

Childwall School - A Specialist Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104697
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	377111
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Joan Davis HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,120
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Griffiths
Headteacher	Dewi Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Teaching and learning were observed in 41 lessons and 40 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and students. The inspection team examined the school's self-evaluation of its work, students' work and data on their current performance, minutes of meetings, the school development plan and policies, including those relating to safeguarding. Inspectors considered an analysis of 148 parents' and carers' questionnaires as well as those from staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the school's actions in addressing underperformance in English and mathematics, as identified at the previous inspection.
- The impact of the school's actions to address the comparative underperformance of higher-attaining girls.
- The effectiveness of the school's procedures to improve attendance.
- The effectiveness of current arrangements for provision in the sixth form.

Information about the school

Childwall School is of larger-than-average size. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is more than twice the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well above the national average, although the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above the national average, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language. There are collaborative arrangements with a local school for post-16 provision. The school has specialist status for sport and also science. The school has won many awards, including the Artsmark Gold Award, the Sportsmark, the International Award and the Investors in People Award. The school has also gained the Enhanced Healthy Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Childwall is a satisfactory school. There had been a rising trend in attainment from 2008 to 2010, albeit from low starting points. However, performance dipped in 2011, particularly in English and mathematics. Attainment is therefore low. Learning and progress are satisfactory overall. However, the school has worked highly effectively in improving the quality of teaching and as a result students' learning and progress are now improving securely and quickly. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as they move up through the school. Students' achievement is therefore satisfactory overall.

The school provides a caring, welcoming environment in which all students are valued as individuals. Students make a good contribution to the school and the wider community and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Students are courteous and friendly. Their behaviour is good. Procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory. Students say that they feel safe in the school. They say that there is very little bullying and that when it occurs it is dealt with effectively. The sports' specialism contributes highly effectively to students' well-being and as a result the extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles is outstanding. Attendance is improving, but remains low.

The quality of teaching is good. In the large majority of lessons, teachers plan interesting activities that engage students and help them to learn. As a result, students work productively in lessons and enjoy harmonious relationships with their teachers and each other. Teachers use information and communication technology highly effectively to support learning. The use of assessment to support learning is also good.

The curriculum is satisfactory but improving. The impact of both specialist subjects on the school and the wider community has been beneficial, providing a wide range of enriching opportunities.

Leaders and managers are satisfactory overall. The headteacher is passionate in his resolve to reverse the decline in attainment and secure improvements in outcomes for students. All members of the school community share this vision. However, self-evaluation has been over-generous in the past and planning for improvement, at times, lacks precision and clarity. Targets that have been set have not always been sufficiently challenging to secure improvements in outcomes. School leaders have

taken swift action in order to address the recent dip in performance in English and mathematics. Evidence provided by the school suggests that these initiatives are already having an impact. In addition, the school has been effective in narrowing the gap between the performance of a group of girls with that of their peers. The school has had some success in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. As a result, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. There has been a concerted drive to improve the quality of teaching across the school and procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of practice are rigorous. Robust action in the past to tackle poor teaching in English and mathematics has resulted in turbulence in staffing in these areas of the curriculum. The school has been compelled to rely on a succession of temporary teachers and this has presented a substantial challenge to senior leaders in their attempt to improve provision in these subjects. This is why students' progress is satisfactory despite good teaching by the permanent staff. The school has now addressed this effectively by appointing additional teachers in both English and mathematics.

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money is satisfactory. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good, as is the effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination.

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Students appreciate the high quality guidance they receive and recent initiatives to improve provision are beginning to have an impact on outcomes for students. Students speak highly of their experience in the sixth form; as one student commented: 'The community spirit is good here. We all get along.'

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics to be average by:
 - embedding improvements in monitoring the progress of students and providing appropriate intervention when necessary
 - securing consistently good teaching that is of the same high quality as the better practice existing elsewhere in the school.
- Improve attendance to average across the school by:
 - exploring and implementing best practice in other schools facing similar challenges regarding attendance
 - embedding current procedures to monitor and improve attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students enter the school with prior attainment that is below average. Performance in public examinations improved from 2008 to 2010. In 2010, performance in mathematics was broadly in line with the national average, which represented a substantial improvement on previous attainment in this subject. Performance in English also improved. As a result, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, was only slightly below the national average. However, in 2011 performance dipped and attainment in most key measures was significantly below the national average. Therefore attainment is low overall, although data provided by the school during the inspection suggest that performance in English and mathematics is now improving. Learning and progress have been satisfactory over the three year period since the previous inspection. However, learning and progress are improving securely and quickly as a result of a determined and effective drive to improve the quality of teaching. Learning and progress, as seen in the large majority of lessons observed during the inspection, were good and in some instances, outstanding. The learning and progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are good. Students' achievement is therefore satisfactory overall.

