

Archbishop Sancroft High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121188
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	327427
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2009
Reporting inspector	John Mitcheson HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	406
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Rudge
Headteacher	Mr Richard Cranmer
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
School address	Wilderness Lane Harleston Norfolk IP20 9DD
Telephone number	01379 852561
Fax number	01379 852561

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Archbishop Sancroft High School is a smaller than average Church of England Voluntary Aided community school with 406 students. It serves the town of Harleston and its surrounding area, where the level of socio-economic disadvantage is lower than is found nationally and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The majority of students are White British, very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average although the number with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school was awarded specialist science status in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Archbishop Sancroft High School is a good school. Its Christian ethos is reflected in the good quality care and support provided and the mutual care and respect shown by teachers and students. In this environment, most students thrive and achieve well. The vast majority of Year 11 students progress onto sixth form education and training. The school is experiencing a period of transition following the appointment of a new headteacher. In a short space of time, he has shared with staff his vision for the future of the school and has the full support of teachers and governors. He has also acted decisively to resolve some key issues and has prioritised plans to develop and improve the school further. A significant number of students and parents commented favourably on the impact he has already made.

Based on their starting points, most students, including those who find learning difficult, make good progress. However, recently a small minority of students, mainly boys, have not achieved what they were capable of in English because lessons do not stimulate and engage them and the monitoring of their progress is ineffective. Improvements in English identified in the previous inspection have not been sustained and last year, the proportion of students attaining a GCSE grade C or above was below the national average. Overall GCSE results have fluctuated in recent years, mainly due to inconsistencies in teaching and learning and because the procedures to monitor how well students are achieving have lacked sufficient rigour. However, in 2008, 71% of Year 11 students achieved 5 or more A* to C grades and almost half of them achieved 5 A* to Cs including English and mathematics. This represents very good progression from Year 7 to Year 11 compared to other similar schools. Ninety nine per cent achieved at least five GCSEs and notably, every student left Year 11 with at least one GCSE qualification.

Inspectors found that in many lessons the quality of students' learning is better than the quality of teaching. Observations showed that most lessons are satisfactory, but teaching varies from outstanding to, at times, inadequate. In the past, not all leaders and managers have carried out regular, structured observations of lessons and are unaware that many lessons are dominated by too much teacher talk, passivity amongst students and inconsistent assessment procedures. Students say that in some subjects their work is often lightly marked and does not give them clear advice on how to improve their work. Despite this, most students make good progress because they have high aspirations and display positive attitudes. The majority behave well, work hard, enjoy school and attend regularly.

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. They told inspectors that they feel safe and valued and enthused about the wide range of enrichment activities on offer during lunchtimes and after school. They engage in fund-raising for local charities and make a satisfactory contribution to the local community. Students lead healthy lifestyles although the current time allocated to physical education in Key Stage 4 is limited. The majority of students behave well in lessons and around school but a few parents expressed concerns about a small minority of boys who are allowed to disrupt the learning of others. High rates of exclusion last year have reduced significantly since September. The school council plays an increasingly active role in school life and large numbers of students adopt responsibility as peer mentors, 'buddies' and sports leaders.

The school makes the most of its resources to provide a good curriculum that meets the needs of most learners. Students select from a broad selection of GCSEs and a few vocational courses. Alternative arrangements are made with a local college to provide work-based learning for a

small number not suited to GCSE studies. Work-related learning and a two-week work experience contribute well to students' future economic well-being. Students enjoy an excellent range of enrichment opportunities, including extra-curricular clubs and some superb visits locally and abroad.

