

Archbishop Tenison's School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100640
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	307431
Inspection dates	14-15 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Lynn Bappa

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

Type of School	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School (total)	534
Sixth form	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robert Moreland
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Sims
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2004
School address	55 Kennington Oval London SE11 5SR
Telephone number	020 7735 3771
Fax number	020 7587 5186

Age group	11-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Archbishop Tenison's is a small Church of England boys' school serving a diverse community. Girls are admitted into the sixth form. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is much higher than average. Most students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the largest single group is Black British/Black African. A much higher proportion of students speak English as an additional language than is usually found. None of these students, however, are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also higher than is normally found. These include difficulties with speech, language and communication, autistic spectrum disorder, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Sixth-form provision forms part of the area's consortium with Charles Edward Brooke School and The London Nautical School. The school has had specialist arts status since 2003. It has a range of awards, including Healthy School and Investor in Careers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Archbishop Tenison's is a good school where students thrive, both academically and personally. As one student commented, 'This has been the best five years of my life!' The school's strong promotion of Christian values underpins the students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has created a truly cohesive and caring community where students and adults work together in genuine harmony. Students are exceptionally well cared for and feel safe and happy at their school. There is a strong commitment to equality. As one student commented, 'This is a Christian school but it is not just a school for Christians - there are students who belong to other religions and we all get on very well together.'

The contribution of the arts, its specialist area, is excellent. The art displayed around the school is stunning and of a very high standard. Students show great pride in this aspect of school life, and regularly leave the sixth form having gained places at prestigious art colleges. As well as developing students culturally, art brings about excellent spiritual development because students develop their creative and reflective skills to a high standard.

The school is very well led by the headteacher, who values tradition but is also innovative and forward-looking. Her clearly articulated vision is widely shared by adults and students alike. The school has implemented an effective range of strategies to improve learning; as a result, standards have risen steadily in recent years and are now above the national average by the end of Years 9 and 11. Students' achievements in mathematics and art are particularly good, with standards being well above the national average. Students enter the school having reached standards that are broadly in line with national expectations, so the results they achieve at Archbishop Tenison's show that they are making good rates of progress and are achieving well. A minority of students do not achieve their full potential. The school is working hard to rectify this by making more effective use of performance data in order to identify problems earlier and provide more targeted support. However, senior leaders rightly recognise the need for more rigour in the precise use of data by staff in order to improve learning further.

Most students thoroughly enjoy their learning, because the teaching is good overall, being characterised by positive relationships and a good range of interesting activities. Written comments in students' exercise books do not always tell them what they need to do to improve the quality of their work, however. Despite the constraints of a small school and a very cramped site, the curriculum is good and the range of courses on offer is constantly improving. Senior leaders rightly recognise that there is still scope to broaden the provision further, particularly in the creative subjects.

The school uses its specialist status well to support subjects across the curriculum and to raise the profile of art within neighbouring schools and the local community. The school has a clear understanding of the needs of the inner-city community in which it is located, and is developing strong and productive links to enable students to engage fully with a range of community partners.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is small, but provides a good quality of education for its students. It has a strong inclusive ethos, reflected in minimum entry requirements of five GCSE passes at C grade. Senior leaders, however, are rightly reviewing these in order to ensure that students embark on courses of study where they have a reasonable chance of success. The overall attainment on entry is below average because many high-attaining students leave the school after GCSE examinations to study elsewhere. The school is working hard, however, to encourage more of these students to stay on. Standards in the sixth form are rising, although they remain below the national average. However, given students' below-average starting points, overall achievement is good. Students make better progress in Year 13 than they do in Year 12 because learners embarking on sixth-form courses do not necessarily possess a solid base for study at this level when they begin. Most students successfully complete their courses, however, and are able to access their higher education and career choices. Teaching is good. Students praise the help and encouragement given in lessons and outside. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students manifestly enjoy their education and speak highly of the school. They feel very well supported and find their teachers extremely approachable. They value the

