

Inspection of Litherland High School

Sterrix Lane, Litherland, Liverpool, Merseyside L21 0DB

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is David Yates. This school is part of The Heath Family Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), David Donnelly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Stevenson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Litherland High School. They appreciate the commitment and care that staff display for them each day. This helps pupils to feel safe, happy and valued in school.

The school ensures that staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to these expectations. They demonstrate positive behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes. The school is equally ambitious for pupils' learning, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In recent years, the school has considerably strengthened the curriculum across a broad range of subjects. As a result, an increasing number of pupils achieve well.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities that the school provides for their personal development. They have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy in their everyday lives. Pupils take part in a range of clubs and activities that build their interests and talents. For example, pupils have tried new sports such as curling or judo, and they have taken part in a range of performances and art projects.

Pupils on the junior leadership team are excellent role models for younger pupils. They are thoughtful and professional when representing pupils' views to staff. Pupils said that leaders readily consider their suggestions and ideas. This contributes further to the strong relationships between staff and pupils.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Support from the trust has contributed considerably to the improvements that the school has made to the quality of education that pupils receive. The school has overhauled the curriculum to ensure that it is broad and suitably ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. For example, the school is increasingly ambitious for pupils to study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. The published data in 2023 does not reflect the quality of education at this school or how well current pupils are learning. This is because pupils who are no longer at the school did not benefit fully from the strengthened curriculum offer.

Teachers use their subject knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum skilfully. They design purposeful activities that support pupils to learn essential subject knowledge successfully. In the main, pupils learn well across a range of subjects.

Within lessons, teachers routinely check what pupils know. This enables teachers to swiftly address pupils' misconceptions as they identify them. Teachers also use assessment strategies well to check what knowledge pupils know and remember over a longer period. However, in a small number of subjects, assessment information does not provide teachers with the information that they need to know how well pupils have learned across a series of lessons. This hinders staff from

ascertaining where pupils have gaps in their knowledge or whether refinements to the curriculum are required.

The school accurately identifies pupils who find reading challenging. These pupils are provided with a comprehensive programme of support to help them catch up quickly with their peers. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. They are exposed to a range of thoughtfully selected texts. Despite this, pupils' reading within subjects is less developed. In some subjects, leaders have identified the subject-specific vocabulary that they want pupils to know and use. However, in other subjects, this work is at an earlier stage. This means that some pupils do not build subject-specific vocabulary as well as they should. From time to time, this prevents these pupils from deepening their understanding in these subjects.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND effectively. Teachers are provided with the information and training that they need to meet the needs of pupils with SEND well. As a result, teachers make adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum as necessary so that pupils with SEND can learn well alongside their peers.

The school has prioritised improving pupils' attendance. Staff monitor pupils' rates of attendance carefully and provide effective support for those pupils who find coming to school more difficult. As a result of leaders' endeavours, these pupils' rates of attendance have improved considerably.

The school has a carefully designed programme to support pupils with their personal development. This enables pupils to build their knowledge in an age-appropriate way. For example, pupils learn how to develop healthy relationships and how to look after their mental health. Pupils receive comprehensive information about opportunities for further education and different careers. Pupils value this learning and feel well prepared for their lives beyond school.

Trustees and governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They have recently developed their systems to ensure that they provide timely support and challenge for the school. However, from time to time, the school lacks detailed information about the impact of the updated curriculums in some subject areas.

Staff feel well supported by leaders in terms of their workload and well-being. Parents and carers were full of praise for the school and the communication that they receive about how well their children are achieving.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school's assessment strategies do not provide teachers with sufficient information to identify how well pupils are learning over a series of lessons. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their learning. The school should ensure that in these subjects, approaches to assessment enable teachers to successfully identify and remedy pupils' missed or forgotten learning.
- In some subjects, the school has not identified the subject-specific vocabulary that it wants pupils to know and remember. From time to time, this prevents some pupils from learning as deeply as they could in these subjects. The school should ensure that pupils are suitably furnished with the subject-specific terminology that they need to build a deep body of subject knowledge.
- The school does not have a clear enough understanding of the impact of some aspects of the curriculum. On occasions, this hinders staff from knowing when further improvements to the curriculum are necessary. The school should ensure that it has appropriate strategies in place to fully evaluate the quality of education that pupils receive.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141694
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10314045
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	739
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Stevenson
CEO of the trust	David Donnelly
Principal	David Yates
Website	www.litherlandhigh.com
Date of previous inspection	21 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Heath Family Trust.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision and one registered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with the school and

have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, art and design, and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, members of the trust, trustees and members of the governing body. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Eleanor Overland, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Michael Wright	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Maclean	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Parker	Ofsted Inspector

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