

Archbishop Tenison's CofE High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101811
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	286191
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Ramesh Kapadia HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	757
6th form	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev P Brown
Headteacher	Mr R Parrish
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002
School address	Selborne Road Croydon CR0 5JQ
Telephone number	020 8688 4014
Fax number	020 8681 6336

Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three Additional Inspectors, led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Archbishop Tenison's is a relatively small school with a large sixth form, located in the centre of Croydon. It draws pupils from all wards in the borough and therefore reflects a broad ethnic mix, with almost half from Black African and Caribbean communities. Most pupils are from Anglican churches but a third are now from Free Church families, reflecting a change in admissions policy a few years ago. The school is very popular and also admits pupils into its sixth form. There are slightly more boys than girls; few pupils are entitled to free school meals or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) or a statement of special educational need. In 2004, the school acquired specialist status as a mathematics and computing college. It also has Investors in People Status and the Sportsmark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Archbishop Tenison's school is achieving its central mission of academic excellence in an inclusive Christian community. The school has made significant improvements in standards since its last inspection. High standards have been maintained in the main school over the last few years and have now been reached in the sixth form too. This is characterised by the outstanding progress from Key Stage 2 to GCSE and beyond.

The school's broad and balanced curriculum has option choices in Key Stage 3 and builds on an academic approach in Key Stage 4, with some innovative features. For example, most pupils study a foreign language at GCSE. The choices in Key Stage 4 are carefully matched to individual pupils' needs and parents' academic aspirations for their children.

Teaching and learning are outstanding, and have been strengthened in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The school's leadership and management are outstanding, as is its overall effectiveness and value for money. The thoughtful and rigorous internal self-evaluation is, on occasions, rather cautious in some aspects. Senior managers monitor the quality of lessons and other aspects of the school systematically and plan appropriate actions subsequently. The accommodation continues to pose constraints, but many avenues are taken to minimise negative consequences. Here, the governors have been working hard with the diocese and the Local Authority towards a permanent resolution, which has yet to be agreed, even though the issue was raised in the last inspection report.

Excellent care, guidance and support underpin outstanding levels of personal development and well-being. After a slight decline in attendance in 2006, there has been a significant improvement and attendance is now well above the national average and was well over 96% in the lessons observed. Behaviour is good.

There is strong partnership with a range of agencies. Parents are supportive and are pleased at the creation of the parents' forum, partly addressing an issue over communication in the previous report; staff recognise that more could be done. Specialist status has been well promoted and ensures that mathematics is strong. The school is well placed to preserve its strengths, and has an outstanding capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form is outstanding in that it meets the needs of different students very well through its provision. It is over-subscribed and increasingly successful. This is reflected by the improvement in results demonstrated over the last two years. The average points per entry and per student rose in 2007; over a tenth of students attained at least three A grades at A level, and over three quarters of grades were at least C. This represents outstanding progress, according to an external system of measuring value added.

The broad curriculum and wide variety of subjects on offer, including some vocational options, means that all students are catered for well. The recent provision of general studies within the vocational offer supports well the acquisition of key skills. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use a wide range of resources, including interactive whiteboards. Students are given excellent support and guidance for the induction into Year 12. Students who have come from other schools agreed that, 'We are a community and all look after each other. Staff are always there to help us'. In the sixth form, those who come from outside the school achieve at

a similar level to those who continue from Year 11, pointing to the way that new students integrate quickly into the school's positive and hard-working ethos.

A very well administered 'target setting and review' system ensures students are well informed about their progress. Work support, tutor review and counselling act as support to these high expectations. There is an active 6th form council and a wide range of extra-curricular activity including religious education 'away-days', drama, music, foreign travel and Duke of Edinburgh Award Schemes. Older students also act as mentors with their younger peers. This results in mature, well-rounded and responsible young people who have great confidence in their own abilities and assist in developing the school's wider community and Christian ethos.

What the school should do to improve further

- Form a stronger partnership with parents to enable them to engage more fully with the school's developing vision for the future.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school's intake is above average when pupils join in Year 7. They make good progress, with about nine-tenths reaching the expected Level 5 in tests in English and science at Key Stage 3; it is particularly notable that over three quarters of pupils reach the higher Level 6 in mathematics. Good progress is also made in information communication and technology (ICT) and almost all foundation subjects.

Pupils make outstanding progress in Key Stage 4 and this year about three quarters are expected to attain five or more higher GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, a figure which is significantly higher than the national average. A particularly notable achievement is that virtually all pupils achieve at least five passes at GCSE. There has been a marked increase in the proportion of the highest grades at GCSE, which is now well above average. In 2007, a quarter of the year group attained five passes at grade A/A*, including a tenth who reached that level in at least eight subjects. Standards are high.

GCSE results in 2007 show that all groups of pupils made at least good progress, and for some this was significantly better than similar groups elsewhere. Pupils with LDD make faster progress than their peers nationally. Internal data suggests that results in 2008 will show further if more modest improvement, from a high base.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school enables pupils to flourish. They greatly enjoy their time in school, with positive attitudes to learning. This is also demonstrated by a high rate of attendance of over 95% and good behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are given responsibility for running some assemblies which encourages them to become reflective individuals. The strong Christian ethos also promotes clear moral and social values. Pupils raise money for a variety of charities, such as for poor children in Kenya. They participate in celebrating their cultural heritage with events such as 'Black History Month'. They say they

feel safe from bullying and racist incidents: sixth form mentors help to develop positive relationships within the school community.

