

St Helens Local Authority School Review

Name of school	Haydock High School
Date of last S5 Ofsted inspection	March 2017 - overall effectiveness judged requires improvement.
Date of this review	13th July 2017
Dates of previous reviews	November 2015 – (PDBW) March 2016, September 16, January 2017.
Focus of this review	This review focused on evaluating the progress that the school has made in taking action to address the areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted inspection conducted in March 2017.
Activities undertaken to gain evidence	As the main activity involved on undertaking challenging discussions with leaders, no formal observations of teaching and learning were conducted on this occasion. Activities included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with the Headteacher. • Discussions with senior leaders. • Discussions with middle leaders. • Scrutiny of relevant plans and policies. • A learning walk during lessons and at lunchtime. • Discussions with two groups of pupils.

Findings of the review.

The Headteacher has put in place a detailed strategic development plan that incorporates the areas for improvement identified in the recent Ofsted inspection of the school. All of the priorities set out in the plan have the overall aim of improving outcomes at key stage 4, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Whilst the actions set out are comprehensive, some of the timescales set for completion of actions are too long, and this means that impact is unlikely to be seen quickly. It is important that actions are sequenced to ensure that the most urgent developments take place before the start of the new school year so that all staff and pupils adopt new expectations in September 2017. In addition, as noted previously in LA reviews, impact measures should include measurable pupil progress targets.

Senior leaders have taken swift action to improve the consistency of teaching and learning across the school and to raise the expectations of teachers. A working group of staff has contributed to the development of the policy, which provides teachers with much more detailed expectations for planning lessons that engage and challenge pupils of different abilities. The annual monitoring cycle has been clearly set out to include a more robust system that includes consideration of a wide range of teaching activities. In addition, a comprehensive scheme has been put in place to ensure that staff are supported in developing their skills through a range of collaborative activities, including action research. All staff are to undertake training on supporting the needs of key groups including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and boys, and this should be completed as soon as possible in the autumn term. More attention should also be paid to developing numeracy across the curriculum.

The new policy is well thought out and includes reference to the appropriate use of homework, which pupils say is given regularly. The school's marking and feedback policy has also been revised to include greater emphasis on developing an effective dialogue between teachers and pupils. Although the initial impact of the new system was not directly evaluated in this visit, pupil feedback

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was highly positive.

Senior leaders recognise that there is a continued need to support the development of the monitoring role of subject leaders. The new, more detailed observation pro forma helps all staff to gain a sharper picture of the effectiveness of particular teaching activities and to identify areas for further development more precisely. The school has established a database to record the judgements on key aspects of teaching and this will help to evaluate the impact of CPD and identify future developmental needs. It is important to ensure that account is taken of subject specific issues, especially in mathematics and science, in order to provide pupils with more consistently effective learning experiences.

Plans are in place to further develop the leadership and management skills of middle leaders and this should be prioritised as it will strengthen the overall capacity of leadership to bring about the necessary improvements across the school with greater speed. Some training has already been provided and some subject leaders have recently completed a leadership qualification. A few middle leaders have also benefitted from holding an associate membership of SLT. The middle leaders interviewed indicated that this has helped them to gain a better insight into whole school issues. This is crucial, as leaders currently lack confidence in their knowledge and understanding of key priorities for the school and they need to be more aware of whole school plans and their roles and responsibilities within them. A good example of this is to strengthen middle leaders' role in the analysis of behaviour so that they are able to draw on evidence from monitoring activity to help to identify whether teaching is engaging all learners, and where further support or advice may be required. At present, pupils say that the clarity of teachers' expectations and the level of interest and challenge in learning activities influence the behaviour of their peers, which is variable.

The review of the school's pupil premium strategy is underway and good progress has been made. There are clear links with developments that are taking place in improving teaching and learning and the plan shows a good balance between curriculum based interventions and activities designed to broaden pupils' experience. The lead for pupil premium has taken account of research when designing the strategy and has ensured that there is a focus on maximising the achievement of the more able pupils in this group through establishing a link with a local sixth form college. In addition to the core activity, departments are invited to establish enrichment and engagement projects.

There are a number of staffing changes taking place in summer 2017, but the Headteacher indicated that the school will be fully staffed for the new academic year and the new staff have already been familiarised with school priorities and new systems.

As one result of staffing changes, a member of the SLT has taken up the role of SENCO in addition to other existing responsibilities. He has registered to attend specialist SENCO training in the new school year, and there is a database in place that provides a great deal of useful reference information. However, there is an urgent need for the school to establish a clear overview of the profile of the needs of pupils in the school and then put in place appropriate training and provision to address the barriers faced by pupils effectively. A member of the governing body with appropriate skills is working closely with the new leader and external support has been secured from a specialist consultant.

The recommendation from Ofsted that an external review of governance should take place has not yet been completed. Whilst the review has been initiated and some discussion as to its format undertaken, there remains some lack of clarity as to when it will take place and this should be addressed very promptly by the Chair of Governors. In the meantime action has been taken to realign governor roles and responsibilities.

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In response to the Ofsted findings regarding bullying, the school has undertaken appropriate action to further raise awareness of bullying and ensure that all pupils understand school systems to address any problems that may occur. Interviews with pupils showed that they feel confident that bullying is rare in the school and that they feel well supported and cared for by staff in respect of any problems that they may face, whether these are linked to their learning or social and welfare issues.

Overall pupils were very positive about their experiences in the school and value the wide range of opportunities that they are given to take part in activities and benefit from taking leadership roles.

Summary

There is evidence that effective action has been taken to begin to address the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted, particularly in respect of positive developments in teaching and learning and the pupil premium strategy. The development of middle leadership is crucial to increasing the schools capacity to secure rapid improvement and therefore this should be a major priority for attention. In addition, developments to improve the quality of provision for pupils with SEND and the review of governance should be acted upon promptly.

Recommendations

In order to further improve overall effectiveness the school and implement Ofsted recommendations leaders should pursue actions identified in the strategic plan and in particular:

1. Maintain a sense of urgency by setting clear, short-term timescales for the completion of well sequenced developmental activity and the introduction of new practices across the school.
2. Identify clearly the actions needed in each subject area (especially mathematics and science) in order to reduce the variation in the performance of different subjects and improve the overall quality of teaching.
3. Prioritise CPD for all staff in respect of meeting the learning needs of pupils with SEND, ensuring that their awareness and understanding are increased.
4. Ensure that there is a planned approach to developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum.
5. Undertake developmental activity to strengthen middle leadership across the school as a priority in order to quickly increase the capacity of overall leadership. Ensure that middle leaders understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of improving outcomes across the school and they are able to demonstrate the impact of actions taken at departmental level and how they contribute to overall improvements across the school.
6. Immediately audit the profile of pupils with SEND across the school, then establish a relevant training programme and support teachers so that they meet pupils' learning needs effectively.
7. Ensure that the review of governance is completed promptly and that governors receive the necessary training and support to conduct their roles effectively.

Progress will be evaluated in the next LA review in October 2017.