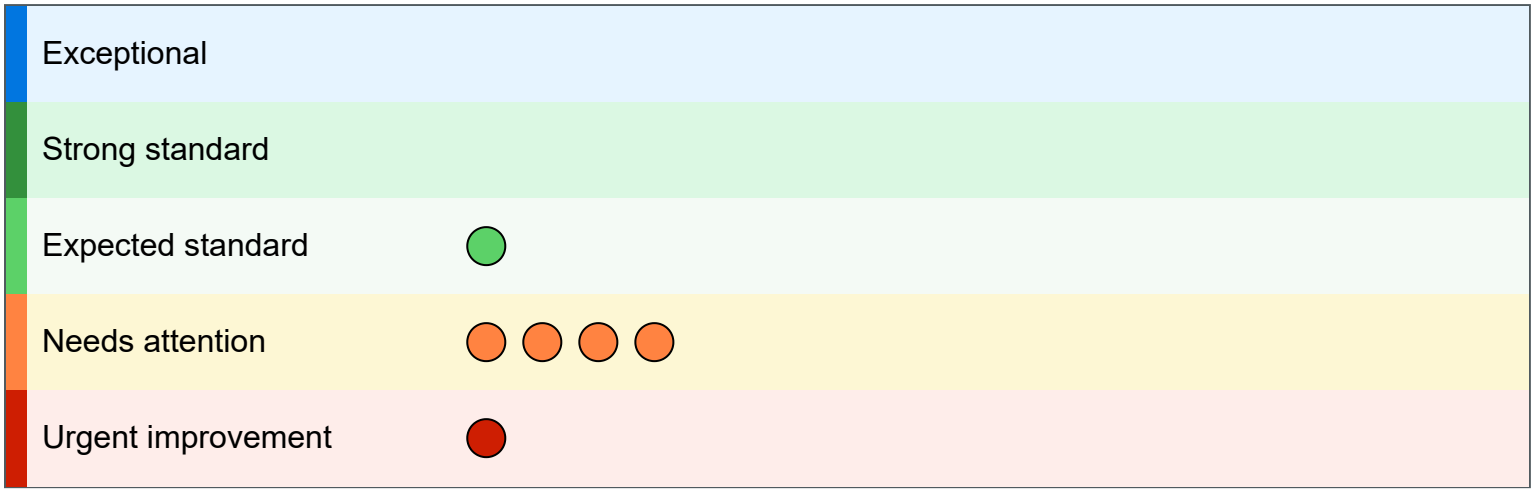
Liberty Academy

Address: 1 Bilton Grove, Hull, HU9 5YB

Unique reference number (URN): 135598

Inspection report: 22 September 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

This school requires significant improvement

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **significant improvement** because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Expected standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders have carefully considered the school's context and the pupils it serves when creating the personal development programme. The curriculum for personal, social and health education helps pupils at different stages of their education understand how to live healthy, happy and safe lives. For example, pupils understand online risks very well. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including in relation to local and national issues. Pupils' knowledge gained through the personal development curriculum is secure. For example, pupils understand fundamental British vales and how democracy works in their communities. Pupils appreciate the importance of working together and respecting one another's opinions. Pupils take part in a wide variety of enrichment including visits to a writing festival, theatre trips, athletics competitions and singing in a community choir. Pupils' voices matter to leaders. The 'qualities council' pupil leadership team help improve the experience of school for other pupils.

Leaders carefully track pupils' participation in enrichment activities. They identify groups who do not engage and give them additional opportunities. For example, a group of vulnerable female pupils worked with inspiring local women as part of a leadership programme. This project raised the ambitions of disadvantaged pupils at the school. Leaders ensure that effective pastoral care is in place to meet pupils' needs. Wellbeing and mental health support are provided by experienced staff. Pupils know who to turn to if things get tough. The school develops pupils' resilience and independence.

Careers education at the school is a strength. Pupils understand the options they have for their futures. Independent advice is readily available to pupils of all ages. Careers information is becoming embedded throughout the curriculum. Pupils value their work experience placements and opportunities to meet with a wide range of employers. For example, pupils visit local hospitals, construction companies, digital design firms and universities. These encounters inspire and shape their future ambitions.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention

Pupils' attendance has been very poor at the school over many years. Recent improvements have been achieved through leaders' deliberate and determined work. Considerable time and energy has been put into developing an effective attendance strategy. Leaders now

have a better understanding of how to get pupils into school more often. This has led to improvements in attendance for all groups of pupils recently. Persistent absence is reducing. Staff and pupils have a common understanding about the importance of attendance. Leaders have plans to ensure that this continues to improve, including for pupils who face barriers to regular attendance.

