

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Harmonize Academy AP Free School

7 Phillimore Road, Kensington, Liverpool L6 6DL

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 May 2025

Outcome

Harmonize Academy AP Free School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Marie McConville. This school is part of the Lighthouse Harmonize Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Modupe Omideyi.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's values of 'trust, respect, compassion and forgiveness' are evident in all aspects of its work. Pupils join at various points during their schooling and have previously had poor educational experiences. They feel that staff genuinely care about their well-being. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe at school.

Pupils are given a fresh start at this nurturing school. Staff cultivate highly positive and trusting relationships with pupils. Pupils are treated with a sense of fairness and respect. They speak highly of mentors who support them with any concerns that they may have. This helps them to reengage with their learning. Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Their behaviour improves significantly over time.

The school has very high expectations for all pupils' achievement. Pupils work hard in class and are keen to make up lost ground. They achieve exceptionally well from their starting points.

Pupils benefit from a fantastic enrichment programme which nurtures their talents and interests. This includes dance, jewellery making and photography. Pupils spoke positively of the diverse range of trips and visits available to them. Examples include paintballing, go-karting and visits to museums and theatres. Pupils actively contribute to the local

community and thoroughly enjoy participating in local drama and music productions. These activities help to build their resilience and confidence.

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

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils. Pupils follow a broad curriculum tailored to their individual needs. Pupils in key stage 4 gain accreditation in a number of vocational and academic subjects, including GCSEs. They are prepared very well for their next steps.

Pupils learn subject content in a logical order. Staff use their expert subject knowledge to help pupils revisit prior learning and build their understanding. Staff skilfully check what pupils know, enabling them to spot and address any misunderstandings. Pupils make very significant gains in a relatively short space of time, both academically and personally.

Reading has a high profile. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their reading across the school. Those who are at the early stages of learning to read receive highly effective support from trained staff. This helps pupils to catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. They read with increasing confidence and fluency.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) promptly and accurately. Staff successfully adapt their delivery of the curriculum to ensure that all pupils are able to access the intended curriculum. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

The school is a safe haven for pupils. Staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to understand and manage their emotions effectively. Pupils develop into respectful, caring and considerate young people. They respond very well to staff instructions and show high levels of engagement and interest in their learning. Many pupils have not attended their previous schools regularly. However, once pupils start here, their attendance improves significantly.

Pupils' personal development is a golden thread woven through the school's provision. Pupils successfully complete leadership qualifications in sport and dance. A variety of speakers raise awareness of important issues such as staying safe and healthy relationships. Pupils learn to understand, accept and respect the diversity in different cultures, as well as develop their understanding of fundamental British values.

Pupils receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. They benefit from strong links with local employers. Pupils improve their enterprise and employability skills through workplace visits and vocational subjects, such as hair and beauty. They appreciate the support they receive to apply to local colleges and apprenticeships. All pupils go on to education, training and employment when they leave Year 11.

Staff feel very well supported with their well-being and their workload. They report high staff morale and strong teamwork. Trustees are passionately committed to the ethos of the school. They are highly effective at supporting and holding the school to account. This has supported the school exceptionally well in maintaining and improving standards since

the previous inspection. Trustees ensure that the decisions they make are always in the best interest of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in March 2015.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and

pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139114
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10378003
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	12 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Modupe Omidoyi
Principal	Marie McConville
Website	www.harmonizeacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In 2021, pupil numbers increased from 104 to 150. The increase in pupil numbers allowed the school to expand and improve its facilities. Alongside this, the school broadened the range of subjects offered, including new GCSEs in several subjects.
- Pupils join the school at different points between the end of Year 8 and the end of Year 11. Most pupils join the school during key stage 4.
- All pupils have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream schools. Most pupils are dual-registered. As such they are on the roll of a mainstream secondary school as well as this school. These pupils' places have been commissioned by their mainstream schools. A significant minority of pupils are only on the roll of this school. These single-registered pupils have been placed at this school by the local authority.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, other school leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with the board of trustees, including the chair.
- The lead inspector also spoke with the leaders of three schools whose pupils attend the school and with two local authority representatives.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences in school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. Inspectors also took account of the views expressed by pupils in Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and also considered the opinions expressed through Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed by parents and carers through Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Geoff Baker

Ofsted Inspector

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