

Archway School

Paganhill, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 4AX

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The quality of teaching is good and continuing to improve with many examples of outstanding practice. There is a very positive culture of reflection, collaboration and improvement among teachers.
- Achievement in the school is continuing to rise. Attainment is above average in many subjects. All groups of students are now making good progress across a range of subjects and key stages.
- The school is well led and managed. Senior leaders have a strong understanding of the school. The leadership of the headteacher and senior team has been relentless in improving standards. Highly effective systems are in place to monitor and improve the school's activities.
- Governors provide effective challenge and support by closely monitoring the impact of leadership, teaching and the use of government funding in supporting those students eligible for the pupil premium.
- The sixth form is good. The implementation of an enhanced curriculum is now improving standards for all students.
- Students' attitudes to learning are consistently positive; they behave well in lessons and apply themselves diligently to their work. They feel safe and secure from any threats of bullying.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Some lessons do not ensure that all students are given opportunities to develop their own independent learning skills.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because some small inconsistencies still exist between subject areas.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors worked with senior staff while observing teaching and learning and reviewing work completed by students. Inspectors observed 49 lessons eight of which were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team.
- Several shorter visits to lessons were made focusing on specific aspects of the school’s work. Inspectors spoke to many students in meetings, during breaks and lunchtimes and during lessons.
- They observed activities taking place during form and registration time and attended a school assembly.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders and with staff. A discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including internal and external data about students’ attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance records and students’ work. They scrutinised safeguarding procedures and records.
- During the inspection 109 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. Inspectors reviewed responses to parental surveys conducted by the school and 51 staff responses to a questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris King, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Justine Hocking	Additional Inspector
Shahnaz Maqsood	Additional Inspector
David King	Additional Inspector
Marion Hobbs	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- A below average proportion of students are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free schools meals and children from service families.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A smaller number of students speak English as an additional language, or are from minority ethnic groups, when compared to national.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school works with South Gloucestershire and Stroud College to provide vocational courses in either hair and beauty or construction for a small number of students in Key stage 4.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To further increase the proportions of outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers continue to share the very best practice in the school so that there is a greater consistency of outstanding teaching between subjects
 - lessons are designed to ensure that more opportunities exist for students to develop the skills they need to be more independent in their own learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards in both English and mathematics have improved over recent years. Students' attainment in gaining five A* to C GCSE qualifications including English and mathematics was significantly above national averages in 2012. Examination results in the summer of 2013 were also above the 2012 national average. Students' expected progress in both English and mathematics is above the national figure.
- From starting points that are in line with national averages students make good progress across a wide range of subjects and qualifications, including those that attend off-site provision. The school has particular strengths in geography, physical education, art and textiles. However, the school is aware that in some subjects students do not make as much progress as they do in others. While actions have started to impact on inconsistencies these need to be sustained over time.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Pass rates have improved as have the numbers of students gaining A*/A grades. Completion and retention rates have improved year on year. Following a review of the school's curriculum and the introduction of new courses students now achieve well and in line with the main school.
- The school quickly identifies any students joining Year 7 who have weaknesses in reading and mathematics. The school's use of the Year 7 catch-up funding supports students well, for example in improving reading. The initiative called 'sound training for reading' is ensuring that students make good progress in their literacy.
- In the past, the attainment of higher ability students has not been good. However, the school's drive to improve the performance of higher ability students is now successful. Students were seen in lessons making good progress as a result of stretching and challenging teaching. Attainment in A*/A GCSE grades has improved significantly in recent years and the school's own information suggests further increases in the future.
- In last summer's GCSE examinations, the gaps in attainment between Year 11 students who had benefited from the pupil premium and other Year 11 students narrowed significantly in both English and mathematics compared to the previous year. In 2013, this represented half a grade lower in English and mathematics. These gaps are much smaller than those found nationally as a result of initiatives in the school such as one-to-one tuition and additional mentoring.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve better overall when compared to national averages.
- Those students that attend a local college to study courses such as construction or hair and beauty achieve well and are in line with their peers as a result of a curriculum well matched to their needs.
- The school makes good use of early entry to support students' confidence and preparation for GCSE examinations. As a result students achieve better results than they might have normally achieved.
- Careful checks are made of the small number of students from minority ethnic groups to ensure they achieve as well as others. Consequently, the school promotes equality of opportunity, fosters good relationships, and tackles discrimination effectively.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good and improving. There is an increasing proportion that is outstanding as a result of the school's focus on learning and progress as well as a programme of monitoring and support using formal observations and learning walks.
- Good or better teaching was characterised by secure subject knowledge, which allows teachers to identify the best resources and quickly address any misconceptions. Questioning is skilfully used to deepen students' understanding and knowledge. Strong relationships and high

expectations contribute significantly to create a climate for learning and progress.

