

Childwall School - A Specialist Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104697
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	324092
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Ms Jean Kendall

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1,258
Sixth form	283
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Griffiths
Headteacher	Mr D Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	November 2005
School address	Queen's Drive Liverpool L15 6XZ
Telephone number	0151 7221561
Fax number	0151 7371698

Age group	11–18
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CHILDWALL SCHOOL: A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

OFSTED REPORT 4th/5th MARCH 2009

Introduction:

The Inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional Inspectors.

Description of the School:

Childwall Sports College is a popular, oversubscribed, larger than average comprehensive school with 283 students in the Sixth Form and a further 54 students from other local schools receiving all or part of their Sixth Form education at the school. It gained Specialist Sports College in 2002 and offers use of its sports facilities to a number of local clubs. It became a Trust School in September 2008 in partnership with Liverpool Hope and John Moores Universities, Broadgreen International and the local Primary Care Trust. Childwall Sports College is also part of a well established 14-19 Collaborative working in partnership with two other local schools. The school is the home of a large Adult Learning Centre.

The school has a number of awards including Artsmark Gold, Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Sportsmark, Eco School Bronze and an award for Careers Education and Guidance. It has recently become a Teacher Learning Academy (TLA).

Key for Inspection Grades:

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

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL: GRADE 2

Childwall Sports College is a good school with several outstanding features. Key to its success is the warm and caring ethos fostered by all staff and greatly valued by students. This is a school with energy and ambition for itself and high aspirations for its students. Excellent relationships characterise the outstanding care, guidance and support provided for students and their friendly and constructive relations with each other. The school celebrates the diverse experiences and backgrounds of students and inclusion lies at the heart of all it does. Students thrive in this harmonious community and make good progress in their academic work and personal development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They truly feel safe, secure and valued. Parents are highly supportive of the school, stating for example, 'the Teachers are wonderful, they care for their pupils', 'The atmosphere is pleasant and friendly' and 'we like the way the Headmaster always gets involved and is so proud of his school'.

Students make good progress in their learning because teaching is good and well planned to provide for the varied needs. Any student needing help receives good support and makes good progress. Students of all abilities are challenged appropriately. Those who are vulnerable, including those in the care of the local authority, those who need help learning to speak English as an additional language or those who have particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support and make good progress. Students of all abilities are challenged appropriately. However, there are occasions when lessons are not sufficiently challenging or engaging and this can lead to low levels of disruption which slows the pace of learning.

Students' experience is much enhanced by the excellent curriculum which meets their learning needs and interests effectively. Students are able to choose from a rich range of academic and vocational courses which satisfy their varied aspirations and talents. As a result of the good teaching and flexible curriculum the percentage of students who attain five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C has risen and is in line with national averages. Targets have been exceeded for those who achieve A* to C grades including English and Mathematics. The school is taking every possible step to improve the attendance of some students with the support of the Local Authority and National Strategies.

Specialist Sports Status gained in 2002 has had a very significant impact on the school. What one staff member described as 'The buzz around P.E.' has rapidly enhanced the school's ethos. The Physical Education (P.E.) targets have been exceeded every year. Specialist Status brought vocational courses and ever wider extra-curricular activities so driving the changes which have led to the outstanding curriculum. It also fostered the spread of the most successful aspects of teaching so driving up standards and achievement.

Key factors underpinning the good and outstanding provision are the high quality leadership provided by the Headteacher and Senior Team and the high aspirations and determined drive for the improvement shared by governors and staff. They have created a real learning community in which all work in harmony and share the ambition to bring about further improvements. Good quality professional development serves to enhance the skills of teachers and support staff. Together with the strong systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision, this provides the school with good capacity to bring about further improvement.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SIXTH FORM: GRADE 1

