

# Archbishop Beck Catholic Sports College

55 Long Lane, Liverpool L9 7BF

## Inspection dates

22 September 2015 and 7  
October 2015

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2015, the proportion of students who gained five A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, fell to well below the national average. This was because a large group of students, including those who are disadvantaged, did not make good progress in mathematics, science and humanities.
- Teachers in mathematics were too slow to adapt their teaching to changes in how this subject is examined. As a result, some students underperformed in their GCSE examinations.
- Teaching in science over time has been of too variable a quality, resulting in some students, such as the most able, making good progress and others underachieving.
- Students taking GCSE examinations in history and geography have for some time underachieved. This is to a large extent due to the fact that these subjects were not taught well lower down the school.
- Teachers do not always use the wealth of information on students' progress in order to plan their lessons. As a result, the work is sometimes too easy for certain students and too difficult for others.
- The results of GCSE resit examinations in English and mathematics in the sixth form are not good enough.
- The attendance of some disadvantaged students, although improving, remains too low.

### The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have tackled successfully the underperformance of most-able students and weaknesses in English. This demonstrates their capacity to improve.
- Disabled students or those who have special educational needs achieve well.
- Students, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in English.
- The school's thriving sixth form is of high quality. Successful teaching leading to good achievement at A level in academic subjects, as well as in vocational education, equips students with a firm foundation for their future lives.
- Students' behaviour is good. Most students attend well and on time. Students wear their uniform with pride and have good attitudes to learning.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching by ensuring that all teachers use all the information they have available on students' progress to adapt their teaching to the needs and abilities of students.
- Ensure that senior leaders' plans for development lead to rapid and sustained improvement in students' outcomes, particularly in mathematics, science and humanities.
- Improve further the attendance and progress of disadvantaged students so that they achieve on a par with their peers.
- Ensure that students who enter the sixth form without having gained at least a GCSE grade C in English and mathematics are successful in achieving this qualification when they resit the examination.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- School leaders, including governors, have successfully established an ethos of respect, hard work and aspiration that permeates the school. Strong relationships have been forged with parents, local businesses and higher education institutions. As a result, the school enjoys a very positive reputation and is repeatedly oversubscribed.
- The sustained success of the sixth form in terms of achievement at A level and in vocational courses has had a hugely beneficial impact on the life chances of students, many of whom have acquired the skills and knowledge to be the first in their families to attend a university. This high-quality sixth form is a testament to school leaders' ambition to create a school that is a hub of learning and a beacon of hope for the local community.
- Leaders are self-critical and have a sharp grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have a track record of spotting underperformance and sorting it out. Improvements in English, overall attendance and the achievement of most-able students are just some examples that demonstrate the school has strong capacity to improve further.
- The curriculum provides evidence of school leaders' aspiration. A higher than average proportion of students have the opportunity to study a range of rigorous academic subjects, including individual sciences and modern foreign languages. As a result, students have a rich variety of possible paths to pursue in their future lives, including higher education and fulfilling careers.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well; this is a strength of the school. Students have the opportunity to reflect on ethical issues through the curriculum and also on retreats. Extra-curricular activities, for example trips to France and Spain, sporting and public-speaking competitions and dramatic productions, help to make students' lives more exciting and also broaden their horizons.
- The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination robustly. For example, some of the government funding that the school receives to support disadvantaged students has been spent wisely to ensure that students have an equal chance of benefiting from the life-enhancing experiences that the broader curriculum offers.
- The school prepares students well for life in modern Britain, for example by raising students' awareness of the principles and practice of democracy during the recent General Election. Tolerance of people of different faiths and cultures is developed both through the curriculum and via the promotion of respect for others that lies at the core of the school's values.
- Literacy is promoted well, largely through the expert teaching of English. Students are given suggestions about what books they may enjoy reading and are actively encouraged to use the school library. However, by contrast, inspectors found little evidence to suggest that numeracy is promoted effectively.
- There is an extensive programme designed to improve teaching and this has been successful in some quarters, for example in English. Strong departments, such as modern foreign languages, are at the forefront of sharing good practice and driving improvement.
- In mathematics, science and history, pockets of underperformance have been more persistent and are not yet fully resolved, although teaching is improving. As a result, some students do not make good progress in these subjects. School leaders have devised appropriate and robust plans to tackle remaining weaknesses, including changes to the leadership of science, more rigorous monitoring of teaching and adaptations to lesson planning. However, as these plans are at the early stages of implementation, it is still too soon to see strong evidence of impact.
- School leaders use effectively the additional funding they receive from the government to help students in Year 7 who have fallen behind at primary school. All these students make strong progress and are catching up with their peers. The effectiveness of the expenditure of the pupil premium has been more mixed. By the end of Key Stage 4, in English, the gaps between disadvantaged students and other students nationally are almost negligible, whereas in mathematics gaps widened in 2015.
- School leaders work constructively with the local authority, which has held the school up as a good practice example, particularly regarding the attendance of students in the main school and the sixth form. School leaders sought the local authority's expertise to improve outcomes in science and history and also to assure the quality of assessment in mathematics.
- The school also has productive links with the family of schools covered by the Liverpool archdiocese. As a result, in the academic year 2014 to 2015, the headteacher worked intensively with a secondary school in

