

Christ's College Finchley

East End Road, East Finchley, London, N2 0SE

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	N/A	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- GCSE results, while above national standards in 2012 and earlier, declined in 2013 to be below average.
- The proportion of students making expected progress in English was below national levels in 2013.
- Students from some ethnic groups, particularly those of Black African and Caribbean origin, made significantly less progress in 2012 and 2013 compared with similar students nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students making expected or better than expected progress in English and mathematics is below that of other students.
- The sixth form requires improvement. This is because there is variability in the outcomes achieved by students in different subjects.
- Teaching is not consistently good throughout the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher demonstrates high expectations and a clear vision for the school's improvement.
- The spiritual, cultural, moral and social education of the students is good. The school's strong values and social cohesiveness are evident in every aspect of the school.
- The behaviour of the students is good and improving.
- The integration of students from all backgrounds is exemplary.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 43 lessons to observe teaching and learning.
- Students' work and the school's assessment records of students' progress were examined.
- Inspectors met with groups of students, the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a community governor.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including records relating to teachers' pay and performance, the school's self-evaluation, school improvement and departmental improvement plans, records relating to attendance, behaviour and the monitoring of the quality of teaching, the governing body minutes, and safeguarding documents.
- The inspection took account of 19 questionnaires completed by staff. Inspectors also considered parents' and carers' views through a college-based survey and the 42 responses made online via 'Parent View'.

Inspection team

Thomas Packer, Lead Inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Carmen Rodney	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gill Walley	Additional Inspector
Mark Warren	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Christ's College Finchley is a slightly smaller than average all-boys' secondary school with a very small minority of girls in the sixth form.
- The college serves a diverse community and the large majority of students come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The three largest groups of students are White British, Indian and Black African heritages. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is significantly higher than average.
- The proportion of students in receipt of the pupil premium is above average. This additional funding is given by the government for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families. There are no children of service families currently in the school.
- The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs, at school action and school action plus is less than average.
- There is no alternative provision.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school enters some students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics.
- The school specialises in mathematics and science.
- Christ's College Finchley converted to become an academy on 1 September 2011. When its predecessor school, Christ's College, Finchley, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The headteacher is new and took up his post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - improving the rates of progress made by all students, and particularly the more able, middle attaining and those of Black African and Caribbean heritage, by ensuring that teachers use information on students' progress accurately to match work to their needs
 - ensuring that teachers plan and implement activities that engage and motivate all students in learning well
 - developing a consistent marking policy so that all students are clear about how they can improve.
- Develop the quality of leadership and management at all levels so that students can make better progress by:
 - monitoring carefully the impact of teaching activities on students' learning and giving clear feedback that will lead to teachers developing teaching styles that accelerate students' progress
 - ensuring that all middle leaders and staff consistently monitor and evaluate the progress made by different groups of students in relation to their ability, gender and ethnicity, and use the information to increase accountability and tackle underperformance
 - reviewing the amount of time given to English in Key Stage 4 to ensure that all aspects of the course can be taught in sufficient depth
 - increasing rates of progress in the sixth form by reviewing the curriculum and providing courses that better meet all students' needs.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards at GCSE have not been sustained over time. The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSEs at grades from A* to C including English and mathematics declined in 2013 and was significantly below national average.
- Results in mathematics and languages are above average. This is as a result of generally good teaching in these subjects. However, standards continue to vary too much between other subjects. In 2013, attainment was significantly below average attainment in subjects such as English, physics and geography.
- In 2013, students' progress in English was severely compromised because the allocation of teaching time in the subject was reduced in September 2012. Consequently, they did not achieve well.
- Students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding progress slightly less well than others. In both 2012 and 2013, they attained over half a grade lower than other students in English; in mathematics, they gained a whole grade lower. The school has only recently begun to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions in place to support these students.
- The rates of progress for students from different cultural heritages are uneven, in particular, those of Black African and Caribbean descent. For example, over the last two years, their performance has been significantly lower than their peers and for their respective group nationally. Again, leaders have recently begun to develop their awareness of the progress that these students are making.
- A significant proportion of students who have special educational needs do not achieve well enough. A range of targeted strategies to remove barriers to learning are in place to support these students. However, the impact of the work is not fully evident because only just over half of these students make expected or better progress. Students who speak English as an additional language perform slightly better than others, and are achieving as well as similar students nationally.
- While the more-able students achieve results that are broadly in line with similar students nationally, too few are achieving the topmost grades, A*/A, in most subjects. Similarly, middle-ability students are achieving below expectations because their progress is too slow.
- In the sixth form, the achievement of students requires improvement. Standards at A and AS level are broadly average and, while there is no difference in the performance between boys and girls, there is too much variation in the outcomes achieved by students across different subjects. Retention rates at the end of the AS year are not good. A further reason why sixth-form achievement requires improvement is because the curriculum offered is not suitable for a significant minority of students.
- Students' communication, mathematical and reading skills prepare them well for their next steps in education, employment or training.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across the school and within subjects. As a result, students do not always make the progress that is expected. In a few instances, inadequate teaching was observed by inspectors. In these lessons, the limited range of activities restricted students' learning - especially that of the more able. However, the support provided by the teaching assistants was consistently good.
- Where teaching is weaker, all students move at a slow pace. In these lessons, the students' attitudes lead to disengagement with learning, including instances of low-level disruption. Students' learning also slowed when they were given work they had already covered previously, occasionally in their primary schools. In several instances, students told inspectors, 'We have done this before.'