Poor behaviour, bad language and disorderly corridors had a negative impact on pupils' learning in the past. Pupils and staff agree that this has improved significantly. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Staff and pupils share positive relationships. Pupils are beginning to gain more enjoyment from their learning. Fewer pupils are removed from lessons or suspended from school than in the past. Alongside attendance rates beginning to rise, this means pupils now miss less of their education. Leaders have gained a thorough insight into why pupils misbehave. Changes in staff supervision, and routines around school and social times have helped to reduce behaviour incidents. Pupils now feel that the school is a calmer place in which to learn.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

Leaders have gained a better understanding of the quality of curriculum and teaching at the school over time. Teaching has improved as more effective strategies have become embedded. For example, staff now demonstrate what they expect from pupils more clearly. This has increased expectations and the quality of work some pupils produce. Staff have a clearer understanding of what each pupil needs to succeed. However, improvements to the curriculum and how it is taught are only recent. High-quality teaching is not embedded throughout the school. Staff do not consistently check that pupils understand new learning. This can negatively impact how effective teaching is. Too often, staff move on to new content before some pupils have secured important knowledge.

Staff highlight important vocabulary to ensure that pupils have understood it. However, leaders know that some pupils have significant gaps in basic skills. This often limits pupils' ability to read, write or solve number problems. Some disadvantaged pupils are particularly ill-prepared to tackle more complex learning at key stage 4. Leaders have taken effective, whole-school action to address this fact. A range of well-considered strategies are now in place to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, some of these strategies are very new and have not benefited all pupils.

Inclusion

Needs attention

As pupils arrive at the school, leaders quickly identify their individual needs. Strategies are put in place to support each pupil. Staff are aware of strategies that help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn. However, the strategies used are not as effective as they might be in all classrooms. Some pupils need more specific help than they currently receive to achieve their best. Leaders carefully track the progress of pupils with SEND. Staff ensure that parents and carers and pupils are involved in important decisions about their education. This builds effective relationships between different stakeholders. Decisions are made in the best interests of pupils.

A large proportion of pupils at the school are known, or previously known, to social care. Increasingly, pupils come to the school speaking English as an additional language. Leaders

understand the needs of these different groups of pupils very well. In the past, a large proportion of pupils attended alternative provision. As the school has become better at meeting individual needs, fewer pupils now receive their education elsewhere. The pupil premium funding is used for the right priorities but its impact is still too variable. Many disadvantaged pupils do not achieve highly and some still do not attend well either.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention

Leaders and those responsible for governance have acted on the most pressing priorities at the school. Attendance, behaviour, staff morale and teaching consistency have all improved. However, some actions have been less effective than others. This is particularly the case in relation to improving pupils' achievement. Leaders have created a precise and considered strategy to address underperformance at the school. Those responsible for governance are beginning to support leaders more effectively. Several new governors and trustees have come to post. Their considerable knowledge and experience enable them to hold leaders to account effectively. Trustees undertake their statutory duties well. They ensure that school leaders have the resources and capacity to bring about school improvement.

The improvement journey at the school has sometimes led to increased workload. Leaders are mindful of this and ensure that staff have the support and resources that they need to undertake their roles successfully. Staff value opportunities for professional learning. This has led to increasing confidence and competence in teaching. Leaders' evaluations of the school's strengths and areas for development are still being refined. Some leaders are more precise at identifying priorities for improvement than others. This has slowed the pace of change in important aspects of the school's work. The school works very closely with external agencies and its wider community. Parents and carers recognise improvements at the school over time. Leaders have an ambitious vision for the future. Ensuring all stakeholders understand and contribute towards this mission is a significant priority for leaders.

Urgent improvement

Achievement

Urgent improvement

Pupils' attainment in national tests and examinations has been weak over several years. Pupils have made significantly less progress than they might otherwise have reasonably been expected to make. Disadvantaged pupils have been particularly poorly prepared for future education, employment or training. There is little convincing evidence that this has improved significantly over time. Although pupils have begun to develop the skills and knowledge that they need, these changes are at a very early stage and pupils' achievement overall remains weak.

