



The Archbishop's School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118898
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280426
Inspection dates 4 October 2005 to 5 October 2005
Reporting inspector Sheila Browning RISP

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	St Stephen's Hill
School category	Foundation		Canterbury
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Kent CT2 7AP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01227 765805
Number on roll	855	Fax number	01227 768535
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev M Stace
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Alasdair Hogarth

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a mixed comprehensive Church of England foundation school in Canterbury. The area operates a system of selection into grammar schools based on ability; this means that there are fewer higher-attaining pupils than is usually found in a comprehensive school. There are 873 pupils from 11 to 19, of whom 146 are in the sixth form. The school has specialist provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) and for visually impaired pupils. Most pupils are from White British families but several minority ethnic groups are represented in small numbers. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. A few pupils are in care and a few are travellers. Attainment on entry is broadly average.

The school is part of a Department of Education and Skills pilot scheme to measure accurately the progress students make over their five years in secondary school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. The inspirational headmaster has developed an exceptional team of staff and governors dedicated to ensuring that all pupils achieve their full potential. Many elements of the school's work are exemplary. Pupils make exceptional progress. By the end of Years 9 and 11, they do very well when compared with when they first started in Year 7.

Teaching is at least good, and is exemplary in significant elements; as a result pupils are responsive to learning, behave well and form excellent relationships. The 'personalised' and flexible curriculum, enriched by numerous activities, meets pupils needs. Occasionally, lessons could use information and communication technology more imaginatively. Pupils make exceptional progress in their personal and social development due to the very high quality care, guidance and support and the fact that the school listens to, and involves, pupils in all that it does.

The school is constantly striving to do even better and its evaluation of itself is rigorous and measured. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is good; inspectors judge it as outstanding.

Given the school's improvements since the last inspection, it is very well placed to move forward and build on its success. The school deploys resources efficiently and value for money is excellent.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form is outstanding. It very successfully serves the needs of all its students, who have a wide range of abilities. Students achieve well and many continue to university. The school customises courses to match students' future plans and capabilities. Students mature to become thoughtful and considerate members of society. They contribute significantly to the local community and school life. Value for money in the sixth form is good. Leadership and management are outstanding; as one ex-pupil stated as he obtained his degree, "thank you for being the coolest and best headmaster a kid could hope for".

What the school should do to improve further

- Use ICT more in subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enter the school with average standards although there are slightly fewer high ability students than seen nationally. By the end of Year 9, students attain above average standards. End of Year 9 test results have improved each year since the last

inspection. In 2005, 80% of students attained the expected levels in English, mathematics and science and 50% of students attained higher levels. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs achieve very well because of the very good support.

Apart from a dip in 2004, the percentage of students attaining five GCSE grades A*-C has increased every year since 2001. The percentage who achieved eight or more GCSE grades A*-C has also steadily increased. The total points score for students' best eight subjects is above average. Statistics for 2005 confirm that students achieve outstandingly, outperforming four out of five schools in the country.

Sixth form A-level results are below average, although every year several students attain three or more good grades. The large majority of students achieved well, some of them from a low starting point. Almost half the 2005 cohort continued into higher education. Regardless of their GCSE results, the school welcomes any Year 11 students who wish to continue in the sixth form. They also take a few students from other schools and from overseas. Several students study in Year 12 only, improving their GCSE grades while taking other worthwhile courses.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are clearly proud of their school's reputation and successes. They enjoy school as is shown in the high attendance, and in the high proportion choosing to stay in the sixth form. Pupils take an active part in school life. Large numbers participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, and many take up positions of responsibility, such as form captains, prefects and school councillors. Many older pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award and a number act as 'guardians', helping younger pupils settle into school. Inspectors were struck by the enthusiasm of pupils, with one pupil commenting on the "good community spirit" and another said they liked school because "teachers are happy and they make you happy".

Behaviour is outstanding. Consequently, pupils make great strides in their learning and achieve high standards. Relationships are very positive and pupils are unfailingly friendly and courteous. Lunchtimes are sociable and relaxed. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and would turn to any member of staff if they had a problem. In the words of one pupil, "you can trust the teachers". Pupils' views are sought in the decision-making of the school. They cite the School Council as bringing about improvements to their environment. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils learn to respect one another. The strong caring Christian ethos in the school permeates into the wider community. Many do voluntary work in the locality and all pupils regularly raise funds for a wide variety of charities.

