

Longdendale High School



Inclusion Quality Mark



Inclusion Quality Mark Report February 2019



Longdendale
HIGH SCHOOL



AspirePlus
EDUCATIONAL TRUST


Achievement **S**uccess **P**rofessionalism **I**ntegrity **R**espect **E**ndeavour

Assessment Date – 7th February 2019

Longdendale High School is an impressive 11-16 school serving the local community, with 842 students on roll. Attendance at LHS is the highest ever recorded over the past nine years standing at 95.7% significantly above the most recent national average of 94.6%. Persistent absence is also considerably lower at 8.3% than the most recent national average of 13.5% and is a testament to the efforts of the school and the attendance team in ensuring student attendance. They should be commended for their efforts in this respect. The school is built on strong values, that is clearly seen in its mission statement "*We Endeavour to Achieve and Aspire to be successful*" and through their well established and clearly defined core values of *ASPIRE – Achievement, Success, Professionalism, Integrity, Respect, Endeavour* that promote a culture that underpins and informs all that they do at every level. LHS and its staff have the highest standards where everyone is challenged and supported to flourish and is encouraged to work hard to fulfil their aspirations, with an expectation that every member of the school be the best they can be. LHS is a truly inclusive and extremely caring, vibrant school where all staff are justifiably proud of the high-quality education they provide to all students. A school that has a very real and positive impact on students' ability to access appropriate learning or timely interventions, allied with an unwavering and uncompromising ambition for all they serve including disadvantaged and vulnerable students. A fact I can attest to from the evidence of the review and through discussions with staff and students. Everyone connected to the school should be proud they provide an inclusive environment that in my opinion from the evidence of this review is superb.

LHS is a school where every student really does matter and is made to feel special. The school and staff are committed to providing the very highest standard of teaching and learning experiences which not only develop the student's knowledge and skills but also gives them the opportunities to excel in all areas of the curriculum and beyond as they move through their school life. Everyone involved with the school including students and parents who are actively involved in the life of the school, pull together to realise the school's vision and understand that this is a superbly inclusive place to come to work and learn.

The school's excellent work in engaging parents was evidenced by LHS being awarded the Leading Parent Partnership Award in (LPPA) in November 2018, an award that recognises the high-quality work that they engage in on a daily basis to support their families and to secure and promote the best possible outcomes and life chances for their students and families. LHS is clearly a school that is at the heart of its community where inclusion is a natural and intuitive part of what happens on a daily basis, where students are encouraged to achieve their full potential, where everyone involved is committed to the inclusion of all students whatever it takes. A school that is constantly looking at ways to develop for the benefit of the students and families that it serves.



Students are valued as individuals and this was clearly seen on a tour of the school and through interactions during the review with staff and students, where inclusion is a natural part of the very fabric of the school and a place where superb care, nurture and support naturally occur, within a happy, stimulating and vibrant learning environment and through a focus on helping students to develop the skills, they need to be effective independent learners and positive members of their community and society. Everyone I met was helpful and spoke very positively about their experiences at the school. With a tight focus on improving the attainment and wider outcomes for all students and not just promoting the learning of the lowest or highest achievers as with the previous review it is clear to see that the school's actions to care for pupils in my judgement is superb.

The Staff are exceptionally positive about the school and as a matter of course without thought go the extra mile and beyond to ensure that the individual and groups of students' needs are met and enhances the provision at the school. Staff I spoke to in meetings or around the school are justifiably proud of what they achieve both professionally and in terms of support for the students and for themselves. They work exceptionally hard to ensure that needs of students are met and it is very clear to see walking around the school that there is mutual respect and care that is evident across the staff body; and a fantastic rapport between the staff, the students in the school and between the staff at all levels. A mutual regard and respect that shines through.

Staff led by the Headteacher and her senior team have a clear vision for the school, 'their' students, families. They see themselves as part of 'Longdendale Family'. All staff clearly demonstrate a relentless determination and drive for all students to succeed, this came across very clearly in meetings and discussions with staff at all levels and with the students I met and talked to and is a very real strength of this outstanding and superbly inclusive school. Students have a clear enjoyment of learning about themselves and the world around them, this is apparent walking around the school and is highly visible in classrooms, on corridors and at social times as well, it is a real strength of the school and the staff should be commended for ensuring the students have this attitude to learning instilled in them.

