

Auckland College

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	341/6046
Unique Reference Number	132119
Inspection number	316816
Inspection dates	25-26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Auckland College is an independent co-educational school catering for pupils aged 3 - 18 years of age. The vast majority of pupils live close to the school but as it has become more popular in recent years, the number on roll includes some who travel 10 or more miles to the school. The school's ethos is to develop the moral standards and principles of the pupils within a caring and secure environment; this includes a commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of their ethnic heritage, culture or religious background. A number of pupils are on the special educational needs register, with nearly 10% having a statement of special educational needs. Two of the pupils with a statement of special educational needs are funded for full-time attendance by a local authority.

Evaluation of the school

Auckland College is a good school, providing a good standard of education and care for its pupils. The school benefits from staff who are dedicated to providing a whole-school experience that helps to develop the pupils socially, emotionally and intellectually. The school's leaders are appropriately focused on improving provision throughout the school, so that the pupils achieve in line with their capabilities. The school meets almost all regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall because of the current limitations in the accommodation and resources for design and technology, and outdoor play in Reception. The off-site use of facilities for physical education means that the majority of the pupils experience a suitable range of practical activities. Those curriculum subjects that are taught on the school site are generally of a satisfactory or better quality overall. The curriculum policy is clear, and is based firmly on National Curriculum requirements at all key stages.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment are good, and are helping pupils to make good progress during their time at the school. Teachers' planning against the requirements of the National Curriculum is satisfactory, with good use made of commercial and other available information relevant to the range of subjects taught. Lesson planning templates are used consistently throughout the school, although these give greater emphasis to teaching activities than to what skills and

knowledge the pupils should acquire, and how these will develop their understanding of key concepts within the different subject areas. Teachers are making good use of National Curriculum Levels across all subjects to set targets for pupils, with the monitoring of achievement against these predicted levels thorough; this helps the pupils to maintain the pace of their learning. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is good, and includes regular monitoring of their performance via a focus group of senior managers and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Although well established links have been made between the special educational needs co-ordinator and subject staff, including regular updates of progress of pupils on the special educational needs register, the co-ordination of target setting for these pupils across the school is underdeveloped. The termly meetings with parents of those pupils with LDD are helpful in ensuring that the school's provision continues to match the needs of the pupils.

The standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 3, in relation to the school's aims, are good in English and science, and satisfactory in mathematics. At Key Stage 4, the pupils achieve satisfactory standards. The overall progress that pupils make during their time at the school, including those with LDD, is good.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is good; it is outstanding for moral development. The school promotes and achieves a calm and purposeful working environment, within which the pupils appreciate their surroundings, show outstanding behaviour and develop excellent relationships with teachers and peers. Attendance rates are outstanding. Those pupils who spoke with inspectors said they enjoy being at school, and appreciate the varied opportunities they have to learn many different things. The small size of the school means that everyone knows each other well, helping the pupils to form secure and trusting relationships, irrespective of age.

There is a clear work ethic, which is appreciated both by parents and pupils. The school is a close-knit community and cohesive, which makes the pupils feel safe and well supported in their work. Pupils' achievements are recognised and celebrated, and regular ongoing monitoring and termly reporting to parents helps the pupils to appreciate their personal successes.

Sanctions are rarely needed because staff are consistent in reinforcing a range of rules that safeguard the pupils and encourage their personal well-being throughout their time at the school. The school satisfactorily promotes aspects of healthy living, including eating healthily and taking regular exercise. There are opportunities for pupils to become involved in decision-making activities, but it is underdeveloped across the full curriculum, in a way that would more effectively support the school's aim to develop individualised learning. Key Stage 4 pupils have suitable opportunities