Students feel safe in the school. They trust staff and feel that they are listened to when problems arise. Behaviour is good and makes a strong contribution to learning in lessons. Students have an outstanding appreciation of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. As a result participation rates and involvement in the wide range of sporting activities on offer are very high. Students assume responsibilities willingly and they contribute well to the school and the wider community, for example as sports leaders or through dramatic productions. For example, during the inspection, pupils from a local primary school enjoyed watching the school's charming production of 'Goodnight Mr Tom'. Students' attendance is low but improving, as is attainment in English and mathematics. Therefore the development of workplace skills is satisfactory.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students are sensitive to the needs of others, and they are encouraged to reflect on a wide range of social and spiritual issues in lessons, assemblies and visits to places of religious worship. For example, students spoke highly of a recent assembly addressed by the mother of a local youth who was killed in a racist attack. They were clearly moved by her speech and commented, 'It made us think...and showed us the negative effects of prejudice'. Students develop an appreciation of cultural diversity as they move up through the school. For example, in an outstanding Year 10 Spanish lesson, observed during the inspection, students were learning about how Spanish Muslims, Hindus and Christians celebrate their festivals.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	4
Pupils' attainment ¹	3

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The quality of pupils' learning and their progress The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good. The best lessons are characterised by a brisk pace and a clear sense of purpose. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are often well-planned, with a range of activities to stimulate and engage learners. Many opportunities are provided for students to work independently and collaboratively. Teachers have high expectations and use questioning skilfully to establish whether students have understood the work. However, the quality of teaching in English and mathematics has not been as consistently good as in other areas of the curriculum.

The use of assessment information to support learning is good. In the large majority of lessons, teachers use assessment criteria well to guide students, explaining carefully and in detail what individual students need to do to improve their work. Marking is used highly effectively in some subjects to spur improvement; however, practice in this regard is inconsistent across the school.

The curriculum is improving as it is increasingly tailored to the needs of individuals. However, as these initiatives are at the early stages of development they have not had an impact on securing improvement in outcomes. Therefore the curriculum is only satisfactory. Partnerships are becoming increasingly effective in meeting the needs of students. For example, through links with the Jaguar motor company and Alder Hey Children's hospital, students have the opportunity to take up apprenticeships, thereby improving their prospects for future employment. Extra-curricular provision is a strength of the school. The sports' specialism contributes particularly effectively in this respect and students have the opportunity to participate in many trips and visits, both locally and internationally. The science specialism also contributes well, acting as a centre for the promotion of science across a group of local schools. Students enjoy participating in the 'Eco Club' which enables them to develop their awareness of ecological issues.

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall. Leaders of this aspect of provision demonstrate a passionate commitment to improving the lives of students. As a result, students who attend school regularly benefit greatly from the care, guidance and support they receive. However, the school has been less effective in reaching out to those students who are absent from school and improving their attendance. The school has now put in place more effective systems

to improve attendance and these are beginning to have an impact on reducing rates of absence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has effectively communicated his vision for the future development of the school. There is a tangible and concerted ambition to arrest the recent decline in performance and action to this effect has been swift and robust. Planning for improvement is aspirational but sometimes lacks precision. The school has developed far more rigorous procedures for monitoring the quality of provision and as a result self-evaluation is becoming increasingly accurate, although it was over-generous in the past.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. Extensive training, challenge and support have been provided in order to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, there has been a marked improvement in the quality of provision. Training for middle leaders has been effective in establishing a culture of accountability and the impact of initiatives is monitored assiduously.

