

Holly Lodge Girls' College

140 Mill Lane, West Derby, Liverpool, Merseyside L12 7LE

Inspection dates

23–24 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Not enough of the most able pupils reach the standards of which they are capable.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils, particularly of the most able disadvantaged pupils, were below national averages in 2016.
- Pupils have not improved their learning in science because teaching in the subject has not improved rapidly enough.
- Students in the sixth form do not make enough progress in academic subjects. Standards in some subjects have declined in recent years.
- The level of persistent absence of a small group of pupils has increased during this academic year.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, governors and staff are highly ambitious for every pupil and student. Steps taken since September 2016 to raise standards have been effective in increasing the progress of the majority of pupils.
- The governing body has used training well to make sure that they all have the necessary knowledge to challenge the headteacher and senior staff. Governors fully support leaders' and teachers' planned actions to improve.
- Teaching has improved in most subjects. More pupils are now making faster progress because of teachers' higher expectations.
- Most-able disadvantaged pupils in particular are increasing their progress as a result of the school's judicious spending of the additional pupil premium funding on a wide range of well-planned support.
- Middle leaders, teachers and staff value highly the training and support given to help them improve teaching.
- The school has sustained attendance at levels close to national averages, despite the recent rise in persistent absence of a minority of pupils.
- Pupils display increasingly positive attitudes to their learning. They behave well in lessons and around school and speak warmly of the positive relationships they have with adults in the school.
- Students in the sixth form achieve well in applied subjects.
- Pupils feel well cared for and safe in school.
- All pupils are well supported in all subjects to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils overall, particularly in science, by:
 - reducing the variability in the quality of teaching
 - sharing effective practice in teaching that is developing rapidly across the school.
- Increase the progress in academic subjects in the sixth form, so students make progress as good as in applied subjects.
- Reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- At the last inspection, the quality of teaching was variable and pupils made inconsistent progress, especially in English and mathematics. Because of actions taken by the current leaders, pupils are now being taught effectively in most subjects, and are now beginning to make more purposeful progress.
- The impetus to improve teaching has been shared by all staff. Leaders have made sure that teachers have been supported by excellent training. Teachers have grasped these opportunities to improve their teaching with commitment and purpose. The local authority has added to the training offered. They have usefully supported the school in checking that pupil progress is improving because of better teaching. Pupils say that they are now expected to think harder in their work and to take on extra challenges.
- The steady improvement in teaching has been accompanied by a concerted effort by most subject leaders to check between subjects in their own school, and with other subject leaders in partner schools, that assessments of pupils' work are accurate. Middle and senior leaders now have a realistic view of how well pupils are progressing because they are evaluating the quality of provision across the school accurately. However, this has been less effective in science where pupil progress is less consistent, despite support from external specialists and the local authority.
- Weaker practice has been tackled effectively to create a shared vision of where the school wants to be. Some staff have left the school and some new teachers are still to arrive in September, for example in science. Support is planned to speed up the improvement of achievement and teaching in geography.
- There has been a concerted, focused and well-planned series of initiatives which complement each other and provide strong support to improve the learning and progress of the most able, and the most able disadvantaged, pupils. These two groups improved their attainment in 2016, but attainment remained below national averages, especially in mathematics. The school's regular assessments since September 2016, checked externally, indicate attainment and progress is set to improve further, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The school's use of pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged students in all year groups to increase the rate of their progress is effective. The school's form time has been deliberately structured to give enough time for additional teaching, and a good range of support. Pupils are guided towards the support sessions that will have most impact on improving their reading and numeracy skills, and their learning in general. Pupils themselves understand the purpose of these sessions and value the gains in learning they make as a result. However, this has only been fully in place since the autumn and spring terms of this academic year and so has not had time to fully have an impact on improved progress across all groups and all subjects.
- The school considers the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and understanding as crucial in supporting the excellent relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults. Pupils look out for each other, and understood the impact of global acts, not only on themselves but on their fellow students with differing

beliefs. They understand and value the strong relationships within the school and articulate clearly how these are important drivers of their pride in their school.

