

# Archbishop Beck Catholic Sports College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104717
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	377117
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Joan Davis HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Unknown
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,160
<b>Of which number on roll in the sixth form</b>	270
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Southern
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Dickinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Cedar Road Walton Liverpool L9 9AF
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Joan Davis	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Cooper	Additional inspector
Derek Barnes	Additional inspector
Gary Kelly	Additional inspector
Christine Addison	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 50 lessons, taught by 48 teachers. In addition, inspectors listened to students reading, visited an assembly and observed the behaviour of students at break and during lunchtime. Meetings were held with four groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, the school's own monitoring records regarding the quality of teaching and information on students' current attainment and progress. The inspection team also considered an analysis of 115 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by students and staff. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

## Information about the school

Archbishop Beck Catholic Sports College is a larger than average-sized school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above the national average. The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. Archbishop Beck has specialist status for sports. The school has won many awards, including the Healthy Schools Award, the Sportsmark and the Artsmark.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- The overall effectiveness of Archbishop Beck Catholic Sports College is good. This is a compassionate school, where individuals are valued and nurtured. The mission statement, 'Everyone has the right to respect', permeates the life of the school, and there is an almost palpable sense of pride and ambition, shared by all members of the school community. Students make good progress overall as they move up through the school. Current attainment is now broadly in line with the national average and improving quickly. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similarly good progress. Therefore, achievement is good. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is also good.
- Teaching is good overall, particularly in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. There has been a concerted drive to improve provision. However, the quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 remains satisfactory. This is because the use of assessment to support learning is inconsistent and, as a result, sometimes lessons are insufficiently challenging for more-able students. The school itself recognises this as an area for development. Good practice in the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills exists but is not consistent across the curriculum.
- Behaviour is good in the school and students say that they feel safe. Bullying, when it occurs, is dealt with promptly and students speak highly of the support they receive from staff; for example, as one student commented: 'Staff listen to us and take account of our views'.
- Leaders at all levels demonstrate a passionate commitment to improving students' achievement. The headteacher clearly articulates his ambitious vision for the students in his care. He has provided inspirational direction to the school, steering it carefully on its challenging journey. He has been ably supported in this task by his leadership team and an astute governing body. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. Performance management and professional development have been used highly effectively particularly in driving improvements in the quality of teaching. The school is not outstanding because the quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school and policies to promote literacy and numeracy are not embedded in practice.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement to be consistently good or better by:
  - improving the quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 ensuring that all teachers use assessment information accurately, in order to plan lessons that are appropriately challenging for all students
  - ensuring all teachers plan lessons that develop students' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

All parents and carers who completed a questionnaire feel that their child is making good progress at the school and inspectors' findings confirm this point of view. Students in the past entered the school with prior attainment that was significantly below the national average, although this profile is rising. From low starting points, there has been a rising trend in achievement since the previous inspection and the school has been successful in steadily narrowing the gaps between the performance of students in the school and that of their peers nationally. At the previous inspection, the school was asked to increase the proportion of students attaining at least five higher GCSE grades including English and mathematics. The school has been successful in doing so and scrutiny of data during the inspection demonstrates that this trend has accelerated. The attainment of students currently in Year 11 is higher than it has ever been in the history of the school and the school is on track to exceed its own challenging performance targets. The proportion of students gaining five GCSEs at A\* to C grades has risen year-on-year and has been consistently significantly above the national average. Learning and progress, as observed in lessons during the inspection, were good overall, but weaker in Key Stage 3.

Although in the past students did not make expected progress in English and mathematics, the school has, nevertheless, been successful in narrowing the gaps between the performance of students in the school and that of their peers nationally in these subjects. There has been a determined drive to improve the rates at which students make progress in English and mathematics. Data demonstrate that students' progress in these subjects is improving strongly and, as a result, is now approaching the national average. This improving picture was also evident in lesson observations and in scrutiny of students' work during the inspection.

Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Students who are known to be eligible for free school meals make similarly good progress to other students. The progress made by boys has in the past trailed behind that made by girls in the school and boys nationally. The school correctly identified this as an area for improvement and made adjustments to the curriculum and teaching styles in order to address this issue. As a result, the gap between these groups of students is narrowing. More-able students have not always made progress commensurate with their peers nationally. Again, the school has taken effective action and the proportion of students gaining the very highest grades at GCSE has improved substantially since the previous inspection.

The sixth form is highly inclusive. Students enter the sixth form with prior attainment that is, for the most part, well below the national average. They make good progress and their attainment at the end of Year 13 is average overall. Students appreciate the high quality teaching and support that they receive. Students are encouraged to set their sights high and underperformance is challenged highly effectively. The curriculum is innovative and finely tuned to suit the needs, abilities and aspirations of each individual student. Recruitment and retention rates are above the national average and students speak proudly of the strong sense of community in the sixth form; as one student commented: 'Expectations are high, there's always someone to support you and a place for you to learn.'

## Quality of teaching

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel that their child is taught well in the school. Inspectors found that the quality of teaching has improved over time and is good, with some examples of outstanding practice.

The best lessons are characterised by a brisk pace with activities that are designed to challenge students. Teachers use questioning highly effectively to probe students' knowledge and understanding and assess their progress, deftly adjusting their teaching accordingly. This good practice is particularly in evidence in Key Stages 4 and the sixth form, but less so lower down the school. Information and communication technology is used highly effectively in many lessons and students appreciate the wealth of material to support their learning available through the virtual learning environment.

