

The Studio@Deyes

Vortex House, Enterprise Way, Wavertree Technology Park, Liverpool L13 1FB

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have faced significant challenges including financial constraints and turbulence in leadership and staffing. This situation has led to inconsistency in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils are not doing well enough in some subjects, particularly in English and mathematics in key stage 4.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make variable progress across the school.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve at key stage 4.
- Overall attendance is low. Too many pupils are persistently absent.
- Pupils, including the most able, are not sufficiently stretched to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders do not carry out sufficiently detailed monitoring and analysis of the information they have about pupils, for example on the impact of strategies to improve attendance.
- Some subject leaders are new to the role. They have not had time to bring about sustained improvements.
- Students' progress on 16 to 19 study programmes varies, with students making stronger progress on vocational rather than academic courses.

The school has the following strengths

- The new head of school, well supported by his staff and governors, has developed an inclusive and nurturing environment.
- The curriculum has been redesigned to ensure that the range of subjects is now more suitable for pupils.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe, well cared for.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well by leaders.
- Teaching and outcomes are strong in vocational subjects, especially in fashion.
- In 2018, most Year 11 pupils and Year 13 students went on to appropriate education, employment or training.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - setting work that is sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - reviewing the use of spending of additional funds for disadvantaged pupils so that the strategies in place improve outcomes for these pupils
 - building on current initiatives for those pupils with SEND so that the provision for these pupils improves
 - ensuring that leaders routinely monitor the information they have about pupils, such as that relating to their attendance and learning, to be able to spot any trends or patterns quickly
 - supporting new subject leaders to be fully effective in their roles.
- Improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- Improve the quality of the 16 to 19 study programmes so that students make good progress in academic subjects.

An external review of the effectiveness of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have faced significant challenges since the school opened in 2016, particularly in dealing with delays in building work and financial concerns. In addition, the school has also experienced a significant number of changes in leadership and staffing. These have had a negative impact on teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. Since taking up his post in January 2018, he has worked closely with staff and governors to develop a supportive culture. All staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said that they are proud to work at the school. Staff value the wide range of training and support that they receive.
- Leaders have introduced new measures which are starting to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders now monitor the quality of learning and teaching closely through lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny.
- Some subject leaders have been appointed recently. They are in the process of developing their skills to monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibility and are introducing new strategies. It is too soon to evaluate the full impact of these initiatives.
- Leaders have not been assiduous in evaluating the effectiveness of strategies to ensure that all pupils achieve well. In the past, leaders have not used additional funding sufficiently well to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. However, this is beginning to change, and leaders have identified the support needed to better meet the needs of these pupils. Consequently, additional funding is now being used more effectively than in the past. However, leaders are aware that more needs to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND have their needs met and make even better progress.
- The headteacher has reviewed and redesigned the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs and interests of pupils. For example, BTEC National Diploma sports studies and childcare have been introduced for pupils currently in Year 10.
- Vocational learning in fashion, engineering and business studies underpins the studio school's curriculum. Leaders have forged strong partnerships with local employers to enrich the curriculum and give pupils real-life experiences in the workplace.
- Leaders provide a growing range of extra-curricular activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, which enrich pupils' lives. Pupils have opportunities to participate in visits to theatres and trips such as that to the Large Hadron Collider near Geneva.
- Leaders develop well pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding across the curriculum. Discussions in assemblies about other religions help pupils to develop a greater understanding and tolerance of others. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The chief executive officer (CEO) and representatives of the Lydiate Learning Trust have supported the headteacher capably in his efforts to improve the quality of education.

- A small proportion of parents and carers responded to the free-text facility on Parent View. All parents are positive about the school. One parent commented, 'My child is supported well and thriving here.' Another parent said, 'My child has settled in very well and has grown in confidence.'