security of a familiar school environment and benefit socially from the strong links and partnerships within the sixth form consortium. Students appreciate the range of subjects on offer and the efforts that the school makes to accommodate their needs. This is demonstrated by the consortium partnerships with two local schools that have enabled the expansion of curriculum opportunities. Very good guidance is provided in preparation for university or further education. The sixth form is well led and managed. Leaders have a clear sense of purpose and high expectations of work and commitment from students. Although there are satisfactory resources for learning, the limited accommodation currently places restrictions on expanding the sixth form further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more rigorous use of assessment and marking, to ensure that students have a good understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Increase the breadth of the curriculum to better meet students' needs and aspirations.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students enter the school with standards that are broadly in line with the national average. Standards in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 are above average overall, with particular strengths in mathematics. Although standards in science are currently below average, the school has put into place a range of strategies to improve results, and these are beginning to have a positive impact.

The school gained its best ever GCSE results in 2008. The proportion of students achieving five or more good passes, including English and mathematics, was above average. One measure of the good progress made by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is that they all leave the school with at least one qualification. The school is developing a good range of strategies to improve the performance of the small number of students who do not do as well as they should. This includes, for example, the small cohort of White British students. In the small number of cases where individual boys have underachieved, this has largely been because of the substantial and very challenging external pressures faced by them. Students with English as an additional language, those who have emotional or behavioural difficulties, and those who are at risk of disaffection or exclusion generally achieve well because of the good support provided for them. The school is on track to meet next year's challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students are very proud of their school and this is reflected in their smart appearance and courteous and friendly behaviour to visitors. They value education and want to succeed. Many students remark on the strong sense of community in the school and the supportive relationships between students. Spiritual development is enhanced through regular prayer and reflection. Incidents of bullying or other forms of harassment are rare, and are dealt with effectively. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Students enjoy school, and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. They show a strong sense of responsibility and a genuine concern for others. A wide range of responsibilities enables students to become independent and self-motivated young people. The school council has been instrumental in bringing about many improvements, such as the provision of games and benches in the playground. Students feel safe, happy and secure in school and know how to live healthily. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In general, most students make good progress in lessons. This mirrors the good quality of teaching they experience. Teachers typically display good subject knowledge and enthusiasm, and plan their lessons well with activities that are appropriately challenging and varied. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and are characterised by good humour and imaginative resources. A strong feature of all lessons is the very positive relationships between teachers and students. Praise is a strong feature in most lessons. As one boy said of his teachers, 'The teachers bring out the best in me.' Another added that they 'stretch me out to my limit'. Students are confident to ask for help because they know that teachers will help them. Teachers have a very good understanding of examination requirements and make sure that students are well prepared and confident. The school makes good use of teaching assistants and learning mentors to make sure that the most vulnerable students are supported well. Teachers are beginning to provide a more extensive range of challenging tasks for more-able students. They manage behaviour well, and lessons take place in a calm and orderly environment. The effectiveness of assessment varies. The best marking ensures that students are involved and receive good guidance on how to improve their work, although this good practice does not extend to all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum promotes good achievement. The school has worked hard to ensure that it meets the academic aspirations and personal development needs of all students. Senior leaders are rightly reviewing the curriculum, with a focus on broadening the range of activities and subjects offered, particularly in the creative and performing arts. There is an effective emphasis on enabling the students to improve their skills in English and mathematics. The specialist subjects make a considerable and positive contribution to the curriculum. The well-planned personal, social and health education curriculum makes a good contribution to students' personal development. Provision for information and communication technology has improved markedly since the last inspection. Site constraints limit the extent of the physical education that can be provided, but the school tackles this well by making good use of off-site facilities. Students who need extra help with their learning are provided with good packages of support. There are good opportunities for work experience, and students speak highly of the advice they receive on higher education or jobs.

