

Auckland College

65–67 Parkfield Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L17 4LE

Inspection dates	12–14 November 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Teaching is good and the curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. As a result, pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Provision for the personal development of pupils is good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively.
- Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good; policies and procedures are implemented effectively to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Leadership and management is good. Senior leaders lead a drive to secure positive benefits for pupils; as a result, teaching is good, pupils achieve well and make good progress.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Teachers are not always imaginative in using the resources available to support lessons.
- Systems to track and monitor pupils' achievement and progress are not fully embedded; as a result, achievement and progress are not accelerated enough because the school does not have a clear picture of individual rates of achievement.
- The range of accredited courses available to pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form (the Upper School) is a little limited.
- Lesson observations conducted by senior leaders are not undertaken frequently enough and the feedback provided does not always challenge teachers sufficiently well to improve.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day’s notice.
- The inspectors observed 15 lessons all taught by different teachers. The inspectors looked at pupils’ work and held meetings with the proprietor, headteacher, heads of departments, teachers and pupils.
- The inspectors looked at the school’s documentation including schemes of work, teachers’ planning, records of pupils’ progress, assessment records and records pertaining to the professional development of staff. They checked the school’s compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed in 16 questionnaires returned by staff and 38 responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s online ‘Parent View’ questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chanan Tomlin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sarah Drake

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Auckland College is a small independent co-educational school catering for pupils aged from three to 18 years of age. The school is based in a residential area of south Liverpool, with most pupils living within 10 miles of its location.
- Currently, there are 138 pupils on roll. There are 30 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage; all are in receipt of a nursery funding grant. Twenty three pupils are disabled or have special educational needs, four of whom have a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with a majority being White British. Twenty one pupils speak English as an additional language, but very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The school sets out to provide, 'an education of the highest quality which allows every pupil to reach their academic and personal potential in a safe, happy and stimulating environment'. It aims to prepare pupils 'to enter the world as individuals, fully equipped with the skills needed to be successful and happy in both their careers and personal lives whilst making a valuable and long-lasting contribution to the wider community'
- The school uses alternative provision for physical education at local leisure centres.
- The school was opened in 1999 and was last inspected in April 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers use a range of resources more often and more imaginatively.
- Further improve the curriculum in the Upper School by:
 - increasing the range of accredited courses available to pupils
 - further enriching pupils' understanding of different cultures.
- Further improve leadership and management by:
 - undertaking more frequent lesson observations and providing feedback which challenges teachers more to improve
 - embedding systems to monitor and track pupils' achievement and progress so the school gains a clear picture of individual rates of achievement.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Achievement is good as a result of good teaching and a good curriculum. Pupils' work, records of achievement and test results show that, considering their starting points, the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress over time compares favourably with national figures. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's 'Learning Journey' profiles and other records indicate that they make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Achievement in literacy and numeracy for pupils in the Lower School (Key Stages 1 and 2) is good and above the national averages.

Overall, achievement and progress in the Upper School is good but not as consistent as that in the Lower School. The Upper School has a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Although last year's GCSE outcomes for pupils in Year 12 were low, this was because almost half of the cohort were identified as having special educational needs. In the same year, almost half of the Year 10 pupils took GCSE examinations early and achieved good grades for all subjects including English and mathematics. All pupils that complete their GCSEs continue their education either at the school or elsewhere. A small number of pupils complete A levels, most achieving good results.