special measures. A representative of the archdiocese spoke very favourably of the impact of this work on rapidly improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement in the other school.

#### ■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors bring a wealth of expertise from the outside world fruitfully to bear in supporting the school. Governors are proud of the school and its reputation in the local community.
  - Governors are by no means complacent and they persistently challenge the school to do better. For example, devastated by the drop in GCSE results in 2015, they immediately convened meetings during the summer holiday period to draw up a swift response to this underperformance. Subject leaders and teachers have been told in no uncertain terms to step up to the mark; staff are well aware that the governing body is quite prepared to hold back pay increases to teachers who are underperforming.
  - The governing body is structured in such a way that there are clear lines of responsibility for all areas of the school's work; for example, individual governors are responsible for holding school staff to account for the performance of groups of students, including those that are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- Teaching in mathematics over time has not been consistently good. As a result, some students, particularly those that enter the school with average prior attainment, have not made the progress they should make in this subject.
- Teachers of mathematics were too slow to adapt their teaching to recent changes in GCSE examinations. A further complication was that in the past the school had become reliant on students having repeated opportunities to resit their examination in mathematics in order to gain a good grade. School leaders have altered this policy and no longer enter students early for examinations in this subject.
- Teaching in science is mixed. Most-able students who study biology, physics and chemistry achieve well; in 2015 a much higher proportion than is seen nationally achieved the top grades of A\* and A in these subjects at GCSE. However, teaching is not consistently good across the department and therefore some middle-ability students do not make good progress.
- In the past, the lines of accountability for students' performance in science were blurred because a number of teachers shared the responsibility for teaching groups. Senior leaders have stepped in and changed this arrangement. As a result, they can now identify more accurately which teachers are underperforming and in this way hold staff more effectively to account.
- Teaching in geography and history has not been of a consistently good standard. Students who took GCSE examinations in 2014 and 2015 had followed a humanities course in Key Stage 3 that was not taught by specialist teachers. As a consequence, students had much ground to make up in Key Stage 4 to reach the standards required, and results have been variable. School leaders changed this policy some years ago, but there was some weak teaching in Key Stage 3 in the past that continues to have a detrimental impact on students' achievement.
- Teaching is of much better quality in other subjects, for example in English, dance and modern foreign languages. Students achieve well in these subjects because teaching is rigorous, enthusiastic and characterised by high expectations. These subjects also make a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Inspectors found examples of strong teaching practice across all year groups; for example, teachers were observed using questioning highly effectively to probe students' understanding of the topics being covered. Interesting examples from the outside world were used well to make lessons more relevant and stimulating.
- Good practice in marking in both English and modern foreign languages has been used to develop a new marking policy. Inspectors found that most teachers are following this guidance, and students generally receive useful advice on how to improve their work. However, not all students act on this advice; therefore marking is not always effective in helping students make gains in their learning.
- School leaders maintain that all staff receive comprehensive and detailed information on students' progress and their targets. However, this information is not always used effectively by teachers to inform their planning. As a result, sometimes the work set is too easy; equally, on occasion, teachers do not pick up on the fact that some students are finding the work too difficult.