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a wide range of experience and skills to the school. They are highly committed to the ethos of the studio school and want the best for pupils.
- Governors are aware of the weak performance of the school in the 2018 examination results. They understand the challenges faced by the school and provide a good balance of support and challenge to leaders.
- Governors have an improved understanding of the school's strengths and areas which could be improved. They have become more rigorous in holding leaders to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Required procedures for safeguarding, including the recruitment and training of staff, are in place. All staff know how to identify possible signs of abuse and know how they should respond if they have any concerns. Pupils, too, play an important role in safeguarding. They know who to talk to if they have any worries and are confident that any issues are dealt with quickly.
- There is a core team of staff with a detailed knowledge of those pupils who have complex needs and conditions, many of whom need additional support to be safe. These members of staff are vigilant and have effective working partnerships with other agencies who also have responsibilities for safeguarding children. The safeguarding team constantly reviews the effectiveness of its work and implements changes promptly where improvements are needed.
- Pupils said that they are safe in the school. All staff and parents agreed that children are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across the school. Since the school opened, there has been a considerable turnover of staff. Many pupils have gaps in their learning. Teaching is not focused well enough on quickly plugging these gaps and then moving pupils on in their learning. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Leaders have improved the accuracy of assessments by using external markers for mock examinations and through consultation with other schools within the Lydiate Learning Trust.
- More recently, there has been greater stability in staffing. Lead practitioners from the Lydiate Learning Trust have provided effective support for English and mathematics. This is enabling pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding in these subjects.

For example, pupils have more opportunities to write at length in English and develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics.

- Teachers foster positive working relationships with pupils. Pupils say that teachers are approachable and helpful.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Where learning is less effective, activities are not planned well enough to take account of pupils' needs. In addition, some teachers do not provide pupils with work that provides sufficient challenge. This is particularly the case with the most able pupils.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to address pupils' misconceptions and deepen their understanding.
- Where learning is most effective, for example in a fashion lesson, teachers' planned activities were matched to pupils' needs well. Pupils were challenged to think hard and enjoyed developing new skills.
- Pupils who enter the school with low attainment in reading follow a programme in functional skills in English and mathematics. This helps them catch up with their peers. All pupils are encouraged to read in form time.
- Work in pupils' science books shows that they have many opportunities to develop their numeracy skills and technical vocabulary through practical investigations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. This is because weaknesses in pupils' attitudes to learning continue to impact negatively on the progress that they make in their learning. Despite this, there are signs that pupils' attitudes are beginning to improve, particularly as staffing turbulence has reduced. The school can also demonstrate how the attitudes of some pupils have improved the longer they have been at the school.
- A significant strength of the school is the high-quality support and guidance it provides for its pupils. Staff are vigilant in monitoring the emotional well-being of all pupils and follow clearly established procedures to raise any concerns. The school has skilled staff who help pupils get back on track if they experience hardship.
- The school is safe, and pupils say that if bullying does occur staff deal with it efficiently and effectively.
- Staff make an effort to broaden pupils' experiences and provide them with opportunities that enhance their personal development. Pupils learn how to be safe from potential dangers, including from those that can arise when using the internet and using illegal drugs.
- Careers guidance is of a high quality. Individual interests and talents are taken into account when staff discuss a pupil's future aspirations. Staff ensure that pupils are aware of a wide range of opportunities that are available to them, including academic study and apprenticeships. Speakers from local businesses give regular 'business

breakfast' presentations to pupils. These help them develop a thorough understanding of the career opportunities available to them.

- Leaders ensure that the small number of pupils who are attending alternative provision are studying courses that meet their needs. Leaders carefully check on the well-being and attendance of these pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Many pupils join this school having had very unsettled experiences at other secondary schools. Many have developed poor attitudes to learning, behaviour and attendance.
- A major challenge for school staff is to help pupils to begin to improve their behaviour. Although rates of exclusion are high, staff are successful in improving the behaviour of most pupils. Over time, these pupils begin to engage much more positively with their schooling.
- Improvements in behaviour have gathered momentum recently because the quality of leadership has improved. There is now a much more systematic approach to managing behaviour and pupils are clear about the sanctions they should expect if they do not meet the school's expectations. Leaders have also introduced a rewards system which is having a positive effect on encouraging pupils to attend regularly and behave well.
- Leaders ensure that good support is given to pupils and families who need additional guidance to help them better engage with the school.
- Attendance, although below the national average, has improved for many pupils whose attendance at their previous secondary schools was very poor. The persistent absence of some pupils remains too high. Procedures to monitor the impact of strategies to improve attendance are not as sharp and focused as they could be.
- The school has systems in place that go a long way to mitigate the safeguarding risks associated with pupils' absence. They include first day contact with parents, and possible home visits the next day. Staff keep in close contact with those families where pupils have extended absence. Staff know when to alert other agencies to their concerns.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Published information to measure progress from Year 7 to Year 11 is misleading because pupils only join the studio school in Year 10. Also, because of the specialist curriculum, some pupils do not study a sufficient number of GCSE subjects to make a full contribution to the school's overall progress measure.
- Baseline tests administered in Year 10 show that many pupils arrive in the school with considerable gaps in their learning due to disrupted education in key stage 3.
- Pupils' progress is not good overall because it varies too much between subjects and year groups.

