

# LIPA Sixth Form College

Address: 41 Upper Duke Street, Liverpool L1 9DY

Unique reference number (URN): 142891

## Monitoring inspection report:

28 and 29 January 2026

At the most recent full inspection, the following areas were identified as needing to improve:

- Repair and resolve the fractured relationships between striking staff and trustees so that staff return to the usual teaching timetable.
- Provide immediate support to students to help them to catch up on lost learning so that they can make good progress and achieve their qualifications.
- Return to providing sufficient training for students on wider personal development topics.

During the monitoring inspection, inspectors focused on the following themes:

## Theme 1

### **What progress have leaders and trustees made to maintain a stable workforce, including stability in the senior leadership and board of trustees, and to promote staff wellbeing? (Leadership and governance)**

The interim trustees have taken effective action to stabilise the leadership of the college and to rectify serious problems that previously affected staff, governance and morale. They have rebuilt essential processes, implemented financial controls, strengthened governance and ensured that the college meets its statutory duties.

Interim trustees and leaders show a strong commitment to staff's wellbeing and workforce stabilisation. They have introduced improved employment contracts, supported staff through the reforms and to rebuild relationships, and promoted open communication. Staff have confidence in the interim principal and the direction in which he is taking the college. They mostly feel that the changes have created a culture in which they feel valued and listened to. Staff appreciate that leaders and trustees ensure that their improvement actions focus on doing what is best for the students. They value leaders' much increased visibility around the college.

Future, long-term governance arrangements remain uncertain and depend largely on a decision from the Department for Education. This uncertainty continues to worry staff, despite the rapid progress made. A few staff remain concerned about their employment

contracts. Others cite issues with workload pressures and inconsistencies in the implementation of new procedures, such as student attendance and disciplinary processes.

## Theme 2

**What progress have leaders made to ensure that students continue to make at least expected progress towards achieving their qualifications on time, including those who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or high needs, those who are known or previously known to social services and those who may face other barriers to learning? (Achievement)**

Students' achievements are high. Leaders and teachers create highly inclusive curriculums and respectful learning environments that meet individual students' needs, including those with education, health and care plans. Learning support is of a high quality. Staff reduce the levels of support that students receive over time. Their focus is to build students' resilience, not reliance. This prepares students for their next steps and working in the performing arts industry.

Students benefit from skilled and passionate teachers with current relevant industry experience. Students produce high-quality, creative, and technically well-developed work across all performing arts disciplines. In design for performance, students respond with maturity to industry-related commissions. They undertake detailed research and present well-crafted models, drawings and storyboards. In dance, students perform to a high standard with professionalism. They produce devised pieces that show insights into social themes, including fundamental British values. In musical theatre, students perform confidently across acting, singing and dance. Their portfolios include reflective notes, vocal plans, drawings and score annotations, evidencing effective evaluation skills. In acting, students devise imaginative scenes and apply genre techniques very effectively, such as slapstick. Students often work collaboratively across disciplines. Their highly skilled technical theatre peers provide technical support for performances.

## Theme 3

**What progress have leaders made to further develop and embed their tailored personal development curriculum? (Participation and development)**

Leaders have strengthened the personal development curriculum. They have refined the content in consultation with students to ensure that it responds to their needs, as they prepare to work in the performing arts sector, and aligns to statutory guidance.

Students demonstrate confidence and maturity when debating sensitive and complex topics. They engage in informed discussions on topics such as antisemitism, peaceful protests, animal testing and wider global concerns. Teachers often link these themes to the performing arts industry and actors who publicly advocate for particular causes.

Teachers mostly receive effective training to handle sensitive topics. They benefit from centrally produced resources to promote consistency across different teaching sessions.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding topics are woven naturally into the curriculum. These include online safety, misogyny, sexual health, neurodiversity and mental health. Students have improved their understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Leaders enhance the curriculum content through guest speakers and industry links. However, second-year students report the repetition of a few topics they already covered in year one.

Students frequently take part in citizenship and fund-raising events. They raise large amounts of money for a variety of charities that support cancer care, homelessness, mental health and suicide awareness.

## Next steps

- Leaders should continue to work to deal with the areas identified as needing improvement in the full inspection report.

## About this inspection

This is the second monitoring inspection following publication of the inspection report on 10 February 2025 which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

The provider's previous full inspection and the first monitoring inspection were carried out under the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) at that time. The renewed EIF took effect from 10 November 2025. The areas for improvement identified at the provider's full inspection and subsequent monitoring inspections have been cross-referenced to relevant evaluation areas in the inspection toolkit for consideration on this monitoring inspection.

The purpose of this monitoring inspection was not to determine grades for any of the evaluation areas set out in the further education and skills inspection toolkit. The purpose was to identify and report on the provider's progress in addressing the areas identified as needing to improve since the provider's previous inspection.

At the time of the second monitoring inspection, the members of the board of trustees, the senior leadership team of the college and a few college middle managers remained in interim roles while they awaited a decision about the future of the college from the Department for Education.

## Lead inspector

Suzanne Wainwright

His Majesty's Inspector

## Team inspector

Helen Whelan

His Majesty's Inspector

## About this provider

**Number of learners on education programmes for young people at time of inspection** 398

**Number of learners on adult learning programmes at time of inspection** 0

**Number of apprentices at time of inspection** 0

**Number of learners receiving high-needs funding at time of inspection** 2

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