

# North Liverpool Academy

120 Heyworth Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L5 0SQ

**Inspection dates** 28–29 April 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

**This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because**

- Leadership requires improvement because, although leaders are now improving provision and standards, they are not doing so rapidly enough. Consequently, the academy's overall effectiveness has declined since its previous inspection.
- Leaders and governors do not always evaluate effectively the quality of learning across the academy.
- Students' achievement requires improvement. The gap between the performance of the disadvantaged students and their peers is closing but has not been eliminated.
- The proportion of students who achieve five GCSE qualifications at grades A\* to C in English and mathematics is below average.
- The achievement of students in the sixth form requires improvement. The most able sixth-form students do not always attain highly enough.
- Underachievement of sixth-form students is not identified swiftly enough to galvanise improvement.
- Teaching requires improvement because teachers' expectations and the level of challenge they provide for students are not consistently strong across the academy.
- Teachers do not consistently check learning and adjust their teaching to improve students' understanding.
- Teachers do not always provide students with high quality feedback, including through marking, to enable them to improve their learning.
- Homework does not strengthen learning beyond the classroom sufficiently.
- Attendance is still below the national level and this is affecting academic success for some students.
- Behaviour policies are not applied consistently enough to eliminate low-level disruption to learning.
- Some students use thoughtless and offensive language.

## The school has the following strengths

- The Principal has a clear view of what needs to improve and the academy's self-evaluation is accurate and realistic.
- Recent improvements to senior leadership have brought greater capacity for improvement.
- Sixth-form students make a valuable contribution to the academy community.
- The academy provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is supported with good, objective careers guidance.
- The pastoral programme is strong and prepares students well for life in modern Britain. The promotion of British values is a strength of the academy.
- The house system provides strong pastoral support; students feel safe and have a sense of belonging to the academy.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across a range of lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke to students about their work and progress and looked at students' work in books, alongside members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed students' behaviour in lessons and around the academy throughout the academy day. Inspectors saw registration periods and a house assembly and listened to students read.
- A further scrutiny of work was undertaken in which inspectors sampled students' work across a wide range of subjects and all year groups.
- Inspectors considered documents including: the academy's view of how well it is performing; development planning; academy policies and procedures; records showing students' progress; records of leaders' monitoring of teaching; arrangements for the appraisal of teachers' work; staff training arrangements and records of governors' meetings. Inspectors also reviewed records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, as well as a wide range of information uploaded on the academy's website.
- Inspectors held formal discussions with the Principal, senior leaders, members of the governing body and the Academy Trust, middle leaders, trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers. Inspectors met with four groups of students and also had informal discussions with students in corridors, in lessons and during social times.
- Inspectors took into account 24 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) received in the last 365 days and 66 inspection questionnaires completed by staff. Telephone discussions were held with two parents who contacted Ofsted about the inspection.
- An inspector had a telephone discussion with representatives of Everton Free School and Harmonize Academy which work with the academy to provide a range of alternative provision.