Pupils acquire knowledge quickly and are secure in their understanding of different subjects. They develop and apply a good range of skills well. Pupils are motivated and interested in a broad range of activities; as a result, they learn to take responsibility for tasks and develop skills for the future well. Achievement and progress in reading, writing, mathematics and communication are particularly strong; as a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils that are very able attain standards that are well above the national average. Pupils whose standards are below those of all pupils nationally achieve well and make good progress according to their abilities. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress in their levels of confidence and concentration; as a result, their readiness for the next stages in their education improves.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. Behaviour in lessons is good and this contributes to good learning. Staff expect high levels of conduct in lessons and around the school; pupils know what is expected of them and respond well by engaging in lessons and applying themselves to their studies. Pupils have good attitudes towards learning, there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in school and lessons are seldom disrupted; this has a good impact on pupils' achievements and progress. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They get along well together and form warm relationships with teachers and senior staff. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and take steps to prevent it from happening; as a result, bullying is very rare. Although attendance over the past two years was slightly below average, it is currently well above. The school is taking steps to ensure that good attendance is sustained. Pupils come to school on time and lessons start punctually.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils experience spirituality through religious education (RE), art and music in the Lower School and through art, personal, social and health education (PSHE), assemblies and discussions in the Upper School. They learn about moral issues, upright moral behaviour and sociability through topics in religious education, PSHE, citizenship and history and through assemblies and frequent discussions with their teachers. The impact of this is evident in their courteousness and respectfulness. Pupils are elected to a school council and take part in regular events to raise funds for charity. Pupils in the Lower School perform in a Christmas play; participation in this for pupils in the Upper School is

optional and some volunteer. Pupils in Year 9 will be entering sculptures of birds that they are making in art, into a competition run by a local art gallery. These and other activities help pupils grow in self-esteem and self-confidence.

All pupils learn about British society, culture and public services through citizenship, history and geography; they learn about politics in a balanced way and the school ensures that no partisan views are advanced. As a result, they are equipped with the attitudes that they need to make a positive contribution to society in the future. Pupils in the Lower School learn about other cultures in some detail through religious education, history and geography. This is less well developed in the Upper School where religious education is not on the syllabus. Pupils have not visited places of worship. Notwithstanding this, they do learn about diversity and equality in a general sense and are tolerant and accepting of all people regardless of their race or sexual orientation. An example of this is a Year 10 lesson where pupils discussed the accomplishments of the renowned physicist Stephen Hawking despite his disabilities. The school acknowledges that pupils would benefit from more experiences in learning about different cultures and religions and is taking steps to improve this provision.

Quality of teaching

Good

Teaching is good; as a result, most pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well and make good progress. Teachers expect pupils to achieve well. They plan lessons well enabling pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of study, including reading, writing, mathematics and communication. Teachers are careful to observe how pupils respond to what is being taught; they question and challenge pupils skilfully and often reshape tasks and explanations to ensure that pupils understand and make good progress in their learning. They create a purposeful learning environment where pupils are interested, engaged and maintain concentration.

Outstanding lessons observed during the inspection were quick paced and involved a very good range of resources. An example of this was an outstanding Year 11 physical education (PE) lesson where the teacher used diagrams, an interactive whiteboard and a balloon to describe the respiratory system. Lessons which are less strong are more teacher-led and formal where opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively are limited. For example, in a Key Stage 1 literacy lesson on speech marks, pupils read together in pairs but this was mostly a repetition of what the class did as a whole. In these lessons, teachers are less imaginative in the resources that they use to support the topic being taught. During the inspection, one pupil said that 'teachers are really good!' another that 'teachers are really nice!' However, pupils agree that teachers sometimes use resources in limited ways and that this affects the quality of some lessons.

Teachers mark work carefully ensuring that achievement is acknowledged while pointing out areas that pupils need to improve. Pupils are tested regularly; test results help teachers gauge progress and plan lessons effectively so that they review subject matter that has not yet been mastered. Teachers employ effective teaching strategies; support and intervention for all pupils, including for both the most and the least able meet their individual needs. As a result, all pupils learn well and make good progress over time. Teachers manage behaviour well and disruptive behaviour is extremely rare. Teachers have a good understanding of the learning, development and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and promote children's learning, social, physical and economic well-being effectively.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum is good. It provides all pupils with good opportunities to achieve well and make good progress in all subject areas and especially in developing their reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills. In the Lower School, the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets

the needs of all pupils well. In the Upper School, pupils are offered a good range of GCSE and other accredited courses including, English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), business and economics. Early entries for GCSE examinations for more able pupils are justified by good results. However, the range of GCSE and A Level course options is not broad enough to fully meet pupils' interests and aspirations.