Students know their targets. Their work is marked regularly, for the most part, and students have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. However, teachers do not always correct written work which contains grammatical or spelling mistakes, and therefore opportunities are missed to promote literacy. Some excellent practice in the use of assessment to support learning was observed. For example, in one outstanding Year 11 art lesson, students were given clear, crisp information on how to improve their work, with close reference to GCSE criteria for assessment. Students were free to develop individually their own projects, with a range of media. A mature and purposeful atmosphere was thereby created, entirely conducive to learning. However, in Key Stage 3, teachers do not always use assessment information to plan their lessons and therefore some activities lack sufficient challenge. At the previous inspection the school was asked to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all students, especially the more able. The school has successfully addressed this, for the most part, but there remain some pockets of weaker practice. The school is correct in identifying this as an area for improvement, particularly given the changing profile of students' prior attainment.

Teachers implement the planned curriculum well overall. However, policies to promote literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are in the early stages of development and practice remains inconsistent. Students speak enthusiastically about the well-stocked library which they can visit before, during and after school.

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## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most students say that they feel safe in the school and the overwhelming majority of parents and carers echo this point of view. The school is a harmonious community where students and staff show a great deal of respect for one another. Students take responsibility for their own safety and understand the risks to which they may be exposed, both within the school and outside it. Students mix well together socially at break times and at lunchtime. The school has worked effectively in improving attendance, which is now slightly above the national average. Students are punctual to school and to lessons. Racist incidents are rare and dealt with effectively. Students are aware of the many forms of bullying that can occur, but they say that such incidents are uncommon. Students find that staff are approachable and know who to turn to should problems arise.

The vast majority of parents and carers feel that there is a good standard of behaviour in the school, and this sentiment is shared by staff and students. Indeed, inspectors also found students' behaviour to be good. The school has developed effective systems to manage poor behaviour. The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions has fallen dramatically over time and is now well below the national average.

## Leadership and management

The headteacher has successfully galvanised all members of the school community. There is a unified sense of purpose, underperformance is challenged robustly and there is a culture of accountability. From being once a failing school, the school has emerged as an ambitious and forward-looking institution, proud of its success, but entirely without complacency. The school's roll in the past was falling, but it is now oversubscribed. The school has matured on its journey and the impact of initiatives designed to improve outcomes and provision are now clearly discernible. Self-evaluation is highly accurate and self-critical. Development plans are clear, precise and entirely focused on raising achievement further. The school now has an established track record of improvement; therefore, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

The school works productively with a range of partners and the perception of the school in the local community has gone from strength to strength. For example, the school works with a local primary school to improve the teaching of mathematics, especially to more-able pupils. One partner school commented: 'Cooperation between the two schools is now more meaningful than ever...more-able pupils have gained confidence and self-esteem. Teachers are given the opportunity to see mathematics taught in different ways which has had an impact on our planning, delivery and expectations.'

The curriculum is good overall. There is a tangible determination to improve the life chances of all students through a curriculum that is tailored well to their needs and abilities. The sports specialism provides students with ample opportunities to mix with their peers in sports fixtures and in acting as sports' leaders. The specialism is also characterised by outstanding practice in teaching and has contributed highly effectively to the school's drive to improve the quality of provision. Students speak highly of the many enrichment activities on offer; for example, one student enthusiastically explained how learning Mandarin would help him to find employment in the future.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are many opportunities to take part in cultural activities, such as participation in the school band or

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trips to museums. Students are encouraged to reflect on ethical issues in lessons and on retreats. Students raise money for many charities and are encouraged to have compassion for others less fortunate than themselves through, for example, assemblies.

The governing body demonstrates loyalty and commitment, providing well-informed challenge and support to the school. Procedures for safeguarding are effective and meet all statutory requirements. School leaders, in conjunction with the governing body, promote equality well and tackle discrimination effectively. The school is effective in reaching out to parents and carers, who are overwhelmingly positive about their child's experience at Archbishop Beck; as one parent commented: 'My son's life has been enriched in terms of music, sport and other extra-curricular activities... I would not hesitate to recommend this school to other parents'.



## 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](http://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.
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.**



16 March 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Archbishop Beck Catholic Sports College, Liverpool, L9 9AF**

We would like to thank you all for the warm and friendly welcome we received during our inspection of your school. We were impressed by your good behaviour and the kindness you show to one another. You show great compassion in raising money for charities to help people less fortunate than yourselves. You seem to enjoy coming to school and know that you can confide in your teachers, should problems arise. We found that your school provides you with a good quality of education. You make good progress as you move up through the school and your attainment at the end of Years 11 and 13 is broadly in line with the national average.

Teaching is good in your school. Most teachers deliver good lessons that are designed to help you to learn. You have really made an effort to improve your attendance, which is now slightly above the national average. Keep it up!

We have identified a number of areas where we think your school should make improvements. We have asked the headteacher to make sure that good teachers share their expertise with others so that all lessons are as good as the best, with challenging activities that will help you make even better progress. We have also asked the headteacher to make sure that your literacy and numeracy skills are developed across the curriculum.

All of you can help in the further improvement of your school by continuing to attend school regularly and working hard, taking advantage of all the wonderful opportunities available to you. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joan Davis  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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