- Pupils understand and act on the school values of respect and pride. Pupils with disabilities and difficulties are helped by specific provision such as The Buzz Club. There were several individual messages of appreciation from parents about how well the pupils and staff had supported pupils to continue to achieve through ill health and challenging events.
- Leaders have targeted improvement in science by identifying effective specialists to support improvement in teaching and planning. However, this has not had sufficient impact to eradicate the variability in teaching that is limiting progress and outcomes in the subject. Leaders have made plans to support improved leadership and teaching for September 2017.
- School leaders work in close partnership with two local secondary schools. Boys from one of the schools attend the sixth form, and specialist staff from the second school have contributed support to the science department. Leaders are astute in identifying partnerships and sources of support to strengthen provision in the school.
- School and subject leaders have acknowledged that the curriculum was not challenging pupils, nor was it offering enough subject choices of the requisite level to widen opportunities after key stage 4. The key stage 4 curriculum will cover three years from September 2017, and key stage 3 will consist of a two-year course. The curriculum choice is wider and includes more-challenging courses that match the improving achievement of most pupils. The legacy of variable teaching and a narrower curriculum has had a limiting impact on the progress of some older pupils and students. Progress is improving rapidly lower down the school.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has benefited from the review of governance recommended at the last inspection. The governing body is now smaller and more focused, has clearer roles and accountability and has significant education expertise within its members. This means that they are better equipped to support and challenge senior and middle leaders; the headteacher welcomes the increased challenge. The two chairs of the governing body complement each other well.
- Moreover, governors are clear that staff, including teachers, are accountable for their performance. They have supported school leaders in incorporating this into the procedures for managing the performance of teachers. Governors question leaders closely when leaders present their departmental achievements and plans to governors.
- Governors understand well how pupil premium funding has been used and how effective the funded strategies have been in improving the performance of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. Governors know that teaching still needs to improve in science and geography, and are fully supportive of the headteacher's effective and coordinated drive to improve pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- The safeguarding policy is up to date and informative. Regular training is held to make sure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to be vigilant in picking up any signs that pupils may be at risk. Staff know the girls well, particularly the more-vulnerable pupils, and those who may be vulnerable to extremism or exploitation. Staff also monitor attendance closely, particularly of pupils who attend provision away from the school site and those whose attendance is fragile or deteriorating. Staff spoken to knew exactly who was not attending well, and what the challenges were in increasing attendance. Staff work closely with other agencies, including the local authority, to access support where it is needed. Collaborative working with the safeguarding board is robust.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved significantly since September 2016. Achievement in mathematics was particularly low in 2016. Support from specialists, from the local authority and from in-school training, has helped mathematics teachers to improve the progress of pupils of most abilities. Strategies such as 'Exit Tickets', which pupils use to test they have understood the lesson's topic, have been useful in focusing pupils' attention on their learning to ensure that understanding is secure before they leave each lesson.
- Similarly, training on questioning techniques means that pupils have to think for themselves, are not told answers too quickly and are helped by answers from other pupils to clarify their understanding. 'Challenge Questions' at different levels are displayed in classrooms and pupils are encouraged and guided to select one to take away and complete. The questions extend pupils' thinking and require them to apply the knowledge they have gained in the lesson. They are completed in addition to homework. Pupils were seen to select their own Challenge Question with the minimum of prompting from the teacher.
- Teachers develop literacy and numeracy skills well across the curriculum. They frequently refer to subject terminology to make sure that pupils know and understand these terms and are able to use them in their writing.
- Pupils spoken to stated that the level of challenge in lessons had increased. The most able pupils are responding well to the increased challenge and assessments show that there are corresponding gains in their progress. Pupils in most lessons are completing extended pieces of writing more often, and using more sophisticated vocabulary. However in a small number of lessons, assessments are patchy and progress is not secure.
- Pupils are articulate and confidently discuss topics in lessons. They can respond to questions by explaining complex ideas successfully. In drama, a group of older pupils adopted suitable characters and used appropriate intonation and gesture to demonstrate sensitive responses to a significant event in a family.
- Teachers apply the school's marking policy to establish a dialogue between pupil and teacher about the pupil's learning. Pupils explained that this helped them to tackle more-complex work more confidently.
- Teachers help pupils to note important points in their books so they can use them for future reference to remind them of what they have learned. Teachers also adapt the

lesson if it becomes evident that pupils are becoming confused or overloaded with information.