## Inspection team

Dawn Platt, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Smart	Additional Inspector
Michele Costello	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Kelly	Additional Inspector
Peter McKay	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- North Liverpool Academy is a larger than average-sized comprehensive school with a sixth form.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The majority of students speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled students or students who have special educational needs is over three times the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for extra support through pupil premium funding is two-and-a-half times the national average. The pupil premium supports those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The Principal took up post in April 2014.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A few students attend off-site provision at the following places: Everton Free School, Harmonize Academy and Alder Hey Children's Hospital.
- The academy holds a number of awards including: the Inclusion Quality Mark; Leadership Academy Award; Sainsbury's School Sports Mark Gold; Career Connect Quality Award; Healthy Schools Award.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that all teachers:
  - have high expectations for all students, and provide challenging activities for them, with appropriate regard of their starting points or academic ability
  - check students' learning and adjust their teaching appropriately
  - set regular and appropriate homework to strengthen learning beyond the classroom
  - provide focused and sharp feedback which allows students to take the next steps in their learning.
- Improve progress and raise attainment for all students, especially those who are disadvantaged.
- Improve more rapidly the progress and raise attainment of sixth-form students, particularly the most able, by ensuring that underachievement is swiftly identified and successful strategies for improvement are consistently employed.
- Improve leadership by ensuring that leaders at all levels evaluate effectively the quality of teaching in terms of pupils' learning and progress over time.
- Improve students' behaviour and attitudes by:
  - making sure all adults apply the academy's behaviour rules and codes consistently
  - eliminating low-level disruption to learning in lessons
  - challenging more rigorously students' thoughtless use of offensive language.
- Improve further attendance across the academy so that students' progress is not restricted by absence.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- The academy's overall effectiveness has declined since the previous inspection because leaders' work to raise standards has not been sufficiently rapid or effective. Leaders were unable to arrest a sharp downturn in students' achievement that occurred in 2014.
- The Principal knows the academy well and recognises its strengths and areas for development. Leadership has been reinforced by new appointments to drive further improvements and a thriving new team is now in place.
- Leaders receive regular support from the Academy Trust and a productive climate for improvement has been established. The expectations of how staff and students should work have been raised and there is evident capacity for positive change, as shown by leaders' swift impact to arrest the decline in students' progress.
- The academy provides strong support for new senior and middle leaders to enable them to make a difference quickly.
- Middle leaders are now making a good contribution to school improvement; however, they do not all thoroughly check and improve the quality of teachers' written feedback to ensure that students make rapid progress.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate and realistic; leaders recognise the need to accelerate improvement in student outcomes, particularly for the disadvantaged. Data are used to track and monitor all students and vulnerable groups and appropriate interventions are used to raise performance. Academy leaders are reflective and build future support plans to ensure improvements for students.
- Leaders evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. However, their judgements about the quality of teaching are not always accurate because they do not always take enough account of the impact of teaching on students' learning over time.
- The house managers provide good quality care and support for students. They work closely with outside agencies and arrange effective support for individual students. The majority of students are happy and enjoy life at the academy.
- The academy's safeguarding arrangements are effective; safeguarding is given a high priority.
- The Key Stage 4 curriculum has been reshaped to suit the needs of learners and to ensure that more students achieve eight GCSE qualifications. The curriculum is broad and varied with a range of academic and vocational subjects offered in close discussion and liaison with parents and students. Aspirations for the most able have improved; there has been an increase in the number of students following separate science courses and entering sixth form.
- Nearly all students who left the academy in 2014 progressed into education, employment or training. Students are well prepared for the next step in education or employment due to well-structured careers advice and education.
- The pastoral programme is a strength of the academy. It enables students to develop personal and social skills. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is effectively organised and they develop skills and tolerance to equip them as citizens in modern Britain.
- The academy delivers a Key Stage 3 core curriculum through themed projects which develop literacy and independent learning. The tracking of students' achievement within this programme is not sufficiently well developed. This means that teachers do not always have accurate information on which to base interventions to help students.
- Students who are identified for further reading support follow clear, well-planned reading programmes. These successfully raise their reading ages and meet their literacy needs.
- Staff are held to account for their performance. Teachers' impact on students' progress is closely linked to pay progression.
- Staff are provided with appropriate professional development throughout the school year, including through regular updates on safeguarding; however, leaders do not offer enough bespoke training and development opportunities to further support the needs of staff.
- Newly qualified teachers are supported well by their mentors. They are closely monitored to ensure that they provide good quality teaching.
- Leaders ensure that staff and students are treated equally, that any discrimination is tackled and that good relationships are evident. Equality of provision is taken seriously by leaders and this is seen in the tracked spending of the pupil premium funding. Leaders recognise that more needs to be done to ensure

equality of opportunity by further reducing gaps in performance between different groups of students.

