

# King Arthur's Community School

West Hill, Wincanton, Somerset, BA9 9BX

## Inspection dates

10 – 11 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement requires improvement; standards at GCSE level are not high enough.
- Students' performance across a number of subjects is below that achieved by students nationally, particularly in science and humanities.
- The most able students do not make rapid enough progress and so the standards they reach at the end of Year 11 are not high enough.
- Teachers do not enable students to excel in all subjects because their expectations of what students are capable of are not always high enough.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to develop their numeracy skills when being taught in subjects other than mathematics.
- In some lessons, where teaching is less effective, low-level disruption by a minority of students hinders learning.
- Some students, particularly boys, do not take enough care over the presentation of their written work.
- The actions taken by leaders and governors have not been sufficiently effective to tackle the variable quality of teaching and raise students' attainment.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has an ambitious vision for the school. He has set a clear direction but his drive for improvement has been hampered by some turbulence in staffing.
- Teaching is improving as leaders in charge of subjects have brought new ideas from other schools and training has been put in place to help staff. This improvement has not had time to impact on published results.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and other students in the school has narrowed. These students are now making better progress than previously.
- Students behave well around the site and at break and lunchtime. They are polite to each other and to adults. Attendance has risen as students are increasingly taking pride in their school.
- Students feel safe and well cared for because of the good level of pastoral support they receive.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 part lessons. Four of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers responsible for pastoral care, the Vice Chair of Governors and three other governors.
- Inspectors observed and spoke with students during their lessons, at break time and at lunchtime. They also met formally with groups of students from Key Stages 3 and 4. They looked at samples of students' books and considered students' work in lessons.
- The lead inspector spoke with an advisor from the Somerset Challenge who advises the school on its development.
- Inspectors considered key documents, including the school's improvement plan, the school's own self-evaluation, data about students' progress and reports from governors' meetings.
- The 34 responses to Parent View on the Ofsted website were taken into account along with the school's own parental survey.

## Inspection team

Paul Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Martin Watson	Additional Inspector
Ben Antell	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- King Arthur's Community School is much smaller than most secondary schools.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for student's eligible for free school meals or those looked after by the local authority) is in line with the national average. Some students are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is average.
- A small number of students take part in vocational courses at Yeovil College.
- The school is a member of the Tower Learning Community comprising two local secondary schools and eight primary schools which work closely together on issues of school improvement.
- Support for the school is provided through the Somerset Challenge which facilitates a group of six schools engaged in collaborative school improvement work and provides advice from a National Leader of Education.
- The school has an informal collaboration for mutual support and resource sharing with King's School, Bruton, a local independent school.
- In the last two years there has been significant turbulence in staffing.
- The majority of senior leaders have been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management and governance by:
  - ensuring that improvement plans, particularly in science and humanities, are clearly understood by all teachers and are closely monitored and acted upon.
- Improve the quality of teaching to accelerate students' progress and raise their attainment by:
  - making sure that work is set for the most able students which consistently deepens their understanding
  - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of the progress of their students
  - giving students more opportunities to develop their mathematical reasoning across the full range of subjects which they are taught.
- Improve behaviour by:
  - checking that all teachers apply the school's behaviour code consistently
  - making sure that high standards of written work are insisted upon.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### require improvement

