

King Arthur's Community School

West Hill, Wincanton, Somerset, BA9 9BX

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2013

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| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| 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:

- Students' attainment requires improvement. English attainment is rising but remains a little below that of mathematics. Progress has accelerated quickly this year but improvements have not raised achievement above average levels.
- The gap between the progress of students receiving additional government funding and other students is wider than average and has only closed a little in 2012 and 2013.
- Teaching is variable in quality. There is much good practice but too many lessons do not challenge students enough or provide sufficient opportunities for them to work independently.
- Marking of students' work does not consistently offer useful advice to help them make improvements.
- Homework is often trivial and does little to advance students' progress.
- Behaviour is usually calm and relationships are good. However, students' attitudes to learning are too passive; they sometimes lack concentration and become too chatty.
- The full impact of the sweeping reforms that leaders and managers are making to the school is only partially apparent in improved achievement. Analysis of the performance of students receiving the additional pupil premium funding has been limited but is now improving.

The school has the following strengths:

- The headteacher has been a new broom that has swept through the school. With the strong support of senior managers he has brought in wide-reaching changes that set high expectations and have started to raise achievement and improve teaching.
- The largely new governing body has a firm grasp of the school and offers strong support and challenge to its leaders, managers and all staff.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 25 lessons taught by 24 teachers and undertook four joint observations with senior staff.
- Inspectors held discussions with students, teachers, the headteacher and senior managers, representatives of the governing body and a local authority officer.
- Inspectors examined numerous school documents including policies, assessment information, planning documents and records of all kinds.
- The views of 34 parents and carers were analysed through the online Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| John Carnaghan, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Marion Hobbs | Additional Inspector |
| Philippa Ronan | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- King Arthur's is a below average-sized comprehensive school.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for looked-after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and students who have a parent or carer in the armed forces) is below average. No students have parents or carers in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school uses alternative, off-site provision at Yeovil College for a small number of Years 10 and 11 students.
- The school receives Year 7 catch-up programme funding for just over 20 students who did not attain Level 4 in reading and/or mathematics at the end of primary school.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement to good by ensuring a higher proportion of teaching is good or better through:
 - planning lessons more thoroughly, taking full account of assessment information, so they offer the correct degree of challenge and support to all groups of students
 - reducing and providing more opportunities for students to work independently
 - developing homework so it consistently offers regular, engaging learning experiences that promote students' understanding and progress
 - providing more-engaging teaching, encouraging students to participate fully in their learning so reducing incidents of low-level misbehaviour.
- Provide clearer information to students on the standard of their work and how to improve it through regular marking that both offers good individual advice and encourages students to respond positively.
- Senior leaders and governors should use available data to check whether pupil premium spending has raised the achievement of this group of students sufficiently. They should then utilise this analysis to plan future pupil premium expenditure.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Attainment at the end of Year 11 requires improvement. This is in spite of developments in leadership, management and teaching that have reduced inconsistencies in attainment between subjects and groups of students. For example, school data show that English attainment has risen sharply this year and is now close to that in mathematics. The attainment in both subjects and overall is now close to national averages. The school does not have a policy of entering students for GCSE examinations early.
- Progress is improving across the school, led by better teaching. However, these developments are relatively recent and have yet to have their full impact. The school agrees that there is a great deal more to be done. The achievement of all groups of students requires improvement.
- In previous years the gap in achievement between students in receipt of the pupil premium and their peers remained wide. The attainment of this group in 2012 was nearly a year behind their classmates in English and six months in mathematics. However more rigorous targeting of resources to specific individuals has begun which has reversed this trend in the last year and the performance of this group of students, measured through national assessments, has begun to slowly close on that of their peers.
- Checks on students' progress identify where there are variations between groups. The school acts swiftly, proffering additional support from skilled staff at an individual or small-group level. This means that previous gaps in achievement have closed and there is now good consistency. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. The school provides equality of opportunity and ensures that there is no discrimination.
- The school has identified those subjects in which there is danger of underachievement and groups of pupils at risk of making slow progress. Rigorous actions to improve teaching in all aspects, including personalised support for students, have had a swift impact on achievement which has risen rapidly and is now much more consistent for all groups.
- Additional funding for those Year 7 pupils who need help to catch up with their peers is wisely spent. Opportunities for small-group work and one-to-one help are proving most effective and this group of students makes good progress, particularly in reading and writing.
- The achievement of the small group of students who undertake some of their studies off site is similar to their peers. This is because they are well supported by both the school and receiving college and the courses offered, for example land management, suit students' needs and aspirations.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Rigorous leadership and management have started to improve teaching but the process is at an early stage and the school agrees that too much teaching requires improvement because it does not promote good progress.
- In many lessons, planning lacks detail and teachers do not use the assessment information they hold on students to provide challenging activities for all groups and to target assistance to those in the greatest need. This is particularly concerning in mixed-ability groups, where work can be unsuitable for many and they switch off. Students commented that off-task behaviour is most prevalent in such groups.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers tend to talk for too long. Pupils sit passively, lacking opportunities to answer questions in depth or to work independently.
- Students have targets, often in the form of examination grades, but frequently lack the information they need to reach them. This is because marking does not always offer the precise advice required to help improve their work. It is rare to see a student respond to any comments

made in marking.

