

Auckland College

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

Inspection dates

30 April–2 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The proprietors, directors and headteacher have ambitious aims for the school. Their vision has an extremely positive influence on every part of the school's work and drives continual improvement. They have made certain that all the independent school standards are met.
- Due to excellent teaching, pupils exhibit exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They become confident, resilient learners. Teachers and teaching assistants enable pupils to realise their full potential and prepare them very well for the next stage of their education.
- All pupils in Years 1 to 6 make substantial and sustained progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 make equally strong progress across a range of subjects from their starting points.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make the same excellent progress as others.
- The exceptional curriculum meets pupils' needs very effectively. Alongside core skills, the enhanced curriculum provides pupils with a wealth of choice. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered exceptionally well and the curriculum also promotes a good understanding of fundamental British values.
- Behaviour is impeccable. Pupils respect each other's differences and work and play together harmoniously.
- The school's culture actively promotes pupils' well-being so that they feel safe and secure.
- Strong leadership and teamwork in the pre-prep classes produce highly effective teaching so that children get off to an excellent start to their education.
- The new middle leaders are already having a valuable impact on this highly successful school and with further support could do even more.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further enhance leadership and management by continuing to develop and support those staff that are new to middle leadership roles.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher sets an inspirational vision for the school. She is very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher. Her determination that all pupils will succeed and take their place as effective citizens is well understood by staff and pupils.
- Senior leaders set very high expectations for pupils and staff. Leaders have led improvements in teaching, learning and assessment for all pupils, which have resulted in improvements across the school, both in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The deputy headteacher has devised an excellent system for tracking the progress of pupils across the school. Leaders are looking to measure the extent to which pupils develop greater depth and mastery in different subjects. The tracking system provides a clear picture of every pupil's progress and attainment in all elements of learning. Teachers use this tracking to set aspirational targets for all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are new to learning English.
- Teachers are held to account for the progress their pupils make. There is a very effective performance management system based on secure evidence about the quality of the work of staff. Teachers know their pupils exceptionally well and how well each is performing. This means that they can plan lessons to precisely suit the needs of individuals.
- Leaders have recently reviewed the management structure and created middle leadership roles. Middle leaders are already having a beneficial impact on this highly successful school. However, there is the potential for them to be even more successful.
- A highly qualified and skilled special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has transformed the whole approach to supporting pupils with SEND. She ensures that accurate diagnosis and early intervention are provided for pupils who need extra help. She leads additional training for staff and has increased the skills of teaching assistants. There are regular reviews which ensure that interventions are successful and that pupils are receiving the best support.
- The curriculum is highly imaginative. Leaders have embraced the concept of knowing more in greater depth. In addition to the core curriculum, pupils of all ages choose from the enhanced curriculum of six topics over each academic year. The aim is to widen pupils' intellectual experience, improve research skills and inspire them. Currently the topics on offer include robotics and crazy science in Reception and Year 1, chess and up-cycling in Years 2 and 3, community service and food technology in Years 4 to 6 and young enterprise and life skills in the secondary phase.
- Physical education lessons take place at I. M. Marsh sports centre which is part of Liverpool John Moores University. This enables pupils to experience high-quality resources. In addition to timetabled lessons, the enhanced curriculum choices include tennis, martial arts, lacrosse, trampolining, yoga and athletics. The school has its own bus to transport pupils to and from the sports centre.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered in the relationships within the school and in pupils' contribution to the wider community. Pupils learn about different world faiths within personal and social education lessons. The curriculum is

further enhanced by trips and visits, such as a recent visit to Berlin.

- The great majority of parents and carers are highly satisfied with the work of the school. Comments such as 'my daughter skips into school every day with a smile', 'I love the friendly feel to this school', 'the hands-on teaching is so creative and imaginative' and 'fantastic school and excellent leadership' are typical of the many positive comments received. A very small minority of parents expressed concerns which were carefully investigated. Inspection evidence shows that the school is vigilant in ensuring that pupils are well cared for and that behaviour is extremely well managed. Parents praise both the excellent academic progress their children make and the outstanding support for pupils with SEND.