Throughout the school, pupils show a very strong interest in leading a healthy lifestyle. A substantial proportion of pupils in each year group are involved weekly in sports teams; in some years there are several teams despite the small size of the year group. Although the school promotes healthy eating, pupils do not always choose to adopt it.

An active school council helps pupils develop a very strong sense of responsibility. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the local and wider communities, some in Years 10 and 11 teach physical education at a local infant school and help with mathematics master-classes for local primary schools. The acquisition of excellent basic skills in core subjects, well organised work experience and high quality mentoring help to lay the foundations for pupils' future studies and economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Detailed lesson plans show that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and prepare work carefully to challenge learners. Teachers have records of pupils' prior attainment and current levels of work, but in some cases, marking of books could be more thorough to show pupils how to improve their work.

Teaching methods are adapted to ensure that pupils engage with their work and very good use is made of electronic whiteboards to enliven learning. Teachers praise and encourage pupils appropriately and form strong working relationships with them. They utilise strong subject knowledge to ensure that pupils can learn from their mistakes and make progress.

Cross-curricular links are made between subjects which makes lessons more interesting. For example, in history pupils used their mathematical skills to complete a table and their geographical skills to identify relevant areas on a map.

A strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers model correct responses. For example in an English lesson, the teacher modelled the planning of answers to examination questions. This ensured that pupils learned time-saving techniques to improve their chance of gaining higher grades. In an art lesson, the teacher demonstrated a variety of methods of painting and colouring which helped pupils to enhance the design of their 'comic book covers'. Mathematics teachers focus on developing conceptual understanding by encouraging pupils to explain underlying reasoning and give proofs where appropriate.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum for its pupils. The great majority of pupils enjoy their education and achieve well because they are extremely well served by the curriculum. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 has appropriate breadth and balance, including two modern foreign languages, and a choice of unusual options such as philosophy or surface design. Though a wide range of options is not available to pupils in Years 10 and 11 in this small school, all do

religious studies and about four-fifths continue to take a modern foreign language, with some taking two. An innovative curriculum in physical education enables three separate courses to be offered simultaneously.

There is special provision for the few pupils for whom the traditional options are not effective and includes courses in leisure and tourism as well as in ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network). The school plans the curriculum to meet differing needs, and builds on areas which have proved to be successful; courses are sometimes offered for just one or two pupils to ensure that they continue attending school regularly and gain success in examinations.

There are carefully devised plans for three main pathways next year: one offers triple science, a second is an ICT pathway, including vocational elements; the third route offers an extra option choice, whilst including both religious studies and a modern foreign language, except for the few students for whom ASDAN is more appropriate.

There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, as well as imaginative enrichment days such as supporting the study of the Renaissance by Year 8 pupils with visits to St Paul's Cathedral and the Tate. Older pupils went on an enlightening trip to Singapore and were able to reflect on the different ways of teaching mathematics there.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school has very efficient assessment and tracking procedures in place which enables a close eye to be kept on pupils' academic progress. The school gathers a variety of information from a number of sources and uses it effectively to improve the quality of education and support it provides. Motivational groups in Year 11 have been particularly effective in raising standards. Heads of years have closer contact with pupils but the use of information in Key Stage 3 is not as strong. However, the school's most vulnerable pupils achieve well. Further, well over nine-tenths of pupils are continuing with education, employment or training.

The school is vigilant about safeguarding its pupils. All checks on adults working in school have been carried out thoroughly and child protection procedures are in place. All staff have received training in these. Links with outside agencies are good. Parents are positive about the school and write about the 'good support for my daughter who has special needs', and that, 'The teachers are all very encouraging and reassuring when my daughter has had any concerns'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership because his vision for the school is clear and shared by staff. A strong senior team, with some new staff partnerships and posts, ensures consistent and high quality monitoring. They evaluate the school's development systematically, accepting that, for example, some very challenging targets for specialist status have not been met.

The school has established a culture of accountability and high expectations that supports both its aims and ethos. Teachers are regularly observed in the classroom and supported in their continuing professional development. There is good promotion of equalities for pupils both in the main school and the large sixth form, but also there is also recognition that, with a changing intake to the school, this is a continuing area for development. The school makes excellent use of data to monitor standards and this information is actively shared with teachers.

There is active involvement by a strong and effective governing body that has supported these developments and dealt pragmatically with the constraints offered by the school's accommodation. Following some changes, individual governors now have closer links with members of the senior management team. The school's specialist status has acted as a major agent of change, with the introduction of GCSE for Year 9 in ICT and strong links to local primary schools.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
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	1	

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	1
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 to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Archbishop Tenison's CofE High School, Croydon, CR0 5JQ

Many thanks for the welcome you gave us to your school. We enjoyed our discussions with you in meetings, in lessons and around the school.

Archbishop Tenison's is an outstanding school. Standards are high across the school. You are very well cared for and links with the community are very good, not least because of the school's status as a specialist college for mathematics and computing.

Your teachers teach you well and plan interesting lessons in subjects as varied as art, history and mathematics. Teachers are well aware of your capabilities. They use this information well in lessons and provide extra support and encouragement to help you after lessons. You attend well and behaviour in lessons is good, despite the accommodation, which is cramped. Many of you are enthusiastic about the wide range of activities available and take part in sports teams, concerts and productions. You are offered a very good range of subjects to study, including vocational courses.

As with any school, there are some improvements that can still be made, and we noted that your parents could be more involved in future developments to ensure that the school retains its strong features.

Yours truly,

Ramesh Kapadia

Her Majesty's Inspector