

King Arthur's Community School

West Hill, Wincanton, Somerset BA9 9BX

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- GCSE results have been poor for several years, including in English, science and languages. Leaders have not tackled this issue effectively and standards declined further in the 2017 examinations.
- Governance is ineffective. Governors have not focused enough on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Their ability to challenge the school is hindered by weak understanding of information about the school's performance.
- Leaders' strategies to support disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and those who enter the school with below expected standards in English and mathematics have not been effective.
- Leaders do not accurately monitor and evaluate the school's work. This has limited the effectiveness of their actions to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils do not make the progress they should in a range of subjects and year groups. In key subjects pupils' learning is limited.
- Teachers do not routinely take account of what pupils know, understand and can do in order to plan the next steps for their learning. Therefore, the most able pupils are not challenged, and the least able pupils find the work too hard.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Pupils are not consistently expected to complete unfinished work and poor presentation is not challenged.
- Leaders and teachers have accepted passive compliance of pupils in lessons instead of ensuring their active engagement with learning. Some pupils are easily distracted when teaching does not interest them.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' actions to improve attendance have been effective. Pupils attend regularly and persistent absence is rare.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong focus for the school.
- Pupils' conduct around the site is orderly. They are respectful and polite. Pupils respond quickly when spoken to and are punctual to lessons.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress made by all pupils, especially the disadvantaged, so that they achieve at least as well as other pupils nationally from their starting points by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that teachers have access to information about pupils' prior learning and use this to plan activities that enable pupils to make good progress
 - making sure that pupils complete work to a high standard
 - clearly identifying, and then meeting, the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those who enter the school below expectations in English and mathematics to enable them to catch up
 - building from pupils' compliance in lessons to consistently positive attitudes to learning and study.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - rigorously and accurately evaluating the work of the school, to understand the impact of strategies to improve pupils' progress
 - ensuring that governors have the necessary skills and understanding to support the school strategically
 - ensuring that governors hold leaders rigorously to account for the performance of the school
 - increasing the impact that additional funding has on the outcomes of the pupils for whom it is intended, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Urgently take action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - accurately assess pupils' learning and address any misconceptions quickly
 - challenge the most able pupils to think more deeply about their learning
 - provide pupils with learning activities that interest them and are closely matched to their needs.

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

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not taken rapid action to tackle the underperformance of pupils. As a result, pupils' progress has remained significantly below average and there is no evidence of improvement for current pupils.
- Leaders and governors recognise the underperformance of the school, but have been unable to address the issues effectively. This is, in part, due to financial constraints. However, a lack of secure monitoring, evaluation and strategic planning have led to leaders being reactive, instead of proactive, in addressing the school's key priorities.
- Leaders' evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment is overgenerous because it focuses on teachers' compliance with procedures rather than their impact on pupils' progress. Therefore, leaders' efforts to improve the quality of teaching and assessment have been ineffective in securing improvements in pupils' outcomes.
- The school has experienced difficulty in recruiting teachers in some curriculum areas. This, together with a high turnover in staff, has resulted in uncertainty, which pupils have found unsettling. This has, at times, been detrimental to their achievement.
- Leaders' management of teachers' performance is not sufficiently robust to ensure that it improves teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders' and governors' oversight of the use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities lacks rigour. The lack of robust information about the effectiveness of strategies used has resulted in a decline in standards for both groups of pupils.
- Additional funding to help Year 7 pupils catch up academically with their peers is not used effectively. Leaders do not monitor the use of this funding robustly to evaluate its impact. Nearly half of the pupils supported in 2017 fell further behind in English.
- Leaders have worked hard to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum, despite the challenges for a small school. Pupils' opportunities are extended with a range of extra-curricular activities. Additional funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils in accessing the full range of opportunities where required. However, leaders are unable to evaluate the effectiveness of this, or its personal, social, health and citizenship education programme.
- Leaders have successfully improved the attendance of pupils so that it is now consistently at or above national averages. Persistent absence is rare. The attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils has been slower to increase, but is now showing signs of improving.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Governance of the school

- Governors' support and challenge for senior leaders is limited due to gaps in their ability to understand and interpret information from the school. Training of key governors has not been updated when needed. Governors' focus on long-term finance

and staffing issues has hindered their effectiveness in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for current pupils in the school.

- Governors responded to the recommendations of the governance review in 2015, and there is evidence that most, but not all, of the recommendations have been implemented. However, this has not improved their effectiveness sufficiently.