Sixth Form provision is outstanding. Students are appreciative of the high quality of provision and are rightly proud of their Sixth Form. The excellent leadership of the Head of Sixth Form, ably supported by his team, has resulted in continuous improvement since the last Inspection. All aspects of the Sixth Form are closely monitored and evaluated and resulting actions demonstrate that there is a strong capacity for sustaining improvement. Every student is valued and given every opportunity to blossom. The outstanding curriculum, enhanced by effective collaborative arrangements with neighbouring institutions, is tailored to meet individual needs and embraces the school's commitment to equal opportunities and inclusion. Students take full advantage of the extensive range of enrichment activities, many of which give them opportunities to exercise responsibility in the main school. These aspects of provision contribute to the outstanding personal development of students and reflect the very high order of care, guidance and support they receive. Students are given challenging targets; they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Impressive support and intervention arrangements are in place if any problems arise. "You're never on your own" and "staff know us so well and notice if you're not yourself" are typical of the comments made by Sixth Form students. Good quality teaching and the cumulative impact of provision results in students making outstanding progress in their studies. Entry into the Sixth Form is non-selective and students enter with a wide range of ability. Standards are broadly in line with national average and given the starting points of some students, this represents significant achievement.

What the school should do to improve further:

- Ensure that in all lessons activities are sufficiently challenging to engage students and hold their interest.
- Raise achievement in English and Mathematics across the whole school and increase the percentage of students gaining A* to C grades in both subjects at GCSE.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS: GRADE 2

Students' achievement is good in the main school and outstanding in the Sixth Form. Their good achievement across Key Stages 3 and 4 is supported by an excellent curriculum which enables them to pursue pathways

most suited to their learning needs. As a result the percentage of students attaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE has improved considerably over the last four years and was in line with national averages in 2008. Students achieve highly in P.E. to attain standards that are above the national average. Science, Art and Design, Engineering and Vocational GCSEs were also high performing subjects in 2008. Students who go into the Sixth Form and those that join the Sixth Form from other schools go on to make excellent progress through the wide range of courses on offer.

The percentage of students achieving A* to C grades including English and Mathematics has improved. Targets based on students' prior attainment were met in 2008. The school has put good support in place for students who are underachieving and has grouped students according to their ability, needs and interests. Students are currently making good progress in their learning groups, where teaching is well targeted to their specific needs. The positive impact of support is also evident at Key Stage 3 where results in English and Mathematics have improved since a dip in 2007. Vulnerable students, including those speaking English as an additional language, make good progress because they receive good support tailored to their needs.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING: GRADE 2

The quality of the students' personal development and well-being is good, with some outstanding aspects, in the main school and outstanding overall in the Sixth Form.

Students' enjoyment of school is evident from their enthusiastic contributions in classes and their extensive participation in extra-curricular activities. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. The strong emphasis on promoting students' well-being gives students an excellent understanding of what they need to do to maintain a healthy lifestyle both physically and emotionally. Students can talk readily about healthy eating and they are involved in a wide range of physical activities. Students take an active part in school life, such as serving on the School Council or in the Sixth Form acting as Peer Mentors to younger students. These activities develop social responsibility and initiative. An exciting range of alternative work and training opportunities promotes independence, student confidence and their ability to make their views known. Sixth Form students have excellent opportunities for collaborative working. These skills lead to well developed economic awareness which prepares students well for future life.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have positive relationships with the staff and each other, and they are particularly proud of their harmonious multi-cultural community. Cultural diversity is celebrated and supported by visitors from the community. Spiritual awareness is promoted very effectively through an impressive range of curricular activities, assemblies and extra-curricular opportunities. As a result the school has a warm, relaxed atmosphere in which all flourish and feel included. Students truly feel safe, secure and valued.

QUALITY OF PROVISION:

Teaching and Learning: Grade 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good in the main school and in the Sixth Form.

Planning is a particular strength and teachers make good provision for the varied needs of all students. As a result higher attaining students are effectively challenged and those needing help are well supported. Consequently most students make good progress in lessons. Relationships in classrooms are positive. One student remarked that "teachers generally make their lessons interesting". All appreciate the wide range of teaching styles. A group of Year 9 boys forgot the cold and the mud and rose to the challenge of being coaches and referees in an outstanding lesson which developed their sport skills, responsibility and a sense of working together. Teachers' high expectations of the boys and the pace at which activities proceeded drove the learning of everyone.