- Leaders and governors have not improved the quality of teaching rapidly enough and so the achievement of students is not rising at a fast enough pace.
- Turbulence in staffing has had a disproportionate effect on this small school, slowing the pace of change. The headteacher provides strong leadership for the whole school community. He has made a marked difference to the ethos of this school since his arrival in 2012, raising students' aspirations and their self-belief. There is widespread support for the headteacher and his drive to improve teaching, behaviour and achievement.
- The improvement plans developed by leaders have not yet had enough impact on students' attainment, particularly in science and humanities.
- Several leaders in charge of subjects are new to the school or have been promoted from other roles. They are keen to develop and have grasped opportunities to collaborate with and bring in new approaches from other local schools. The strong teaching in physical education has also been used to model good practice. However, not all subject leaders have been effective in raising the quality of teaching in their departments.
- Pupil premium funding is targeted well to support individuals and has resulted in increased rates of progress for disadvantaged students. Senior staff and governors monitor the impact of this spending well, evaluating each intervention carefully.
- The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and tackles discrimination robustly. There is a positive atmosphere in the school. Staff know the students well and this helps them work together to develop appropriate attitudes. Positive messages about gender, identity and sexuality are reinforced through wall displays. Students joining part-way through the year are accepted by the school community, supported and made to feel welcome.
- Despite this being a small school, the curriculum consists of a broad, appropriate range of GCSE examination subjects at Key Stage 4. Students say they are given good advice about the options they choose for courses. The Year 7 curriculum has been developed in collaboration with partner primary schools and supports students to transfer smoothly from Year 6.
- A series of focus days are used alongside a comprehensive assembly programme to develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and their understanding of fundamental British values. This awareness is also supported by the recently introduced house system, with themes based on the Arthurian legend, which is encouraging students to work together and to model those values. Students are very aware of a wide range of issues in modern British society, including the risks of radicalisation.
- Leaders have ensured that the work the school does to keep students safe meets statutory requirements. There is a good level of awareness of child protection issues and also a healthy culture in the school of identifying concerns and sharing them with appropriate staff.
- The school has received only limited support directly from the local authority but is supported well through the Somerset Challenge organisation which provides strategic advice for senior leaders and governors. This is leading to strengthened links with local schools and has resulted in a number of initiatives which have improved the school in different areas.
- Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to seek the views of parents and work more closely with them. Their views are now routinely gathered at parents' evenings and through surveys. Parent forum groups allow detailed feedback on any issues that are raised.
- Records of behaviour kept by the school show that the number of incidents of poor behaviour and the number of fixed-term exclusions are falling.
- The school closely monitors those students who attend less regularly than others and has been successful in encouraging them to improve their attendance.
- Leaders carefully monitor the attendance and performance of those students educated off site. The school is involved in a local collaborative group which carries out quality assurance of 14 to 19 provision in the area.
- The school has strong links with the local community and local businesses. These links are used effectively to raise students' aspirations through, for example, internships in local high technology companies. The school employs a careers adviser to good effect, working with individual students and organising activities which ensure that students are fully informed about the options open to them when they leave Year 11.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body was reconstituted in September 2014; it now operates as a single board having removed the committee structure. The Chair of the Governing Body and governors are now better informed and more sharply focused on challenging senior leaders but they have not yet had enough impact on the achievement of students. The governors are knowledgeable, articulate and highly committed to the school.
- Governors now understand the school's strengths and weaknesses through good links with senior leaders who provide accurate data on its performance, the quality of teaching and the impact of pupil premium funding. They support the headteacher's use of the performance management process to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. Well-focused school visits are systematically documented and shared. They understand clearly that more needs to be done to address variations in the progress of students across different subjects.
- Throughout a challenging period of falling rolls and redundancies, governors have ensured that financial resources are managed effectively and that a balanced budget has been maintained.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## require improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Although most students have good attitudes to their learning, some students, particularly boys, do not take enough pride in their work. Untidy and careless work is not always challenged. This is why attitudes to learning are not good.
- Most, but not all, teachers have high expectations of behaviour and apply the school's behaviour policy. In a minority of lessons, where teaching is less effective, there is some low-level disruption which slows the pace of learning.
- At break and lunchtime students behave well, they are polite and courteous to each other and this contributes to a calm and orderly atmosphere. The school site is kept tidy and is well cared for; students respect their environment.
- The majority of students take care over their appearance. One Year 11 student commented that the new uniform, introduced by the headteacher two years ago, marked a turning point for the school.
- This is a small school with an inclusive ethos. The headteacher takes a lead in this respect, he is passionate about the school's role in promoting the welfare and academic progress of vulnerable students.
- Students have responded well to the introduction of a house system and to greater opportunities to take on leadership roles as house captains and prefects. During the inspection a group of students led a house assembly effectively, demonstrating the healthy rivalry between houses over attendance, punctuality, reading and academic work.
- Attendance has improved steadily over the last three years and is now above the national average for secondary schools.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students say they feel safe and looked after carefully at school.
- The checks that are made on those who apply to work or volunteer at the school are robust. Visitors to the school are monitored effectively.
- Incidents of bullying are not common but the school responds quickly well when they are discovered. The school has good systems in place for dealing with different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and as a result students know who to go to if it does occur.
- The school ensures that students are given clear advice about staying safe, for example how to stay safe on the internet or in relationships.
- The welfare and safety of students attending alternative provision are ensured by appropriate checks and by good communication between the providers and the school.
- Over four fifths of parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire said that their child is happy, well looked after and feels safe at school.