Governance

- Governance is excellent.
- The proprietors are rightly proud of the progress the school has made since it opened in 2000. They are fully involved in all aspects of the management of the school and ambitious to share their vision of what can be achieved in a small school. The directors are aware that the school is currently operating with a higher number of pupils than it is registered for. They intend to apply to the Department of Education for a material change to increase this number to 250.
- The two proprietors and two directors act as governors and determine the strategic direction of the school. They ensure that all the independent school standards are met and that the school is on a sound financial footing.
- All the directors have expertise from working at senior levels in education. As a result, they challenge leaders effectively. Directors monitor the impact of teaching and learning and have detailed knowledge about the progress and well-being of all pupils.
- The directors are regularly in school. They use their expertise to make sure that leaders' actions have a positive impact. They talk to pupils and staff and join in learning walks to see what is happening around the school. The directors know what the strengths are and where there can be further improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy which meets all current government requirements. It is published on the school's website.
- Safeguarding procedures are embedded into school life. Safeguarding is seen as the shared responsibility of everyone. Actions taken to address concerns are effective and well documented.
- The school's record-keeping is exemplary, showing that all statutory requirements are met. All staff are fully aware of safeguarding procedures because staff training is regular and comprehensive.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through personal, social and health education lessons.
- Leaders communicate frequently with parents and the wider community to make sure

that pupils are safe.

- The on-site breakfast club and after-school clubs are well supervised so that pupils are safe throughout the day.
- Leaders conduct weekly reviews to ensure that the building and outside areas are safe, entrances are secure and that all rooms and equipment are safe and useable.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The work in pupils' books in all phases shows outstanding progress from each individual starting point. The books illustrate that staff are consistent in setting high expectations and that pupils respond well.
- Across the school, teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. Their extensive planning builds on pupils' prior learning from year to year, term to term, lesson to lesson in a well-structured way. This ensures that pupils make rapid progress.
- Teachers identify and tackle pupils' misconceptions quickly and provide support or extension activities to reinforce learning.
- Teachers use questioning very effectively to deepen understanding and ensure that pupils think hard about their learning.
- Teachers' enthusiasm is infectious, so pupils develop a real love of learning. Very high expectations for handwriting and the quality of presentation of work are set. As a result, pupils take great pride in their work.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to learning across the school. A recent drive to develop and improve their subject knowledge ensures that they are having an even greater impact on the progress of pupils.
- Pupils with SEND are very well catered for. There is excellent liaison between the SENCo, teachers and teaching assistants which ensures that these pupils make excellent progress in line with, and sometimes exceeding, those without special needs.
- Homework is set regularly across the school. Parents appreciate the new system of displaying and celebrating homework projects on the school's web pages.
- In the prep school (Years 1–6) there is a very strong focus on teaching reading, which ensures that standards in reading are high. Pupils' interest in books is reflected in the fact that Year 6 runs a book club. Pupils can discuss their reading tastes with flair.
- Prep school pupils enjoy working with subject specialists. For example, in art, Year 1 pupils were painting in the style of the artist Kandinsky and learning about his techniques and approach to art. In a Spanish lesson, pupils enjoyed learning how to describe the appearance of their family members in Spanish.
- The teaching of mathematics is a strength. Pupils are provided with challenging activities which enable them to make strong progress. For example, pupils in Year 7 were engrossed in proving Pythagoras' theorem. A recent initiative has been successful in improving pupils' confidence in using times tables as part of their mental mathematics.
- Teaching in science includes examples of practical investigations. For example, pupils in Years 8 and 9 were making models to show how the lungs work, using plastic water bottles and balloons.

