

# King's Leadership Academy Liverpool

Dingle Vale, Liverpool L8 9SJ

## Inspection dates

22–23 March 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes are improving; however, there are gaps in their knowledge and understanding, particularly in science, due to weak and inconsistent teaching in previous years.
- The proportion of pupils making expected progress in mathematics is below the national average and lags behind the progress pupils make in English.
- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Off-task or disruptive behaviour in some lessons detracts from learning.
- There is still some boisterous and occasionally inappropriate behaviour in corridors and at breaktimes.
- Homework is not used effectively in all year groups to consolidate pupils' learning.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are not developed well enough, so pupils lack confidence in explaining their thinking and ideas.
- Although attendance is rising rapidly, there are still a number of pupils who fail to attend the school regularly.

### The school has the following strengths

- Exceptional leadership and robust governance since the start of the academic year have secured improvements to teaching, raised pupils' achievement and improved their behaviour.
- Pupils now benefit from good or better teaching and are making more rapid progress from starting points that are well below average.
- Senior leaders provide highly effective training for staff to help them improve their teaching. Teachers share good practice within the school and work effectively with colleagues across the trust.
- Teachers expect pupils to work hard and to achieve well. They provide effective feedback and most pupils respond positively to the high aspirations of their teachers in lessons.
- Systems to ensure that pupils' work is assessed accurately are robust. Consequently, leaders and teachers have an accurate view of pupils' progress and of the next steps to secure their learning.
- The school has very strong safeguarding procedures to protect pupils. This means that they are exceptionally well cared for.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is similar to, and sometimes above, that of other pupils in the school.

## Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

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

- Build on the considerable improvements already secured in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that outcomes for pupils continue to rise rapidly, by ensuring that:
  - appropriate homework is set consistently across all year groups
  - pupils develop their oral and communication skills so that they are able to explain their thinking.
  
- Strengthen the behaviour of pupils so that it is as good for all pupils as it is for most pupils in the school and continue to improve the attendance of the minority who do not attend well.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The principal and senior leaders have won the trust of pupils, staff, parents and the local community. They are supported by very able middle leaders. Leaders' passion for all pupils to do well runs through the school. They have very high expectations and an ambitious vision for all pupils to succeed. They have swiftly secured substantial improvements in a short space of time which indicate that they have strong capacity for further improvement.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. School leaders have secured high-quality, permanent teaching staff and the leadership of teaching is now tightly focused on raising standards. Training for staff is structured, frequent and meets the needs of both the ambitious school aspirations and the individual needs of staff. Where teaching has required improvement, a comprehensive coaching programme has been used to develop practice swiftly. Staff morale is very high and this is contributing to the rapid improvements being made. Staff speak very highly of the support that they have received to help them improve; they say that their contribution is welcomed by senior leaders and that the levels of trust are very high.
- Systems for checking pupils' progress are precise. Leaders at all levels secured accurate information on pupils' achievement at the start of the academic year. Working through a robust cycle for teaching, learning and assessment, leaders have supported teachers in making considerable gains in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in most subjects, at both key stages.
- Underperformance has been robustly challenged and the setting of targets for teachers to improve is used exceptionally well to identify the skills which teachers and leaders need to develop. Pay progression is closely linked to pupils' achievement and teachers' training.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and successfully prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. The proportion of pupils achieving an English Baccalaureate qualification is increasing and there is an expectation that the majority of pupils will study for these qualifications. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well developed. This is underpinned by the trust's focus on character education and leadership development. There is now a school council and pupils explore British values such as the rule of law and democracy through the curriculum and enrichment days. The school is a 'Rights Respecting School' and pupils now have opportunities to become 'Anne Frank ambassadors' and work with children from primary schools on reading projects, for example.
- Pupils value the wider curriculum opportunities open to them, which include a residential trip to the Lake District, theatre visits and the chance to take part in sports, including martial arts competitions.
- All teachers follow the school's feedback policy; their feedback to pupils is precise and effective.
- The support provided to pupils who have special educational needs or disability and the disadvantaged pupils, who benefit from the government's additional funding known as pupil premium, is effective. Outcomes for these groups have improved because their needs are understood and any additional support is closely tracked and leaders use associated funding, resources and strategies effectively.
- Pupils in Year 7, who receive additional funding to catch up to the expected level, receive purposeful additional support through small-group numeracy and literacy sessions. Literacy support is provided to other year groups and, consequently, reading age scores have risen dramatically. Pupils were very enthusiastic about how these sessions have helped them improve.
- The progress and attendance of pupils who attend off-site provision are monitored carefully by leaders and these pupils are making similar progress to that of their peers in the school.
- Leaders' work to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism is exemplary. Leaders respond swiftly when pupils are vulnerable to these issues. High-quality training develops staff's vigilance, confidence and competency to challenge pupils' views and encourage debate.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Since the interim executive board was established in November 2015, the governance of the school has improved considerably. Led by a chair with exceptional vision and considerable experience and supported by colleagues with wide educational experience and backgrounds, members of the board have supported the school with wisdom and purpose. They provide considerable challenge and support to leaders and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of further development.
  - Members of the interim executive board are determined that the school continues to improve. They

