

Archbishop Sancroft High School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	121188
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380183
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2012
Lead inspector	Stephen Abbott HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr John Rudge
Headteacher	Richard Cranmer
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2009
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Abbott

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kathleen Yates

Additional inspector

Michael Hiscox

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's attainment and progress data, its self-evaluation and improvement planning documents. During the inspection, inspectors scrutinised students' work and observed parts of 32 lessons involving 26 teachers, including four lessons that were observed jointly with senior members of staff. They made short visits to other lessons and withdrawal groups to check on the provision for improving students' literacy across the curriculum and the provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs. They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and groups of students, teachers and teaching assistants. They examined the school's assessment, attendance and behaviour records, the bullying and racist incident logs, the single central record of safeguarding checks and the minutes of governing body meetings. They analysed questionnaire responses from 108 parents and carers, 102 students and 29 members of staff.

Information about the school

The Archbishop Sancroft High School is a small Church of England Voluntary Aided secondary school with specialist science college status. It serves Harleston and the mainly rural surrounding area. The school has achieved the Food for Life Partnership's bronze award. The senior leadership team was restructured last year following a retirement and a new appointment.

The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is also below average. Very few students are from minority ethnic groups. The school meets the current government floor standards.

The school's religious character is subject to a separate inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school which is improving again after a dip since its last inspection. Changes in senior leadership have helped revitalise the school's capacity for improvement. Better teaching has raised achievement in English and new systems are leading to higher attendance and better behaviour.
- Relationships are a strength of the school. Most students behave well but learning is occasionally slowed by low-level disruption, particularly in less interesting lessons. Attendance is above average.
- In recent years, the school's GCSE results have not risen as fast as the national average. This is mainly because the school has not followed the national trend of entering students for vocational qualifications. Students' attainment on academic GCSE courses is above average.
- All groups of students are currently making satisfactory progress. This is an improvement on the previous two years when too many lower attaining boys had underachieved.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but lessons do not always address their particular needs well enough. Learning support is satisfactory but not always well deployed.
- While a majority of lessons are well taught, some focus on task completion at the expense of understanding, and a few are barely adequate. Inconsistencies in assessment mean that students do not always know how to improve their work. In some lessons, the same tasks are set for students who are working at different levels.
- Leadership and management are judged satisfactory because the pace of change has until recently been slow. The role of middle leaders is now better defined, but there are considerable variations in the quality of lesson planning,

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marking and the use of homework in some subjects.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and reduce low-level disruption through better teaching that:
 - promotes better literacy and numeracy in all subjects and helps students to deepen their understanding
 - is backed up with interventions in lessons that address misconceptions and show students how to improve their work
 - meets the different needs of all groups of students, taking into account their prior attainment
 - makes more effective use of teaching assistants by planning specific teaching activities that they can tackle with individuals or small groups.
- Sharpen the focus on improvement by:
 - embedding recent improvements in the tracking of students' progress and the monitoring of teaching
 - making middle leaders accountable for ensuring that work is regularly and consistently marked, and that schemes of work give sufficient guidance to support teachers' planning for students with different starting points.
- Provide more opportunities for students to gain experience of the wide range of cultures found in modern Britain.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students' attainment on entry to the school is usually average, with variation from year to year. Over the last three years, the standards reached at age 16 have been broadly average. However, recent GCSE results have not kept pace with the national trend of improvement. As a result, the school has underperformed on value-added measures of students' progress in the last two years, particularly for lower attaining boys. This is partly because the school provides few of the vocational courses that provide lower attaining students with success in other schools. Judged on GCSE courses alone, the school's performance is above average. This has been helped by improvements in English, which had previously been a relatively weak subject. Students satisfactorily develop and use their basic skills in a range of lessons. Most students, parents and carers feel that the school promotes achievement well, but some are rightly concerned that high staff turnover is affecting learning in science.

