



Assessor Summary Report

Assessment Date: 9th & 10th November 2016

The school and its staff have a deep commitment to an inclusive ethos in order that all students become successful citizens in the 21st Century. Aspiration is extremely high and Safeguarding is particularly robust.

The new build having been completed in February 2011 houses state of the art facilities, including the use of a local sports park with athletic facilities and a local FE college across the road, providing fantastic opportunities for students who attend the school.

The curriculum spaces are intelligently grouped together in faculties of subjects, as well as reduce lost time from travelling between areas either during or between lessons. Each department has its own Central Work Area that is a non-timetabled space containing sufficient computers, projection and printing equipment to allow for full classes to use as and when the teacher requires it. With over 800 devices on site, the school currently has a 1:1 student to computer ratio, every teaching space is equipped with computers for both staff and student use, giving teachers the ability to differentiate learning through technology whenever they need to. Feature spaces such as the Information and Communication Centre (ICC) are at the heart of the school, allowing easy access for students before and after school, at break time and lunch time. These spaces are equipped with computers, books, magazines, traditional board games such as Chess and Scrabble and are staffed by dedicated teaching and support staff to maximise the benefits that students can enjoy from such facilities. Student Information Communication Assistants (ICAs) also offer support, promoting student leadership. LHS's proximity to Litherland Sports Park, a fully equipped athletics and sports facility, means students have excellent access to high level sporting facilities. The formal agreement between the two sites allows for the school's unrestricted use of turf and synthetic sports pitches, running track and cycling track during school hours.

The school has an extremely warm, welcoming and vibrant atmosphere and is extremely well looked after and is in immaculate condition. The building is bright dynamic and airy with the ability to be altered as needed to continue to provide suitable accommodation for 21st century teaching and learning and beyond with an impressive teaching environment with the latest technologies that are embedded in students' everyday learning experience.

Wherever I went in the fantastic building staff and students were happy to relate their experience of the school to me and demonstrate how inclusive practice permeates everything that goes on in the school, in fact students I spoke to couldn't find fault with what is on offer in the school, which supports the school's motto, *'Together in the Business of Learning'* and their mission statement, I would like to thank Carmel Murphy and her team who ensured that everything was ready for the IQM assessment and who produced a very thorough self-evaluation document, thus allowing me to gain a detailed understanding of LHS and its ingrained inclusive ethos prior to the assessment.

Everybody I met over the two days of the assessment was very helpful and spoke in a highly positive manner about the school, their involvement and their experience of the school often at great length, not only students and staff but also the parents, governors and external professionals from the LA I spoke to. The students I spoke to were very mature, polite and courteous and spoke about their time at the school and offered their honest opinions on a range of topics concerning their education. They were a credit to themselves, the school and their families. The school's very inclusive culture is based around their mission statement, *'By the time our children leave Litherland High School they will be literate, numerate, confident young people with high aspirations, independent learning skills and a sense of moral responsibility'*, and as stated by the Co-Principals welcome on their excellent easily navigable website. *'we aim to create a positive climate for learning where expectations and standards are high and our students are supported to do their best and achieve their full potential'*. A statement that I agree with and I can attest to from discussions, conversations and observation during the rigorous and comprehensive two-day assessment process and that operates through the school's emphasis on Achievement, Participation, Partnership and Equality and through their BFL policy at the heart of which is **RESPECT** – **R**eady to learn, **E**ngaged, **S**uitably dressed, **P**rogress is made, **E**xcellent standards of behaviour, **C**onsideration for others, and a **T**idy environment a truly inclusive approach based on the vision and belief that, LHS is an exciting learning community where all students make progress irrespective of their starting point, Learning is challenging, engaging, purposeful and innovative allowing for creativity, a sense of fulfilment and a desire to succeed, There is an open and honest culture where celebration of achievement is the norm and accountability is clear. Students and staff are given opportunities to discover and develop skills and talents as well as contribute to social improvement through volunteering schemes such as the Junior Leadership Team, School Council with representatives from each Year, The head Boy and Head Girl and the Anti Bullying Ambassadors, Peer Mentoring and Well-being Ambassadors and also partnerships with the local community. Crucially students also felt that the teachers and support staff know them very well fostering excellent positive relationships and an environment in which as individuals they can flourish and grow.