Teachers manage their classes well and the behaviour policy works. However, where teachers set tasks which are not sufficiently challenging and engaging, this can lead to a low level of disruption. Assessment is secure. Students know how well they are doing and how well they should be doing. Day to day marking helps students to improve. As befits a Specialist Sports College the P.E. Department has played a key role in wider whole school development teaching; helping staff develop the creative use of information and communication technology (ICT) for example.

Curriculum and other activities: Grade 1

The outstanding curriculum is making a major contribution to raising standards across the main school and in the Sixth Form.

The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the diverse needs of all students and provide them with a broad and interesting range of experiences. Some students in Years 7 to 9 have a modified curriculum to support the development of core skills. This is impacting significantly on their confidence and self-esteem. Students can also start their Key Stage 4 courses early in Year 9 if appropriate to their needs. In Years 10 and 11 a new pathways curriculum provides students with a rich range of traditional and vocational courses. This flexibility satisfies the varied needs, aspirations and interests of students. Provision for ICT is improved and now all students in Years 10 and 11 choose from a range of courses leading to qualifications in ICT. The collaborative arrangements with local schools and colleges provides the Sixth Form students with an affluence of traditional and vocational options. The school's work related learning, work experience and careers education and guidance programmes prepares students well to make informed choices about their future. An exceptional programme of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities further enhance this provision in the main school and Sixth Form.

Care, guidance and support: Grade 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding in the main school and in the Sixth Form. The school provides a safe environment for its students. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are fully in place. Arrangements for safeguarding children are regularly reviewed.

Pastoral support is sensitive, well co-ordinated and very effective in promoting the well-being of students. Arrangements to settle new students, including those transferring to Sixth Form, are very effective. Those entering Year 7 are offered considerate support by Year 9 mentors and this is much appreciated. Students in need of additional support are quickly identified and their individual needs are met through the school's high quality support systems and flexible alternative programmes. Students know their academic targets and what is required of them at the next level, if they are to improve their work. All students are provided with the very best opportunities to succeed. As a result they make good progress in their personal and academic achievement. For older students, comprehensive careers guidance and work related experiences link very effectively to support from the Connexions Service.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT: GRADE 2

Leadership and management are good across the whole school and outstanding in some aspects including leadership in the Sixth Form.

The Headteacher and Senior Team provide impressive leadership and set a clear direction for improvement based on rigorous and accurate self-evaluation. Their high aspirations and determined drive for improvement are shared by governors and staff. Leaders have put good systems in place to monitor students' progress towards challenging individual targets and evaluate the effectiveness of provision. Monitoring is linked with

robust performance management processes. Any weakness is identified and tackled swiftly by providing support and through professional development. Professional development opportunities are also used effectively to enhance and enrich the skills of all staff, for example, through the 'Teacher Learning Academy' (TLA). Staff are effectively deployed to make best use of their skills and expertise. Consequently, students are making good academic progress across the school and the quality of their care is outstanding.

Self-review at departmental levels is at early stages of development. This is consistent in approach and provides a good tool for monitoring students' progress and evaluating strengths and weaknesses in provision. As a result of good analysis of performance data, faculty heads are well informed of strengths and weaknesses in students' performance. Governors also have a clear understanding of strengths in areas requiring development across the school. Together with the school's Trust Board they provide a high level of challenge and support to school leaders. Financial management is good and the school provides good value for money.

The school regularly analyses all aspects of its performances against gender, ethnicity and other factors. Consequently, the strategies it has in place to meet the varied needs of its students and to ensure equal opportunities for all, are highly effective. Inclusion lies at the heart of the school's planning. This enhances the real sense of community which pervades the school. It opens its doors to the wider community for 18 hours a day and during holidays. It does much to broaden the horizons of its wholly urban cohort – taking all Year 7 students for a residential experience to North Wales for example. The school's commitment to community cohesion at all levels, locally, nationally and internationally is outstanding.