The behaviour and safety of students seen during this review was exemplary. The students, their parents and the school should be immensely proud of the way they conduct themselves. There is a very clear and strong student voice at LHS. Parents are well informed of their children's progress and what they can do to support the school and their child's development. This partnership is a very clear key strength of the school, parents and governors are actively involved in shaping and developing the vision of the school and communicating extremely effectively through its excellent new website, letters, texts and through social media.

During the Review, there were numerous opportunities to see LHS in operation during a normal day very clearly demonstrating their superb inclusive practice in all interactions between staff and students. I was able to watch a Year 8 assembly as part of Children's Mental Health Week; participate in a tour the school to seeing lessons in progress and students making their way to and from lessons; have a number of discussions with staff and students exploring aspects of their school that clearly demonstrated their superb inclusive ethos and culture, including the opportunity to talk to the Trust CEO and the school's Headteacher to discuss progress since the last review and plans for the next twelve months. It was very humbling to listen to staff and students who were grateful for and excited by the opportunities given to them as a matter of course at LHS.

Showcasing LHS as a lively, yet calm place to come to teach and learn highlighting its values and vision, delivering quality teaching and learning experiences for students and demonstrating their superb inclusive culture that is a natural part of the everyday experience shared by staff and students.

The Year 8 assembly as part of Children's Mental Health Week had a focus on, '*Healthy: Inside and Out*'. Led by the school's Senior Inclusion Lead who talked about healthy living, where there tends to be a focus on looking after our bodies –physical wellbeing – through food, being active and getting enough sleep. However, in order to be healthy overall, it's important that there is also a focus on the mind –mental well-being too. Bodies and minds are actually very closely linked, so things that are done to improve physical wellbeing can help mental well-being as well. When steps are taken to be *Healthy: Inside and Out*, it helps people to feel better in themselves. Students took an active part answering questions posed and also discussed on line safety to promote positive mental health.

LHS during the last review period put in place a vertical tutor system to address their identified inclusion developmental themes of 'diversity and tolerance, resilience and self-awareness, integrity and respect'. The sessions worked well for the vast majority of students and year groups. During a discussion with Senior Leaders different options for moving forward were suggested to expand the system and focus on a House System based on the schools ASPIRE core values with six houses linked to each of the core values that would provide a vehicle for social interaction across all years, peer mentoring opportunities, whole staff involvement and also allow for inter house competition and possibly a cross MAT element if the system was duplicated at Rayner Stephens High School.

After a discussion at the last review about 'Forest School' LHS have worked with '*Inside Out Forest School*' to deliver a programme to Year 7 students using their own external environment. Bringing learning to life in an outdoors environment with practical hands on cross curricular, with students developing social and communication skills, team work and self-esteem. The members of staff and students I spoke to were very enthusiastic about the programme and want to see it develop in the future. It would be useful to explore LHS staff being trained as Forest School Workers and we also discussed the development of the outdoor area to provide further opportunities for outdoor learning in a wider context and contact details were provided for LHS to look at two outstanding Forest schools who would offer support.

A new lead has been appointed to oversee Student Leadership at LHS and has continued to build on their already excellent practice, where there are numerous leadership opportunities for students of all ages to be involved in leadership opportunities. It is clear to see from discussions with the extremely enthusiastic lead and from conversations with a variety of student leaders including Head Boy and Girl, Senior Student leaders and school council members that Student leadership is extremely strong at LHS and is developing at a fast pace. The new model mirrors to a degree the schools SLT with Head Boy and Girl, four Deputies and then 7 Senior Student Leaders each with an area of responsibility-Academic, Sports, Art, Charity, Anti Bullying, Equality and Well-Being and Aspire Centre. This is mirrored by Leaders in Year 10 and 11 and then Year representatives on the school council in Years 7-9 and Form representatives for Years 7-9. A comprehensive that is supported by other groups such as the Eco Warriors. The Lead has a 5-year vision for student leadership at LHS that is extremely comprehensive and could provide a template for all schools to follow. As part of this process the school are looking to engage with SSAT Student Leadership Accreditation. During the discussion we explored the possibility to widen the brief to not just include those actively involved with the Student Leadership path outlined above but to broaden it to all students and to explore ways of doing this. Alongside this there was a very interesting and involved discussion about the merits of a student profile that would support them and provide a structure for recording the students time at LHS.