- In 2018, the first cohort of Year 11 pupils did not do well in their GCSE examinations. Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science was well below average. This reflects a legacy of weak teaching and changes in staffing.
- Pupils' attainment was in line with or above the national average in vocational subjects, such as business studies, fashion and engineering.
- Inspection evidence suggests that current pupils, including the most able, are making better progress than previous cohorts in English, mathematics and science. The school's own assessment information and scrutiny of work show that pupils are making strong progress in vocational subjects, particularly in fashion.
- Evidence also suggests that disadvantaged pupils are beginning to catch up with other pupils due to focused support. However, in some subjects disadvantaged pupils are not making sufficient progress.
- The progress made by pupils with SEND is inconsistent. The progress of some of these pupils is improving, but for others progress remains weak.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. Most pupils secure appropriate places in education, training or employment when they leave school.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Leaders of the sixth form provision generally know its strengths and weaknesses. They have shown some capacity to improve the aspects of the provision that they consider to be weak. While leaders use information to evaluate how well students are learning and teachers are teaching, some aspects are not monitored so closely.
- Leaders promote a positive culture. Students are respectful and behave well. They are good role models for younger pupils. Leaders ensure that students receive care and support of the highest quality. Many students receive additional and effective support to help improve their mental health and their emotional well-being. Staff help students build their self-esteem.
- Consistently, and over time, students produce high-quality work in their fashion and textile courses. In art, too, students' attainment is high. In these subjects, teachers generally integrate course content with wider work-based learning activities.
- The achievement of students on academic courses such as economics, physics and mathematics is not as strong as it is in vocational subjects.
- In 2018, almost all students who tried to improve their GCSE grade in English did so and achieved a good pass. This strong performance continues with current students who aspire to improve their GCSE English grade. Last year there was a contrasting story with those students wishing to improve their GCSE grade in mathematics: none managed to attain a good pass. Currently, however, students wishing to attain a good pass in mathematics are producing work at a much higher level.
- Leaders ensure that students take part in a range of cultural and spiritual activities that broaden their experiences.
- Excellent careers guidance and advice boost students' career aspirations. Staff take time to understand each student and what s/he wants to achieve. Leaders raise

students' expectations by taking them to visit universities. Leaders secure suitable work experience placements for all students. Most students who leave the school move on to good-quality learning, training or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	142128
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10057905

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

Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy studio school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	38
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Director	John Graham
Headteacher	John Parry
Telephone number	0151 5273814
Website	http://studio-deyes.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@studio-deyes.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Studio@Deyes is a small 14 to 18 studio school with a focus on business studies, engineering and fashion.
- The school is part of the Lydiate Learning Trust. The board of trustees is accountable for the school. The scheme of delegation sets out clearly what powers have been delegated to the local governing body.
- The school opened in September 2016 with space for 300 pupils. In April 2019, the governors announced that the school would close in August 2020 due to financial reasons.

- The school is smaller than average and provides education for pupils in key stages 4 and 5. Pupils join the school in Year 10 or in Year 12 for the sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- A small number of pupils from Studio 76 Dance School attend Studio@Deyes for lessons in English and mathematics.
- Since September 2018, some students in Year 12 attend Childwall Sports and Science Academy for lessons in mathematics and physics. Childwall Sports and Science Academy is also part of the Lydiate Learning Trust.
- At the time of the inspection, a small number of pupils attended alternative education provision off the school site at the following providers: Everton Free School, Harmonize and Montebello.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across Year 10 in a wide range of subjects. Some of these were joint observations with school leaders. Inspectors observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' work in different subjects throughout the inspection to evaluate pupils' learning over time.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in Year 10 and some students in Year 12.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, groups of subject leaders and teachers. The lead inspector also met with the director of school improvement, members of the local governing body, the board of trustees and the CEO of the multi-academy trust. Inspectors also held telephone conversations with the chair of the trustees of the multi-academy trust and representatives from alternative providers.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including: records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding information, minutes of governing body meetings, information on the attainment and progress made by pupils, curriculum plans, checks on the quality of teaching, the school's self-evaluation and the improvement plan.
- There were only five responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. Inspectors considered four free-text comments made by parents.
- Inspectors also considered the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire and 19 responses to the questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Neil Mackenzie

Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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