**The quality of teaching****requires improvement**

- In some lessons the work given to students does not match their needs. This is often the case for the most able who do not have enough opportunities to explore a wide range of solutions to problems by thinking differently about them or by approaching them in novel ways. Consequently, they do not deepen their knowledge sufficiently.
- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching across different subject areas. This leads to variable rates of students' progress so that, for example, achievement in English and mathematics is stronger than in science and humanities.
- There is too much variation in students' attitudes to learning in different subject areas. This is because not all teachers have the same expectations of behaviour.
- There is not enough emphasis on the development of numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics. Opportunities to illustrate mathematical reasoning and strengthen students' skills are being missed.
- Teaching is improving where there is more effective monitoring of classroom practice followed up with professional development training. Where teaching is at its best, teachers' expectations are high and imaginative activities are planned which engage and challenge all students. In physical education, for example, learning is consistently well planned and this stimulates students' interest and causes them to learn skills rapidly.
- Many teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to present ideas creatively generating good levels of enthusiasm for learning from their students. They are able to respond to students' curiosity with skilful explanations which generate further questions.
- Since the last inspection the school has developed a more rigorous approach to the use of homework. The amount of homework which is set increases through the school with a greater emphasis in Key Stage 4. This is helping students develop and extend their learning.
- The system for ensuring students receive regular, high quality feedback about their work is effective in the majority of cases. Inspectors saw good examples in English lessons of detailed marking which explained the next steps students should take in order to improve. These students commented that this was very helpful in showing them how to develop their ideas.
- The appointment of a literacy leader in September 2014 has improved the school's work in this area. An accelerated reading programme and focused work to help those Year 11 students who have weaker literacy skills are effective. There is now a co-ordinated approach to extended writing skills in English and humanities but this has not expanded into other subject areas. The quality of students' presentation of written work is too variable.
- Teachers are open to advice and guidance, they speak highly of the opportunities to observe each other's lessons and to share ideas at the regular Wednesday morning teaching and learning briefing. Evidence from discussions with teachers and support staff indicates that they are reflective and keen to develop their professional skills.
- Students are often involved in the assessment of each other's work and this helps their learning. There are many examples of good work on display around the school both in classrooms and in corridors. These show students what they can achieve and this raises their aspirations.
- Well over three quarters of parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire agreed that their child is well taught and makes good progress at King Arthur's.

**The achievement of pupils****requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because the proportion of students who attain five or more GCSE grades at A\* to C, including English and mathematics, was well below the national average in 2013 and 2014. Information about the students currently in the school indicates that their performance has improved. Year 11 students are now attaining standards which are higher than in previous years but at the same time are still below the national average.
- The achievement of the most able students requires improvement because a smaller proportion attain five or more GCSE grades at A\* to C, including English and mathematics, than is the case nationally. In science, humanities and languages a below average proportion of these students achieve A and A\* grades.
- The attainment of students when they enter the school in Year 7 has been consistently below the national average in recent years. Year 7 catch-up funding has been used effectively to help those

students who join the school with poor literacy skills and as a result the majority of these have shown good progress in reading and writing.

- The proportion of students in 2014 who made the progress expected of them between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in mathematics was in line the national average and the proportion making the progress expected of them in English was just below the national average.
- Students achieve well in GCSE physical education, statistics and photography as a result of the strong teaching in these areas. The progress of students in core and additional science, geography and history has not been as good and this has resulted in weaker GCSE results in these subjects.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE English or mathematics.
- Disadvantaged students arrive at the school with lower attainment than other students. In 2014, a smaller proportion of these students made the progress expected of them in both English and mathematics than their peers. Teachers' assessments and work in students' books indicate that disadvantaged students in Year 11 are currently making better progress than their peers in English and only slightly less progress than their peers in mathematics.
- When they finish Year 11 disadvantaged students are one grade behind other students in the school in English and just over one grade behind other students nationally. In mathematics, disadvantaged students finish Year 11 one and a quarter grades behind other students in the school and one and a half grades behind other students nationally. These attainment gaps are closing as their increased rate of progress takes effect.
- In 2014, the progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs was below that of similar students nationally. The school has reorganised the way it uses learning support assistants to support these students and introduced learning passports across the school. Current data supplied by the school indicate that more are now making the progress expected of them.
- Students who follow work-related courses off site have their attendance and learning carefully monitored and make good progress.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123869
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	453828

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	460
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing board
<b>Chair</b>	Charles Bradley-Hudson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Beech
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 – 12 June 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01963 32368
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