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Mr Chris Beech  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Beech

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to King Arthur's Community School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 March 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help that you gave me and for the time that you made available to discuss the actions that you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection. Please also pass on my thanks to your staff, pupils and governors.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

As a result of the strong leadership and actions taken by the headteacher since the previous inspection, supported by other senior leaders and subject leaders and the governing body, pupils' achievement is improving at a good rate as the quality of teaching rises. To sustain this improvement, the school's leaders should take action to improve teaching further by setting higher expectations for the pace and depth of pupils' learning and challenging them to produce work of the highest quality.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and subject leaders, the Chair and one other member of the governing body, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's self-evaluation and improvement plan were evaluated. The inspector, accompanied by the headteacher or other senior leaders, visited lessons across a range of subjects

and year groups. In these lessons, the inspector looked at pupils' work and talked with them about it. The information gathered from these visits was compared with the school leaders' evaluation of how well pupils are currently doing.

## **Context**

The school has undergone significant turbulence in teaching and subject leadership as a result of staff changes and extensive illness. In such a small secondary school, this has put significant pressure on the headteacher in achieving, with some success, the pace of improvement that he is striving for.

As a result of the decline in pupil numbers and the impact on the school's budget, the headteacher and governors are in discussions with a number of potential partners about the future status of the school.

## **Main findings**

- The school is now well placed to make the further improvements necessary to become a good school. Pupils' achievement is rising, building on the improvements seen in the 2015 examination results, as a result of better teaching across a range of subjects. Pupils' behaviour has also improved significantly and is sometimes exemplary. Pupils are a delight to talk to, polite, respectful and extremely welcoming. As a result, the school is calm, well ordered and a pleasant place in which to learn.
- Despite the improvements in 2015, the headteacher accurately identified the achievement of some groups of pupils, which are not as good as they need to be in some subjects, and related weaknesses in teaching. This included the low achievement of disadvantaged pupils in science and of some boys in English.
- Current pupils' work in English shows significant further improvements with more pupils making at least good progress. The previous gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils have closed or are closing rapidly. However, the pace of learning and the level of challenge are not yet high enough to encourage all pupils to achieve their very best. This lack of pace was also seen, for example, in pupils' work in French and German. Although the quality of the work is high, insufficient work is covered.
- Pupils' work in mathematics, as seen in Year 10, shows that the improvements seen in 2015 have been sustained. The previous gaps between the achievement of boys and girls, and between disadvantaged pupils and others, are not obvious in pupils' current work. However, not enough of the most able mathematicians are working at the level that they should be. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in mathematics, with excellent attention to all pupils' specific needs so that they make good progress from their different starting points.
- The pupils following courses in the three separate sciences (biology, chemistry and physics), around one third of the year group, make good progress and achieve well. Most other pupils follow a double science programme of core and additional science. Too few of these pupils make

good progress. However, the science subject leader is fully aware of what needs to be done to improve teaching.

- Pupils behave themselves well, and sometimes very well, in lessons. Many show enthusiasm for their learning, although passive compliance is still the norm in lessons where teaching does not fully grab their interest. Pupils respond extremely well when teaching motivates them to learn, as seen in the outstanding quality of work in a Year 10 catering class and high quality work in dance, music and product design (design and technology).
- Too much of the work seen in pupils' books in some subjects, such as geography and science, is not their own, but notes given by the teacher. This makes it difficult to gauge the depth of the pupils' understanding. As a result, they do not receive good feedback on their progress from the teacher.
- Understandably, the school places great emphasis on preparing pupils well for examinations. A significant amount of time in Years 10 and 11 is spent on practising examination questions. This leads to learning that can be superficial, rather than developing a deeper understanding. In addition, this can reinforce what is required to achieve a grade C, rather than setting high aspirations and expectations.
- Pupils' attendance has improved further overall and for all groups. The headteacher and other senior leaders are fully aware that more needs to be done to improve the attendance of some pupils.
- The school has a large proportion of vulnerable young people. The school's leaders have realistic expectations for their achievement. They apply a good balance of support and challenge to improve their attendance, attitudes or behaviour as appropriate. They set challenging targets for those aspects that will lay the foundations for future improved achievement.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The headteacher has established contacts with other schools nearby, enabling him to secure support in key areas. The approach is a very collaborative one to allow good practice to be shared effectively. This more outward-looking approach has contributed to some of the improvements that the school has already made since the previous inspection. The local authority is now more supportive and providing useful help and guidance for the headteacher and governors. The headteacher is more confident in being able to ask for help when required.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

James Sage

**Her Majesty's Inspector**