- A small number of students in Year 11 attend alternative provision. Leaders work closely with all providers and check systematically on the attendance, safety, curriculum provision and progress of these students.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are experienced and supportive of the academy and of the Principal's drive for improvement.
- Governors are aware of the strategies being used by leaders to raise achievement; they recognise the need to arrest the decline in results that happened in 2014.
- Governors understand how well leadership is doing through their analysis of data, curriculum reviews and regular meetings. They challenge leadership appropriately and are effective in the way in which they hold academy leaders to account.
- Governors contribute fully to the appraisal arrangements for teachers. They know about the quality of teaching in the academy and work with senior leaders to decide teachers' salary progression and reward those who perform well. Governors support the leaders' actions in addressing underperformance.
- Governors ensure that the academy's spending is well planned. They are aware of how pupil premium funding is used to support disadvantaged students but are not as knowledgeable about its impact and success. There is recognition that, although gaps are narrowing, this aspect of the academy's work needs to remain as a key focus.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- On occasions, lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. Most teachers tackle inappropriate behaviour and attitudes well but some do not follow the academy's rules or systems; consequently, disruption sometimes affects students' progress.
- The rate of exclusion of students for poor behaviour has fallen. However, the proportion of boys receiving fixed-term exclusions is still above the national average.
- A small minority of students use thoughtless or offensive language that can cause distress to others, whereas the majority of students move calmly around the academy, are courteous and show respect.
- Many students take pride in their work; however, this positive quality is not consistent across the academy.
- The vast majority of students are keen to learn and participate in the many revision sessions and wider cultural educational experiences offered by the academy. For example, some students have been engaged by an engineering project at Liverpool University and others visited Knowsley Safari Park to support conservation in action. These students were keen to apply their learning in different contexts.
- A strong ethos is driven by the student leadership programme which encourages students to demonstrate skills, resulting in their graduation from each key stage with a repertoire of validated work that demonstrates their contribution to the community.
- Students feel rewarded in the academy. They are encouraged to strive for awards each term related to skills and attributes, for example, creativity, risk-taking, determination and problem-solving. Most students respond positively to these opportunities.
- The academy's house system provides effective pastoral support for all students; this is helping to improve their attendance and achievement.
- Student leadership is used well in the academy to promote citizenship and a sense of civic responsibility. For example, elected members of the student voice group take on leadership roles, including organising end-of-term celebrations and charity fund-raising. They play a key part in representing and supporting the academy at parents' evenings and open evenings.
- British values are mapped across the curriculum and delivered frequently through assemblies and the leadership programme. For example, the rule of democracy was promoted in an assembly linking politics with voting in order to change lives. Some students are active members of the Liverpool Youth Parliament. Regular sessions provided by the community fire service and police reinforce the consequences of law-breaking.

#### Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.

- The academy works hard to keep students safe. Discussions held by inspectors with students revealed that they feel safe in the academy and are positive about the ways in which they are taught to be safe. The academy provides clear information regarding matters such as e-safety, 'sexting' and bullying, which students value. Students consider bullying in its various forms to be uncommon.
- Students mix well and social interaction between students of different races, genders and cultures is good.
- The vast majority of students display tolerance of others' sexuality, background, and religious beliefs.
- The safety of students in alternative provision is taken seriously by leaders. All providers communicate frequently with the academy about the progress and attendance of all students in their care.
- Attendance is below the national average. The attendance of key vulnerable groups is now closely tracked and improvement has been swift in 2015. Students are regularly encouraged and rewarded for improved attendance. Thorough tracking and robust support programmes are now improving students' attendance.
- The majority of students arrive on time to lessons. Lateness to the academy is not tolerated and appropriate tracking and support have improved students' punctuality.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding of students, including checks on the recruitment of staff, are rigorous and monitored regularly and closely. All staff, including those recently appointed, have received statutory safeguarding training, and are knowledgeable about the procedures to be followed if any concerns arise.
- Inspection evidence supports the view of parents who responded to the Parent View online survey that their sons and daughters feel safe and well cared for by the academy.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- High expectations and challenge are not consistently applied by staff in all lessons, so students do not always make good gains in their learning. Often lessons are pitched to students of middle ability, resulting in less progress for the most able students.
- Students arrive to lessons equipped for learning. However, on occasions, teaching does not always match students' needs which results in disengagement and, sometimes, low-level disruption.
- Work in students' books is inconsistent in quality and this hinders their progress. Staff do not always guide students effectively on what they need to do to make improvements. Feedback is not sharply focused to steer students to take the next steps in their learning.
- The most effective teaching in the academy is characterised by good working relationships and by teachers establishing high expectations with challenging activities adapted for all students, built on prior learning. For example, in Spanish, students were observed developing their command of vocabulary rapidly and effectively due to skilful questioning and support by their teacher.
- Literacy teaching is not embedded strongly to support all students in different subjects, so their progress is sometimes hampered. However, good practice is apparent in modern foreign languages and English.
- Some teachers do not use data effectively to identify students' underachievement or provide appropriate support for improvement. Conversely, when data are used well by teachers, students' progress accelerates.
- Teachers use assessments to measure and track students' progress; however, students' understanding of their own progress against targets is not fully developed. Students do not have enough chances to strengthen their learning beyond the classroom; homework is not set consistently across the academy.
- Learning support assistants are largely effective in supporting students in the classroom. However, leaders do not evaluate their impact on students' learning in enough detail.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students enter the academy having achieved standards at the end of Key Stage 2 that are below the national average. The proportion of students who attain five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, at the end of Key Stage 4, is below average.
- Students' attainment and progress fell in 2014 to levels that were untypically low for the academy. The current achievement of students requires improvement because, although attainment and progress are now improving, some students still perform less well than they should.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students attained half a grade behind other students in English and approximately a full grade-and-a-half less than other students in mathematics in the academy. However, the gap has now reduced substantially in mathematics. Better leadership and fresh developments in mathematics are having a positive impact on learning.

