

Auckland College

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

Inspection dates

1–3 November 2016, 9 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school continues to improve under strong strategic leadership. Leaders' vision to nurture individuality and inspire pupils is supported by committed staff.
- Pupils feel very safe and valued in school. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and extremely effective. Pupils are confident that there is no bullying.
- Pupils are exceptionally well behaved and have excellent attitudes to learning. The school is calm and lessons proceed at a good pace.
- Children settle happily and make a good start in the early years.
- Good teaching and a broad curriculum in Years 1 to 6 support pupils to make good progress in a range of subjects. Pupils attain at least expected standards in each year group.
- Good provision continues into the secondary school, where pupils gain qualifications appropriate to their abilities.
- Pupils' reading and mathematical skills are promoted effectively. Their writing lags behind because skills such as handwriting and punctuation are not taught systematically over time.
- Teaching is not precise enough to challenge the most able pupils and support those who need to catch up to make rapid progress in some classes.
- Questioning is not probing enough to help pupils deepen their understanding and develop their thinking skills.
- The school is very well maintained and mostly well resourced. Resources for the early years outdoor provision and for practical science require development.
- Leaders manage staff performance effectively. The headteacher is astute in her evaluation of teaching and learning and provides incisive feedback to teachers.
- Regular training in school keeps staff up to date. Provision for teachers' broader professional development is more limited.

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?

- Continue to improve teaching and learning by:
 - using the best practice in school to ensure that the most able pupils are provided with work that is challenging in all classes
 - making sure that, where pupils have gaps in their learning, teaching is precisely focused to help them catch up rapidly
 - developing teachers' questioning so it deepens pupils' understanding, their thinking and reasoning skills
 - ensuring that pupils' handwriting and use of punctuation are developed systematically as they move through school.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by:
 - supporting teachers to assess pupils' learning in greater detail, so that their teaching extends pupils' skills and understanding
 - ensuring resources are available to support lively and imaginative teaching and learning, especially outdoors, for children in the early years and for practical science
 - linking professional development more closely to teachers' personal targets, roles and responsibilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The senior team provides strong strategic leadership and has established an atmosphere in school where pupils grow in confidence, are happy and motivated. Leaders have continued to improve the school since the last inspection. The school has been refurbished and the curriculum has been enhanced.
- Pupils are valued as individuals. Staff and pupils respect and celebrate the diversity within the school and ensure there is no discrimination. The individualised support for pupils promotes equality of opportunity effectively.
- Leaders set high expectations of staff and for pupils. Staff are highly accountable for the progress and attainment of pupils in their class. Regular meetings with senior leaders to discuss pupils' progress ensure that any who are not making at least expected progress are supported successfully.
- Staff who made their views known during the inspection reported positive, supportive relationships between staff and leaders. Teachers and teaching assistants are motivated, hardworking and committed to providing good-quality teaching and care for pupils.
- The school follows the national curriculum in each phase and teaching is supported by a number of specialist subject teachers. Pupils experience a broad and balanced range of subjects in the primary school. A narrower range of subjects is taught in the secondary school but subjects are targeted to meet the needs of pupils. All areas of learning are covered effectively in the early years.
- Pupils' learning is enriched with a range of additional activities that broaden their experiences. Pupils enjoy choosing from a range of enrichment activities such as baking, astronomy, golf and additional arts, science and computer clubs. Good-quality physical education is provided by specialist teachers, off-site in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University and local sports providers.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of fundamental British values are promoted exceptionally well. Pupils from different cultural backgrounds learn from each other. They have a good understanding of and respect for different faiths and cultures. Pupils learn about British values explicitly in lessons and because they are integral to the ethos of the school.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively. Leaders deploy staff to make the best use of their strengths and set relevant targets for improvement. Professional development is planned to support the school's priorities and keep staff up to date. It is not linked closely to teachers' personal professional development needs and responsibilities, however. Teachers have limited opportunity to learn from best practice outside school.
- Leaders track pupils' attainment against national curriculum standards expected for each year group. Teachers use assessment well to plan for further learning. However, assessment is not yet finely tuned to enable teachers to assess pupils' learning precisely against the programmes of study and identify specific gaps in learning. New systems have been introduced, laying the foundation for more precise assessment, but are not yet in use across the school.
- Communication with parents is good. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, would recommend the school to another parent. Their comments include: 'staff are dedicated and really care about helping

children to fulfil their potential and excel', and 'we are kept very well informed ... and any issues are discussed as and when required'. Evidence gathered during the inspection endorses parents' positive views.