High quality care and support are strengths of the school. A number of parents praised the individual care and support provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All safeguarding arrangements are in place and students know who to approach if they have concerns. Adults from the local community act as mentors and offer students invaluable advice and support. Guidance is only satisfactory. Although revised procedures to monitor students' progress have been introduced, they are not yet firmly embedded and lack coherence. School managers are unaware of how well all students are progressing in both key stages and are therefore unable to spot those at risk of underachieving.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Until recently, senior managers have played a limited role in self-review and have not always taken decisive action to improve areas of underperformance. They are now adopting greater responsibility for school improvement and they are working much more effectively as a team. An increasing number of middle managers understand their roles in school improvement and share their practice with others. They, and an invigorated senior leadership team, are demonstrating good capacity to make further improvements. Governors have overseen the strategic development of the school, including appointing the new headteacher and have ensured good value for money. They acknowledge that they need to increase their role in monitoring the overall performance of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English in both key stages by improving teaching and learning and by evaluating the effectiveness of leadership and management of this subject.
- Engage all leaders and managers in a rigorous programme of detailed lesson observations to identify and share best practice and evaluate the impact this has on students' performance.
- Ensure that monitoring procedures become firmly embedded so teachers and managers know how well all students are achieving and can intervene promptly to support those requiring additional help.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In 2008, 66% of students that sat Adult Literacy and Numeracy tests achieved 5 or more A* to C grades including functional English and mathematics, helping to secure their future economic well-being. Science is a strength of the school. Results are well above average and specialist science status has contributed directly to an improvement in overall GCSE results this year. Specialist targets were exceeded in science and the school moved closer to meeting its targets in mathematics. Most students make good progress but this varies between boys and girls. For example, the previous inspection found that boys achieved much better than girls did. Action taken by the school to remedy this has worked and now girls outperform boys in most subjects. The school recognises it needs to do more work to monitor the progress made by all students so that boys and girls attain equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students feel safe around the site and buildings and say that any bullying, including that of a racist nature, will be treated seriously and dealt with fairly. Behaviour is generally good but can deteriorate if not all staff manage it effectively and consistently. Most students are well aware of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles, including making good food choices, exercising and not smoking. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Students respect one another's beliefs and work hard through charity fund-raising to support others. For example, two pupils have organised activities to raise money to support development projects in Kenya. Students who join one of the many international trips organised by teachers experience aspects of life and culture in other communities. As yet, there are few multicultural opportunities in school to enable students to develop this aspect of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school's view of the quality of teaching and learning is too generous. It is not based on clear evidence gained through rigorous and externally validated lesson monitoring. When students are actively engaged in their learning and work is made interesting and challenging, they enjoy what they do and achieve well. However, not all teachers plan lively, stimulating activities or use resources effectively to interest and motivate learners. In lessons where teachers' planning does not take enough account of students' different needs and abilities some tasks are too easy and do not provide enough challenge. Marking is too general and rarely offers advice on how well students are doing or how they can improve their work. Teaching assistants provide helpful support to individual students in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The recent introduction of 'flexible Fridays' into the Year 7 curriculum is already having an impact on increasing learners' creativity and in promoting teamwork and joint planning amongst teachers. In Key Stage 4, the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. Given the small size and its rural location, the school offers an appropriate blend of traditional GCSEs and vocational awards. Specialist science status has been used to increase the range of science courses and to take a leading role in developing revised procedures for assessing students' work. Provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is good but a lack of continuity due to changes in subject leadership have led to only satisfactory results in this subject. A growing number of enrichment activities are targeted towards the most able students in order to provide them with additional challenge.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff are committed to nurturing and sustaining good relations with students and the majority of them respond well. A small minority of more challenging students, mainly boys, do not respond as positively and the exclusion rate last year was high. Students in Year 9 and 11 are well informed about the choices for further study and the world of work. However, guidance

about how well they are progressing is less effective. Although the school has made a start in developing systems to track students' progress, at present this is underdeveloped and inconsistent across year groups. Assessment procedures lack consistency and do not help all students to meet the targets set for them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The appointment of heads of learning and pastoral heads for each key stage has strengthened the middle management team. It has placed a stronger emphasis on what students are learning and on monitoring the progress they are making. Senior managers have an improved understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and display a corporate willingness to raise standards and increase the school's overall effectiveness. An increasing number of middle leaders have attended training to acquire the skills needed to lead on new initiatives and share good practice. A significant number of subject leaders are well organised and manage their departments well, but this is not the case in all areas and closer monitoring by senior leaders is required to ensure that all subject leaders contribute to raising standards. Governors' training is planned to help them improve their monitoring skills and increase their understanding of self-evaluation.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 January 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Archbishop Sancroft High School, Harleston IP20 9DD

Earlier this week a team of inspectors visited Archbishop Sancroft High School and found it to be a good school. Your input was vital in helping us to make this judgement, so thank you for allowing us to join you in lessons and to talk with some of you. We also spent some time meeting with your senior teachers, governors and read many letters from parents. Throughout the inspection, your behaviour was good and you made inspectors feel welcome.

We were impressed with many aspects of the school, particularly the above average standards in Key Stage 4, other than in English. Your enjoyment of school life is shown by your regular attendance and the willingness of many of you to take responsibility as peer mentors, buddies and sports leaders. We also noted that a large number of you join in the many enrichment activities at lunchtimes and after school. A large number of you access an excellent range of school visits. Teachers help you very much by providing you with the care and support you need, but we feel that they could do more to give you clear guidance on how well you are doing and what you can do to improve your work to attain higher grades.

We have asked your senior teachers to make the following improvements.

- Raise standards in English in both key stages by improving teaching and learning and monitoring the management of this subject.
- Engage all leaders and managers in lesson observations to identify and share best practice and then measure the impact on your performance.
- Fully embed new monitoring procedures so that teachers and managers have a thorough understanding of how well you are achieving and can identify early those of you that need additional help.

Your new headteacher is already making an impact and is keen to make further improvements to your school. You can help him by letting your school council know what changes you feel would make Archbishop Sancroft an even better school.

Best wishes for the future.

John Mitcheson

Her Majesty's Inspector