have thorough procedures for checking the school's progress in meeting ambitious targets. They are very clear about how all groups of pupils are achieving and are well informed about how successfully the government's additional funding, known as pupil premium, for disadvantaged pupils and 'catch-up funding' is used.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's work to keep pupils safe is systematic and exceptionally well managed. Staff are trained in the identification and reporting of risk. The most-vulnerable pupils receive close support and the school's liaison with other agencies is effective. Leaders and managers have created a culture of care where pupils' welfare is actively promoted. Pupils are listened to and feel safe. Staff are trained to identify when a pupil may be at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation and they report their concerns.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now good. As a result, pupils currently in the school are making much more rapid progress than they have in the past. Many pupils told inspectors that the high expectations of their teachers are helping them to achieve much more than they have done previously.
- Leaders have developed a robust assessment process to give leaders and teachers a very clear idea of where the gaps are in pupils' knowledge and, therefore, plan accordingly to address them. This tightly focused process underpins the rapid improvement in standards.
- The quality of feedback, both written and verbal, is good. Teachers provide feedback which is purposeful and supports the next steps in learning.
- Teachers address misconceptions and regularly check that pupils understand what they are learning. They use questioning skilfully to probe pupils' responses and they reshape tasks and explanations so that pupils better understand new concepts.
- Teachers explain work carefully so that pupils understand what they are doing and how to reach better standards. There is very good support for pupils with English as an additional language. This was observed in a music lesson, where the teacher provided a range of resources to help pupils understand what they needed to learn.
- Teaching stimulates and engages the pupils. Inspectors observed many examples of teachers using technical vocabulary and expecting pupils to use these terms correctly. The most-able pupils are challenged appropriately and, consequently, they are making quicker progress than was previously the case. Some pupils said: 'Our teachers push us to do well.'
- Pupils have the opportunity to read widely. For example, in a catch-up intervention group, pupils read to an inspector with confidence and shared their enjoyment of reading both in the school and at home.
- Teaching assistants are effective in supporting those pupils who need additional help with their work.
- Teachers challenge stereotypes and the use of derogatory language in lessons and around the school. They are quick to tackle inappropriate language and promote equality of opportunity and diversity in teaching and learning.
- Parents of pupils in the school have helpful information about the progress which their child is making.
- Pupils are set homework on a regular basis but it is sometimes not used to consolidate the learning in the classroom. This means that occasionally pupils do not have the chance to deepen their learning.
- Sometimes teachers do not check well enough whether pupils understand their work. When this happens, they do not produce good-quality work because they are not clear about how to do so. Occasionally, the behaviour of some pupils means that the learning is not as focused.
- Pupils sometimes lack confidence in explaining their ideas because their oral and communication skills are not well developed.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally good and pupils value the improved atmosphere in the school. Pupils say that they are able to learn better because behaviour has improved a great deal this year.

- Pupils say that bullying, including homophobic name calling, is very rare and that their teachers take swift action to let them know that this is unacceptable.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and have a good understanding of the potential dangers of mobile technologies, social media and the internet. They understand how to keep themselves healthy, both emotionally and physically.
- Pupils show respect for others' ideas and views. Good examples of this were seen in a number of lessons. In a geography lesson, for example, pupils were supportive of each other when they discussed the impact of HIV in emerging economies.
- Most pupils have very good attitudes to learning and apply themselves well to their studies. Scholarly attitudes were observed in a number of lessons, where pupils showed concentration and resilience. One pupil summed up the new culture of the school in a comment to an inspector that there is 'much more learning now, so we need to concentrate'.
- Pupils now have opportunities to take part in wider aspects of school life. They appreciate being acknowledged for their positive attitudes to learning. The 'ASPIRE' programme, based on the school's values, is delivered through tutor time and encourages pupils to discuss what it means to have high aspirations and how they can contribute to wider society.
- Support for pupils' welfare and well-being, including with any mental health issues, is effective. The school's psychologist provides good support for this aspect of the school's work. Pupils are confident that they feel safe and that they are well cared for. A community worker gives advice and support for Roma families.
- The quality of individual advice and guidance is good. The school holds a careers fair and has links with a number of universities. Advice is closely tailored to the needs and aspirations of pupils and is promoting a wide range of opportunities and future pathways.
- The personal development and welfare of pupils in alternative provision are monitored carefully. Targets for attendance and achievement are set and tracked by school leaders. Where leaders have not been satisfied with the quality of alternative provision, they have taken appropriate action to ensure that pupils are supported to return to the school.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. While much behaviour is good, there is still some low-level disruption in some lessons.
- Leaders are firm about the expected standards of behaviour. While the behaviour policy is understood well by pupils and used consistently by staff in the majority of classrooms, there is still some boisterous behaviour in the corridors and at breaktimes.
- Overall attendance is below average and persistent absence is above average. However, there is an improving picture of attendance, partly because of the concerted actions of leaders to ensure improved attendance and partly because pupils say that they enjoy attending the school.
- The number of pupils excluded for a fixed term from the school has risen since last year. This is due in part to the number of pupils who had previously been educated in alternative provision being brought back to the school. The leadership team is taking a very firm line on insisting on high standards of behaviour and the number of incidents of poor behaviour is decreasing.
- Most pupils respect their school, their uniform and each other. They say there are clear expectations for behaviour and hard work. They look after the school site and there is no litter in rooms, corridors and open spaces.
- The majority of parents and staff agree that behaviour has improved. One parent contacted the inspection team to say: 'I hope the school gets the praise it deserves.'

