

# Everton Free School

City of Liverpool College, Learning Exchange, Roscoe Street, Liverpool, L1 9DW

**Inspection dates** 14–15 May 2014

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b> <b>2</b>     |
| Achievement of pupils          | Good                 | 2                        |
| Quality of teaching            | Good                 | 2                        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | Good                 | 2                        |
| Leadership and management      | Outstanding          | 1                        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Teaching is good because it is built on strong subject knowledge. Students engage in interesting learning activities which inspire them to behave well and value education.
- The small class sizes and the high level of support enable students to thrive and progress well. Students' communication skills develop rapidly due to the positive relationships between staff and students.
- The sixth form is good. Students are highly motivated to achieve well.
- Students are a credit to the school. The atmosphere in school is relaxed and friendly. High standards of behaviour are expected and modelled by staff and most students.
- Student progress is assessed and tracked regularly so that support can be put in place swiftly when necessary.
- The Principal has been highly effective in developing a cohesive, caring school community. He has used external support and advice well to develop and improve many aspects of the school's work.
- Outstanding governance and leadership have driven and secured strong foundations for the school's growth and development. The vision of 'Nothing but the best' is shared by all involved. Leaders are deeply committed to providing a high quality, aspirational school to serve the community.
- Parents feel their children are safe, happy and making good progress. Safeguarding arrangements meet all the required regulations across all the school sites.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding across all subjects on all sites. Therefore, students do not always make rapid progress.
- The marking of students' work is variable in quality and at times does not encourage students to reflect upon and improve their work.
- Learning activities do not always challenge some groups, especially the most-able and those who require a lot of support.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 11 lessons, visited every classroom on all four sites and observed 11 of the 17 teachers. Three lessons were observed jointly with the Assistant Principal on one site.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, the two Assistant Principals, the Deputy Principal, the Head of sixth form, the special educational needs coordinator and mathematics teacher, the Head of the in-house therapeutic engagement service, two commissioning officers, a group of parents and three members of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors.
- Discussions were held with groups of students on each site and inspectors spoke with others in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the school’s self-evaluation, improvement planning, monitoring records, external reports, policies including safeguarding and behaviour, information about students’ progress and records of governors’ meetings.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 13 staff who returned inspection questionnaires.
- The on-line questionnaire, Parent View, was not available to parents of students at Everton Free School at the time of inspection so inspectors took evidence from the school’s own surveys of parents.

## Inspection team

Christina McIntosh, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

John Cornally

Additional Inspector

Christine Birchall

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Everton in the Community Trust opened its Free School for Alternative Provision on one site in Liverpool in September 2012. The charity has a long-standing history of informal community engagement with young people and Everton Free School delivers formal educational provision with strong links to the community.
- The school now comprises four satellite sites across Merseyside, each approximately 8 miles distant from the current base. The school currently occupies rooms within the City of Liverpool College, The Lord Derby Academy, Parklands City Learning Centre and Wallasey School. An additional newly built, permanent site is due to open in Walton in September 2014.
- The number of places available will rise to 200 in September 2014. There are 101 students on roll and 27 on the waiting list to join. There are currently students in Years 9, 10, 11 and 12. The school does not admit students under the age of 14.
- Students are taught in mixed-age and ability classes. Class sizes at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are kept to a maximum of eight students.
- Students who are at risk of, or have been, permanently excluded are commissioned by their local authorities or their home-school to attend Everton Free School.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average for all schools.
- The proportion of students identified as having a disability or special educational needs and supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion given extra support through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided to the school based on the number of pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school currently uses two alternative providers: Shaftesbury Youth Boys' Club and Cornerstones for three Key Stage 4 students and Assess Education and Safe Hands (transition into traineeships) for two groups of Post 16 students.
- Students attend the school on a part-time, full-time or dual registered basis.
- The full-time sixth form group follows sports studies courses based at The Lord Derby Academy.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so the most-able students and those who require a lot of support, always make the progress of which they are capable in all subjects by:
  - teachers being aware of and focusing on the differing abilities of students in their class to ensure that they make rapid and sustained progress and the gap between actual and potential attainment is narrowed
  - improving marking so that it is always informative and aids learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students make very good progress based on their starting points according to the school's data.
- Students enter the school with varied prior experience but, in the main, their levels of attainment are low and previous school attendance has been fragmented. There has been a recent influx of students in Year 11: they have been integrated well and, as a result of their increased motivation, they make good progress in the vast majority of lessons.
- The school uses well-moderated, robust, baseline tests when students join, to establish a starting point on which to build and measure their progress in behaviour, emotional and social development and academic achievement.
- Students achieve well because of well-targeted support to fill the gaps in their learning and accelerate their progress. Work in books shows good progress over time.
- Staff discuss progress with students every week and attainment is assessed and recorded every half term. Staff have improved their consistency and accuracy of grading attainment through internal and external moderation processes.
- Pupil premium funding has been used well to provide additional support for eligible students. These students make good progress and achieve as well as others.
- Students with special educational needs, benefit from targeted support, both in lessons and beyond, to enable them to succeed in all the opportunities provided by the school. Students from this group were able to explain clearly how they are supported by the therapeutic engagement team and the positive impact this has on their attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The most able students make inconsistent progress in some subjects where learning materials do not always challenge them enough.
- Sixth Form students make good progress due to their positive response to the variety of opportunities, offered by Everton Free School, to increase their qualifications, skills and self-esteem.
- The parents that an inspector spoke to, are confident that the school is meeting the needs of their children as 'staff are skilled in balancing support with challenge for the young people in their care' and communicate well with parents.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. There are small class sizes and this enables teachers to respond to individual enquiries. This means that students develop new knowledge, skills and understanding in most lessons. Targeted questioning is used well by teachers to check learning during lessons.
- Literacy is well promoted. The development of subject-specific vocabulary is a key feature in every lesson and students are encouraged to use a wide and accurate vocabulary at all times. Students are encouraged to read widely and regularly. Teachers make good use of other adults in their lessons to support positive behaviour from students to engage in learning activities.
- Work is not always well matched to students' individual potential. As a result, a few students on occasion find some work too easy.
- The marking of students' work is not always helpful enough to enable all students to reflect on their performance and know how best to improve their work.
- Monitoring processes to assess and improve the quality of teaching are in place but are inconsistently applied. The evidence from internal lesson observations is not consistently developmental in that feedback to teachers does not always identify precise targets and support.
- The school has a good therapeutic engagement service which addresses and supports the

