

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Liverpool College

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

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 June 2025

Outcome

Liverpool College has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Alison Haynes. This school is part of a single academy trust, Liverpool College Independent School Trust. The trust is run by the principal and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Professor Timothy Nichol.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit from a strong educational experience that promotes their academic excellence and their personal development. They are happy, proud and feel safe within a highly caring environment. Relationships between pupils and staff are built on respect, trust and high expectations. This helps pupils to thrive inside and outside of the classroom.

Across the school, most pupils behave extremely well. They develop increasing maturity and responsibility as they progress through the school. Children in the early years play well together and learn to manage their emotions and behaviour. Pupils across other phases are proud to be role models for their peers. For example, primary school pupils value their prefect roles and being able to help their peers. Older pupils enjoy leading clubs and societies to enrich younger pupils' experiences and understanding of the wider world.

The school sets high expectations of pupils' academic achievement. It offers a broad and ambitious curriculum that encourages most pupils to gain a deep and secure body of knowledge. Pupils are motivated and keen to live up to the high ambitions that staff have of them. They engage positively with their learning and achieve well.

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

The school's motto 'not only the intellect, but also the character' is at the heart of its curriculum. The curriculum model successfully integrates academic learning with pupils' wider development. This ensures that pupils across each key stage develop a deep body of knowledge and skills to help them to succeed. Staff across the early years and the primary and secondary phases work well together to ensure that pupils' prior learning is built on seamlessly over time.

At every key stage, subject specialists deliver the curriculum well. New concepts and learning are presented clearly. As soon as children start in the Reception class, they are encouraged to develop their vocabulary across the curriculum. Teachers choose activities which foster curiosity and engage pupils' interest. Consequently, pupils revisit and retain their learning well.

Teachers review and check that pupils have secured their learning before moving on. They use effective strategies to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning swiftly. Teachers give pupils valuable feedback that helps to move their learning on. As such, most pupils achieve well.

The school prioritises its support for the growing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It ensures that the needs of these pupils are identified accurately and quickly. In the primary phase, high-quality support is put in place to ensure that pupils with SEND access the curriculum well. As a result, along with their peers, these pupils excel. However, in the secondary phase, support strategies have not been developed and embedded as well as they could be. As a result, from time to time, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

Reading is a high priority across school. Children in the early years make a strong start to their phonics learning. Teachers use songs and story time to prepare children to develop their reading knowledge in key stage 1. The school ensures that books match closely to the sounds that pupils are learning. Pupils who struggle with reading are identified and supported well. As a result, they become fluent and confident readers. Across the curriculum, including in the sixth form, pupils are provided with an ambitious and broad range of texts. This fosters their love of reading.

Behaviour is managed effectively across school. As such, learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils are engaged with their learning and take pride in their work. Sixth-form students are keen and driven to do as well as they can. Pupils' strong commitment to learning is reflected in the very low absence rates across school.

In the early years, children explore a broad range of ways to look after themselves and stay healthy. Older pupils learn about personal safety, responsibility and respecting others. They enjoy leading diversity fairs, cultural events and assemblies. This raises awareness and develops pupils' understanding of the differences between themselves and others. As a result, they are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils relish opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include music, sports and charity work as part of the school's diploma programme. Secondary pupils also enjoy taking part in the cadet's programme and the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme. These opportunities build their confidence, resilience and independence.

Across each phase of the school, a wide range of activities and events are organised to develop pupils' understanding of different careers. For example, the 'Audience With' sessions, mock interviews and careers fairs introduce pupils to a broad range of avenues to pursue. This means that older pupils feel well informed in making decisions about their careers.

Staff value the support provided by trustees and the school. At all levels, there is a strong understanding of the school's vision to sustain high standards of education. Trustees play an active role in ensuring that the school is challenged and supported appropriately well. This enables the school to refine and reshape its practices so that pupils across the school can excel.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not fully developed and implemented its provision to support pupils with SEND, particularly in the secondary phase. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could. The school should enhance staff's expertise and knowledge to adapt learning to meet the additional needs of the growing number of pupils with SEND.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the

last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in November 2019.

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	139686
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10348287
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1655
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	258
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Timothy Nichol
Principal	Alison Haynes
Website	www.liverpoolcollege.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current principal was appointed in August 2024.
- The school is part of the Liverpool College Independent School single-academy trust.
- The trust offers boarding provision to its 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.
- The school uses five registered providers of alternative provision for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal and other school leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff.
- Inspectors spoke with trustees, including the chair of trustees. They also spoke with representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour across the school, including at social times.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and teachers, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work and spoke with some pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with the leaders responsible for pupils' personal development, behaviour and attendance, early years, sixth form, disadvantaged pupils, careers, the provision for SEND and reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and records relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

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