The curriculum is well organised and planned for good progression from one skill to another. It is supported with detailed schemes of work and planning that show how pupils of all ages and abilities are to be challenged and supported. The curriculum for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in line with current guidance and meets children's needs well. Children in this setting are provided with an interesting, well-equipped learning environment. However, resources for outdoor learning are rather more limited and the school is looking at ways to address this matter. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being through a strong emphasis on ensuring that they achieve good standards in literacy and numeracy throughout the school and, for example, through mechanics and health and beauty courses in the Upper School.

Education for PSHE is good; as a result, pupils develop a good understanding of themselves and people around them. Extra-curricular activities for enrichment are good and are well-suited to pupils' interests. These include a breakfast club and after-school clubs for homework, art and sports. Most pupils attend and enjoy these activities. Physical education is provided at local leisure centres that are well-equipped to meet the interests of pupils. The school arranges exciting trips to reward pupils for good achievement and behaviour and some educational trips to enrich what is being taught in school. These include visits to museums and an aquarium.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good and all of the independent school standards are met. The school has established policies and procedures that are in keeping with current legislation, are reviewed regularly and implemented effectively. These include policies for the prevention of bullying, health and safety and first aid. During this inspection, a small number of very minor omissions were found in some policies; these were brought to the attention of senior leaders and were rectified immediately.

Arrangements for safeguarding are robust, are reviewed regularly and the school implements its child protection policy effectively. All staff and the proprietor have received clearances through the Criminal Records Bureau to work with children; these and all other required checks are included in a single central register. Two designated persons for child protection and all staff have attended the required trainings at the required levels. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are robust and ensure that they are well-aware of child protection procedures before they commence work. Staff are committed to ensuring that pupils are well-cared for and safe at all times and undertake a good range of training related to health and safety; two senior members of staff are trained in paediatric first aid.

The school has a good level of fire safety. A detailed fire risk assessment is in place and equipment is checked regularly. Fire drills are regular events that are recorded appropriately. Risk assessments for the premises and school trips are detailed. The school works well with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and supervision around school and on excursions out of school is consistently good. Staff promote good behaviour at all times; as a result, conduct in all areas of the school is good and this contributes to a calm, purposeful learning environment where pupils thrive. Pupils agree that they feel safe and very well cared for and that bullying is very rare. Pupils learn about nutrition and healthy lifestyles through science and PSHE and the school provides nutritious meals three times a day. As a result, pupils gain an understanding of the importance of keeping healthy and many are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Leadership and management**Good**

Leadership and management are good. Although the current senior leaders have only been in post for a short time, they have already developed very good working relationships with staff and communicate high expectations and ambition to them effectively. As a result, teaching is good and this secures good achievement and progress. Teachers appreciate the support offered by senior leaders. In one questionnaire returned during the inspection, a teacher wrote 'staff are very supportive and caring – they go beyond their expected role!' Overall, systems for managing the performance of staff are good. Senior leaders conduct lesson observations in order to guide teachers and help them address weaknesses in their teaching. However, these observations are not frequent enough nor does the feedback given always challenge teachers well enough to improve their teaching. As a result, teaching is not outstanding. Senior leaders have not produced a formal self-assessment but have prepared a development plan that identifies areas to be improved according to realistic timescales. They have produced curricular policies that ensure that pupils make good progress in all subjects including literacy.

The proprietor is very involved in the running of the school and challenges leaders to improve all aspects of the provision. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and good achievement and progress have been sustained. However, systems to monitor and track pupils' achievement and progress are not yet embedded. As a result, teaching and learning is not outstanding because senior leaders do not have a very precise picture of rates of achievement for all individual pupils and this limits the quality of some lesson planning. The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to make good progress especially in the Lower School. The school ethos promotes good behaviour and personal development well and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong in most aspects.

The school works well with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure positive benefits for pupils. Although small, the premises and accommodation are well-suited to support implementation of the curriculum. All areas of the school are well-maintained and attractively decorated creating a pleasant learning environment for pupils. The school meets the requirements related to the provision of information for parents and carers and the complaints procedure includes all of the necessary details.

Senior leaders have ensured that all of the independent school regulations are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	132119
Inspection number	422744
DfE registration number	341/6046

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Co-educational day school
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3–18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Number of part time pupils	1
Proprietor	Mr A and Mrs G Akaraonye
Chair	Mrs M Wainright
Headteacher	Miss S Boyd
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,500-£7,500
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