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The school's efforts to improve students' achievement are beginning to pay off. Of last year's students, only one did not progress to education, employment or training. For the current Year 11, attainment on entry was below average. It is therefore creditable that this year group is achieving higher standards and better value-added than its two predecessors, thereby closing the gap with the national trend. Boys' progress in English is considerably better in this year group.

Where students achieved well in the lessons observed, they were enthusiastic and curious to find out more. They worked well in groups, contributed well to discussions and showed independent learning skills. For example, in an outstanding geography lesson, Year 8 students became engrossed in a role-play activity based on the volcanic eruption in Montserrat, where they had to use rapidly changing information to make decisions on how to manage the crisis. However, there were several lessons where students simply completed tasks set for them while showing little understanding or self-motivation. This was evident in some mathematics and science lessons, where students did not always appreciate the bigger picture, and therefore struggled with potentially interesting problem-solving tasks. Some students do not take sufficient pride in their work, being content with sloppy presentation and lots of loose sheets that easily fall out of their books. This is often linked with irregular or superficial marking.

The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is satisfactory, with a majority currently achieving in line with their realistic targets in English and mathematics. However, there are some lessons where the work is not well adapted to meet students' learning needs; students are supported to complete the tasks set for them, but gaps in their learning are not always addressed. The school works hard to support students with medical needs and those who care for adults at home to maintain continuity of learning despite their unavoidably high absence.

Quality of teaching

While teaching was good or better in a majority of lessons seen during the inspection, in a few cases it was either barely adequate or inadequate. It is this lack of consistency that results in students' satisfactory achievement. The inconsistency also extends to the quality and frequency of marking, and the setting of homework, issues mentioned by some parents and carers.

The great majority of students, parents and carers have positive views about teaching, which are borne out in the better lessons. Most teachers use questioning well and encourage productive class discussion. They make time to observe students as they work, sometimes intervening to good effect, as in a good French lesson, where the teacher encouraged pairs who were struggling to link up with others he knew were doing well. In the best lessons, teachers promote independent learning, as in an outstanding history lesson where students analysed a range of sources to research the war in Vietnam. Good relationships between students and adults were apparent in most lessons.

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Some aspects of teaching were less effective. This is partly because curriculum planning is not detailed enough to guide teachers on how to cater for a wide range of learning needs. In several lessons the same work was set for all students, with the teacher accepting that some would complete it easily and others would not finish. Sometimes, teachers did not intervene to correct evident errors or to provide greater challenge. Teaching assistants did their best to help students with special educational needs to complete the tasks, but occasionally had to resort to simply telling them what to do, having had little prior information of the lesson's content. Teachers rarely deployed teaching assistants to work with a group of students to address a gap in their knowledge. In the few weak lessons, learning was hampered by a lack of care in planning tasks at an appropriate level and by inaccurate modelling of the responses expected.

The school is encouraging teachers of all subjects to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills, but this is at an early stage. For example, guidance on better writing, spelling and punctuation was not always given by teachers as they observed or marked students' work. Teaching makes a satisfactory contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students debate moral issues in religious studies and history, take on leadership roles in physical education, and learn to work in teams in English, French and geography. However, other opportunities were missed, for example to reflect on how people's lives are affected by war and disaster or to celebrate the accomplishments of disabled people.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

During the inspection, students' behaviour was good around the school and in a large majority of lessons. However, nearly half of the students and a third of parents and carers surveyed were concerned about disruption in some lessons. Most teachers manage such incidents well by following the school's behaviour code. Students generally engage in the tasks set for them, but some show a lack of urgency in lessons where the work is dull or not well matched to their needs.

Bullying and racist incidents are infrequent and most students feel safe in school most of the time. Nearly three-quarters of students, parents and carers expressed confidence that bullying is dealt with well, including students who had experienced bullying in the last year. Students report that teachers are sympathetic when they report verbal bullying, advising them not to retaliate and to keep a log. Physical bullying is always investigated with urgency. The school council plays an active role in anti-bullying campaigns and students know to keep records of any cyber-bullying for the school to investigate.

