

North Liverpool Academy

120 Heyworth Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L5 0SQ

Inspection dates

10–11 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The standard of education has improved since the last inspection and is now good. A new principal was appointed in June 2016 and since then leadership and management, including governance, have been effective in making the improvements required.
- Outcomes are good and have improved further this year. The school met the government's floor standard in 2016.
- Pupils from all starting points make good progress across a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics. In a minority of subjects, disadvantaged pupils and those with higher starting points do not yet match the good achievement seen elsewhere.
- Leaders, including governors, effectively monitor and evaluate the use of the pupil premium and funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teachers assess pupils' knowledge and understanding accurately. They use this information to plan activities that challenge and motivate pupils, including the most able. In a minority of lessons, pupils are not provided with work that is hard enough.
- Leaders have high expectations of behaviour, which is far better than at the last inspection. Pupils say that the school is a safe place where bullying is rare. Exclusions are reducing.
- Pupils' attendance is improving overall. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities needs to improve further.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Diversity is recognised and celebrated. Fundamental British values are taught well.
- Leaders regularly monitor and accurately assess the progress towards achieving their school improvement priorities. Consequently, leaders' plans are effective in ensuring that the school continues to get better.
- School leaders have introduced a curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils. They study a broad range of subjects and follow appropriate qualifications. Careers guidance is impartial, well led and of a good standard. Consequently, pupils move on to appropriate next steps in education, employment and/or training, including disadvantaged pupils.
- The sixth form is now good. It is effectively led and, consequently, has improved since the last inspection. Outcomes are good because students are taught well. When they leave, an increasing number of students move on to university courses, further education, employment or training.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able, are routinely challenged to excel.
- Further improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the few inconsistencies in leadership, in the minority of subjects where teaching and outcomes are not yet as strong as others, are effectively tackled.
- Further improve pupils' behaviour by:
 - ensuring that the attendance and persistent absence of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, continue to improve so that attendance figures are in line with national averages
 - maintaining high expectations about pupils' behaviour to reduce exclusions further still.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal's leadership is highly effective. Since being appointed in June 2016, he has made changes that have moved the school forward. He shares a clear vision of where the school needs to improve further and how to achieve this. His high standards and strong ambition ensure that staff and pupils respond positively and confidently to change. Consequently, the school is well placed to continue improving.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses and are tenacious in their drive to improve the school further. Improvement plans are robust and regularly monitored by leaders and the governing body. Any underperformance is recognised and challenged quickly and effectively.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is a strength and has a positive impact across the school. School leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. This enables them to provide effective support and training for teachers. In most subject areas leadership is good. Consequently, teaching is often good or better, including for disadvantaged and most-able pupils. Leadership in geography and history is not as strong, and because of this, teaching is not yet consistently good. School leaders have plans in place to improve standards and leadership in these subjects.
- Pupil premium funding is used well. School leaders plan and assess actions carefully and effectively. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils made progress in line with others nationally across a broad range of subjects in 2016 and pupils' progress has continued to improve this year. Attendance has also improved for disadvantaged pupils, although it remains lower than others nationally.
- The impact of strategies supported through the Year 7 catch-up fund is good. School leaders are vigilant in ensuring that pupils can access and enjoy the subjects that they study because pupils' understanding of literacy and numeracy is good. For example, inspectors heard Year 7 pupils who have had extra support through the catch-up funding read well because of the good progress they have made this year. Improvements in standards of writing, speaking and listening and mathematics are also supported effectively.
- School leaders have a convincing rationale to ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with the best range of qualifications and opportunities when they leave the school. Consequently, since the last inspection, leaders have improved the range of subjects that pupils study. For example, pupils are now taught how to improve their reading, writing and speaking and listening skills in key stage 3. Consequently, most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, speak confidently and fluently. Added to this, their extended writing skills are often of a good standard.
- Subject leadership is generally good and has improved since the last inspection. Subject leaders make good use of regular and accurate assessment information to review and improve outcomes, to improve teaching and to promote good attitudes to learning. In a minority of subjects, where leadership is not as strong, pupils sometimes make less progress.
- Extra-curricular opportunities are popular and varied. They include sports, academic and cultural opportunities. Pupils are positive about the impact of the extra-curricular

opportunities on their learning and progress. For example, Year 11 pupils value the additional preparation that they receive prior to their examinations. Extra-curricular clubs are very well attended by pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Leadership of careers education and information, advice and guidance is good for all pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The careers programme begins in Year 7 and pupils speak positively about its impartiality and effectiveness. The number of pupils who successfully move on to the next stages in education, employment and/or training has improved since the previous inspection.
- School leaders, including the principal, governors and the trust chief executive officer, maintain a sharp focus on the well-being and success of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The support provided for these pupils is having a positive effect on their progress and attainment. Outcomes and attendance for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have improved this year, although attendance remains well below national averages. Overall, the additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are well supported and they make good progress. The leadership of alternative provision is good; leaders regularly monitor and support pupils and providers to ensure good outcomes.
- The training programme provided by school leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning is well planned and effective. Leaders have focused training on those areas requiring improvement identified in the previous inspection report. Teachers, including those who are newly or recently qualified, value their ongoing training programme. Leaders are aware of the few areas where teaching remains less effective and have plans under way to improve provision.
- Performance management and pay progression are led and managed effectively. This has led to improvements in teaching and leadership. Targets, which include those relating to the progress of pupils, are set and reviewed by school leaders and governors. Staff and school leaders are eligible for pay progression only if those targets are met.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge, including fundamental British values, is a strength of the school because it is well led and managed. Consequently, pupils learn about and respect the views and cultures of others. Inspectors visited a Year 10 event to raise awareness of diversity in the school and beyond. This reinforced the pupils' view that diversity is to be celebrated at every opportunity.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They visit frequently and make regular checks on the effectiveness of leaders' work. They have insight into the specific areas that they oversee and take their responsibilities very seriously. Governors accept nothing but the best for the pupils at the school. Consequently, they have had a significant impact on improving the school since the previous inspection.

