

Auckland College

Independent school inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Peter Toft HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Auckland College is a small independent co-educational school catering for pupils aged three to eighteen years. The school is based in a residential area of south Liverpool, with most pupils living within 10 miles of its location. Currently, there are 140 pupils on roll. Nine of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage class are in receipt of a nursery funding grant. Twenty six pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, six of whom have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with a majority being White British. Twenty pupils speak English as an additional language, but very few are at an early stage of learning English. The college sets out to provide, 'an education of the highest quality which allows every pupil to reach their academic and personal potential in a safe, happy and stimulating environment.' It aims to prepare pupils 'to enter the world as individuals, fully equipped with the skills needed to be successful and happy in both their careers and personal lives whilst making a valuable and long-lasting contribution to the wider community.' The college was opened in 1999 and was last inspected in September 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Auckland College provides a good quality of education for its pupils, and the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It is successful in meeting its aims, not least in the way its pupils thrive and develop within its civilised and family atmosphere. Provision to secure the welfare and safeguarding of pupils is good, with some outstanding features. Pupils' personal development and academic progress are good. They are well supported by a curriculum and style of teaching which is carefully tailored to meet the specific needs of the pupils as individuals. The school has improved well since its last inspection. It meets all but one aspect of one of the regulatory requirements.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education

The quality of education provided is good. The curriculum overall is good, despite the small size of the school. It meets very well the diverse needs of all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's coordinator for special educational needs works well with class teachers to ensure that these pupils are taught an appropriate curriculum, using effective methods. The curriculum has been improved since the last inspection, not least in the use of outdoor play to strengthen learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All major areas of learning and subjects are well covered for pupils aged three to sixteen; an exception is design and technology, modules for which are currently being developed in cooperation with a specialist from a local high school, but are not yet being taught. Pupils receive good tuition in information and communication technology throughout the school. Preparation for life and work after school is good, and basic skills are well covered, as is provision to promote pupils' strong personal development. Students in the sixth form have access to a small range of subjects; although this is limited by the number on roll, it is sufficient to enable the college to provide a curriculum which meets the particular needs of these students. The planning of the curriculum is thorough and benefits from consistent procedures throughout the school. These help teachers clearly to identify learning objectives and then to work to meet them in lessons using appropriate teaching methods and a satisfactory range of learning resources. The planning is effective in enabling teachers to set work at different levels of difficulty to meet the learning needs of pupils in the mixed-ability groups, including the specific needs of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented. A range of extra-curricular enrichment activities is provided, as well as additional tuition in academic subjects. Not all pupils participate in the enrichment activities; the school accepts there is scope to strengthen demand among students by showing them how such activities can be interesting and beneficial.

Teaching and assessment are good throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers have high levels of subject expertise and the clear capacity to pass this, and their enthusiasm, onto pupils. Parents recognise this and state in their responses to the inspection questionnaire that this and individual attention are major benefits for their children. Lessons are brisk and interesting. Teachers, aided by effective teaching assistants, go to some lengths to ensure that pupils of different abilities keep up with the pace and are suitably challenged by the work. Pupils' behaviour is usually very good and staff are effective in bringing into line those whose concentration sometimes lapses. The vast majority are well motivated and have positive attitudes to school and to learning. Teachers make good use of questioning to make pupils think imaginatively and to ascertain how well they are learning. In addition, a strong and comprehensive set of procedures is well used to assess pupils' attainment and track their progress. Parents are given good information on this progress and pupils are clear about how well they are doing. Work is regularly marked and teachers are particularly effective at giving advice and

in providing intervention for individuals on how to improve their learning. Teaching is regularly evaluated by a joint principal and effective steps are taken where necessary to provide in-service training to help staff to improve their performance.

