

Inspection of a good school: Liverpool Life Sciences UTC

41 Greenland Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L1 0BS

Inspection dates: 21–22 January 2020

Outcome

Liverpool Life Sciences UTC continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders, governors and staff are passionate about helping pupils to become successful and active citizens. The school's motto, 'Every day is an interview', promotes professional standards and high expectations. Many pupils with previous poor experiences of schooling flourish in a caring and supportive environment.

Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that the specialist life science curriculum was 'the main reason for choosing the school'. Pupils and students take part in a wide array of science projects and work experience with prestigious employers. This helps them to be 'work ready'. They have won awards in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities, such as the 'Big Bang' competitions. Pupils and students in the sixth form are very well prepared for their next steps. Almost all move on to education, employment or further training related to healthcare and sciences.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They get on well with each other regardless of their background. Most pupils behave well. They want to learn. Students in the sixth form act as excellent role models to younger pupils.

The pupils that we spoke to said that they feel safe at the school. Bullying is rare. Teachers deal with it swiftly if it does happen.

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

The principal and governors are highly ambitious for all pupils to do the best that they can. The school provides an exciting curriculum with a range of academic and vocational subjects, including English and mathematics. Leaders have designed subject curriculums so that pupils learn knowledge in a logical order. In mathematics, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to tackle pupils' misconceptions. Assessment is used effectively across the school to identify what pupils know and can do. Pupils who enter the school with low levels of literacy are supported well to improve their reading and writing skills. Pupils develop a wide range of subject-specific vocabulary.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on building pupils' research and practical skills. Pupils have opportunities to revisit and apply their knowledge through carrying out high-level work, such as investigating the antimicrobial compounds found in chilli and ginger. Students in the sixth form lead the 'Baltic Research Institute', which publishes research work carried out by pupils and students in the school.

Most pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects. However, some disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as they should. Leaders are aware of this situation. They are taking positive action. Any pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning are identified quickly and given additional support. Disadvantaged pupils are catching up with their peers. However, leaders know that this is an area that needs some further work.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same learning and opportunities as other pupils. Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly when they enter the school. They have also improved the level of support that SEND pupils receive. Most pupils with SEND are beginning to learn more as they move through the school.

The school is calm and orderly. Relationships between pupils and staff are professional and help pupils to concentrate and work well together in lessons. Pupils socialise well during break and lunchtimes. The majority of pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils' personal development is a high priority for leaders. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities that help them to develop their confidence, such as sports, visits and overseas trips. They learn about different religions and cultures. Pupils show respect and tolerance for others. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Students and pupils help shape the school through the junior leadership team. They raise considerable amounts of money for charity.

Careers advice is highly effective. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' employability skills, such as teamwork and communication. Pupils and students benefit from mentoring and presentations from local employers, hospitals and universities. This helps to raise their aspirations for their future careers.

Students in the sixth form achieve exceptionally well in vocational courses. Leaders have improved the curriculum planning and delivery in the academic subjects. As a result, students are performing better than in the past and achieve well. Students value the support that teachers provide with applications to further education and apprenticeships. Many go on to study at university.

Governors and trustees challenge and support leaders well. Staff are proud to work at the school. They report that the principal considers their workload and well-being carefully.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All appropriate checks are made on staff to make sure that they are safe to work with pupils and students. All staff and governors receive training in safeguarding, including child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. They know what to do if they have any concerns. Leaders work closely with external agencies to protect vulnerable pupils. Pupils learn about potential risks in the local area, such as knife crime and county lines, through assemblies, lessons and visitors to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are already taking action to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. There are early signs that this work is making a positive difference. Leaders should continue to ensure that the curriculum enables disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as others in the school in a range of subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Liverpool Life Sciences UTC to be good on 26–27 January 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139588
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10110979
Type of school	Other secondary
School category	University technical college
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	476
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	260
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Geoff Wainwright
Principal	Jill Davies
Website	www.lifesciencesutc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 January 2016

Information about this school

- Liverpool Life Sciences UTC has a specialised focus on life sciences and health care. The school is sponsored by the University of Liverpool, Royal Liverpool Hospital, North Liverpool Academy and 2Bio.
- The school part of a multi-academy trust called the Northern Schools Trust. The school is co-located with another school in the Northern Schools Trust: The Studio School, Liverpool.
- The current principal was appointed in September 2019. Prior to this she was principal of the Studio School. She leads both schools and is supported by one senior leadership team. Some pupils and students in the sixth form from both Liverpool Life Sciences UTC and the Studio School learn in the same classes, in core subjects and in some option subjects. Some teaching is delivered by teachers from both schools.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision for their education at local hospital schools.

Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the principal, other senior leaders and groups of subject leaders and teachers. We met with the chair of the local governing body and the chief executive officer (CEO) and chair of the trust. We also held discussions with many pupils and students and observed their interactions during social times.
- We reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and attendance and behaviour records. We also looked at minutes of governing body meetings.
- To inspect safeguarding we looked at safeguarding policies and reviewed the school's record of checks on the suitability of staff and governors. We met with the designated safeguarding leaders. We also spoke to pupils about safeguarding. We also considered the views of parents and carers.
- We analysed five responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 24 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. No responses were received to the questionnaires for pupils.
- We started the inspection by focusing on academic and vocational science courses, geography and mathematics. We visited a sample of lessons in these subjects, met with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and had discussions with teachers and a small group of pupils.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Woodhouse

Ofsted Inspector

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