The school through cross MAT planning days have introduced a new Project Based Learning Curriculum in year 7 which differs to the previous one in that it is delivered by SLT across both schools and is timetabled on the same afternoon so that there can be joint working. I had an interesting discussion with a group of students who have been involved in this project and was astounded by the way they were able to articulate their feelings about the eco projects they had been involved with and their enthusiasm for what they were doing. The students and the school should be proud of this development and how it is producing articulate confident, independent learners in years 7 & 8, that eloquently demonstrates the school's Teaching & Learning vision to produce, *'Dynamic and engaging experiences, challenge learners to be inquisitive, active and independent'*. The students I spoke to clearly demonstrated all of these qualities.

There is a superb quality of support, care and nurture that is continually evolving to enhance provision at the school both for students and for staff, with superb provision and support for mental health issues that continues to develop under the Leadership of the Schools Senior Inclusion Lead. What is evident from the previous IQM review and from discussions this year is that the work to support Mental Health and Well-Being at LHS is at the forefront of what is happening in Tameside but also, I would suggest nationally. This is demonstrated by the level of training and expertise accrued by the Inclusion team and in particular the Senior Inclusion Lead who has been invited to be part of the Children and Young People's Strategic Steering Group concerned with mental health and well-being and through the teams proactive work to continue to ensure students who need support in this arena and their families are supported towards successful outcomes. Since the last review they have achieved the AcSEED Award and are the first school in Greater Manchester to be accredited with the award in recognition of the well-being support provided across the school community. AcSEED is a charity that exclusively focuses on promoting the need for high – quality emotional well-being and mental health support across the country.

Founded by young people with direct personal experience of mental illness at a young age and a clarity of focus on well-being for students and staff.

However, the superb levels of support do not stop there and the inclusion staff at LHS are always exploring ways in which they can improve the support they offer. For example, twenty staff having received level two mental health training and they are also actively involved in the Thrive initiative through 'I Thrive'. It is a national programme of innovation and improvement in child and adolescent mental health and is currently being implemented in national accelerator sites across the country. It is an integrated, person centred, needs led approach to delivering mental health services for children, young people and families which conceptualises need in five categories; *Thriving, Getting Advice, Getting Help, Getting More Help and Getting Risk Support*. The school are also involved in a number of other programmes and projects in this area of mental health and well-being.

As part of the next flagship review it will be interesting to discuss the programmes and projects talked about above and to see how they have developed.

In summary, it is very clear to see that the superb inclusive ethos of this school is very much a living, breathing and developing entity. At the heart of LHS inclusion is the inspiration and aspirations of a highly cohesive group of senior leaders with shared values led by the Headteacher, and the 'can do' attitude they inspire in their carefully chosen staff, who continue to go from strength to strength. Staff morale is extremely high, and they feel empowered to try out new ideas and to take calculated risks in the interests of the students in their care. They feel valued and subsequently are very loyal and proud to work at LHS. Life never stands still here as the school continues to move forward at a fast pace; always looking to the future to see what is over the horizon and what opportunities or threats might be heading their way. This means they are prepared and can make the right decisions and develop plans for the future. However, this does not mean they neglect the present. Students always come first, and their needs are the priority. Extremely positive relationships are at the heart of everything that happens at LHS and is at the very heart of their superb inclusive policy and practice.

Having completed a rigorous and thorough review and having discussed and agreed the targets cited in the report and their involvement in and capacity to support and attend Cluster Group meetings where they have attended three of the four meetings held so far and hosted the last in October. They clearly understand that their involvement will form a significant part of their next annual Review. Therefore, I am of the opinion that LHS remains a school with the Inclusion agenda at the forefront of everything it provides for its students. The environment is superb providing an excellent teaching and learning environment for teachers, support staff, students and the local community. They have proved their expertise over the years of IQM accreditation and I believe they have the drive and capacity to be a Flagship School. I recommend, without reservation, that the school be given the accreditation, and moves from Centre of Excellence status to hold Flagship status.

The next review will look closely at how the school has interacted with its Inclusion Cluster and promoted continuing outreach and in-school research. Evidence of Cluster working will underpin the capacity for the school to maintain its Flagship status.

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd



Achievement

Success

Professionalism

Integrity

Respect

Endeavour



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