

Inspection of Educ8 Liverpool

Elm Road, Seaforth, Liverpool, Merseyside L21 3TG

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Educ8 Liverpool welcomes pupils who have not benefited from a positive experience in their previous schools. Many pupils have suffered considerable disruption to their education. When they arrive at Educ8, pupils are listened to, respected and valued by staff. Pupils forge positive relationships quickly with staff and with each other. They know that staff care about them and want them to enjoy being at school. Pupils told inspectors that they feel happy and settled at Educ8.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils behave well and enjoy each other's company. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils feel safe. Leaders deal swiftly with any incidents of bullying or name-calling.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils academically and have set about improving the quality of the curriculum. However, the curriculum has not been finalised in all subject areas. This hinders how well some pupils learn. Additionally, a few pupils do not receive the support that they require to read accurately and fluently.

Pupils benefit from some external speakers who visit the school to talk to them about their career aspirations and growing up in modern Britain. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about going to the gymnasium, where pupils have access to personal trainers and a variety of fitness activities. However, pupils do not get enough opportunities to participate in enrichment activities that enhance their learning of the curriculum.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are clear about what they want pupils to achieve during their time at Educ8. Their mission is to prepare pupils to return to mainstream school or to successfully go on to post-16 education. Typically, leaders realise this vision. They have designed an overarching curriculum that supports this aim. For example, the curriculum enables pupils to study an appropriate range of different subjects, including vocational qualifications in art and design, construction and hair and beauty.

While leaders have established the subjects that make up the curriculum, they have not identified all the essential information that pupils must learn. This prevents some teachers from knowing exactly what to teach to pupils. It also hinders how well teachers assess what pupils know and remember about some subjects. As a result, some pupils do not have secure enough foundations on which to build new learning.

Some staff's subject and teaching knowledge is underdeveloped. Furthermore, the choice of activities that teachers select to deliver new learning are sometimes not the most appropriate tasks to help pupils learn new concepts. This means that the gaps that some pupils have in their learning widen further still. As a result, on occasion, some pupils learn content that does not match their individual needs. Sometimes pupils repeat learning unnecessarily.

Reading has an increasingly higher profile in the school. Leaders have taken steps to promote pupils' reading for pleasure. However, leaders have not identified those pupils who struggle with reading. This means that some pupils do not receive the additional reading support that they need to catch up with their peers.

Leaders and staff successfully unpick pupils' additional educational needs and any barriers to learning that they may have. Pupils with SEND experience a smooth transition into Educ8 because this is meticulously planned. Generally, leaders ensure that teachers have all the information that they need to support this group of pupils.

Most pupils have joined the school after significant periods of time out of education. Typically, pupils' rates of attendance improve when they start at the school. Furthermore, teachers successfully establish positive relationships with pupils. As pupils gain confidence and trust in education, they re-engage with learning and enjoy their lessons.

Typically, pupils behave well, and they stay focused. Pupils appreciate the individual attention that staff provide to them. Pupils feel confident to tell staff if they do not understand something. Staff quickly address any inappropriate conduct or low-level disruption.

Leaders' provision for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is generally well thought out. For example, leaders provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to learn about relationships and sex education in accordance with statutory guidance. Staff support the development of pupils' resilience and independence. Pupils know how to eat healthily, and they learn the importance of keeping physically and mentally fit.

Teachers ensure that pupils learn to respect those with backgrounds different from their own. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their wider interests and talents, for example through trips, enrichment activities and extra-curricular activities.

Pupils receive quality careers advice and guidance. They meet with independent careers advisers to discuss their career choices. Typically, this successfully helps pupils to prepare for their next steps in education or training. Leaders develop pupils' first-hand experience of the world of work.

The proprietor body puts pupils at the centre of its work and it ensures that all decisions are taken in their best interests. However, the proprietor body and the executive board have not provided sufficient training to ensure that all leaders can fulfil their roles to a consistently high standard. Occasionally, this prevents some leaders from identifying the most appropriate actions required to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They say that leaders have an open-door policy, listen to their views and are considerate of their well-being and workload.

The proprietor body has ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards (the standards), including the school's responsibilities under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is an effective safeguarding policy in place. The policy is published on the school's website and follows the latest government guidance.

Leaders have ensured that staff at all levels have had training on the most recent statutory guidance. Adults know how to spot the signs that indicate that pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff understand their responsibility to use their knowledge of pupils to swiftly identify any concerns about pupils' welfare. Staff know how to report any safeguarding concerns, and they do this immediately.

Leaders understand when and how they should make referrals to get the external support that vulnerable pupils and their families may need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For instance, they learn about knife crime, gangs and how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified all the essential information that pupils must learn. This prevents teachers from assessing how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum in some subjects. Leaders should ensure that all curriculums are finalised and that they are delivered in a logical order. They should ensure that staff are well trained to check how well pupils are learning new knowledge.
- Some staff do not have secure enough subject knowledge to design the most effective learning activities to help pupils learn new knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not have secure enough foundations on which to build new knowledge. Leaders should ensure that staff are well trained to deliver the curriculum as intended.
- Leaders do not systematically identify pupils who are weaker readers. This means that some pupils do not receive the additional reading support that they need to catch up with their peers. Leaders should ensure that teachers are fully equipped to support these pupils to read fluently and accurately.
- Pupils do not have sufficient enrichment opportunities. Sometimes this prevents pupils from developing their wider talents and interests. Leaders should enhance pupils' wider personal development, for example by providing an increased range

of enrichment activities, including trips and extra-curricular clubs.

- Some leaders have not been sufficiently trained to carry out their roles as effectively as they could. This hinders how well they check on the quality of education that pupils receive. The proprietor body and executive board should provide ongoing training to improve how well leaders fulfil their roles.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	148931
DfE registration number	343/6003
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10267710
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Proprietor	Educ8 Liverpool Ltd
Chair	Neil Prince
Headteacher	Debi Capper
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,000 to £17,000
Telephone number	0151 662 0199
Website	www.educ8group.com/liverpool
Email address	liverpool@educ8group.com

Information about this school

- This was the school's first standard inspection.
- This independent special school is located in a former social club and has undergone renovation. The building is owned by the proprietor body. There is a boxing club adjoining the school which is in use after school hours. Pupils at the school do not have access to the boxing club.
- The school is located at Elm Road, Seaforth, Liverpool, Merseyside L21 3TG.
- The school aims to re-engage pupils not suited to, or struggling with, traditional education pathways by engaging them in personalised, high-quality vocational courses that encourage and motivate pupils.
- The proprietor body has a limited company called Educ8 Liverpool Limited. The proprietor is the only director. The governance of the school is overseen by an executive board.
- The school is registered to admit up to 40 girls and boys, aged between 13 and 16 years old. There are currently 13 pupils on roll. Nine Year 11 pupils have recently come off roll. Eleven pupils attend full time. There are two Year 10 pupils who attend on a part-time basis.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- Some pupils have SEND. A small number of pupils have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, curriculum leaders and staff. An inspector spoke with the chair of the proprietor body and members of the executive board.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the standards. As part of this, an inspector toured the school's premises accompanied by school leaders.

- Inspectors checked the school’s safeguarding policies and procedures and the school’s single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding arrangements are in the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, such as school policies, risk assessments, school improvement plans and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted’s staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Maria McGarry

Ofsted Inspector

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