

The Archbishop's School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	118898
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	376571
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2012
Lead inspector	Robert Ellis HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	867
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Wells
Headteacher	Michael Liddicoat
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 36 lessons taught by 36 different teachers, and held discussions with groups of students, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. 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: development plans; the school's tracking data showing students' progress; teachers' lesson plans; and students' work. Joint observations of lessons were conducted with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors analysed the questionnaire responses of 197 parents and carers, 49 staff and 318 students, and took their views into account.

Information about the school

This is an averagesized non-selective secondary school in an area where selection takes place. Most students are White British and very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is around 6%, which is below average. Around one in eight students have been identified as having special educational needs, predominantly behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; specific learning difficulty; and speech, language and communication needs. The proportion of students who have a statement of special education needs is more than double the national average. The school meets the current floor standard.

Just prior to the inspection, the school community was affected by the death of a popular former student.

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	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Most students make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and abilities. They demonstrate that they generally enjoy learning and have good productive relationships with the adults they work with. Disabled Students and those who have special education needs make better progress than similar groups nationally.
- Teaching is satisfactory and the proportion that is good or outstanding is increasing. The school provides high-quality support for individual students who are disabled or have special educational needs. Students are sometimes too passive in lessons and they are not sufficiently engaged actively in their learning or in evaluating their own progress. Marking does not always inform students about how they can improve or develop their work. Most students receive work that is pitched at the right level but the most-able students are not consistently challenged.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good so that there is a calm and orderly atmosphere for learning. Lessons are seldom disrupted and strategies to help students modify their behaviour are mostly effective. Students say that they feel safe and are usually not subjected to bullying or other forms of harassment. The school has excellent arrangements for ensuring students are safe and that they are able to recognise unsafe situations and act accordingly.
- The headteacher knows the school well and he has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. Other leaders and managers at all levels are not fully effective in consistently monitoring and evaluating the implementation of plans and policies relating to improving teaching and learning. The school provides a good balanced curriculum for most students and it is working to improve the sixth form curriculum, which is not successful in supporting the achievement of a minority of students. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. The governing body supports the school well but it is less effective in challenging the school to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable leaders and managers at all levels to accurately and systematically monitor and evaluate performance in their areas of responsibility, so that they are more accountable for improving overall effectiveness.
- Improve teaching so that students are engaged more actively in their learning by:
 - providing more opportunities for learners to review and evaluate their own progress and that of others
 - providing consistent helpful advice and guidance that informs students of what their targets are and exactly what they need to do to achieve them
 - ensuring that tasks and activities are sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most-able students
 - reducing inconsistencies across different subjects in the sixth form so that the proportion of higher grades in A and AS level examinations increases.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students join the school with prior attainment that ranges from broadly average to well below average. They make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and achieve standards that are increasingly in line with the national average. GCSE results improved considerably in 2011 and 60% of students gained five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above, including mathematics and English. The school has had some success in eliminating differences in outcomes for different groups. For example, the gap between boys and girl is closing. However, some of the most-able students are not challenged sufficiently and they do not always achieve as well as they might. Outcomes in the sixth form show an improving trend but there is significant variation between subjects. The proportion of students who achieve the higher grades at both A and AS levels is lower than might be expected, considering their starting points.

Students were observed to enjoy school and they have recently begun to make accelerated progress in a majority of lessons, due to good relationships with their teachers, their positive attitudes and improvements to teaching. Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that their children make good progress; although this is the case for an increasing proportion, students' overall progress is currently satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is typically satisfactory. Most teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory, with a significant proportion being good, and a small proportion that was outstanding. Past work and discussion with students indicate that, although teaching was previously weaker, this is typical of the quality of teaching they now

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routinely experience.

Most teachers have suitably high expectations of what the majority of students in their classes can achieve and know their students well. The better lessons are delivered at a brisk pace and teachers use an interesting variety of tasks and activities to engage students actively in their learning. The weaker lessons are less engaging and teachers intervene too often so that students have little opportunity to develop independence and resilience. Effective use of assessment information ensures that, in most lessons, tasks and activities are pitched at the right level, although the most-able students are not always challenged sufficiently.

The development of students' literacy and communication skills is often promoted well, but opportunities for students to collaborate and discuss their learning are sometimes missed. Many lessons provide good opportunities for learners to develop their personal and social skills and reflect on current issues. This makes a positive contribution to learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Marking of students work is inconsistent. Examples of regular helpful marking were seen, but there was too much variation in the quality of marking. Consequently, students do not always get the help and guidance they need in order to know exactly what they should do to improve, and are often not sufficiently aware of their targets. Students have too few opportunities to engage in self- and peer-assessment and this also limits their ability to know how well they are doing.