Pupils have developed significant gaps in their knowledge in many subjects over time. Weaknesses in pupils' basic skills have not been successfully tackled by the school. Leaders have put into place deliberate, carefully planned interventions to address this but much of this work is at an early stage of development. Disadvantaged pupils, particularly

including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are just beginning to benefit from this work.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils' attainment, particularly in national tests and assessments, has been low over several years. Pupils' progress through the curriculum, especially if they are disadvantaged, has been poor. Pupils have not been as well prepared for future education, employment or training as they should have been. However, things have begun to change. The quality of the curriculum and education which pupils receive has improved. Pupils' knowledge and skills are beginning to improve. Increasingly, pupils get the personalised support they need to succeed. However, these improvements are not secure nor embedded at present. Leaders are committed to creating a school that fosters pupils' talents and interests. Pupils have begun to enjoy their learning more and think ambitiously about future careers. As pupils develop a sense of belonging at the school, they attend more often. Leaders' work to improve attendance has been particularly successful with some groups of disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils, parents and carers recognise the positive changes that have taken place at the school more recently. Behaviour has improved in lessons. Staff can teach and pupils can learn uninterrupted. Around the school, pupils conduct themselves much better than they once did. The school is calm and harmonious. Bullying is rare. When it does happen, it is well handled by staff. Pupils from different backgrounds share positive relationships with one another and with staff. Leaders understand the local area that they serve well. Pupils feel safe and state they have someone they would speak to if something worried them. Safeguarding practices at the school are highly effective. Pupils who are vulnerable get extra help and support from staff. Leaders ensure that staff have the time to listen to pupils and respond to any concerns they might have. The Christian ethos of the school and its mission to help each pupil to thrive is understood well by all.

Next steps

- Leaders must improve pupils' achievement rapidly by ensuring that pupils gain appropriate knowledge and skills across the curriculum so that they are ready for their next stages of education, employment or training.
- Leaders should ensure that strategies to enhance the opportunities, experiences and achievement of disadvantaged pupils are highly effective and well embedded throughout the school.
- Leaders should make sure that the curriculum is consistently taught well and that staff check pupils' understanding effectively, responding appropriately to pupils' emerging and changing needs.
- Leaders should establish a culture that is highly conducive to learning, in which pupils of all ages attend well, show dedication to their learning and flourish.

- The strategic work of school leaders and those responsible for governance should have a rapid and sustained impact on improving the educational experiences of pupils in areas graded below the expected standard.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Heartwood Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Helen Winn, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jane Lewis.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place on 22 and 23 September 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the principal, executive principal, designated safeguarding leader and other senior leaders. One inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and the designated teacher for looked after children. The lead inspector met with the CEO and other senior members of trust staff as well as members of the governing body during the inspection.

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.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. It is in the Diocese of York. Its last section 48 inspection was in March 2026.

The school currently makes use of 2 alternative provisions. Both are registered with the Department for Education.

Principal: Louise Beasley

Lead inspector:
John Linkins, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Tudor Griffiths, Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Bootman, Ofsted Inspector
Joshua Fisher Fisher, Ofsted Inspector
Nick Ash, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 22 September 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,199
Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,063

School capacity

1,550
Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

56.46%
Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 30.4%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.00%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.53%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

19.27%
Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 14.0%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	14.9%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	16.1%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	14.1%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	29.2	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	31.8	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	29.3	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.18	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.43	-0.03	Below
2021/22 (final)	-0.83	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	9.4%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	8.9%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	9.2%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	25.2	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	26.5	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	25.9	35.0	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.52	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.67	-0.57	Below
2021/22 (final)	-1.02	-0.55	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	9.4%	53.1%	-43.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	8.9%	53.1%	-44.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	9.2%	52.4%	-43.3 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	25.2	50.4	-25.2
2023/24 (final)	26.5	50.0	-23.5
2022/23 (final)	25.9	50.3	-24.4

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.52	0.16	-1.69
2022/23 (final)	-1.67	0.17	-1.84
2021/22 (final)	-1.02	0.15	-1.18

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	82%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	84%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	91%	94%	Below

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	10.00	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	17.65	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	25.37	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	-0.7	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.2	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	15.8%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	15.6%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	16.5%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	47.1%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	46.8%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	46.7%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional 🔵

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard 🟢

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard 🟢

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention 🟠

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement 🔴

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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