- Students report some frustration over homework. The homework timetable is not adhered to by many staff and in some subjects, little or no homework is set. The spasmodic nature of homework setting produces slack times and busy times where students find deadlines hard to meet.
- Small-group work, especially to support reading, is usually effective because such work is closely tailored to individual students' needs and because well-qualified staff foster constructive relationships with students.
- Better teaching sees teachers go out of their way to develop a good climate for learning and foster positive relationships. These lessons are usually engaging because they have good pace and varied and interesting activities so students stay focused on the task. In such sessions, teachers question students perceptively to check the quality of their learning, adjusting what they are doing to meet their needs.
- Mathematics is well taught and many students report that this is their favourite subject. An excellent Year 9 lesson on percentages typified some strengths. The teacher's strong subject knowledge, perceptive questioning and focus on every student developing the required skills underpinned outstanding progress and students' growing confidence in their mathematical abilities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Students speak positively about the new behaviour code and the effective system of rewards and sanctions that have recently been implemented across the school. They say that there is little significantly bad behaviour but accurately report there are occasions when low-level disturbances disrupt learning.
- Lessons are typified by students' generally positive attitudes but, where teaching is less engaging and the pace slows or teachers talk too much, students tend to lose interest and chat quietly to one another rather than concentrate.
- Parents, carers and staff report very few concerns about behaviour. The new behaviour code has promoted a significant fall in exclusions this year and attendance is improving rapidly as greater rigour is introduced into the methods of checking and following up absence.
- Behaviour around the buildings and outdoor areas is usually orderly and sensible. Students report very little bullying of any kind or other forms of discrimination and say any incidents are effectively and swiftly dealt with. They have a good understanding of the various types of bullying and say that they do feel safe in the school.
- Personal, social and health education lessons keep students fully informed about potential risks in everyday life, including on the internet or through using electronic media. Visits from the emergency services keep them all well informed about important topics like road safety and first aid.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leaders and management have not ensured that teaching has been consistently good enough to promote good progress throughout the school and that all students consistently behave well.
- The more recent strong focus on improvement across many aspects of school life has started to raise achievement, improve teaching and promote better behaviour. The full impact of these reforms is only just becoming apparent in achievement data.
- The headteacher's energy and optimism for the school are infectious. He has successfully promoted a shared ambition and renewed sense of purpose among staff and governors. The local authority provides good support to help the school address weaknesses. Plans for the future are practical and convincing and the school has the capacity for continuing improvement.
- Rigorous, systematic checks on teaching, increasingly undertaken by senior and middle

managers, provide the school with accurate information about where improvements are most required. Teachers are increasingly accountable and the school provides appropriate additional support and training that is well targeted to improve both teachers' and teaching assistants' skills.

- Regular assessment information is fed into a central recording system that accurately tracks the progress of each student. All staff have access to these data and trends are closely analysed. This information is used perceptively, not only to hold staff to account for each student's progress but also to initiate additional assistance to students who may be falling behind.
- The development of more sophisticated additional support, well tailored to individual students' needs has successfully addressed concerns about the progress in past years of groups such as disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- The mixture of subjects offered provides a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities. Focus days that cover areas such as preparing interesting learning resources provide good opportunities for independence and promote personal and social development.
- The advice for students as they make Key Stage 4 and post-16 choices is perceptive and fully takes into account individual needs. Students speak warmly about the additional opportunities offered by after-school activities, particularly in sport and music.
- Students enjoy numerous opportunities that promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Explicit links between the student code and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights emphasise the moral dimension to school life. Students are increasingly encouraged to take responsibility through opportunities like the new house system and participation in assemblies. Local partnerships, such as participation with local primary schools in putting on a musical and links with a Kenyan school, promote cultural awareness effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The many new members of the governing body have developed their capabilities by running systematic checks on all aspects of school life and undertaking relevant training. This enables all members to have a good grasp of the qualities of teaching and learning. They understand how performance management aligns teachers' pay to the quality of their work.
 - The governing body knows how the school needs to improve because members are aware of what assessment data say about achievement and where the school stands in relation to national averages.
 - The depth of information held by the governing body means that members are able to offer effective support and challenge to the headteacher and school.
 - The way pupil premium spending improves opportunities for students is not fully analysed. Because of this governors are not fully aware of whether it is allocated wisely.
 - Governors undertake regular checks to ensure that the school is a safe place. They contribute to the rigorous safeguarding procedures that ensure that the school meets all requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 123869 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 412760 |

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

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| Type of school | Comprehensive |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 560 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Charles Bradley-Hudson |
| Headteacher | Chris Beech |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9–10 February 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01963 32368 |
| Fax number | 01963 33735 |
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