The school has improved its behaviour management systems recently and students feel that the approach to discipline is fair. The isolation unit, which has provided a valuable sanction short of temporary exclusion, is used only two or three times a week. Attendance has also improved following a sharper focus on specific individuals and groups. The school has good procedures to respond to students who are

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persistently absent and works effectively with other agencies to support students with a range of social and emotional difficulties. The school has made suitable adaptations to ensure that disabled students have full access to the curriculum. In nearly all respects, the school environment is safe and secure. Inspectors have drawn the school's attention to certain matters for action.

Leadership and management

The remodelled senior and extended leadership teams have brought a fresh impetus to speed up progress in tackling the issues identified in the previous inspection. Staff morale is good and there is a shared sense of purpose, with staff being held accountable for students' outcomes. The governing body is increasingly equipped to hold the school to account as they gain a better understanding of the key performance indicators for the school. They provide a satisfactory level of challenge for the school, for example by raising questions following the headteachers' report.

Leaders and managers are therefore demonstrating an increasing capacity for improvement. Provision and students' achievement in English have improved. More accurate termly assessments mean that the school can now identify more precisely the individuals and groups where further support is needed, leading to better achievement. Regular lesson observations have highlighted strengths and areas of inconsistency in teaching. As a result, professional development is better targeted and more timely, leading to a higher proportion of good teaching. More effective systems are helping to improve behaviour and attendance. However, many of the improvements are still quite new and are not fully embedded.

Some significant challenges remain. The school has begun to address weaknesses in its provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs, though the impact so far is limited. While middle leaders are increasingly involved in monitoring provision, they have not secured consistency in the quality or frequency of marking, or the use of homework. Schemes of work are ineffective in ensuring that the full range of students' needs is addressed in each lesson. Recent staff turnover in the science and technology departments has highlighted a weakness in succession planning.

The school has made some progress in improving the curriculum. Students can now take separate sciences, as befitting a specialist school, and there are many extra-curricular activities to promote science. Partnership arrangements provide access to a satisfactory range of vocational courses, though take-up is still small. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted satisfactorily through lessons and extra-curricular activity. Students learn about a range of cultures and beliefs, and have links with other countries. However, they gain limited experience of the multitude of cultures to be found in modern Britain.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet current government requirements. The school tackles discrimination satisfactorily and strives to provide equal opportunities for all. However, its equality schemes say little about the promotion of

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good relations between different groups.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 February 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Archbishop Sancroft High School, Harleston, IP20 9DD

Following the recent inspection, your school has been judged satisfactory. After the last inspection in 2009, examination results did not rise as fast as in other schools. Mr Cranmer responded by remodelling the leadership team and putting a big emphasis on making sure that all students achieve their targets. Senior leaders have also worked to improve the quality of teaching and reduce the number of dull lessons. As a result, you are starting to make better progress in lessons.

You told us that your school is a friendly and welcoming environment and we agree. Most of you feel safe in school and say that bullying is rare and usually dealt with well. However, many of you said that lessons are sometimes disrupted. We think that this is linked to the quality of teaching. Some lessons set the same work for all students, which is too hard for some and too easy for others. Marking is inconsistent: some teachers mark your work well and show how to improve your work; others do not mark often enough or in enough detail to help you improve.

Most of you said that teaching is usually good. We found that just over half of the lessons we saw were good or better, but a few were inadequate. We have asked the school to make sure that:

- lessons meet the different needs of all groups of students
- you get more guidance on how to improve your work, including guidance on literacy and numeracy in all subjects
- teaching assistants know more about the lessons they support
- recent improvements in leadership are maintained
- middle leaders check that teachers are consistent on marking and planning
- you get more experience of the wide range of cultures found in modern Britain.

I would like to thank you all for the welcome we received, and to thank especially those of you who gave up your time to talk to us or to complete our questionnaires.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott
Her Majesty's Inspector

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