- In 2014, disadvantaged students attained three-quarters of a grade behind other students in English and approximately a full grade-and-a-half less than other students in mathematics when compared with their peers nationally. They made less progress from their relative starting points than their peers nationally in both subjects.
- The most able students are not always challenged to attain the highest standards across the curriculum and this is reflected in the relatively low proportion of students gaining higher grades. Leaders are now closely tracking their most able 'star chasers' and providing a higher level of support which is improving the progress of these students.
- Students with special educational needs who left Key Stage 4 in 2014 made less progress than other students in the academy and their peers nationally. Currently, more focused strategies, an enhanced curriculum, and better additional support are improving the attainment and progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. The academy focuses strongly, through its policies and practice, on promoting equality of achievement.
- The academy provides effective literacy support for students who join Key Stage 3 with poor reading skills. Those students who receive this support make good progress and develop skills that help them to understand their work in different subjects.
- A small number of students are educated in off-site alternative provision. Senior leaders' monitoring indicates that these students are currently on track to be successful in securing qualifications as a result of their alternative pathways.
- In their GCSE examinations in 2014, girls achieved one-third of a grade better than boys on average. Leaders are now identifying and responding to this gender difference more effectively through closer mentoring and tracking of students' progress.
- The academy has adapted its curriculum to ensure that more students can gain success in the English Baccalaureate.
- The academy no longer makes use of early entry for mathematics at GCSE; however, the school is entering some students early for English literature.

### The sixth form provision

### requires improvement

- Following a decline in the effectiveness of the sixth form, leadership has been strengthened and is now better focused on improving outcomes for students. Leadership of the sixth form requires improvement because leaders have not been able to secure good enough attendance or progress of students.
- Leaders have a clear vision and plan for improving the examination results of students. They use the wider and local community well to support them in this quest.
- Leaders are beginning to use data more effectively to monitor students' progress and to identify when intervention is needed to boost progress. The academy's sixth form is sustainable and results show more stability and retention of students into Year 12.
- The attendance of sixth-form students is not high enough to promote excellent levels of progress.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good across all subjects.
- The academy's latest A-level results show improvements across many subjects, although students' progress from their starting points is below average overall.
- Students' attainment in vocational qualifications shows a sustained trend of improvement over time; however, their results remain below the national average.
- Sixth-form students are mentored closely and supported with individual targets and action plans to steer them towards future success.
- Students are able to choose academic or vocational pathways, or a combination of both, dependent on their needs or aspirations. They are supported by graduate learning support assistants who nurture and prepare students in the sixth form for future academic life or employment.
- Good careers advice is provided and this is reflected in the growing number of students gaining university places or successfully pursuing employment or training.
- There are good opportunities for work experience in Year 12 and visits are also organised to further education providers. This has allowed important skills of team-working, communication and problem-solving to be developed, as well as forming strong links with future employers. Successful work and apprenticeships are promoted with Year 12 students by using an employability programme.
- The academy supports transition into the sixth form well, such as through a programme of taster events. Clear consultation and guidance underpin students' choices of courses. The academy provides the same care and support for students who wish to attend other providers as it does for those remaining at the

academy.

- The proportion of students completing their sixth-form courses was below the national average in 2014, but there is an improving picture for current students within the academy.
- Students who enter the sixth form without English and mathematics at GCSE experience variable success when they resit these qualifications. Pass rates show some improvement in English but less so in mathematics.
- Sixth-form students are valued members of the community and contribute to the supervision of the Learning Resource Centre. Sixth-form students also support younger students with reading. Students' behaviour is good and the academy ensures that they are safe and develop an appropriate knowledge of personal safety.
- Enrichment activities are organised through the academy's pastoral programme. This prepares students successfully for life beyond the academy, and develops skills that are valued by universities and employers.
- Leadership qualifications are encouraged for all students and enable them to build life skills and develop a deeper understanding of community service.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131065
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	461770

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,470
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Geoff Wainwright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rupert Stead
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 260 4044
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