

Liverpool College

Queen's Drive, Liverpool, Merseyside, L18 8BG

Inspection dates 19–20 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The Principal, senior leaders and governors have very high expectations for both the academic performance and personal development of all pupils.
- Leaders have effectively managed the transition from an independent school to an academy. They have clear plans to develop the academy further.
- Teachers' performance is managed well. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and it continues to improve.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well through a very broad range of extra-curricular activities, clubs, visits and special events. Pupils have many opportunities to take on positions of responsibility in the academy.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years where the quality of teaching and provision is good.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is well above national levels.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils behave impeccably well around the site and in lessons. They readily cooperate with others, work very hard and are eager to succeed.
- Pupils feel completely safe in the academy and there are effective procedures to keep them safe.
- Parents are highly supportive of the academy and its leaders.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students are very well taught and attain excellent results.
- Governors are well informed about the performance of the school. They both support and challenge academy leaders effectively; as a result, the academy continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some leaders in charge of subjects do not effectively check that the quality of teaching in their areas is consistently high.
- Pupils' standards of writing in Key Stage 1 are not as high as those in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils make slower progress in Key Stage 2 than in other key stages.
- Teachers do not always set work at the right level of difficulty for pupils of different abilities or ask questions to make pupils think hard.
- The quality of marking is variable and teachers do not always check that pupils have acted on it.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a wide range of lessons. Five of these observations were carried out jointly with academy leaders. Inspectors also visited a number of other activities including assemblies and tutor periods.
- Inspectors and academy leaders jointly evaluated a sample of pupils' work from across different key stages.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, school leaders, governors, a representative from the local authority and with four groups of pupils from different key stages.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the site between lessons, and at break and lunchtimes. They took the opportunity to speak informally to pupils at various times during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the 292 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and took account of a number of other communications from parents. They spoke to a small number of parents at the start and end of the academy day. They also considered the 73 staff questionnaires they received.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents including academy information on pupils' progress, records of their attendance and behaviour, documents relating to safeguarding and academy plans for improvement.

Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Haddock	Additional Inspector
Sheila Mawer	Additional Inspector
Jonathan Smart	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Liverpool College converted to become an academy on 1 September 2013. Before this date, it was an independent school and was subject to inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.
- This all-through academy, with pupils aged from three to 18, is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The early years provision consists of part-time morning and afternoon Nursery classes and full-time Reception classes.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is the additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The academy does not make use of any alternative off-site provision.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 and Year 11.
- The academy has boarding provision for some sixth form students. This provision was not included in this inspection.
- The academy runs a breakfast club and after-school club which provide child care at the start and end of each school day, and wrap-around care for children of nursery age. This provision was included in the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by making sure that:
 - work is always set with the right level of challenge for pupils of different abilities in each class
 - questioning deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - marking consistently gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work and teachers check that pupils have followed this advice
 - leaders in charge of subjects are all equally effective in checking that teachers follow agreed procedures, so the quality of teaching is consistently high.