Inclusion is at the heart of everything it does permeating every nook and cranny and is ingrained in the structure at all levels. It is apparent from the moment you enter the reception area and continues throughout the inspirational and well thought out building. Everyone I met at all levels was keen to share *their* school and celebrate their vision for inclusion and success. Every student is valued for who they are and staff often go the extra mile as a matter of course to ensure that students needs are met and exceeded, as I was told on numerous occasions by students I met and talked with. The hard working, dedicated and thoroughly professional staff employed by the school are proud of their students and of the work that they do to promote successful outcomes and of the outstanding level of care that they provide for all students! There is an outstanding sense of care and nurture within LHS ensuring that students are given the best opportunities to succeed from the time they arrive in Year 7 to the time they leave at the end of Year 11. It was a pleasure to meet such enthusiastic, professional members of staff and to see the pride they felt when telling me about their roles, supporting each other, their students and as often the case their families as well, often without realising how much they do to ensure their students are successfully supported. Everyone I met was proud of *their* school and the outstanding efforts that are made to ensure everyone is cared for and achieves success.

LHS makes every effort to ensure that all students succeed, knowing and feeling that they matter. They provide the excellent care, guidance and support where the ethos of providing an environment supportive of all associated with it is intangible and infectious. Their commitment is reflected in high quality planning with owned and outcomes led actions. There is a culture of widespread reflection and review focussed on sustaining continuous improvement cycles. The importance of treating everyone associated with the school as an individual is deeply held and based on mutual respect, care and trust and they are committed to the 4Ps of Inclusive Education, Protection, Presence, Participation and Progress. The right for all to make progress is inherent and expected.

Leadership with the school and governance are rigorously focussed on ensuring the quality of the learning experience continues to produce improving and excellent results for all students. There is an equivalent emphasis on the provision of a broad array of enrichment opportunities to support individual's personal growth.

Celebrations are a positive and regular feature of life at the school. A broad and innovative array of approaches to recognising and celebrating achievement, in its widest form, are evident. The inclusive ethos is reflected through the operational systems and practice that the staff employ to deliver the clearly articulated vision.

Litherland High School has a relentless focus on driving improvement forward and on objectively evaluating their work on inclusion. Inclusion underpins their philosophy and approach, and is shared effectively through whole school meetings, briefings, school improvement and development planning, learning walks, through communication with parents, carers and students and in discussion with the governing body. LHS is committed to meeting the needs, ambitions and aspirations of **ALL** students, staff and other members of the learning community and by investing in specialist staffing to fully facilitate access to the curriculum for all and to work with staff to ensure that they have the knowledge, skills, ability and capacity to support the inclusion agenda.

The parents I met with and talked to spoke candidly about their experiences of the school. They were positive about the school and the support they offered but were also honest in the fact that they acknowledged that inevitably there were occasional issues. However, they were at pains to point out that the school was an open place and they felt able to discuss issues openly and that they were swiftly resolved. Overall they felt highly of the school and felt that they went above and beyond what was normally expected of school staff and particularly wanted to point out, that the school recognises each student as an individual and puts in place appropriate support where needed and that they are given many opportunities to succeed and be the best that they can be. They were keen to say that they felt that this was a true 'community school' and that where issues occurred they were dealt with swiftly and successfully. They were also keen to continue to forge even closer links with the school and explore further opportunities to be involved both as individuals and as a group.

The school is very well led by the Co-Principals, the Senior Leadership team and middle leaders who are committed to securing the best not only for their students, but for all staff who work in there. The Co-Principals have a clear vision of what they want to achieve and what they want for the school going forward that is fully supported by all staff and the governors and the MAT. Morale throughout the school is extremely high for both staff and students, with staff clearly

committed to ensure every possible success for the students entrusted to their care, academically, emotionally and socially.