- Governors make sure that nobody is rewarded for poor performance. They understand information about pupils' outcomes, attendance and behaviour. This enables them to ask incisive questions of school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding among staff and pupils at the school. Staff understand and follow the school's clear procedures, if they have a concern, and they are vigilant in keeping pupils safe. The school employs a police officer to support the safety of pupils in school and the community.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including from gang culture, knife crime, online threats, and from extremism and radicalisation. This is because these issues have been covered well in the curriculum and the focus on them is maintained by school leaders. Parents say that they are confident that their children are safe in school.
- School leaders are vigilant in keeping safe the pupils who are absent from school, including those who have persistent absence, and pupils who attend alternative provision. Leaders have an enhanced system of safeguarding checks to support these pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is good across a broad range of subjects and year groups, including in English and mathematics. School leaders are aware that teaching in geography and history is not yet as effective as in the rest of the school.
- School leaders, including the principal, have a sharp focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able pupils. Leaders closely monitor the progress of these groups and ensure that teachers are well trained to support pupils' progress further. Consequently, the teaching of these pupils has improved since the last inspection.
- Teaching is now better because most teachers regularly plan activities that challenge pupils. This ensures that pupils are more interested in their learning and most make good progress from their starting points. In geography and history, where teachers plan less-challenging activities, pupils do not make consistently strong progress.
- Teaching meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers have been trained to recognise and respond appropriately to the needs of these groups and, consequently, these pupils have made good progress this year. The learning of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is monitored and assessed regularly by school leaders. Areas where they are not yet achieving well enough are recognised quickly and usually acted upon effectively. Teachers know that they now need to stretch disadvantaged pupils even further so that they excel.

- Teachers' assessment of pupils is regular, effective and meets school policies. Pupils are made clear about the strengths of their work and, because assessment is consistently positive, are confident that they can improve when they make mistakes. Consequently, pupils make secure progress because of good assessment across a broad range of subjects.
- Pupils say that they value the homework that they are given because it is set regularly, it is meaningful and challenging, and teachers assess it regularly and thoroughly. They say homework plays an important role in their learning.
- School leaders have focused on improving literacy this year. They have introduced a plan to develop pupils' speaking and listening and reading and writing skills. Literacy is taught well across a range of subjects and year groups. For example, pupils with low starting points in Year 7 and most-able pupils in Year 8 read well because they are taught well and enjoy reading. Pupils share and discuss ideas with confidence, detail and complexity and consequently produce strong examples of extended written work.
- Standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning are usually good. This is because activities are carefully planned, challenging and expectations are high. Pupils enjoy their learning and have positive relationships with one another and their teachers. Pupils take care to present their work neatly and effectively. Where teaching fails to sustain pupils' interest or work set is not challenging enough, pupils' behaviour can sometimes deteriorate and pupils do not make the same good progress as elsewhere.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils benefit from the well-planned programme to teach spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and fundamental British values. Pupils develop their beliefs and attitudes in lessons and assemblies and through other events. For example, inspectors saw Year 10 pupils engaged in a 'diversity day' during the inspection. Pupils listened attentively and ably discussed lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues.
- Pupils feel safe and well supported. They are taught how to remain healthy. They learn why they should have a healthy diet and stay fit.
- The principal has introduced a culture of zero tolerance of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. Pupils and parents say that bullying is rare. Where there are cases of bullying, pupils and parents say that they are dealt with quickly and effectively, including by the police officer who works on site. Consequently, cases of pupils repeating bullying behaviour are very rare.
- Careers education is planned well and is good. Pupils value the high-quality and impartial support they receive. Careers education is a focus in all year groups. It supports pupils in making good choices in subjects they follow at key stage 4 and ensures that they are fully prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment.
- The personal development of the few pupils who receive their education elsewhere is effectively led and managed. Their attendance and progress are monitored rigorously.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour is supported by the 'Basic 8 Expectations', which school leaders share effectively. Consequently, pupils are well behaved around school and at break and lunchtime. They are courteous, polite and confident. The positive relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are a strength of the school. Pupils are punctual to lessons, keep corridors and the playground clear of litter, and wear their uniform smartly.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and they take pride in their work. This is because school leaders have high expectations of their pupils and because teachers plan work that meets most pupils' needs. Pupils' literacy has also improved. Consequently, most pupils are suitably challenged by their work and enjoy their learning. Where expectations are not high enough or activities do not challenge pupils suitably, their attitudes to learning can deteriorate.
- There is effective support for pupils who are at risk of exclusion, including permanent exclusion. Since the appointment of the principal, exclusions have significantly reduced, including for disadvantaged pupils. However, they remain above the national average.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and since the principal was appointed. Leaders have an unwavering focus on improving attendance. When attendance was not improving fast enough, leaders put a range of new strategies in place. Consequently, attendance is improving rapidly again. School leaders, including governors, are aware that the attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities needs to improve even more quickly, so that it is at least in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- By the end of Year 11 in 2016, outcomes met the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' progress. This was the first time the school had met the floor standard in recent years. This improvement was because of plans put into place by leaders to improve teaching, leadership and the curriculum pupils followed.
- Information shared by school leaders shows that Year 11 pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, now make better progress in almost every subject than a year ago. The subjects that pupils follow are more closely matched to their career aspirations and ability than previously. Pupils make better progress because of this.
- School leaders, including governors, monitor the progress of pupils in all year groups regularly, accurately and rigorously. Pupils who are not achieving well are identified quickly and supported effectively.
- The progress of pupils with above-average starting points has improved across a broad range of subjects. This is because school leaders are sharply focused on ensuring that these pupils are challenged appropriately in lessons and supported to have high aspirations. For example, in English the most able pupils are making good progress