- Teaching is planned well, so pupils and students become more confident and use and apply their knowledge. In a sixth-form lesson, students were strengthening their understanding of key terms in the subject. They worked on the terms and then read an article using the terms which they then had to explain to other students. This consolidated their knowledge and understanding effectively. In a Year 10 religious education lesson on retribution and punishment, pupils explored these concepts and their varied interpretation within different religions. The most able pupils in the lesson were very well supported in completing detailed extended writing, which compared and contrasted the differing views clearly and subtly.
- Assessment information is gathered regularly and used to guide pupils to suitable form time intervention sessions so pupils get the support and help they need to improve.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Overall attendance is close to national averages. Attendance for the most able pupils is higher than for all pupils but the attendance of pupil premium pupils is lower than for all pupils. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has recently increased. Punctuality to school and to lessons is good, and pupils are marked as absent soon after the beginning of the first session of the day. School leaders work closely with the local authority in managing pupil absence. They ensure that contact and visits with home clarify reasons for absence and checks pupils are safe, including any pupil absent from off-site provision. The local authority decision not to prosecute families for absence has led to a rise in holidays in term time and a rise in absence.
- Attendance leaders have developed many strategies to ensure that families and pupils know the impact of absence on learning. Regular assemblies highlight the importance of good attendance, pupils with lower attendance have a monitoring card and the attendance leader meets in person with low-attending pupils. Attendance of pupils with off-site placements is monitored daily and agreed actions are taken if a pupil is absent.
- Pupils have a careers advice meeting in Year 8 and Year 9 prior to their option choices. These are followed up by regular online activities and evening events to help pupils and parents find out how they can make progress in their chosen pathways. Further interviews are held in key stage 4 and key stage 5 to ensure that pupils and students make their plans early. The proportions of students who follow courses in the school sixth form, in further education, or who follow apprenticeships, are similar to national averages. However, more of the most able disadvantaged students choose to go into further education, and fewer choose to enter a sixth form, compared with most able students who are not disadvantaged. Nonetheless, most students sustain their chosen placement. The number of students not in education, employment or training has reduced in the last two years and is lower than that found nationally.
- Pupils spoken to said they knew how to manage the risks from misuse of mobile phones, and from social networking sites, because of regular discussions in form time.

These discussions are developed further by full or half-day events from organisations which explore issues such as sexting, body image, self-esteem and eating disorders.

- The school ensures that pupils educated away from the school site receive similar advice and support.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm environment where girls socialise well together and manage their own behaviour appropriately. A low number of racist and homophobic incidents have been recorded. Girls spoken to in all year groups say there is minimal bullying and if it does happen, staff intervene rapidly and effectively. Every girl spoken to said that she would not hesitate to go to a member of staff if she required support or advice, either for herself or for another pupil. Support from staff is highly valued by pupils, including students in the sixth form; they know they can rely on staff to listen and advise. Behaviour overall around school is exemplary and no derogatory language was overheard during the inspection.
- Pupils spoken to talked convincingly about the challenge they experienced in the classroom. Older pupils said the level of challenge contrasted with their earlier experience in Years 7 and 8, where work had often been too easy. Girls said they invariably completed their homework on time because there was a consequence and they knew ignoring homework would affect their progress. Overall, girls demonstrated a responsible and sensible approach to their learning.
- Exclusion rates are lower than national averages. Pupils who might otherwise be out of the classroom, or who are at risk of being excluded, spend specific time in a designated room rather than be excluded from school. This maintains their learning and sustains their progress. This is one of many strategies used by the school to impress upon pupils that learning is important, and girls talked with conviction about the high priority the school places upon learning and progress.
- Pupils feel safe in and around school and the majority of pupils and parents expressed similar views in their questionnaires and in Parent View returns. The majority of girls take pride in their work and their uniform, look smart and respect the new building and the school environment.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress of the majority of pupils has improved steadily. Pupils are already attaining higher standards since the previous inspection. In 2016, the standards they attained, though improved, were still lower than national averages. A legacy of weaker teaching and a narrow curriculum has limited the achievement of older pupils. However, there are signs from the school's assessments that higher standards, closer to the standards attained by pupils nationally, are anticipated in 2017.
- A high proportion of pupils arrive at the school working at standards lower than those found nationally. The school's strategies to increase progress in Year 7 are introduced quickly. Pupils' written work over time in key stage 3, seen in a range of subjects, showed strong progress. Across the school, there has been a legacy of lower

achievement for the most able pupils, and particularly for the most able disadvantaged pupils. There has been much ground to make up.