The vision for the school is supported by the Leadership team in the way they manage, lead from the front, establish the vision by implementing school, wider MAT policy and innovation and ensure excellence in inclusion is secured across the board for students, staff and families. There are clear leadership roles identified and everyone works hard to provide a learning environment that excites stimulates and challenges students within a secure and caring community. A team approach pervades the whole school, where SEN support, pastoral care, student intervention together with excellent guidance and true inclusive practice combine to great effect. Having spent time in the Litherland High School during the assessment discussing and having varied and interesting conversations about inclusion with a wide variety of stakeholders the LHS 'team' are and should be rightfully proud of their hard-won achievements so far, but are committed and have the vision to continue to ensure outstanding outcomes for all who attend or work in the school. It has been a real privilege to spend time in such a fantastic inclusive school environment. They consistently go above and beyond what is expected in every area of school life.

The key strengths of the school:-

- Leadership at all levels is extremely positive and optimistic and pervades the whole school community. The forward thinking and supportive Co-Principals, Senior Leadership team and Governors have a clear vision for inclusion and a clear picture of where the school is going and how to get there. Supported by the staff, students and parents and the MAT.
- All personnel working in the school go the extra mile to meet the needs of all the students in their care. It is the welfare and achievement of the students that is the key driver and what matters and this was clearly celebrated in the wider community in conversations with parents and LA partners.
- High quality teaching is a continuing priority for the school with programme of Continued Professional Development (CPD) and is linked to appraisal. There is an emphasis on high quality teaching and a drive to continue to improve teaching and learning, so that good or outstanding teaching is at 100% as soon as possible. This is supported by an excellent learning culture across the staff and excellent systems put in place to share good practice and support teachers to improve.
- A real strength of the school is its highly motivated, professional and enthusiastic staff. They feel supported, valued and listened to by the Co-Principals, SLT and middle leadership. There is a culture and ethos of support for all ensuring that there is progression for staff at all levels. This can also be evidenced by the number of ex- students who have deliberately come back to work in the school.
- Staff at all levels feel included in decision making processes, feel supported, included and feel valued and part of the success of the school.
- Transition and induction at all stages are excellent, that has been identified as such by other schools and external agencies.

- There is outstanding inclusive practice in the school that provides fantastic care, nurture and support for all, in a carefully considered and nurturing environment. Everyone involved in inclusion at LHS should be highly commended for their relentless focus on inclusion and the needs of individual students and groups of students. This is evident in the support that students have access to and receive on a continuing daily basis.
- The Governors have a clear focus on inclusion, they know the school well and can challenge and support in equal measure. They know their strengths and weaknesses and are committed to continuing improvement and excellence.
- There are well planned curriculum opportunities on offer provide a full range of pathways that is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of the students at all key stages. With vocational opportunities being available to support students as necessary enriching their life chances. LHS achieved the International Schools Award in 2016 and is striving for a truly global learning environment with links to other countries such as China and the Czech Republic.
- The school works very hard to ensure it listens to students, staff and parents. Student Voice is valued. Students are extremely positive about the school and spoke confidently and at length about the help and support available. They appreciate the efforts of the staff and they are proud of their school. Students are very happy with the range of opportunities and they participate enthusiastically, to the point of producing their own student newsletter earlier this year with the second issue due out before Christmas. The students I spoke to were very proud of the fact that they had produced the newsletter and were keen to explain that it was all their own work and that they were looking forward to developing it as it moved forward as a vehicle for student voice and opinion.
- Parents feel very positive about the school and everything it does to support their children and feel that their voice is heard and communication is a two-way process and issues are dealt with swiftly and successfully and have a very strong voice.
- Performance Management Structure and Line Management Structures are both supportive and challenging. Self-review is thorough and robust and accountability is high but is not oppressive.