- Where teaching is good or better, students are achieving well over time. In these lessons, different tasks are set for different students, matched to their abilities. Activities move at a fast pace and teachers use techniques that stimulate students to think. In these lessons, all students were challenged, including the more able. For example, in a Year 11 biology lesson, students concentrated hard on a range of activities to gain a good understanding of the impact of drugs on synapses.
- Teachers communicate high expectations to their students. In examination subjects, teachers make it plain to the students what they have to do in order to achieve well. This was particularly noticed in, for example, GCSE and AS/A-level lessons in science and psychology where students were 'pushed' to master the taught skills. This contributed to students understanding how to apply the taught skills to gain the topmost grades.
- In outstanding lessons, such as in drama, students are fully stretched when they are carefully guided to use a range of skills. Students said the drama lessons 'really make you think about life'. For example, impressive teaching was observed in a Year 9 lesson based on 'the Theatre of the Absurd' where students were invited to grapple with political and social messages in a play before engaging in role play to work out why wars take place.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is generally better than in the main school. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan activities to suit the individual needs of the students. Most work is marked regularly. In some cases, students were able to explain how the assessment of their work helped them to improve. When speaking with other groups, however, it was reported that teachers do not spend much time encouraging students to address their mistakes. In these instances, inspectors noted that the same mistakes were subsequently repeated. Occasionally, work is not marked so students are left not knowing what they should do to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around the school is usually good. Students move purposefully between lessons. During breaks, there is general sense of orderly behaviour.
- Students reported that the recent strategies brought in by the headteacher have had a positive influence on behaviour. They say that there is much more consistent management and less toleration of poor behaviour.
- Inspectors observed complete harmony between students from all walks of life and all ethnic backgrounds. One student commented that Christ's College was the best preparation for his future because of the way that the diverse mix of students work closely together.
- The activities offered both out of school and as part of the 'My Zone' programme are warmly welcomed by students. Comments were made about the teamwork that these develop, for example in the Cadet Unit, which helps students work together and show respect for others. One student told inspectors how the 'facing difficult situations' course helped him understand the needs and viewpoints of others.
- Students feel safe. Instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students feel free to report bullying or misbehaviour without fear.
- Child-protection procedures are well understood by staff. Governors play an active part in ensuring all students are safe. All of the statutory requirements for the safeguarding of students, including recruitment of staff, are compliant.
- Students feel confident about the next steps in their education and training. They report that the wide range of activities offered played a significant part in this respect.
- The attendance of students is slightly below average. It is showing a steady improvement since September as a result of the school's initiatives, including the 'breakfast club'.
- There is some disruption in lessons which has an impact on students' learning. This takes place in the lessons where teaching is not good or when work is being repeated.
- In the staff questionnaire, some staff expressed concerns about behaviour.

- In several instances, students' behaviour in a few lessons is too passive, particularly when teaching does not stimulate them. On these occasions, students rely on others to answer questions and they are not always engaged in their learning.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, although a number of school improvement initiatives and strategies have been recently introduced, it is too early to see any significant impact.
- The new headteacher has accurately identified weaknesses in achievement and teaching. He has already put in place a number of well-considered measures to address these. Some of these have already begun to make a difference, for example the breakfast club for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable has improved attendance. The intensive catch-up and revision sessions over the half-term break enabled some students to improve their performance substantially in mock examinations.
- Ambitious targets are set for students' achievement. Students are able to explain what is expected of them. Examples of communications with parents and carers also show that the school makes its expectations very clear.
- The decision to reduce time for English at Key Stage 4 has made it difficult for teachers to cover the course requirements in the detail required. This has contributed to the decline in examination results in English.
- The curriculum provision for a significant minority of students in the sixth form is not appropriate. This results in students not continuing their studies beyond AS level in some subjects.
- Departmental reviews do not evaluate the progress made by sub-groups of students, for example minority ethnic groups, the more able and those for whom the school receives pupil premium funding. This is not helping some students to achieve as well as others, for example students from Black African and Caribbean backgrounds.
- Leaders at all levels can show evidence of how they check the quality of teaching. However, the quality of observations is too focused on what teachers do rather than on how well students are learning. Feedback given to staff, following lesson observations, does not always include well-thought-out developmental points for teachers. This means that teaching is not improving as rapidly as it might.
- Performance management is carried out regularly. Teachers report that they are aware of the role of performance management in pay progression. The process shows that teachers do not automatically move up the pay scale. However, some middle leaders do not always hold their teams rigorously to account over time.
- Although the college uses a number of initiatives to support students for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding, it has yet to put in place a robust system to analyse how successful the initiatives are in raising standards for these students.
- The college has not yet introduced a range of suitable programmes or projects to support the most-able students who are gifted or talented, including those who attract the pupil premium funding.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school, as evidenced for Ofsted's 'Parent View' and the school's own surveys. Governors are accessible to parents and carers, through, for example, their attendance at parents' meetings and school functions.
- The college provides a very good range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the values underpinning the way in which they conduct their lives. For example, students are respectful to each other's culture and faith; those who are new to the country and cannot speak the English language said that were readily absorbed into the student body. Subjects such as religious study and English expose students to other belief systems and world literature, as well as the English heritage. Students' caring approach to each other, and good relationships between different

groups of students, support the college's approach to developing students for life in a diverse society and beyond.

■ Arrangements to safeguard students meet statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are ambitious for the school. They play a part in the monitoring of teaching and liaise closely with departments. However, while they have a broad understanding of the school's performance, they do not have a detailed knowledge of how different groups are doing. They know what the pupil premium funding is being spent on, but they do not know how effectively the funding is being used.
 - The governing body is very experienced and uses a wide range of skills such as finance and business management to provide support for the leadership team. Governors have undergone training in the use of data. This enables them to assess how well students are performing and to ask searching questions.
 - The governing body ensures that students' safety is a priority, and that safe recruitment practices are carried out.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137388
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	432333

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	909
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Bowra
Headteacher	Samson Olusanya
Date of previous school inspection	not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8349 3581
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