Pupils are conscious of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Drinking water is available at all times and the canteen offers a wide range of home-cooked food.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils and students are most attentive. They complete work conscientiously and are keen to learn. Their attitudes are a key factor contributing to the excellent progress they make. Teachers are skilful at explaining work clearly and making sure that pupils understand it and know what to do. Teachers create a respectful atmosphere in lessons so pupils feel confident to answer questions and share their ideas. During the inspection, teaching was consistently of a high quality although there were limited examples of inspirational teaching. Use of computers was limited because too few teachers are sufficiently trained in ICT.

The school's procedures for assessing and tracking the attainment and progress of pupils are strong. Challenging targets are set to improve performance. Teachers use marking well to show pupils how to reach their targets. Pupils are involved in their own assessment. Consequently, they know the levels at which they are working and the steps they need to take to improve.

Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is outstanding and they make very good progress. Teachers know the needs of individuals and plan challenging activities for them. Learning support assistants provide high quality extra support. The managed resource provision enables pupils to make very good progress.

Excellent one-to-one guidance is offered in the small sixth form groups and teachers are expert at pitching work at the right level.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school is rightly proud of its curriculum, which is described as being 'personalised and evolutionary'. It is designed to meet the needs and aspirations of all learners. All learners in Years 10 to 13 are helped to identify courses to match their interests and aptitudes. Nevertheless, ICT is not used enough to support work in other subjects. Individual learning needs are diagnosed well and good quality extra support is provided. Setting arrangements are fluid, allowing for individual movement between sets when needed. There is a rich variety of enhancement activities that add fun and interest to the curriculum. Work-related learning, enterprise education and citizenship are seen as central to giving learners a rounded education. There is good provision for safety and health education.

The sixth form curriculum consists of a wide choice of over 20 A-level subjects. It is impressive how the school accommodates practically all students' particular subject combination wishes. A small group of Year 12 students follow the school's own diploma course. This, focusing on basic skills, prepares them very well to move onto further

education, training or work. Year 12 students are expected to work within the community. This broadens their horizons considerably.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes outstanding care of its pupils. All are well known to staff, who work hard to ensure they are happy and achieve to the best of their ability. Careful consideration is given to ensure that pupils new to the school settle quickly and easily. Older pupils are given good guidance when choosing options or making decisions about future careers. The well-structured house system provides pupils with a strong sense of belonging and ensures that any individual concerns are quickly identified. Pupils and their parents particularly value the rewards system. The support for vulnerable pupils is very strong and close links with outside agencies and the school counsellor ensure effective support to meet individual pupils' needs. Parents are very appreciative of the care and support the school provides, often writing letters of thanks to the headmaster; one parent wrote, "I feel he is in good care at school in every respect".

The school has effective systems for ensuring pupils' health and safety. Regular risk assessments and child protection procedures are firmly in place. The personal and social education programme contributes well to pupils' adoption of healthy, safe lifestyles, and raises their awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headmaster's exceptional leadership has generated a school that provides the very best education for all its pupils. Christian values underpin the work of the school. The headmaster provides a clear and purposeful direction for the school and is very well supported by his senior management team and all staff.

Teamwork and communications are excellent. The thought and attention to detail by the headmaster is a role model for all teachers. The school is not complacent and the inspection team readily agrees with one parent who wrote, "We have no doubt the school will move forwards and upward". Indeed, the school's capacity to improve is excellent. The school makes full use of the data available on pupils' progress and uses this most effectively to identify any potential underachievement and to ensure that the needs of higher-attaining pupils are fully met. Exemplification of this is seen in the improved results at the end of Year 9 and in the higher percentage of GCSE grades achieved in 2005.

The school has exemplary arrangements to monitor teaching and learning and misses no opportunity to improve its quality. Partnership with parents is very strong. Parents and pupils are consulted and are involved in reviewing the school's performance. Parental and pupil satisfaction is high.

Well-informed governors understand the strengths and areas for development. They challenge the headmaster and staff, are supportive and make a strong contribution to all aspects of the school. All legal requirements are met. Financial planning is excellent.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. All the inspectors had a thoroughly enjoyable time in your school. We especially enjoyed talking with you, and looking at your work. We are pleased that you are so proud of your school and we think that you are working hard. We think that The Archbishop's School is an outstanding school. We were very impressed with many of the things we saw, and here are a few of them:

You have an outstanding headteacher

Standards are rising in most subjects and you are achieving really well. This shows the excellent progress you are making

Your excellent attitudes and behaviour are a credit to you and the school. We were impressed with how polite and friendly you are to one another and to adults

We agree with you that you are taught extremely well

You like and appreciate your headmaster; "He's the best," said one of you

You really value all the extra opportunities that the school gives you, including clubs, trips and residential visits.

The things we think your school could do to be even better:

We have asked teachers to give you more opportunities to use ICT in your lessons.