

Inspection of The Archbishop's School

St Stephens Hill, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7AP

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is passionate in wanting all pupils to achieve well, including the many who join having not achieved well in the past, or who join after Year 7. It does a good job from the point pupils start, including making arrangements to meet individual needs. As a result, pupils achieve well and learn to attend regularly.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Most enjoy learning and behave well. The school has grown since the last inspection. It has become a more diverse community and is warmly welcoming to pupils from all backgrounds. The school now includes a large number of pupils from refugee families, some of whom attend for a limited time before families move on.

Most pupils settle quickly in lessons and treat others respectfully, both there and around the site. Sixth-form students are good role models for younger pupils in the way they behave. The school provides effective support for pupils who find attending regularly difficult. They and their families typically receive close attention so that they know that attending school is vitally important. Pupils feel their safety is a priority for the school and know who to turn to if they have concerns.

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

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well in key stages 3 and 4. The school has worked hard to ensure that the curriculum builds pupils' learning in a logical sequence so that their knowledge is secure. This has helped address low past achievement at the school and tackle the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Steps the school has taken are increasing the number of pupils studying subjects making up the English Baccalaureate, notably raising the numbers learning a modern foreign language. Targeted support ensures that the many pupils joining mid-way through a year, and the approximately 150 refugee children joining in the last two years, achieve well. The curriculum in the sixth form does not meet students' needs as fully or effectively. The school has rightly identified that there are too few vocational options for prospective students.

Teachers have good subject expertise. They typically explain new ideas well to pupils and use effective lesson activities to enable them to learn. Teachers usually check carefully how well pupils and students have understood new learning and tackle any misunderstandings. However, sometimes, this is not the case and learning is not as secure as a result. In the sixth form, although some students achieve well, others do not have sufficient prior learning for their courses of study and find it hard to learn.

The school works hard supporting the many pupils who join the school with poor attendance records. This includes those pupils new in the country or struggling to attend after the COVID-19 pandemic. This tenacious approach means that, from when they start, pupils' attendance improves securely. The school's analysis of which strategies are most effective is, however, not always precise enough to pinpoint the best ones.

Staff reinforce the school's expectations for good behaviour and most pupils follow these expectations. Effective support for pupils who find it hard to behave well means that their behaviour improves. Sixth-form students act as a good example for younger pupils, such as by taking a lead in volunteering opportunities.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Staff adapt lesson activities well to support them and offer suitable additional opportunities as needed. The school manages carefully and safely any study arrangements with providers external to the school.

Effective work by the school promotes reading well. Staff identify pupils who need extra help and support them to catch up. The school promotes a love of reading well, with all pupils having a reading book.

A well-planned programme of personal, social and health education lessons, linked to tutor times and assemblies, supports pupils' and students' personal development. This means the school's culturally and ethnically diverse community gets on well together. Spiritual development is supported well across subjects. There is a wide range of clubs and activities offering opportunities beyond the academic curriculum. The school provides a good programme about the world of work. Guidance for future study is effective when pupils select GCSEs and for study after the sixth form. Guidance for Year 11 pupils about sixth-form courses has not always helped them choose courses they are able to tackle, an issue the school is starting to address.

Governors hold the school to account tightly but supportively to ensure its vision and values are realised. They check the school's work carefully, including that staff have a manageable workload. Staff are a cohesive team. They feel well supported and trained. This includes in key areas like safeguarding, where they are vigilant.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The sixth-form curriculum does not meet all students' needs fully. Too many take courses for which they have insufficient prior learning, struggle to understand the course content and then do not achieve well. The school should review the range of courses offered and revise guidance for pupils in Year 11.
- The school's work is improving attendance, but it does not analyse actions taken closely enough to find what makes the most difference. This means some resource goes where it has less impact. The school should check more closely the difference made by the different strategies used, so as to identify the best and discard the least effective.

- Teachers' work in checking that new knowledge is embedded in pupils' long-term memory is not always fully effective. As a result, achievement is not as rapid as it could be. The school should ensure that teachers always assess pupils' learning consistently well in order to adapt the next steps in their teaching.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	118898
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10287930
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	736
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kim Stoner
Headteacher	David Elliott
Website	www.archbishops-school.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has taken in considerably more pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, children from refugee families and pupils with SEND than previously. Over 200 children from refugee families have joined in the past two years, with many then leaving as families relocate. This contributes to the high number of pupils leaving and joining other than at normal times.
- The school has two specially resourced provisions for pupils with SEND. One is for visually impaired pupils, which currently has no pupils in it. The second is for pupils with specific learning difficulties such as autism spectrum disorder, with six pupils currently attending.
- The school makes use of three registered alternative providers, all of which are inspected by Ofsted. The school uses three unregistered providers.

- The school has foundation status and offers an education with a Christian ethos. Its last statutory inspection under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 was in June 2017 and its next inspection is due within eight years of that date.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and opportunities for engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with a range of school leaders including the headteacher and senior leadership team, subject leaders and those responsible for leading support for pupils with SEND and the work on safeguarding. Inspectors met the chair of governors and five other governors, a representative from the Diocese of Canterbury and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, physical education, modern foreign languages and history. The deep dives involved visits to classrooms, analysis of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and discussions with teachers, including the subject leader for each subject.
- Evidence was also collected through observations around the school site during break and lunchtimes, through discussions with groups of pupils, visits to form tutor sessions and visits to assemblies.
- Survey responses were analysed from parents, pupils and staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's single central record of checks on adults; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Owen McColgan	Ofsted Inspector
Judy Rider	Ofsted Inspector
Eliot Hodges	Ofsted Inspector

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