- Students feel supported by their teachers and say that they are given plenty of opportunities to catch up if they fall behind. They know their targets and understand what they need to do to improve.
- In the best sixth form teaching observed, students were encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of their own and others' learning, through independent reading and preparation. They presented arguments and explanations very clearly. The relationship between teacher and student was constructively collaborative and the level of student engagement was high.
- Where teaching was less effective, students learned at a slower pace and were less challenged. Teachers relied too much on students volunteering answers and therefore not enough were challenged in their own thinking and work. In many lessons students are given opportunities to share work with each other and engage in peer and self-assessment. However, students had fewer opportunities to fully develop their own independent learning when teachers spent a lot of the lesson talking.
- Targeted professional development is having a positive impact in increasing the overall quality of teaching in the few subject areas where it is less strong.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are effectively supported; in particular by the school's focus on literacy and the concern which staff and other students show for their welfare and well-being.
- Students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium and pupil premium funding receive good support from their teachers and additional adults in the classroom. They are clearly identified by teachers who cater well for their additional needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour around the school is good as are their attitudes to learning. Students listen well to one another showing respect for different opinions and viewpoints. Students and staff confirm that behaviour seen during the inspection is typical of behaviour over time.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. The proportion of persistent non-attenders is falling as a result of the school's effective tracking and liaison with parents and carers. However, the school recognises that there is still more room for improvement.
- The number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions has steadily decreased since the last inspection as a result of the school's effective behaviour management policies. Behaviour and safety, however, are not outstanding yet because levels of exclusion need to be further lowered and attendance improved still further.
- Students feel safe and secure at the school. They are fully aware of the different forms that bullying can take and have a good awareness of issues concerning cyber-bullying and social networking. They say that bullying is rare and quickly dealt with.
- The good behaviour of sixth form students contributes to the positive ethos in the school. They lead by example and are excellent role models to younger students. For example sixth form students talk to and answer questions from Key Stage 4 students about life in post-16 education. They share their experiences and offer advice and support to those that wish to stay on.
- The school is working well with parents, even those who are difficult to reach. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) said they felt their child is safe and well looked after at school.
- Those students that attend off-site provision behave well and attend in line with their peers.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led by a headteacher and senior leadership team that know the school's strengths and areas to improve very well. The systems in place to check and monitor the quality

of teaching have had a good impact on improving outcomes for students over time. As a result the school's capacity for further improvement is secure.

- Data are carefully used to target support to ensure that all make good progress. Accurate tracking of students has led to improved outcomes and raised achievement for all students including those in receipt of the pupil premium.
- Outcomes for students in the sixth form are showing strong signs of improvement, owing to improved teaching and a range of courses that are suitable for all tastes and abilities.
- The checks made on the quality of teaching are accurate and of high quality. The inspection team's view of teaching across the school matched closely that of school leaders. Moreover, good plans are in place to improve teaching further, including well-thought-out professional development opportunities for teachers.
- The local authority provides an effective light-touch level of support to the school. In particular, it has given good advice to help improve the school's progress and development.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs of students are extremely well met, through lessons, activities and particularly through the extra-curricular programmes. Large numbers of students are involved in school productions.
- The curriculum has been carefully developed and is continually reviewed. Overall, it successfully balances academic and vocational options to meet all needs and aspirations. The extended curriculum provides a wide range of sports and performance opportunities, as well as additional classes and revision sessions for students needing extra support. Partnerships with a local college and employers usefully extend students' choices and prepare them for progression to higher or further education, training or employment.
- Procedures to ensure students' safety and well-being are thorough and regularly reviewed. They include training in child protection issues for all staff. Liaison with external agencies, such as the police, health professionals and social and welfare services is extensive and drawn on whenever appropriate.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides good quality support and constantly challenges school leaders to improve the school further. It regularly updates with good quality training. Its members are kept well informed about students' achievement and the quality of teaching. This enables its members to ask searching questions that ensure senior leaders continue to speed up the rate of improvements. The governing body keeps a close watch on the progress made by students eligible for the pupil premium. Through one of its committees, the governing body closely monitors the performance of teachers and has now developed systems to ensure pay is related to the quality of their teaching and the achievement of students.

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	115723
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	426791

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
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	1170
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Pam Swindell
Headteacher	Colin Belford
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 February 2012
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