- A very small minority of parents raised concerns about the level of resources in school, and the recruitment of teaching assistants. Requirements for adult-child ratios are met, including in the early years, albeit with some temporary staff. Leaders are in the process of recruiting additional permanent teaching assistants.
- All areas of the school are well maintained and provide a suitable learning environment. Teachers use small spaces imaginatively and resources are mostly of good quality. However, resources for the youngest children to use outdoors and for the teaching of practical science across the school require improvement.
- The increase in the number of pupils on roll means that all classrooms are at capacity. There are currently 217 pupils on roll including 17 part-time children in the early years and a small number of children who are not quite three years of age.

Governance

- Governance is provided by an executive board made up of the two proprietors, the director of quality assurance and the headteacher.
- Members of the executive board have high ambitions for the school and a commitment to providing a safe, inspiring place to learn. They have an in-depth understanding of the school's performance based on regular monitoring and clear lines of accountability. They manage the performance of staff effectively.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that the school meets all parts of the independent school standards and that statutory requirements of the early years are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The independent school standards for safeguarding are met fully. Premises are well maintained and there is a safe culture in school so pupils feel safe, secure and well looked after.
- Procedures to ensure the safe recruitment of staff are rigorous. Specialist physical education teachers in alternative provision are vetted carefully.
- Staff are knowledgeable, vigilant and alert to signs of potential harm. They are aware of current national issues, for example regarding sexting, the 'Prevent' duty and peer-on-peer abuse. They understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All have completed relevant training which is updated regularly.
- The safeguarding policy is thorough and takes full account of the requirements detailed in 'Keeping children safe in education' September 2016. It is published on the school's website.
- The on-site breakfast club and after-school provision were well supervised during the inspection. This provision provides good-quality 'wrap around' care and is popular with pupils and parents.

Parents are well informed about safeguarding arrangements. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View report that children feel safe and are well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Good-quality teaching supports pupils to make good progress and attain expected or better standards for their age in the early years and primary phase. Teaching in the secondary phase supports pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Teachers have good subject knowledge across all key stages and plan work that meets the requirements of the national curriculum well. They provide clear explanations and exemplify new learning effectively.
- Teaching is adapted effectively to pupils' individual learning needs and abilities. Teaching is enhanced with personalised tuition and support outside the teaching day. This 'personal touch' is valued highly by pupils and parents. Pupils' learning is also enhanced in the after-school provision, where pupils are supported with homework and conduct personal research.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well provided for, especially in the secondary school. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and individualised support supplements their learning in class. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also supported well to develop their knowledge of English.
- Teachers' feedback is effective and provides pupils with good advice to help them improve their work, in line with the school's policy.
- Pupils' reading and mathematical skills are developed successfully in the early years and built on as they progress through school. The teaching of mathematics is a particular strength in the secondary phase.
- Writing skills are taught well in the early stages, particularly in Year 1, but are not taught as systematically as pupils move through school. Their handwriting and use of punctuation lags behind their ability to spell and use exciting vocabulary.
- The most able pupils make good progress but they do not make the most rapid progress they could in every class. In a few classes, the work they are given does not provide enough challenge or repeats learning they have already mastered.
- There are occasions when teaching is not sufficiently finely tuned to help pupils who have gaps in their learning to catch up rapidly, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and those in the secondary school.
- Teachers question pupils frequently in order to gauge their understanding. Questioning is not sufficiently probing, however, to consistently develop pupils' thinking and reasoning skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Teachers have highly positive relationships with pupils.
- The school's strong focus on safeguarding ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy, in school and outside. Pupils feel safe in school and their views are endorsed by the vast majority of parents. Older pupils cite the 'family feel' and strong ethos of safeguarding as key factors in their happiness and well-being at the school.

- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and those who spoke to inspectors are confident that it does not happen in school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online and recognise risks and signs of cyber bullying. There are sufficient safeguards on the different types of computers they use in school.
- Pupils of all ages are knowledgeable about British values such as democracy, liberty, law and respect; they debate issues in a considered way. They enjoy learning about different countries, cultures and faiths from each other, showing great respect for each other's views and experiences. The school's work to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism is highly effective.
- Pupils' welfare and safety is supervised carefully when they attend alternative provision for physical education. This includes thorough risk assessment and careful supervision during transportation and on-site.
- Pupils in the secondary school receive good advice and guidance on career and further education options in personal, social and economic education and citizenship.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and develop as confident, self-assured learners. They are self-disciplined and motivated in class so teaching and learning proceed without interruption.
- Pupils' conduct around school is exemplary. Pupils of all ages are polite and thoughtful in shared spaces. Younger pupils play energetically in the playground but with consideration for each other. Pupils of all ages uphold and respect the school rules.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to school are reflected in their above-average attendance and punctuality.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children make good progress in the early years and typically all achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across Years 1 to 6 from their starting points. School records and the work in pupils' books show that they achieve standards that are at or above those expected for their age in a broad range of subjects in each year group. Attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 standardised assessments is above average. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the primary phase are supported well and usually achieve the standards expected for their age.
- The standards attained in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are particularly high. Pupils read widely, with good fluency and understanding; the majority have a reading age above their chronological age. Pupils' attainment in writing is at expected standards but is not as high as it is in reading, because handwriting and the use of punctuation are not taught systematically across the school.
- Pupils in the secondary school make good progress from their various starting points. A high proportion of secondary school pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their needs are catered for well so they make good progress. Pupils benefit from the individualised tuition that supplements class teaching in school time and after school. Cohorts are too small and variable to compare GCSE results with national data or from year to year. Those who are capable of attaining GCSE accreditation do so in a range of subjects.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well to access the national curriculum in all key stages and develop English language skills.
- The most able pupils make good progress across the whole school, but their progress is not even across all classes. Consequently, they do not make the most rapid progress they could over their whole time at school. While expectations of the most able pupils are high in most classes, in a minority the activities are not challenging enough to take learning forward at a rapid pace. For example, in writing, not enough is expected of them in terms of content and presentation.
- Pupils who move school at the end of Year 6 are well equipped for the next stage of their education. Those who opt to stay in the school's secondary school receive individualised tuition and are similarly well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- There are no disadvantaged pupils in the school supported by the pupil premium.

Early years provision

Good

- All the independent school standards in relation to the early years provision are met.
- Children start in the early years with knowledge and skills that are mostly typical for their age. There is close liaison with the on-site day Nursery and with parents, ensuring that children settle happily and their knowledge and skills are built on from the start. Children make good progress and typically they all achieve all of the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year.
- Children's personal development and welfare are promoted extremely well, so that they develop confidence and effective social skills. Children show consideration for each other and learn to take turns. They have excellent early behaviours for learning.
- Children are safe and well looked after. During the inspection, ratios of adults to children met requirements and children were well supervised.
- Teaching in the early years enables children to develop competence and confidence in all areas of learning and they are well prepared for Year 1. Rooms are relatively small and do not have direct access to the outdoors, and this limits children's ability to exercise and move around. However, teachers plan carefully to ensure the curriculum is balanced and they take children outside to learn frequently throughout the day. Resources for outdoor learning are limited, however, especially for the very youngest children in the school.
- Adults use assessment effectively in the early years to track children's progress and plan next steps in their learning. The 'EY Log' enables parents to view assessments, photographs and comments and ensures that they are kept well informed. The local authority audit of the 2016 early years profile data shows that teachers are accurate and detailed in their assessment.
- The early years leader has recently taken on the role, and the scope of the post is still being developed. Links with parents and the day Nursery are well established. The headteacher effectively checks teaching and learning in the early years.
- Parents who commented on the early years provision are highly satisfied. Typical comments include 'It is clear our child's safety and happiness are paramount' and 'I love the "EY Log", it is lovely to share her school moments with friends and family.'

School details

Unique reference number	132119
DfE registration number	341/6046
Inspection number	10020911

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	Co-educational day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Number of part-time pupils	17
Proprietors	Mrs G Akaraonye, Mr A Akaraonye
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Miss S Boyd
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,000 to £7,500
Telephone number	0151 727 0083
Website	http://www.aucklandcollege.com
Email address	info@aucklandcollege.com
Date of previous inspection	12–14 November 2013

Information about this school

- Auckland College is a small independent co-educational day school.
- The school provides a breakfast club, after-school clubs and school 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 138 to 217.
- There are 82 children in the early years; 17 are part-time. Almost all are in receipt of Nursery funding. Children are taught in two pre-school classes and two Reception classes.

- There are 34 pupils in the secondary school. A third of these pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Seven pupils receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities in the early years and primary phase. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Many speak English as an additional language but few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The school uses alternative provision for physical education at I M Marsh sports centre, which is part of Liverpool John Moores University, and local leisure centres.
- The school was last inspected in November 2013.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with proprietors, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders. They spoke with most members of staff following observations and met with two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning, spoke to pupils and looked at pupils' work in each class. They carried out a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, records of pupils' progress, assessment information, performance management and professional development records. They investigated the school's safeguarding procedures in depth.
- Inspectors took account of 62 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents, and 12 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Compliance with independent school standards was checked.
- A further visit took place on 9 November 2016 to collect additional evidence.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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Early years Regulatory Inspector

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