- In general, students take a pride in their work. For example, students spoken to during the inspection were keen to show inspectors particular pieces of work they were proud of in English; the presentation of this work was impeccable, and students could demonstrate that they understood exactly what the teacher's recommendations for improvement meant and how they had put these suggestions into practice in later work.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote students' personal development and welfare is good.
- Poor attendance has been tackled rigorously since the previous inspection, leading to sustained improvements. Students' overall attendance is now slightly above the national average. During the inspection, not one single student in the whole of Year 7 was absent.
- Students' welfare is an integral part of the life of the school. Excellent relationships with external agencies have been highly effective, for example by improving the attendance and achievement of individual students who face difficult circumstances outside of school.
- The impact of the school's work to raise attendance has been less successful with disadvantaged students. Although the attendance of such students is improving, it is not doing so at as fast a rate as that of other students in the school. Persistent absenteeism, although decreasing, continues to have a negative effect on the overall achievement of some students.
- Students who were spoken to during the inspection say that they feel safe in school, and parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, echoed this point of view. Students react positively to the advice they receive on how to keep themselves safe in the outside world; for example, one student explained to inspectors that he changed his profile on a social network after a police officer had been into school to talk to students about the dangers of cyber-bullying.
- Students, particularly as they move up through the school, receive a thorough grounding in wider social issues that can undermine people's safety, such as child sexual exploitation and radicalisation.
- Students receive excellent advice about careers. Clear systems ensure that students are expertly guided to the next stage of their education, employment or training. The school connects well with local businesses and universities and, as a result, students are encouraged to be imaginative and ambitious in their choice of careers.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good.
- The rate of fixed-term exclusion has decreased markedly and there has not been one single permanent exclusion in over eight years. This is largely because the school instils high expectations regarding behaviour and, as a result, students conduct themselves well both in classrooms and social spaces. Parents who responded to Parent View were overwhelmingly positive about behaviour in the school.
- Students show respect for each other and the learning environment. Inspectors saw no evidence of litter or graffiti around the school. The uniform is worn with pride and the large majority of students arrive at school punctually and well prepared for lessons.
- Students who spoke with inspectors reported that incidents of both bullying and racism are rare and dealt with effectively. Derogatory language of any description is frowned upon.
- During the inspection, some low-level disruption was observed in a very small minority of lessons with younger students when the teaching was less than engaging. These students had not developed the self-discipline that was a characteristic of the high standards of behaviour witnessed across the rest of the school.
- Most students have good attitudes to learning and are well motivated to achieve. Poor behaviour rarely gets in the way of students making progress in their lessons and there are effective procedures in place to sort it out should it occur.

## Outcomes for pupils

## require improvement

- In 2014, the proportion of students who gained five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, improved on the previous year and was broadly in line with the national average.
- This improvement was not maintained in 2015, when performance in this key measure plummeted to well below the national average. This is largely because a substantial proportion of students underachieved in mathematics. Furthermore, some students did not achieve well in certain science examinations or in humanities. By contrast, students made good progress in other subjects, such as English and modern foreign languages.
- In 2014, senior leaders spotted that most-able students did not always make good progress. Actions were swiftly set in motion to improve the achievement of such students and these have begun to bear fruit. As a result, the proportion of students achieving the top grades of A\* and A doubled in 2015, and was well above the national average in a range of subjects including the separate sciences, English Literature and further mathematics.
- Students with special educational needs and disabled students make good progress. This is because they receive well-targeted support that attends to their individual needs effectively. There is a strong ethos in the school that all students, whatever their obstacles to learning, should be encouraged to achieve their potential.
- According to information provided by the school, students who had fallen behind their peers at primary school make good progress because the additional funds that the school receives have been spent effectively. As a result, these students are rapidly catching up with their classmates.
- Gaps between disadvantaged students and other students nationally had started to narrow in 2014. This improvement has been maintained in English; students achieve as well in this subject as other students nationally, given their starting points. However, gaps across other subjects have widened, largely because these students have not made sufficient progress in mathematics and science.
- Progress of current students across the school is mixed. Inspectors spoke to a sample of students from every year group, scrutinised information on progress for all years and also examined students' work from a selection of subjects and key stages. From this evidence, students appear to be making strong progress in English, but in mathematics progress remains variable.
- Information provided by the school during the inspection indicated that standards are improving.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## are good