- Improve achievement by making sure that:
 - pupils in Key Stage 1 make faster progress in writing, so they reach the same standards as those attained in reading and mathematics
 - pupils in Key Stage 2 make more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The academy's focus on 'Learning with Character' emphasises both pupils' academic performance and their personal development. The Principal, well supported by senior leaders and governors, makes sure that the academy has high expectations for all pupils in both areas. This strong leadership has created a culture in which good teaching and outstanding behaviour can flourish.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. There is a very broad range of extra-curricular activities available: a large number of music groups; the Duke of Edinburgh award; the combined cadet force; plays and school productions; sporting competitions; charity events; academic clubs; visits, visitors and special events. Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities in the academy, such as becoming monitors, prefects, house captains, head boy or girl. Many represent the academy in a wide range of sporting or cultural events and competitions. As a result, pupils develop into confident and articulate young people.
- Good attention is paid to making sure that pupils from all backgrounds and starting points have an equal opportunity to be successful and that there is no discrimination. Very good relations are fostered between pupils. Ambitious targets are set for pupils' progress and regular checks are made. If any pupils fall behind, extra support is provided to help them to catch up.
- Extra funds from the pupil premium are spent effectively on a programme to improve the reading skills of disadvantaged pupils and on a teaching assistant to support the social and emotional needs of younger pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Primary sport funding contributes towards the very wide range of sporting opportunities available to pupils, which is having a positive impact on pupils' health and well-being.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively. Regular checks are made on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Teachers are set targets based on pupils' progress and teachers are held accountable for pupils' achievement. Any underperformance in teaching is dealt with robustly. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and continues to improve.
- The academy's curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced; it prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. Effective careers guidance is supplemented by visiting speakers and careers fairs. As a result, pupils' aspirations are high and they are able to make informed choices about their next steps.
- Modern British values are promoted well. Pupils are given many opportunities to understand democracy and the rule of law. For example, pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 recently held a mock election, timed to coincide with the general election. Pupils are taught to respect people from all cultures and faiths by, for example, hearing visiting speakers from a range of different backgrounds.
- Parents are very supportive of the academy and its leaders. The very large majority who responded to the questionnaire say their child is happy, well taught and making good progress; as a result, they would recommend Liverpool College to others. One parent, speaking for many, said: 'I have nothing but praise for this school and the wealth of extra-curricular activities that are made available to all pupils. Teachers give up their time freely to provide these.'
- Staff are appropriately trained in child protection issues and provide a high level of care for pupils. The academy's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very effective and meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided valuable support as part of the process of the college converting to become an academy. Leaders have managed this transition very effectively. They have well-thought-out plans to develop the academy further.
- Leaders in charge of subjects are developing in their roles but some are not yet fully effective in making sure that all teachers follow agreed procedures. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning in some areas remains variable.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear view of the academy's strengths and its areas for improvement. Many are regular visitors to the school and have carried out learning walks around the academy with senior leaders. In this way they see the quality of teaching for themselves. They make sure that teachers' salary progression is based on pupils' progress and they understand how any underperformance in teaching is tackled.
 - Members of the governing body understand what published data on pupils' achievement tells them about how well the academy is doing. This means they can effectively challenge academy leaders when necessary. As a result, governance is effective.
 - Governors make sure that academy finances are managed well. They know how extra funds, such as

the pupil premium, are spent. They analyse the impact of this spending on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils told inspectors they are very proud of belonging to Liverpool College.
- In lessons, pupils display a thirst for learning. There is a strong commitment to learning in all year groups. Pupils want to succeed; they are keen to answer questions and to contribute ideas to class discussions. They are punctual to lessons and arrive well prepared for learning. They cooperate well in lessons and help each other learn.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct around the site is exemplary. They are polite, respectful and courteous to one another and to visitors. Many pupils offered to accompany inspectors around the extensive site if they were unsure of where to go.
- Pupils take pride in their appearance and standards of school uniform are high. There is no litter around the site and pupils look after their academy's facilities very well.
- Pupils' attendance has risen and is above national average levels. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen. Pupils not only attend on time but they also attend after the official end to the day. This is to further their own studies or to take part in the very wide range of extra-curricular activities that are on offer.
- There have been no permanent exclusions since the academy opened.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire have no concerns about pupils' behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The site is extremely secure and pupils say they feel safe in the academy. Pupils are taught effectively how to stay safe and to take responsibility for their own safety. Parents are confident that their children are kept safe.
- There are few, if any, incidents of bullying. Pupils told inspectors that procedures for dealing with any problems are rigorous and effective.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff are appropriately trained on child protection issues, so all are clear on policies and procedures. Appropriate checks are carried out on staff before they are appointed.
- Pupils have lessons on how to stay safe when using the internet. E-safety has a high priority in the academy.
- The academy's breakfast club, after-school club and wraparound care provide children with enjoyable and stimulating activities in a safe and secure environment.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is effective in making sure that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Lessons are well planned. Teachers use the academy's planning framework well to ensure that pupils are always clear about the purpose of lessons and what they are expected to do.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are warm, friendly and respectful. This makes a clear contribution to the good learning that takes place. No time is wasted in dealing with low-level disruption or off-task behaviour. Teachers have an excellent knowledge of individual pupils and a good awareness of their capabilities.
- Homework is set regularly in all year groups. It is used well to contribute to pupils' good learning and progress over time.
- Teachers plan stimulating tasks which fully engage pupils' interest and enable them to make good progress. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves in many lessons. Pupils develop perseverance in their learning and do not give up easily if they find a task difficult.
- Teachers do not always plan work which is well matched to the different abilities of all pupils in their

classes. This means that not all pupils have the right level of challenge, so not all make the outstanding progress of which they are capable.

