

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



24 July 2023

David Yates
Principal
Litherland High School
Sterrix Lane
Litherland
Liverpool
Merseyside
L21 0DB

Dear Mr Yates

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Litherland High School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on Wednesday 21 June 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. I also met with groups of subject leaders, staff and pupils. I spoke with representatives of those responsible for governance and representatives of the multi-academy trust to discuss the actions taken since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I evaluated recent developments to the school's curriculum. I also considered records of safeguarding and records of pupils' attendance. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Litherland High School continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- strengthen the quality of opportunities that promote, encourage and support pupils' wider reading.

Main findings

Since the most recent graded inspection, five governors have left the local governing body (LGB) and two have joined. A new chair of the LGB took up post in September 2022. You have increased the number of senior leaders. An assistant principal joined the senior leadership team in September 2022. During this time, 11 staff have left the school and 23 have joined.

You and other leaders have an in-depth understanding of the weaknesses in the quality of education and leadership and management at the school. Together, you have increased the pace with which you are implementing ambitious plans to secure improvement. You have focused on creating a culture of mutual respect to ensure that staff support your work to tackle the shortcomings at the school. As a result, you are successfully strengthening the quality of education that pupils receive.

You ensure that the LGB are well informed about the impact of your actions to bring about improvement. The support and challenge that you and other leaders receive from members of the LGB is strengthening leadership across all levels.

You, and other leaders, have improved the systems to ensure that subject leaders receive better guidance and stronger support from senior leaders. This is helping subject leaders to gain the expertise that they need to monitor and evaluate the quality of education in their subjects. The focus, quality and rigour of subject leaders' checks are improving. Teachers described the feedback that they receive from monitoring activities as increasingly valuable. This is because gaps in subject knowledge or teaching practices are being identified and staff are receiving the support that they need to improve. However, some subject leaders are further ahead than others. This means that the effectiveness of the checks on teachers' delivery of the curriculum is uneven across subjects.

You, and other leaders, are supporting staff to ensure that their curriculum thinking enables pupils to learn all that they should. Teachers now have a clearer understanding of the knowledge that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), should learn. Pupils appreciate that teachers across subjects are getting more confident in explaining new concepts. This is because the activities that pupils do in lessons are usually linked to the explanations that teachers have given. However, this is still markedly better in some subjects than others.

You have restructured the timeframes for common assessment points across all subjects. With other leaders, you have ensured that subject staff have benefited from training to better understand the different purposes of assessment. Subject staff are currently in the process of strengthening assessment strategies within different curriculum areas. This work is improving the quality of assessment information in some subjects. However, in some subjects, the purpose and focus of assessment activities is less clear. You have suitable plans to address this.

You, and other leaders, are making sure that those pupils who have the gaps in their reading knowledge are identified quickly. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive increasingly effective support to help them to read with greater fluency and accuracy. This is helping them to access the curriculum more easily than they did in the past.

You, and other leaders, have begun to develop strategies to promote reading for all pupils. You have introduced dedicated reading time for pupils in Years 7 to 9. You are beginning to engage with pupils to identify what will help to increase their use of the library. You are ensuring that pupils take part in a range of reading focused events to introduce and expose them to different text types. However, the quality of these opportunities is mixed, and, consequently, many pupils lack interest in reading.

The trust is making a significant contribution to the ongoing development of leaders and staff. Support from the trust has strengthened subject leaders' knowledge and practice of how to check on the quality of education in their subjects. Subject leaders have benefited from support to strengthen their subject curriculums, while teachers have been helped to improve their delivery of the curriculum.

You, and other leaders, have carefully identified where some subjects would benefit from the additional support of external partners. In these cases, you have made effective use of support from other local trusts and schools to support curriculum development, staff's subject expertise and staff's use of assessment strategies.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Heath Family Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Sefton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pennington
His Majesty's Inspector