- The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Leaders have established a strong team spirit in the sixth form and there is a culture of high expectations and ambition for both staff and students.
- School leaders are aware of strengths and areas for further development in the sixth form. Action plans set clear objectives and targets for improvement. Staff are held rigorously to account for the performance of students who they teach. Robust systems of quality assurance ensure that weaknesses are quickly tackled and staff receive comprehensive advice on how to improve their teaching. This is informed by best practice both within the sixth form and in other post-16 institutions.
- A broad range of courses are on offer that cater for all students whatever their prior attainment. The provision meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programme well, with many enrichment activities, work experience and opportunities for work-related learning. Furthermore, an extensive tutorial programme informs students about fundamental British values, international issues and how to keep themselves safe.
- Teaching in the sixth form is of consistently good quality in both academic and vocational subjects. Teachers have sound subject knowledge. Activities and resources in lessons are well judged to develop students' knowledge, skills and understanding. Literacy skills are well developed and students have extensive opportunities to improve their use of spoken English, for example through public-speaking events.
- Students are serious about their learning, and work purposefully both in lessons and in their free time. They develop resilience and learn to manage their time effectively through working diligently in the dedicated study areas that are highly conducive to learning. Sixth form students make a positive contribution to the wider school community, for example by acting as mentors and role models for

younger students.

- As is the case in the rest of the school, sixth form students receive excellent careers advice and guidance on the next steps available to them. The school has strong systems in place to support the welfare of students, including effective links with external agencies. As a result, both retention and attendance rates are high.
- Students enter the sixth form with prior attainment that is below that seen typically in this key stage. They make at least good progress in A level and BTEC courses. Disadvantaged students do just as well as their peers at AS level and better than their peers at both A level and in BTEC courses. In 2014, not a single disadvantaged student failed to complete the courses they had chosen to follow in the sixth form.
- The sixth form is not outstanding because too few students who enter the sixth form without at least a C grade in English and/or mathematics at GCSE are successful when they resit the examination.
- A substantial proportion of students go on to higher education, including to some of the top universities in the country; for some students, they are the first in their family to do so. In this respect, the sixth form shines like a beacon of aspiration and achievement within the local community.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104717
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	10000959

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<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 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,169
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	270
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Southern
<b>Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge</b>	Paul Dickinson
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 525 6326
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.archbishopbeck.com">www.archbishopbeck.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@beck.uk.com">info@beck.uk.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 March 2012

## Information about this school

- Archbishop Beck Catholic Sports College is a larger than average secondary school with a sixth form. A higher proportion of boys than girls attend the school.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national average and increasing. The pupil premium is additional government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below that seen nationally, but rising.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is slightly below average.
- No students attend work-related or college placements for part of the week, although some students who are in the process of changing schools attend provision provided by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of students' attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 4.
- In the academic year 2014 to 2015, the headteacher was invited by the archdiocese of Liverpool to work intensively with another school that is in special measures, in order to improve teaching and raise standards in that school.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in lessons, visited classrooms at form time and watched how students behaved at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' work across a range of subjects and talked to a large number of students from all year groups, both formally and informally.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of information provided by the school, including: records of students' current progress, behaviour and attendance; plans for improvement; the school's self-evaluation of its work and a selection of school policies, for example those relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also considered information available on the school's website.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors, staff, students and representatives of the local authority and the archdiocese.
- Inspectors took into account the 37 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and also surveys that the school conducts to gauge the opinions of parents on the school's effectiveness.
- Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school on 22 September 2015 under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005. This was followed up by a further visit by seven inspectors on 7 October 2015 as the inspection converted to a Section 5 inspection under the same Act of Parliament.

## Inspection team

Joan Bonenfant, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Patrick Geraghty	Her Majesty's Inspector
Neil MacKenzie	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dawn Platt	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janet Palmer	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anne Seneviratne	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marcia Harding	Ofsted Inspector
John Leigh	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Peckett	Ofsted inspector

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