- Teachers' marking is variable in quality. Some is excellent and gives pupils very clear guidance on how to improve their work. Other marking, although detailed and frequent, does not provide sufficiently clear advice for pupils. Teachers do not always check that pupils have responded to this marking.
- On occasion, teachers' questions are not probing enough to make pupils think hard, to check their learning, or to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is high. In 2014, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics was well above average. The proportion in 2014 making the progress expected of them in both English and mathematics was also well above average.
- Pupils make strong progress and achieve well in a number of subjects at GCSE including mathematics, statistics, English literature, Spanish, geography, physics, chemistry and biology. The academy does not enter pupils early for GCSE examinations.
- Pupils develop their skills in mathematics across the school particularly well because the subject is well taught and they have chances to practise these skills in different subjects. In 2014, the proportion of older pupils making more progress than would be expected of them was double the national average.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is good. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels of achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 4 is above average.
- Younger pupils learn to read well. They have a good understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make). Results in 2014 in the phonics screening check for pupils in Year 1 were above national levels. There is a strong and successful emphasis on reading for pleasure throughout the academy.
- Due to good support, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates. Disadvantaged pupils make at least the same progress as their classmates, and sometimes their progress is more rapid. There are too few disadvantaged pupils in each year group to be able to comment on their attainment compared with other pupils in the school and nationally without identifying them.
- Pupils who enter Year 7 with the lowest starting points also achieve well as a result of the effective use of the catch-up funding made available to boost their achievement in English and mathematics particularly.
- Pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 are above average. In 2014, more pupils reached the higher levels in reading and mathematics than in writing. There is some inconsistency in pupils' progress in writing in different classes in Key Stage 1. Leaders' actions to improve standards in writing are now beginning to have a positive impact. Pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills as they move through the academy because they have many opportunities to write at length in different subjects.
- Pupils' standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average. They make slower progress in Key Stage 2 than in other key stages. Academy data indicate that pupils are currently making more rapid progress, especially in Year 6, and that pupils' results in the 2015 National Curriculum tests are on track to be above average.

The early years provision is good

- Children enter the Reception Year with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. They make good progress and achieve well from their different starting points. By the time they go into Year 1 the majority of children have reached a good level of development, with around one fifth of them exceeding expectations in reading. This means they are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching and provision is good. In both the indoor and outdoor areas, there is a good balance of adult-led tasks and activities chosen by the children themselves. The garden area is used well, for example, to give children excellent opportunities to discover mini-beasts and to explore the life cycle of frogs. Indoors, inspectors saw children who were totally absorbed in making their own information books about the spring flowers found in the garden. The quality of teaching is not outstanding because at times teachers' questions do not always encourage children to think hard enough to make more rapid progress.
- Children are happy learners, and their behaviour is extremely good. All staff are very supportive and

caring. The learning environment is safe and secure. Children show a good awareness of safety; for example, when using the climbing wall children are careful to move safely so they do not hurt themselves or anybody else. All safety and welfare requirements are met.

- The early years provision is well led. The new leader has a clear and accurate view of what further improvements are needed. Improved assessment procedures and the provision of better resources are leading to rising standards of achievement.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Students' achievement in the sixth form is outstanding. They make much better than average progress on their courses, and their results in AS and A-level examinations are much higher than the national average. The proportion of students who transfer from Year 12 into Year 13 is very high. Almost all sixth form students who left in 2014 went to university, with around three-quarters gaining a place at one of the more prestigious Russell Group universities. Students' results are predicted to be equally high in 2015.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is very high. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and an evident enthusiasm for their subjects. Teachers' marking is very detailed and gives students clear guidance on how they can improve and achieve the highest levels. Teachers plan lessons which provide for learners with different abilities and starting points. This means that all can make excellent progress.
- Students' behaviour and safety are excellent in the sixth form. They take part in a range of activities including sport, music and drama. They have many chances to undertake leadership roles: in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme; in the combined cadet force; and more generally across the academy. These experiences provide them with social and leadership skills which equip them well for the next stage of their education. Students work very hard and feel totally safe in the academy. Attendance rates in the sixth form are rising and are now high.
- The sixth form is well led and managed. Leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum to make sure it will, in the future, fully meet the needs of the rising number of students and the increasingly diverse nature of the student population.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139686
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	450034

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,022
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Evans
Principal	Hans Van Mourik Broekman
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0151 724 4000
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