The formal curriculum is enriched well through a very good variety of clubs and out-of-school learning, including visits to most of the major art galleries in and around London, the Old Bailey and Paris. The school's designation as an arts college adds a further ingredient to a rich mix of opportunities, including, for example, an artist in residence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding and caring environment in which students can flourish both as individuals and as part of the community. Pastoral care is exemplary and is reflected in students' high levels of emotional health. Students are encouraged to care for one another, with many older ones acting as prefects. Staff work extremely hard with students, parents and outside agencies to overcome the exceptionally challenging circumstances facing many of the boys outside school. This is appreciated by parents and one wrote, 'If there are issues or concerns regarding our child we feel very able to contact school.' Year group leaders and tutors are very effective in providing support for students in difficulties, with many staff operating an 'open door' policy to enable students with difficulties to seek help easily. The provision for health and safety is very good. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are securely in place, and all staff are aware of their responsibilities. There are very good systems in place to ensure the smooth transfer of students from their primary schools. Careers advice is effective and enables students to make informed choices about their future education or employment. Procedures for promoting good attendance are thorough and extremely effective.

The school has improved its systems for tracking academic progress and identifying underachievement. Teachers are increasingly able to draw on a wealth of data to assess individual students' progress, though there is room to improve the way the staff use assessment information in their planning to ensure that any pockets of underachievement are eradicated.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher sets high expectations and is well supported by a dedicated and talented senior leadership team. They maintain a high-profile presence in the school's daily life, which is much appreciated by both students and their parents. The headteacher is an inspirational leader and teamwork is a strong feature of school life. Self-evaluation is systematic and accurate, and senior managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has made substantial improvements since the last inspection, for example in its GCSE results, and this indicates that the school has good capacity to improve further. Levels of accountability have been strengthened. There has been an increased focus on helping middle leaders to better evaluate the areas for which they are responsible. More effective use is now being made of assessment data and this is leading to a sharper focus on the progress made by all groups of students. Senior leaders rightly recognise, however, that more remains to be done in this area.

Inclusion is a real strength of the school. Pastoral systems are well established and extremely effective. Community cohesion is strong. There are excellent links with the local community and very well-established partnerships with other schools and external agencies.

Governors are very supportive of the school, offer appropriate challenge, and have high aspirations for students. Financial management is good and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. There are good links with parents, who are very pleased with the quality of care and education provided by the school. A small number of parents, however, feel that the school does not communicate well enough with them.

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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?	2	2
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?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

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

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
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	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	

Annex B



Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

28 January 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Archbishop Tenison's School, London, SE11 5SR

On behalf of the team of inspectors that recently visited your school, I would like to thank you all for the very warm welcome you gave us. We all remarked on how friendly, helpful and polite you are - a credit to yourselves, your parents and carers and the school. We judge Archbishop Tenison's (ATS) to be a good school that has many outstanding features. You are right to be proud of it. Art at ATS is amazing - in the art rooms and the corridors it is actually difficult to know what to look at next! You also do particularly well in mathematics, where your standards are well above the national average. We were impressed to see how hard you work and how well you enjoy the subject. I wish I had had such good teaching in mathematics when I was at school! The standards you reach at the end of Years 9 and 11 are above average and mean that you are achieving well. These standards are improving. This is because teaching is good and you are good learners. In the sixth form, standards are below average, but represent good progress given your starting points. We agree with you that the school is a safe and pleasant learning environment to work in. Your representatives on the school council contribute very well to issues that affect you. You rightly believe that bullying and harassment are generally dealt with very effectively. We were impressed by your high levels of attendance and good behaviour. Well done!

Even a good school has some areas for improvement. To help the school improve further, we have asked for two things.

- The school is keen to try several new approaches to the curriculum to make it even more creative, and we agree with it.
- The school agrees with us that there is some variation in the quality of marking and the way that teachers make use of assessment data. It will now be reviewing its procedures to ensure that all of you know what you have to do to improve your work further.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Dr Lynn Bappa
Lead Inspector