emotional and learning needs of the students.

- The good quality alternative provision is regularly monitored to ensure that it meets the needs of the students accessing extra opportunities.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form sports studies course is highly effective. Clear progress charts regarding academic, behavioural, and attendance monitoring are regularly shared with students and they work as a cohesive unit to support each other. Literacy, numeracy, science and personal, social and health skills were all fully and naturally integrated into the teaching observed during the inspection. Students can clearly articulate their good progress and how well the school's links with the sports industry is preparing them for future employment.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are usually very focused, engaged and ready to learn. Students say that there are very few disturbances to lessons as staff pick up on everything and step in before problems develop.
- A minority of parents, staff and students raised concerns about instances of negative behaviour disrupting some lessons. However, inspectors found this was the exception rather than the rule and often involved students who were new to the school.
- Students are welcoming and polite. They talked openly and maturely with inspectors and one parent commented that the school has 'instilled self-respect and respect for other people' into their child.
- Students appreciate the support from their therapeutic support mentors which has improved their behaviour and attitude to learning.
- Positive interaction was seen between staff and students during breakfast and in an effective assembly to promote healthier lifestyles by warning students about the dangers of fizzy drinks and poor diet.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students feel safe and have a high level of supervision. There is a zero tolerance of bullying across all sites and this is evidenced in the school's monitoring of incidents. A team spirit is fostered amongst the students and staff, and students get along well together.
- Students are aware of all forms of prejudice-based bullying, including cyber-bullying, and the negative effects of homophobic and racist views. There are robust procedures for monitoring computer use in school.
- Overall attendance is over 90% and improving. Unauthorised absence is being tackled by improved diagnosis of students' educational barriers to learning; improved transport links; and increased rewards for improved attendance.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The leadership and management team has never lost sight of its vision and aims for the school: 'Nothing but the best'. Its members have laid solid foundation blocks through their policies and procedures to ensure the school is at least a good one and well on its way to achieving its aim to provide a high quality, aspirational school to serve the community.
- The Principal has created a strong leadership team with clear roles and accountability for the quality of teaching, the achievement of students, and the behaviour and safety of students. Therefore, all the aspects are good and moving forward. He has been proactive in developing positive links with local authorities, other education providers and businesses to increase opportunities for staff and students.
- The Principal provides a good role-model, is regularly out and about across all the sites and is well known by the students: as a result he is aware of what is going on and keeps his finger on the pulse of the school.

- There is a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and professional development for teachers and other staff is given a high priority.
- There has been an increase in referrals due to the good reputation of the school, the value for money it provides and the good outcomes for students.
- The school has a well-designed website and it includes the pupil premium spend and impact on students.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are promoted at every opportunity. Leaders and governors ensure that good relationships are fostered, discrimination is tackled and students have equal opportunities to learn.
- Most students actively raise money for charities: for example British Heart Foundations and CRY (Care and Relief for the Young). There is a range of activities involving the school, parents, and the wider community at all levels, which reflect the vision and aims of the school.
- The curriculum is tailor-made to improve the core skills of English, mathematics and science, to meet the personal, social, physical and mental health needs of the students and to engage their interest through a free-choice subject which promotes an interest in lifelong learning.
- High aspirations and an expectation that all students will enter for GCSEs, go on to college or university, or gain an apprenticeship, are shared by staff and students. As a result, students feel valued and try their best to succeed.
- Impartial information, advice and guidance are available to students in Year 11 and students have a wealth of opportunities available to them through the outstanding connections the school has with a wide range of industries and educational partners.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is a particular strength of the school. Governors have a wide range of expertise, knowledge and educational experience and offer a good balance of challenge and support. They challenge leaders of the school robustly. The Chair is tenacious in finding answers and will go straight to the heart of the matter and ask students for their reasoned opinions. The governing body is currently focused on managing the rate of growth, managing the transition to the new site in September and increasing the number of parent governors. Governors carry out a wide range of activities to: check the quality of teaching and how well the students are learning; ensure a safe learning environment; evaluate the school's performance, including the use of performance management, and develop effective plans for improvement. All necessary safeguarding checks and policies are in place and staff training in safeguarding is up to date and relevant. Pupil premium funding is spent appropriately to provide personalised support for students who need it.

## 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

|                                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 138379         |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Not applicable |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 441926         |

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

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                         | Secondary                |
| <b>School category</b>                        | Academy free school      |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 14–19                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                       | Mixed                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>     | Mixed                    |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>    | 101                      |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 35                       |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body       |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | Denise Barrett-Baxendale |
| <b>Principal</b>                              | Adrian Packer            |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | Not previously inspected |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 0151 438 2277            |
| <b>Email address</b>                          | info@evertonfs.net       |

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