

Inspection of Archbishop Blanch School

80 Earle Road, Liverpool, Merseyside L7 6HQ

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students are exceptionally proud to be part of such a close-knit, friendly and welcoming school community. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and they thrive in all that they do. The pupils and students to whom we spoke said that they feel very safe. They are extremely well cared for.

Pupils and students told us that the school's values of trust and friendship are the glue that holds them together. Pupils and students live out these values daily. They said that incidents of bullying are exceptionally rare and that any issues would be dealt with swiftly.

Pupils' and students' behaviour is impeccable. This reflects the respect that they have for staff and for each other. Pupils develop a thirst for learning, which enables them to excel. Students in the sixth form also achieve well.

Pupils and students work exceptionally hard. Staff have very high expectations of them. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. By the end of key stage 4, these pupils achieve highly.

Pupils and students appreciate the wide range of opportunities on offer. They relish performing at festivals and concerts. They develop into responsible, compassionate and confident individuals.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and governors have established a highly successful school. Staff are extremely ambitious for pupils and students. They go the extra mile to ensure that all pupils and students can flourish. Leaders have created a well-respected and highly motivated workforce.

The curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 is highly ambitious and delivered skilfully. This enables all pupils, irrespective of background, to learn well and achieve excellent results in external examinations. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 11 is way above that seen nationally. Pupils' achievement is particularly impressive in English and history. In the sixth form, while the external data does not compare as favourably to the national averages, current students are achieving very well. This is because the curriculum in the sixth form is also well planned.

Across the school, teachers have given great thought to what pupils and students learn and the order in which they learn it. Teachers plan new learning with expertise, based on what pupils and students already know. In key stage 3, for example, teachers take great care to build on what pupils have already learned in primary school. The curriculum across the school builds pupils' and students' knowledge, understanding and skills impressively.

The key stages 3 and 4 curriculums successfully provide pupils with a rich knowledge base on which they can progress into the next stages of their education. Pupils in the main school make excellent progress across the curriculum in all subjects. The English curriculum, for example, opens pupils' eyes to a broad range of texts that contribute to our rich literary heritage. In geography, pupils gain a detailed knowledge of a range of issues that affect the future of our planet, such as the use of palm oil.

Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to help pupils and students learn. They explain new knowledge and ideas exceptionally well. Teachers assess pupils' and students' learning with precision. This helps them to know and remember more. It also enables teachers to tailor their teaching to address gaps in pupils' and students' knowledge.

The ambition and quality of the curriculum ensures that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Leaders use their research and training to remove the barriers to learning that some disadvantaged pupils face. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils entered for the English Baccalaureate is much higher than the national average for all pupils.

Leaders are uncompromising in their ambition for pupils with SEND. They are meticulous in ensuring that all staff meet the precise needs of each and every pupil. Pupils with SEND are fully involved in all aspects of school life, including the vibrant range of enrichment activities offered by the school.

The sixth form continues to improve at a pace. Leaders have successfully deepened teachers' subject knowledge and ability to teach A-level and vocational courses. Governors are expertly holding leaders to account to improve further the achievement of pupils in this key stage. This is so that students' progress on post-16 courses reflects more fully the excellent outcomes that pupils achieve at the end of Year 11.

The attendance of pupils and students is exceptionally high. Pupils' and students' behaviour rarely fails to meet the high expectations set by leaders and staff. On the very rare occasions when pupils and students do not behave well, they are encouraged to reflect deeply on their actions. Leaders promote forgiveness among staff and pupils.

Leaders carefully plan opportunities for pupils' personal development. Careers education, information, advice and guidance are excellent. Leaders ensure that pupils and students challenge gender stereotypes in the workplace. For example, pupils are encouraged to consider aspirational careers in professions related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils and students feel safe in school. Leaders have created a culture where all staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Staff are well trained on a broad range of safeguarding issues. They are alert to an array of safeguarding risks.

The safeguarding team is knowledgeable about the issues that pupils may face in their local communities. They work effectively with external agencies so that pupils receive any extra help that they need.

Pupils learn about how to manage risk through a carefully planned personal development curriculum. Staff empower pupils to make appropriate decisions about their personal safety.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	104705
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10122019
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	896
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frank McFarlane
Headteacher	Claire Madeloso
Website	www.abblanch.com
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school's last section 48 inspection took place on 30 June 2017.
- The school currently uses alternative provision at Alder Hey Hospital School for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- We met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- We held telephone conversations with the school improvement partner and the director of education for the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

- We met with the special educational needs coordinators and those with responsibility for safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.
- We checked safeguarding documentation, including the school's pre-employment checks on staff.
- We met with leaders to discuss the progress of disadvantaged pupils, pupils' personal development and the sixth-form provision. We also met with newly and recently qualified teachers.
- We spoke with groups of pupils in key stages 3 and 4, as well as students in key stage 5.
- We considered the views of the 61 pupils and 77 staff who responded to Ofsted's online surveys. We also considered the 101 responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. This included the comments made by parents using Ofsted's free-text facility.
- As part of the inspection, we did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and geography. We met with subject leaders, visited a range of lessons, talked to pupils about their work, looked at pupils' work and met with teachers. We also considered other curriculum areas, including art, performing arts, history and Spanish.

Inspection team

Alyson Middlemass, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Emma Gregory	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tim Long	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector

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