because their work is suitably challenging. They discuss and redraft extended written work confidently, and because of this, the final pieces of written work they submit are of a high standard.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress overall. Teachers' training to support these pupils has been effective and they understand how to challenge them from their starting points.
- Pupils who enter Year 7 with attainment that is below average in English and mathematics make good progress. The extra help they receive is used effectively to ensure that these pupils catch up.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, including those with above-average starting points, have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress across a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics. The principal has introduced systems to ensure that school leaders monitor and discuss the progress of disadvantaged pupils regularly.
- In geography and history, the outcomes of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with above-average starting points, are not as good as in other subjects. School leaders are aware of these weaknesses and have plans in place to improve the expectations and progress of pupils in these subjects.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The sixth form provides a good quality of education. School leaders have taken effective action to overcome the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Improvements made in leadership, attendance and teaching have led to better outcomes for students. These improvements are significant and sustainable. Leaders demonstrate the capacity to improve the sixth form further.
- Outcomes in 2016 were far better than in previous years. Across the range of academic subjects studied, the progress of students, including disadvantaged students, was in line with the national average. It was better than the national average for students, including disadvantaged students, across the range of vocational courses provided.
- Outcomes for current students are good, across the wide range of courses that students follow. For example, school leaders report that students are making even better progress than last year in 14 of the 15 courses offered in Year 13. Inspectors undertook a scrutiny of students' work that confirms leaders' view.
- Teaching is good. Students, including disadvantaged pupils and those with high starting points, are given challenging work in lessons and make good progress because of this. In most subjects questioning is a strength, because it supports students to think more deeply and write to a high standard. Where questioning is less probing, students make less progress because they do not explore or develop ideas as well as in others. Teachers and leaders monitor the progress of students regularly and accurately, and provide additional support where it is required. Consequently, students who are falling behind with their learning catch up quickly.
- The curriculum is broad and matches the requirements of students well. Students complete all elements of the 16 to 19 study programme. Students benefit from a range of academic and vocational subjects, they complete meaningful work experience, they

have good careers guidance and, where necessary, they resit GCSE English and/or mathematics.

- Students who resit GCSE English and/or mathematics as part of their study programme are taught well and make good progress. Current students already have higher grade A* to C pass rates than others nationally in both subjects.
- The quality of advice and guidance offered to students is very strong. Careers advice is highly personalised and encourages students to be aspirational with their choices of further education, employment or training after they leave the sixth form. Consequently, the number of students, including disadvantaged students, who move on to university courses continues to rise rapidly.
- Personal development, behaviour and safety are good. School leaders are sharply focused on the safety of students. Students recognise and value this. Good punctuality and attendance rates are strong features of the sixth form.
- Students are overwhelmingly positive about the sixth form. They say they are taught, supported and looked after well. Retention rates from Year 12 to Year 13 are high because of effective teaching and good-quality care.

School details

Unique reference number	131065
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10032206

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,284
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr G Wainwright
Principal	Mr M Westerdale
Telephone number	0151 260 4044
Website	http://northliverpoolacademy.co.uk
Email address	admin@northliverpoolacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This is a large school, with significantly more pupils than the national average. The school also includes 16 to 19 provision.
- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities supported by the school is well above the national average. The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below

the national average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged students and those supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision, at Harmonize Academy and New Heights High School.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, the trust chief executive officer and members of the governing body.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on issues including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching and careers guidance.
- Inspectors examined a range of supporting documentation, such as the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, the school's assessment information, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors considered 32 responses to the online parental questionnaire and 94 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors conducted learning walks and lesson observations across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these walks.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils' books and undertook a joint work analysis with school leaders.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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