develop their skills and share effective classroom practice.

3. Personal development, behaviour and welfare

An in depth review of this aspect was undertaken in November 2015 and so this review focused on developments since that time, including the effectiveness of current practice.

Senior leaders have energetically begun to address the recommendations from the review and the school's new monitoring and data systems for behaviour are showing that actions are beginning to have a positive impact, e.g. a significant reduction has been seen in the number of 'on call' referrals made by staff from the similar period in the last academic year. Leaders accept that there is further to go to improve behaviour and attendance, but they have acted appropriately to revise the behaviour policy and change attendance systems and they are beginning to make important links with the quality of teaching.

Other actions are showing a positive impact, with a new provision established to address the needs of vulnerable pupils and a system of departmental detentions in place. Now all leaders should play a part in ensuring that high behavioural expectations are consistently reinforced and that there is an appropriate emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

Staff are becoming more involved in developments associated with improving behaviour and attendance. They reinforce the significance of the school charter and a group of staff are forming a working party to evaluate systems and practice. Pupils say that behaviour is definitely improving. They speak highly of the support that they receive from staff, both personal and academic, and feel they are known as individuals. One student said: 'we are like a family, teachers really listen to us'.

Around the school pupils are polite and courteous and take pride in their school and their uniform. Despite the poor state of some of the physical surroundings, pupils show respect to the school environment. All staff should try to do what they can to improve the quality of the learning

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environment in classrooms and corridors in order to support learning. When working together pupils are usually sensible and support each other well, regardless of ability levels. However, there is further to go to ensure that attitudes to learning are consistently positive.

Some vulnerable pupils showed concern during the review about the level of bullying in the school. Whilst they said that teachers act quickly to address reports of bullying, they sometimes feel inhibited from telling an adult about issues that cause them anxiety. The school should ensure that these concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively.

Summary

Senior leaders at Haydock High School are totally committed to improving the effectiveness of the school and are well supported and challenged by the governing body. They have an accurate grasp of the priorities for improvement and now need to ensure that leaders at all levels play their part in securing progress against key priorities, incorporating monitoring and evaluation of the impact of their actions on pupil outcomes. Many developments are at an early stage of implementation and must now be embedded consistently across the school.

Recommendations

In order to further improve the school should:

1. Ensure that each member of SLT has clear strategic leadership responsibilities and that systems to embed, monitor and evaluate key priorities are robust.
2. Develop the leadership roles and responsibilities of middle leaders and hold them to account for the operational implementation of systems and practice.
3. Strengthen the monitoring of teaching by middle leaders to address the key components of effective practice in order to ensure that there is greater consistency in the delivery of effective teaching across the school.
4. Strengthen the use of assessment for learning across the school in order to ensure that lessons meet the needs of different groups of pupils and that teaching is adapted to promote greater depth in learning.
5. Embed behaviour systems and monitor the behaviour in lessons carefully ensuring that middle leaders take responsibility for addressing problems that are associated with teaching and learning.
6. Improve the quality and consistency of marking and feedback across the school, ensuring that work is well presented.
7. Address the concerns about bullying expressed by vulnerable pupils.

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. Thank you.