- School leaders, including middle leaders, have taken decisive steps to work with the local authority, with their two partner schools and with their colleagues in school, to check the accuracy of assessments.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also improving their achievement. The extra sessions to develop the weaker skills in literacy and numeracy of some pupils, are effective. Pupils make impressive gains in reading and mathematical skills. This indicates that additional funding to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well is used effectively. Pupils who have improved their reading and mathematical skills are helped to sustain their progress by teaching that is increasingly well matched to pupils' stages in their learning.
- Pupils who attend courses away from the school site follow suitable courses to enable them to participate in work placements and to gain qualifications. The school is vigilant in checking that these pupils are attending and progressing well.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The leadership and management of the sixth form has recently improved because the head of the sixth form is now monitoring the progress of students more closely in all subjects, so he knows when students are beginning to fall behind. This is likely to improve achievement because the monitoring of progress across all subjects has not been thorough or well led in the past.
- Students following academic courses have not made strong progress from their starting points. The level of outcomes has also declined recently. This is partly due to there being students returning in Year 14 to repeat courses so they can enter the university of their choice. The sixth form requires improvement because outcomes for students following academic courses are not good.
- Standards and progress in some subjects are lower than in others, particularly in mathematics, religious studies, biology and chemistry. However, numbers of entries in these subjects are low. Disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students attained similar standards in academic subjects.
- Students described how support for academic subjects has improved since September 2016, especially in mathematics and psychology. Students that say they are helped and supported promptly if their work begins to deteriorate. In psychology, students' more recent assessments included more detailed explanations than previously and students were gaining higher grades.
- Provision fully meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programme.
- Students make good progress in applied and vocational subjects. For example, links with Alder Hey Hospital are strong and provide good opportunities for students following health courses to complete placements at the hospital and to see hospital work at first hand.
- Achievement in English and mathematics GCSE resits has steadily improved over the recent years and in 2016 was strong.

- The quality of teaching in the sixth form in both academic and applied courses leads to students making steady progress. Teachers know their students well and classes are small so students can have teacher time to make sure they understand clearly what they have covered. Lessons are well planned and scrutiny of students' written work shows that assessments by teachers and by students themselves assist progress.
- Students benefit from a good programme of careers advice and are well supported in achieving places at the university of their choice. However, some students have had to return in Year 14 to achieve the standards required to gain a place. Students develop work-related skills by completing work experience placements.
- Students in the sixth form behave well in the classroom and around school. Students have an effective Schools Council and took part in recent staff selection processes for newly appointed staff. Support for students with additional needs or who are vulnerable is excellent. One student with multiple sclerosis has been very well supported in attending and continuing her studies where possible.
- The good relationships between staff and students seen in the main school is replicated here. Students have a strong sense of concern for the welfare of others. Safeguarding is effective and has been well supported by the local authority. Younger members of staff have been well trained in safeguarding and understand their responsibilities well.
- Attendance levels in the sixth form are similar to those of the main school, but persistent absence has recently risen. Monitoring systems are thorough. The circumstances and family of any student not attending well is known to the school, so the school can take appropriate steps to work with the family to increase attendance.

School details

Unique reference number	104688
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10032193

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive school
School category	Community school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	799
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body Local authority
Chair	Vanessa Murray Tom Sutton
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Keen
Telephone number	0151 228 3772
Website	http://hollylodge.liverpool.sch.uk
Email address	hollylodge-ao@hollylodge.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what schools should publish.
- The college moved into their new accommodation in January 2015. The current headteacher, and the deputy headteachers, have been in post since September 2016. Since then, several staff have left and a number of new staff have been appointed. Further new staff will begin their posts in September 2017, including some in science.

- Holly Lodge is slightly smaller than the average-sized secondary school, with a smaller than average-sized sixth form. Girls attend the main school but a number of boys from a partner school follow courses in the sixth form.
- The number of pupils entering the school has increased over the last three years, following some years of falling pupil numbers.
- Most pupils are of British heritage and just below a quarter of pupils are of different ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is almost twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The college uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils from a number of providers, including Fazackerley Student Support Centre, Harmonize Academy, Childwall Student Support Centre, New Heights School, Everton Free School and Alder Hey Educational Health Care.
- The school holds the Silver Quality Assurance Mark for reading and a Silver Assurance Mark for numeracy.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been significant changes in membership of the governing body. The governing body has two joint chairs, who have been in post since September 2016.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects; some observations took place jointly with the headteacher and senior leaders. Inspectors also visited classrooms during intervention and form time sessions.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally about their activities in school and about their learning.
- Inspectors looked carefully at a range of school documents, such as development planning and the school's evaluation of its work. Inspectors also examined how effectively the school has used pupil premium and catch-up funding, and funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, of Year 7 pupils, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- In addition, inspectors also examined assessments of pupils' progress, records of attendance and behaviour and a range of policies, including safeguarding. Inspectors scrutinised the school's accounts of their monitoring of the quality of teaching. Inspectors also looked carefully at the school's monitoring of the progress, attendance, safety and behaviour of pupils educated away from the school site.
- Together with the headteacher and senior leaders, inspectors looked at a range of pupils' written work across subjects. Pupils were spoken to more formally about their work and their learning across all year groups.
- Several meetings were held with the headteacher and the deputy headteachers, with senior and middle leaders and with teachers and a range of non-teaching staff. Inspectors met with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors also considered the 35 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and looked at the school's surveys of parent and pupil views of the school.

Inspection team

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Barbara Dutton	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Atherton	Ofsted Inspector

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