Assessment information and direct observation are used to identify which learners may need additional support, for example learners who have poor language and communication skills. As a result of the extra support and guidance they receive, those students, particularly those who have some form of sensory impairment, make good progress and start to make up lost ground in basic skills. Most parents and carers felt that their children are taught well.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Students seldom require little more than gentle prompting from staff to adhere to the code of conduct that they helped to develop. Exemplary safeguarding and care arrangements, combined with good relationships and mutual respect, ensure that students feel safe in school and know that adults in school will help them if they have a problem.

A small minority of parents and carers felt that lessons were often disrupted by inappropriate behaviour but students say that disruption seldom occurs and most teachers deal effectively with any challenging behaviour. During the inspection, all lessons seen proceeded in an orderly manner and no time was lost due to poor behaviour. Students have a good awareness of the different forms of bullying; they say that bullying is rare and that if it is reported, it will be dealt with effectively. The proportion of students who are excluded from school for behaviour issues is extremely low.

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Most students attend school regularly and are punctual. The school has effective systems to challenge and support students who do not attend as regularly as they should, and attendance is improving.

Most students demonstrate a good understanding of how avoid the main risks that they might face. For example, students were clear about potential hazards from cyber-bullying, the use of social networking sites and substance abuse. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed the view that their children were looked after well and felt safe in school.

Leadership and management

Those responsible for leading and managing the school have been successful, since the last inspection, in improving the outcomes for students. It is through these actions, that the leaders demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The headteacher has an ambitious vision for the school but a significant minority of staff are not clear about what the school is trying to achieve. Monitoring of all aspects of the school's work ensures that the senior leadership team is aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation at senior level is generally accurate and used to inform planning and to identify priorities for improvement. However, middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating performance in their areas of responsibility. Consequently, they do not contribute as much as they might to driving improvement. The governing body is effective in supporting the school but does not provide a high level of challenge and depends too much on information provided by the headteacher when evaluating the progress that the school has made.

The school has developed a good curriculum that meets the needs and interests of students. Younger students speak positively about how their personal development is promoted through personal, social and health education. Key Stage 4 students were happy with the range of choices available to them but expressed a view that they would welcome better education on sex and relationships. Most students choose to study a modern foreign language to GCSE level. There are increasing opportunities for a small number of students to follow a range of vocational courses that lead to external accreditation. The curriculum promotes learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The sixth form curriculum is less well developed and, although there have already been some improvements, the school recognises that further changes need to be made to ensure that all students are enabled to achieve as well as they might. Students participate enthusiastically in the wide range of good enrichment activities, including sporting and cultural and creative activities. The school's promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory and discrimination is not tolerated.

The school's safeguarding arrangements exceed statutory requirements and adults

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who work with children receive regular training in safeguarding. The school has developed a limited range of effective partnerships with other schools and colleges as well as education, care and health professionals to support learners' learning and personal development. The school has appropriate procedures to ensure that parents and carers are kept informed about their child's progress and how they can support their learning.

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed very positive views about the work the school does to support them and their children.

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 The Archbishop's School, Canterbury CT2 7AP

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school. My particular thanks go to all of you who took time to fill out our questionnaire or to talk to us about your school. We found that yours is a satisfactory school.

You work hard in lessons and make satisfactory progress in your learning and development. We were pleased to see that you enjoy school and you told us you feel very safe. The school has excellent arrangements to ensure that you are safe and cared for well. We found you to be polite and courteous and we enjoyed listening to you tell us about your experiences at the school. The school provides you with a good range of subjects to study and we were pleased to see that so many of you choose to continue to study a modern foreign language. Teachers make sure that work is set at the right level for you but some of you could cope with work that is more difficult. Although some of you were able to tell us about your targets, we found many students who did not know exactly what they were expected to achieve. Adults who are responsible for improving the school know what needs to be improved and are working hard to help you achieve as well as you can.

We have asked the school to do some things to help you learn even better.

- We would like you to have good advice and guidance so that you know what your targets are and how to achieve them. We would also like you to have more opportunities to review and evaluate your own progress and that of other students. We are asking teachers to make sure that the work they give you is not too easy and provides you with a real challenge.
- We would also like the adults who have particular responsibilities to make sure that they check carefully and regularly so they know what is working best and what needs to be improved.

I am sure that you will want to help make your school an even better place for learning.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis
Her Majesty's Inspector

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