- In English, pupils are given many opportunities to write at length in a range of genres. Pupils make excellent progress with handwriting, punctuation, spelling and grammar. They develop a wide vocabulary and good communication skills. For example, Year 2 pupils confidently discussed the squalor of Victorian workhouse conditions and Years 10 and 11 pupils role-played interview panels and acted as applicants for a summer job. Prep school pupils were recently winners in a young writers' poetry competition.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The drive to enable every pupil to succeed and enjoy that success is reflected in the very positive attitudes of pupils across the school.
- Pupils really enjoy the enriched curriculum which provides so many different opportunities, such as projects on sensory science and dances across the world.
- Pupils know that their voice is heard through the school council. For example, they have negotiated changes to the way the outdoor areas are used and regularly choose which charities they want to support.
- Pupils have a strong social conscience. They are informed about issues such as global warming and plastic pollution and have strong views on the need to act. They have a good understanding of British values and the work of British institutions.
- Pupils take pride in the fact that theirs is a multi-cultural school. They are respectful of differences of gender, race and religion. These themes are covered effectively in the school's personal and social education curriculum. Valuing equality and diversity is inherent in the ethos of the school.
- Pupils contribute to their local community in several ways. For example, a community service group decided to support a local women's refugee charity and a pupil was chosen to be the junior mayor for Liverpool last September. Another pupil wrote to Knowsley Council about the lack of litter bins, succeeding in persuading the council to provide more bins. Reception pupils left painted poppies in the local park in Remembrance week.
- Most pupils agree that bullying is rare. Minor bullying issues are dealt with quickly and effectively. Some pupils are mature in their attitude and recognise that sometimes bullying is a falling out of friends. Pupils know that they can seek support from staff if they feel unhappy or worried.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and when out in the wider community. All relevant policies for ensuring pupils' health, safety and well-being are in place. Pupils feel safe and well looked after.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Year 6 pupils follow a timetable similar to that in Year 7, so that they are used to a secondary-style school day. Careers education is a regular feature in the secondary school and is beneficial in helping pupils to determine their next steps in work, education or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils dress smartly in their uniforms and take pride in their appearance. The school buildings are free from any litter or graffiti.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful. Pupils want to work hard and please their teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, they enjoy learning.
- Pupils of all ages behave in a friendly and mature way. They work together in mixed-age groups in clubs and curriculum projects and share resources at breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Attendance is at least in line with the national average. Attendance rates are sometimes affected by pupils visiting families who live abroad and by long-term illness.
- The school rarely uses alternative provision. If pupils are attending courses elsewhere, their attendance, behaviour and progress are regularly checked.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils across the school make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Tracking information for this academic year shows that 73% of all pupils in Years 1–6 are exceeding standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. At the beginning of the year, this figure was just 33%.
- Reading is a strength and 87% of all pupils in Years 1–6 are exceeding national standards. Most pupils read regularly and with enjoyment. On average, pupils are reading above their chronological age by two years. The average spelling age is one year ahead of their chronological age. One reason for this is the excellent progress pupils make in phonics in the early years and in Years 1 and 2.
- Standards in writing and mathematics are not quite as high, with 62% exceeding national standards in writing and 52% in mathematics. The school knows these figures will rise further by the end of the summer term as more work is covered.
- The work in pupils' books confirms this tracking information. Very strong progress is evident in all subject areas.
- Pupils' work in mathematics is set out carefully to avoid elementary mistakes. Pupils are adept in solving problems and explaining their answers. Teachers regularly set extra challenge questions after they have marked books, to which pupils respond with enthusiasm.
- In science, pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge across a variety of topics. They use scientific vocabulary accurately and include high-quality diagrams and illustrations.
- Pupils write confidently in a variety of different genres. For example, Year 8 and 9 pupils have studied several of Shakespeare's plays and write knowledgeably about the different types of drama he produced. Pupils are adept at writing balanced arguments. For example, their preparation for a debate on whether graffiti is acceptable or not was well researched. Standards in spelling, grammar and punctuation are high. The school's drive since the previous inspection to improve handwriting and presentation skills has been very successful.

- The most able pupils in all classes are encouraged to push themselves further. Pupils are producing complex sentences from an early stage. Science work is very well presented. English books show very strong progress. In humanities subjects, there are many opportunities for research and extended writing. The most able pupils use stimulus advice sheets to inspire greater depth in their work.
- Pupils with SEND make exceptional progress and respond to the same high expectations as other pupils. They are provided with support sheets to enable them to achieve as well as other pupils.
- Secondary-aged pupils make excellent progress from their very varied starting points. Many pupils join the school late in key stage 3 and sometimes in key stage 4. There are over a third of current pupils in Years 7–11 with SEND. A higher percentage of pupils than those in the prep school speak English as an additional language. Several are at an early stage of learning English.
- Cohorts for different GCSE and technical qualifications are very small, often less than five pupils, so comparisons with national GCSE results are not valid. Those who take GCSE subjects achieve well in subjects, including English, mathematics, science, geography, history, business studies, art and music. Occasionally, very able pupils sit GCSE examinations at the end of Year 10 and begin work on Advanced-level topics.
- Pupils who move school at the end of Year 6, those who stay into the secondary school or join during key stages 3 and 4 are all very well equipped for the next stage of their education. This is because of their qualifications, personal development, communication skills and positive attitudes to learning.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children make excellent progress in the early years as a result of very effective leadership, high-quality teaching and strong provision. Most children join the pre-prep classes with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. They make excellent progress from their starting points so that they are very well prepared for Year 1. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is very high.
- Currently there are three pre-prep classes and one Reception class. Children learn very well in stimulating indoor and outdoor areas. Staff work very closely together to ensure that learning is always motivating and enjoyable in all areas of development. They set the highest expectations for paying attention, behaviour and learning, to which children respond very positively.
- Phonics is particularly well taught in small groups to allow for intensive, focused learning. There is a strong focus on reading from the start, so standards are high.
- Adults plan ambitious activities, such as in mathematics, where children became adept at estimating before measuring objects. In science, children were deciding what would happen when objects were put into water. They were totally absorbed in considering what would sink and what would float. They were developing good use of scientific language, for example 'I predict that Spiderman will sink'.
- Staff continually assess how well children are doing and use this information very accurately to develop learning. The needs of individual children, including those with SEND, are well met.