Pupils of all abilities make good, steady progress throughout the school. Achievement is good and the pupils benefit considerably from the individual attention they receive and for some, the intensive intervention provided to help them to catch up. They develop a clear desire to do well; those who have come from other schools, having had a negative experience of education before, progress particularly well as a result of the individualised provision and the very strong pastoral support they are given. The school has been successful in recent years in improving the progress and academic performance of pupils. This shows in steadily improving internal and external test and examination results. Staff are far from complacent; the school is currently aiming to improve performance further, especially in the attainment of higher grades in external examinations.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good throughout the school; aspects are outstanding including moral development and the understanding of people from different cultures. Pupils have clear ideas about right and wrong. They have ample opportunities in lessons, form periods and assemblies to reflect on life and to consider the basic elements of world religions. They develop into thoughtful and considerate young people with open minds and a willingness to consider different points of view. Pupils are courteous and willing to engage openly and positively with each other and adults in the school. They respond very well to the school's strong family atmosphere and learn to get on well and cooperate with each other. Social development is good and pupils grow in self-confidence and self-esteem as they move up the school. This contributes well to their development of skills to help them in adult life. Cultural development is excellent and pupils derive great benefits from the international dimension of the school's curriculum and the interaction they have in school with pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures. Racial harmony is promoted very well throughout the curriculum and by the respectful manner in which pupils are encouraged to relate to one another. They develop a good understanding of British public institutions through a variety of provision within the curriculum. Behaviour is good throughout the school; they are considerate to others and have empathy for those less fortunate than themselves as evidenced by their engagement in fund raising for charities. The rate of attendance is high.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good throughout the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some aspects are exemplary. All staff are strongly committed to the school's aim to provide a safe, stimulating and happy environment for learning and this is well achieved, and pupils enjoy their education

considerably. Almost all statutory requirements are met, though some documentation for safeguarding pupils needs minor adjustments to bring it fully into line with the latest requirements and to reflect the school's exemplary practices. The school cares exceptionally well for its pupils. Staff are trained appropriately in child protection procedures. All necessary checks are made when staff and other adults are appointed to work with pupils. The requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act are met. The school fulfils its aim of creating an environment that respects all cultures enabling pupils of 10 different nationalities to work and play in harmony. It is a safe place with regular checks being made of potential risks. Daily inspections of the grounds and building by a joint principal ensure that would-be hazards are identified and rectified immediately. Pupils are well aware of how to use the building and its facilities safely and, for example, procedures for general circulation and for fire evacuation practice are in order. The school works very closely with parents and outside agencies to promote the welfare of pupils. Adults encourage pupils to keep healthy, but this is not always fully effective, for example, following a healthy lunch, some pupils were observed buying chocolate from the vending machine. In addition, while effective arrangements have been made for pupils to take part in physical education in specialist off-site facilities, the time allocated is low for pupils in Key Stages 2 and 4, especially for pupils entered for GCSE geography who have limited physical activity in Years 10 and 11 because some lessons clash. An exceptional strength of the school is its tailored and rigorous provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for those new to the country and for those who are vulnerable through, for example, having chronic medical conditions.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Provision is good which results in good outcomes. Children enjoy their time in this stage and make good progress in all areas of learning as a result of good teaching. Planning is detailed and takes account of children's successes. Their achievements are recorded conscientiously and accurately. A useful start has been made to compiling an individual portfolio of each child's work, but this does not include photographic evidence that will provide a chronicle of significant moments. Children achieve particularly well in their physical development, however, their knowledge and understanding of the world is not as well developed as in other areas of learning. The provision of an outdoor area has added to children's enjoyment and to their personal development. While the area is well resourced to promote children's physical and social development, outdoor equipment to encourage children's creative development is somewhat limited. Children are generally well behaved and are eager to take part in activities; for example, they had enormous fun playing games with a parachute, but at times in their enthusiasm, their play became boisterous. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, and overseen by a joint principal. Daily routines such as checks on equipment and snack time promote children's well-being. All the required welfare requirements are met.

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 provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- update its child protection policy to bring it into line with current requirements, especially by identifying the 'named person' and listing all the relevant forms of abuse to be aware of.

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.

- Strengthen the curriculum by increasing provision for extra-curricular enrichment activities.
- Improve the capacity of the school to promote pupils' involvement in the community by implementing the current plan to set up a school council.
- Ensure that all pupils have sufficient opportunities for physical activity.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		√		
The behaviour of pupils		√		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?		√		
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?		√		
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?		√		
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?		√		

School details

Name of school	Auckland College		
DCSF number	341/6046		
Unique Reference Number (URN)	132119		
Type of school	Co-educational		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1999		
Age range of pupils	3–18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 86	Girls: 54	Total: 140
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 4	Girls: 1	Total: 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 5	Girls: 1	Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,489		
Address of school	65-67 Parkfield Road Liverpool Merseyside L17 4LE		
Telephone number	0151 727 0083		
Fax number	0151 727 7649		
Email address	info@aucklandcollege.com		
Joint Principals	Mr S Parris and Mr A Akaraonye		
Proprietors	Mr A Akaraonye and Mrs G Akaraonye		
Reporting inspector	Peter Toft HMI		
Date of inspection	22 April 2010		