for work experience, which are helping to prepare them for adult life in education, employment or training.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's measures to promote the welfare, health and safety of the pupils, including child protection, are good. Appropriate risk assessments have been carried out for school activities, including the off-site use of specialist sporting facilities. The school policy for health and safety is clear, and provides all adults in the school with clear guidance about the expectations for ensuring pupils' safety at all times when attending school. The fire safety procedures meet all requirements, including the regular maintenance of fire fighting equipment and practise of exiting the school as part of planned fire drills. The school has recently renewed its contract with an external specialist fire safety company to ensure compliance with annual checks of all school-based equipment. The policies for behaviour and general disciplinary matters are good, and those for first aid and external visits satisfactory.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets all requirements for ensuring that staff are suitably qualified and appropriately checked for them to work with the pupils. Procedures for checking new staff comply fully with requirements.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation are satisfactory. The school is based in a single building, which is in very good condition, with sufficient outdoor space for the numbers of pupils on roll. The building has three floors, with Key Stages 1 and 2 based on the ground floor, close to a science laboratory, staff room, kitchen, dual classroom/dining room, and reception area. The second and third floors have a number of classrooms, which are all of a suitable size for the number, age, and size of pupils. On the second floor, there is a library, specialist computer and art rooms, and the principal's office. On the third floor, in addition to more classrooms, there is a small sixth form common room, specialist computer room with suitable hard and software, and offices for the SENCO and deputy headteacher. There is no specialist accommodation for physical education, design and technology, including food technology, and an outdoor play area for the Reception aged children. The school is well aware of its limitations in accommodation and makes good use of local leisure and sports facilities to provide physical education up to Year 10, and practical work for those pupils studying for a GCSE in the subject in Years 10 and 11. There is good access to toilet and washroom facilities, although there is currently no adequate provision for pupils who are ill. The provision and access for pupils with physical disabilities is good, with a ramp leading to the main reception area, and a lift that goes to all three floors.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents is satisfactory overall. The school brochure includes a range of information about the ethos of the school, including the curriculum provided at different key stages. An additional parents' information booklet provides further and more detailed information about daily routines, teaching and learning, and the pastoral care of pupils in school. Although these documents are helpful in providing parents with essential information about the school, they do not include details about the full names and address of the joint proprietors, their address for correspondence during term time and holidays, and a telephone number or numbers on which they can be contacted. A recent 'flyer', which highlights the information and policies available from the school, has been sent to the parents of all pupils registered at the school. Annual reports are of a satisfactory quality, and contain a range of useful information about actual and predicted attainment in the subjects studied, an effort grade, and other achievements and areas for development. However, there are some inconsistencies in report writing, which detracts from their overall readability and usefulness for parents. These include the use of jargon, for example, reference to National Curriculum sub-levels, which are not sufficiently explained in the supporting information, lack of clarity about the progress made by the pupil over the year, and insufficient focus and clarity on the areas for future development.

Procedures for handling complaints

The procedures for handling complaints are clearly stated in the school's policy and comply fully with all requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(I)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the joint proprietors, including their full name, address for correspondence during both term time and holidays, and a telephone

number or numbers on which they can be contacted at all times (paragraph 6(2)(b)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Develop a dedicated outdoor play area as soon as is practically possible to ensure that children in the early years have regular access to all areas of learning.
- Develop further teachers' planning across the curriculum so that greater emphasis is placed on the skills and knowledge that pupils will acquire, as an aid to developing further their understanding.
- Ensure that there is clearer co-ordination between the SENCO and subject staff when identifying targets for learning for those pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Ensure that all annual reports to parents are jargon free, clear about the progress made by the pupils, and are more explicit in the identification of areas for future development.

School details

Name of school	Auckland College		
DCSF number	341/6046		
Unique reference number	132119		
Type of school	Co-educational		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	April 2000		
Age range of pupils	4-18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 63	Girls: 53	Total: 116
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 13	Girls: 1	Total: 14
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,824		
Address of school	65-67 Parkfield Road Liverpool Merseyside L17 4LE		
Telephone number	01517270083		
Email address	info@aucklandcollege.com		
Joint Principals	Mr and Mrs Akaraonye		
Joint Proprietors	Mr and Mrs Akaraonye		
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI		
Dates of inspection	25-26 September 2007		