The governing body is supportive and capable, bringing a wide range of experience in both education and wider public service. Governors are becoming increasingly confident in holding the school to account. They ensure that safeguarding procedures are consistently implemented. The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is good for the most part. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. Partnerships contribute effectively to students' learning and well-being.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination effectively. The school has made good progress in narrowing the gaps in performance between different groups of students. Racist incidents are rare and are dealt with effectively. The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion is good. The school itself is a cohesive community and students have the opportunity to mix with their peers from a range of religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds both locally and further afield.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with prior attainment that is well below average and performance in the past has been low in most subjects. However, students now have the opportunity to enrol on courses that are better matched to their interests and abilities. As a result, outcomes for students, particularly in Year 12, are improving. Therefore, students are now making satisfactory progress overall in the sixth form, given their starting points. Attendance is improving because the school has put in place improved monitoring procedures. Students develop mature and sensible attitudes towards their health and well-being and contribute well to the life of the school and the wider community. Learning and progress, as seen in lessons observed during the inspection, are good.

The quality of teaching in the sixth form is improving rapidly because of the drive across the school to secure teaching that is of a consistently high standard. Teachers display good subject knowledge and plan activities that promote enthusiasm and engagement in students. However, in some instances, activities are not sufficiently intellectually challenging to ensure that more able students make better than satisfactory progress. In the best lessons assessment information is used highly effectively to enable students to develop a clear grasp of what they need to do in order to improve their work. The curriculum has improved and students in Year 12 can now choose from a wide range of traditional subjects and an increasing variety of vocational courses. However, as these improvements in provision are at the initial stages of development they have not had time to improve the overall outcomes for students across both year groups. Students speak very highly of the care, guidance and support that they receive which they believe prepares them well for the next stage in their lives.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-evaluation is highly accurate and there is a clear vision for further development. Improvements in sixth form provision are starting to have an impact on improving outcomes but this is not consistent across both year groups. Procedures to improve monitoring and evaluation, particularly of provision in the partner institution, are at the early stages of development and therefore the impact of such initiatives is not clearly evident.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

There was an average return to the Ofsted questionnaire. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and most say that their children enjoy school and that it meets their children’s needs. The very large majority of parents and carers feel that the school informs them well of their child’s progress and that their child is making enough progress. Most parents and carers feel that the teaching is good at the school and the large majority feel that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Most parents and carers feel that the school prepares their children well for the future and that the school keeps their child safe. The very large majority of parents and carers feel that the school helps them to support their child’s learning and helps their child to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Most parents and carers feel that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour, although a very small minority expressed some concerns regarding this issue, as did some students. Inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms and around the school, had discussions with staff and students and scrutinised school documentation on the monitoring of behaviour. Their findings are in the report.

Most parents and carers expressed the opinion that the school is led and managed effectively and the very large majority are happy with their child’s experience at Childwall School.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Childwall School - A Specialist Sports College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 148 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,120 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	38	81	55	9	6	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	63	43	78	53	6	4	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	36	76	51	12	8	5	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	28	97	66	8	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	49	33	88	59	8	5	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	30	82	55	15	10	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	42	65	44	15	10	4	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	54	36	77	52	8	5	4	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	25	94	64	12	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	32	82	55	15	10	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	18	91	61	16	11	6	4
The school is led and managed effectively	62	42	74	50	7	5	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	50	67	45	2	1	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 December 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Childwall School - A Specialist Sports College, Liverpool – L15 6XZ

We would like to thank you all for the friendly welcome we received during our inspection of your school. We were impressed by the good attitudes you show towards each other. Your behaviour is good and you listen well to your teachers. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education. You have an outstanding appreciation of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle and enjoy taking part in the many exciting activities available to you. You make a good contribution to your local community, supporting many charities to help people less fortunate than yourselves. You make satisfactory progress as you move up through the school but your attainment at the end of Year 11 and Year 13 has been low.

Teaching is good in your school. Your teachers plan interesting lessons and you show enthusiasm for your studies. You appreciate the support you receive from your teachers and you know who to turn to if you have a problem. Your school is trying to work with you to reduce absence, but attendance rates are still low at the moment.

We have identified a number of areas where we think your school should make improvements. We have asked the headteacher to make sure that teaching in English and mathematics is as good as it is in other subjects. We have also asked him to help you to improve further your attendance. In our judgement, if the school takes these actions then this will help you to improve your examination results.

All of you can help in the further improvement of your school by attending school regularly and continuing to work hard. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,
Joan Davis
Her Majesty's Inspector

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