- Staff make learning motivating and enjoyable in all areas of development. For example, children enjoy the gardening area, where they learn about spring, nature and life cycles. The story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' led to learning about healthy eating and counting and subtracting the number of caterpillars found on leaves.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. They work and play happily together, sharing resources and talking about their activities. They show respect to all staff and are open and confident when talking to visitors. They are curious and motivated to learn.
- Children relish the wider opportunities they are given through the enhanced curriculum. They can choose from many extra activities, such as sensory science or dances of the world.
- All welfare requirements are met so that children learn in a safe, healthy and secure environment. Leaders have introduced a worry monster area so that children can talk about their feelings if they are anxious or angry.
- The school has excellent links with parents, who are kept fully informed about what is happening at school through an electronic information-sharing system. They are invited to attend 'stay and play' sessions, workshops are provided for reading and mathematics and staff are always available to offer advice or support. Many parents expressed their wholehearted approval and appreciation of the pre-prep department. They had nothing but praise for the staff, the quality of teaching and the progress their children are making.
- Leadership of the early years is outstanding. The leader has recently been appointed as an assistant headteacher. She has introduced more high-quality training for all staff on children's emotional development, promoting manual dexterity and accelerated phonics. She is improving transition between the on-site nursery, the pre-prep and key stage 1. She has a clear focus for further development, which includes making stronger links with other schools, developing the roles of teaching assistants and further improving outdoor provision.

School details

Unique reference number	132119
DfE registration number	341/6046
Inspection number	10092580

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Number of part-time pupils	62
Proprietors	Anthony Akaraonye and Gillian Akaraonye
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Stephanie Boyd
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,000 to £7,500
Telephone number	0151 727 0083
Website	www.aucklandcollege.com
Email address	info@aucklandcollege.com
Date of previous inspection	1–3 November 2016, 9 November 2016

Information about this school

- Auckland College is an independent co-educational day school.
- The school provides a breakfast club, after-school clubs and holiday clubs for 51 weeks of the year. These clubs are managed by the executive board and run by staff employed by the school.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased since the last inspection from 217 to 245. The school is registered for 210 pupils.
- The proprietors also run an on-site nursery that provides for children from birth to two

and half years old. This provision is subject to an early years inspection.

- There are 106 children in the early years, of which 62 are part-time. Almost all are in receipt of nursery funding. Children are taught in three pre-school classes and one Reception class.
- There are 63 pupils in the secondary school. Over a third of these pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- A high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Many speak English as an additional language, but few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The school uses provision for physical education at I.M. Marsh sports centre, which is part of Liverpool John Moores University, and local leisure centres. Occasionally, pupils attend part-time alternative provision at Liverpool Football College.
- The last standard inspection of Auckland College took place on 1–3 November and 9 November 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes in a range of subjects. They looked at pupils' work in books with senior leaders and the records of their progress.
- Inspectors listened to pupils' reading in Years 2, 5 and 6 and held discussions with two groups of pupils. They talked informally with pupils around the school, at playtimes and in lessons.
- Inspectors took account of the 53 responses to Parent View and spoke to parents as they arrived at school. They scrutinised the 17 responses to the Ofsted staff survey and spoke to many members of staff following observations.
- Meetings were held with the proprietors, the directors, the headteacher and senior and middle leaders.
- The lead inspector toured the school to check that the premises were suitable.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents to check compliance with the independent school standards. They also looked at the school's self-evaluation and development plans, records of leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils, the school's assessment information and school policies.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding documents, policies and procedures, including attendance and behaviour records.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Maggie Parker

Ofsted Inspector

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