

LIPA Sixth Form College

Reinspection monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector:	Alison Humphreys, His Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	16-19 Academy
Address:	41 Upper Duke Street Liverpool L1 9DY

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first reinspection monitoring visit to LIPA Sixth Form College following publication of the inspection report on 29 April 2025 which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

LIPA Sixth Form College is a 16 to 19 academy that is part of The LIPA Multi-Academy Trust. It was established in 2016 and is situated on the same campus as the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA). The college provides level 3 study programmes for students aged 16 to 19 years specialising in performing arts. At the time of the visit, there were 403 students following diplomas and extended diplomas in music, acting, dance, musical theatre, technical theatre and design for performance. In addition, 65 students were studying GCSE English or mathematics as part of their study programme.

Themes

What progress have leaders and trustees made in ensuring that striking staff return to an appropriate teaching timetable? Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, trustees have worked closely with the trade unions to resolve the industrial action; with staff returning to their teaching timetables in April. Interim arrangements have been put in place with a new interim chair and chief executive officer being appointed to the multi-academy trust board of trustees, and an interim principal for the sixth form college. The new trustees have changed systems and processes to ensure that staff have access to the resources that they need to run their courses. They have visited the college and held a staff briefing to inform staff of recent changes. However, at the time of the visit, staff were cautious about the changes to the multi-academy trust and were concerned about the interim arrangements. This is creating nervousness for a few staff members.

Leaders and managers supported striking staff to return to their teaching commitments. They considered staff wellbeing and workload carefully and agreed additional time for staff to catch up on their work. Leaders and staff prioritised their students to ensure that they caught up on missed learning because of the industrial action. They planned a revised timetable where students benefitted from additional classes, extensions to coursework and individual support. This meant that most students completed their studies and progressed successfully to their next steps.

At the time of the monitoring visit, leaders had improved communication with their staff. The new interim principal holds weekly face-to-face briefings to share key information with staff. Staff appreciate the opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns they may have. They feel that communication is more open and talk enthusiastically of the visibility of senior leaders at the college and their open-door

policy. At the time of the visit, staff told us that they felt more supported and valued.

What progress have leaders made in ensuring that students catch up on lost learning and achieve their qualifications?	Significant progress
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Leaders and teachers have ensured that students in their final year at the college, during the time of industrial action, have achieved or exceeded their target grades. Teachers took highly effective actions such as revisiting previous topics and providing individual tuition to catch-up on missed learning. As a result, most students achieved very highly. Students taking GCSE English and or mathematics achieved their qualifications successfully.

Students in the first year of their studies, that were impacted most by the industrial action, have caught up swiftly on their academic and practical knowledge and skills. Teachers assessed students carefully and identified gaps in learning and misconceptions. Through teaching additional classes and providing individual support, they have helped students to correct misconceptions and fill gaps in their learning quickly. For example, in technical theatre design, teachers supported students to correct and rectify production errors which had become habitual during strike action. Most students progressed to the second year of their study programmes with at least their expected target grades, if not higher, and no longer have gaps in their learning.

Students in the second year of their study programmes are developing the necessary skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to progress to their next steps. Acting students are developing their characterisation and extending their knowledge and skills in taking on new roles to push them out of their comfort zone. Music students demonstrate substantial skills in performing alternative musical styles. For example, thrash metal performers segue seamlessly into performing family musical theatre numbers. Teachers track progress carefully to identify any further gaps and development needs.

Most students who left the college at the end of the 2025 academic year, have progressed into high quality destinations such as renowned conservatoires, performing arts specialist colleges, to university and into employment.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that all students receive training on wider personal development topics?	Reasonable progress
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Following the previous inspection, leaders created a tailored personal development curriculum. They surveyed students to identify gaps and misconceptions in their learning. Students benefitted from additional personal development sessions that deepened their knowledge on specific topics. For example, technical theatre and design students learned about the risks of sexual and criminal exploitation. Dance students were taught about the risks of radicalisation and extremism and the use of

criminal exploitation. They used this new knowledge to create performance pieces to inform their peers of the risks of criminal exploitation.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of a personal development curriculum. They have very recently appointed a personal development curriculum coordinator and made the strategic decision to have teaching staff teach personal development topics to students in their department. The coordinator has carefully crafted a curriculum that links more closely to students' specific needs and what they are studying. They provide suitable resources and guides to teachers that support them to teach a broad range of topics. Leaders have plans in place to provide further training to staff to develop their confidence in teaching this curriculum to their students.

At the time of the monitoring visit, students benefited from weekly timetabled taught sessions. Teachers use topical resources to teach, critique and educate students, encouraging debate and learner self-reflection. For example, teachers use engaging scenarios to discuss and debate what constitutes misogyny and the impact of personal safety with year 1 acting students. Dance and musical theatre students explore the meaning of consent and intimacy training which enables them to understand their rights and responsibilities in a career that often requires physical touch. Students say they enjoy their sessions and now see the value of these to their wider development.

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