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **require improvement**

- Under the previous sponsor, the school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2015. Pupils start at the school with attainment that is significantly below the national average. In the past, they have not made enough progress in each year group to enable them to catch up.
- In 2015, the proportion of Year 11 pupils attaining five A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was significantly lower than the national figure. The proportions making expected or better than expected progress in English and mathematics were also well below national averages.

- At key stage 4, some pupils still have gaps in their learning as a result of weaker teaching in previous years. In particular, this is evident in science.
- New leaders have secured strong improvements to teaching and are raising pupils' achievement across the school. The school's information on pupils' progress and attainment indicates that the current Year 11 pupils are on track to attain better standards and their progress is moving towards that of other pupils nationally.
- The quality of leadership and teaching in science is now effective and pupils are making better progress. Inspectors observed pupils were working hard in science and acquiring knowledge to fill the gaps in their learning.
- Pupils in all year groups are now making more rapid progress due to the significant improvements that have been made to teaching since September 2015. Pupils are responding to higher expectations and say that they enjoy the additional challenge. Pupils' work sampled during the inspection confirmed that they are making quicker progress since the start of this academic year in English and mathematics. The school's information on pupils' outcomes indicates that they are making better progress across most subjects.
- The vast majority of pupils work hard and want to do well in all their subjects. They take considerable pride in their work and many read well and write confidently and convincingly at length. Much teaching ensures a consistent focus on pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils are expected to present their work to a high standard, resulting in extended pieces of work which are carefully crafted, reviewed and improved.
- The most-able pupils are challenged well and pupils enjoy tackling more complex work. This means that these pupils are now making better progress and are being given opportunities to reach higher standards.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress similar to other pupils in the school; in some year groups, their progress is better than that of other pupils in the school. They are now benefiting from good teaching based on high expectations for what they can achieve. Their progress is quickened with effective extra support to develop their academic as well as social and emotional skills. Teachers know each pupil well and ensure that appropriate, individualised support and guidance is received.
- Additional staffing within the special needs department has ensured that more effective support is in place for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. As a consequence, they are making better progress. In particular, the development of pupils' key literacy skills, including reading, is impressive.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of reading. They visit the school library regularly in English lessons and read both at the school and for pleasure at home.
- Rising standards in English and mathematics, combined with impartial careers guidance, mean that pupils are better prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137675
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool City Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10008156

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	448
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The interim executive board
<b>Chair</b>	Sir Iain Hall
<b>Principal</b>	Michael Taylor
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 727 1387
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.kingsliverpool.com">www.kingsliverpool.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@kingsliverpool.com">admin@kingsliverpool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–13 March 2014

## Information about this school

- The school transferred from the University of Chester Academies Trust to the Great Schools Trust on 1 November 2015. The current principal started at the school on 1 September 2015.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is significantly above the national average. This funding is provided for those known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- Approximately half the pupils are of White British heritage and the majority of other pupils come from a diverse range of minority ethnic groups. Almost half the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Eleven pupils attend alternative provision at the Everton Free School, CST Northwest and Active TT.
- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons, of which six were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work together with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils, listened to some pupils reading and talked to others informally during breaktimes.
- Discussions were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders. A meeting was held with members of the interim executive board. A separate telephone conversation was held with the director of children and young people's services at Liverpool City Council.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and of the questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included information on the school's own view of its performance, achievement, behaviour and attendance information; the minutes of the interim executive board meetings; and a range of policies.

## Inspection team

Mary Myatt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Lomas	Ofsted Inspector



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