Safeguarding

- Leaders have created a culture which ensures that staff are vigilant. Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- All members of staff are given training to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm. The school has robust systems to check that all employees are suitable to work with pupils and record-keeping is thorough.
- Senior leaders work closely with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are looked after well. The school is tenacious in following up referrals to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need. Pupils say that they are safe and know how to stay safe.
- On the same site as the school there is a sports centre and a nursery. Members of the public use these facilities during the day. The school manages the access to the site effectively, to ensure that pupils are safeguarded during these times.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching and learning are inadequate because, across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and languages, teachers do not challenge pupils to make the progress that they should.
- Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. They do not use information about pupils' prior attainment and learning effectively. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make sufficient progress because their needs are not being met.
- Teaching fails to provide sufficient stretch and challenge for the most able pupils and does not support the least able pupils. As a result, the attainment and progress of both groups are limited.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils fully understand what they are learning. For example, in science, many pupils carry out experiments without understanding what they are doing or why. In mathematics, pupils discuss methods for multiplication but many do not have the vocabulary required to fully explain their reasoning. As a result, pupils complete tasks without developing secure knowledge or a deeper understanding.
- Teachers do not routinely check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions before moving on. Therefore, pupils are unable to make progress because teachers do not build on a secure understanding of key concepts. Where teachers check learning and focus on key concepts, pupils are well supported and make progress. However, this is not typical across the curriculum.
- Teachers set homework through subject-based projects. Homework tasks demonstrate

low expectations in some areas, and tasks which are inappropriate for pupils of different abilities in others. The effectiveness of homework in extending or consolidating learning is limited.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- As a result of teachers' variable expectations, pupils do not consistently develop the attitudes required to be successful learners. Pupils' work varies in quality and presentation between subjects.
- Most pupils show pride in their school. They wear their uniform smartly and conduct themselves well around the site. They respect the school environment. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive, creating an environment where pupils feel safe.
- Pupils respond well when teachers provide challenging work and high expectations. For example, in Year 8, pupils engaged enthusiastically with discussions around solving logic puzzles in mathematics.
- Parents and carers and most pupils report that bullying is not common and that where it does occur it is dealt with effectively by the school. School records confirm that incidents are rare and appropriate action is taken. For example, the school responded to an increase in online bullying with a ban on mobile technologies. As a result, the incidents of bullying have declined.
- Pupils speak highly of the careers advice and guidance provided by the school. As a result of highly effective provision from the independent careers adviser, and careful tracking of their needs and aspirations, nearly all pupils move to sustained education or training after leaving Year 11. In the rare cases where places are not sustained, the school tracks and continues to support the individuals concerned.
- Pupils are taught how to be healthy and stay safe through the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. They have a secure understanding of how to stay safe, within and outside school, and on the internet.
- Pupils develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding adequately. For example, activities help lower-ability Year 8 pupils empathise with, and explain the feelings of, people from different cultures.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site provision. Staff monitor their attendance and they are well looked after. The school ensures that information is communicated to the provider effectively, so that they can support the pupils in their care effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because too many pupils do not have good attitudes to learning and are easily distracted when their work fails to challenge them sufficiently.

- Relationships between pupils and staff are generally positive. Where teachers address off-task behaviours, pupils respond quickly. Minor disruption of the learning of others is often a response to the low expectations of the teacher and inconsistent application of school procedures.
- Pupils' conduct around the site is generally calm and respectful. Pupils are polite to one another and adults. Consequently, there is an orderly atmosphere around the school at break, lunchtimes and at change of lessons.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Leaders have successfully addressed the slight decrease in attendance last year. Persistent absence is rare. With few exceptions, pupils are punctual to lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- In 2016 and 2017, pupils' progress was weak. Compared to national benchmarks, Year 11 pupils achieved well below pupils of similar starting points in other schools.
- In key subjects, such as science and languages, pupils currently in the school do not demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of basic concepts or vocabulary. They are, therefore, unable to grasp more complex ideas. In mathematics, the most able are not stretched and challenged to make further progress, but sometimes repeat tasks they have already mastered.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who enter the school with below expected standards in English do not catch up with their peers. The progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 declined further in 2017 so that, on average, they achieved a grade less than other pupils nationally from the same starting points. Nearly half of the pupils who entered the school below national expectations in English fell further behind during Year 7, despite the additional resources provided.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils currently in school is similar to other pupils in school from similar starting points. However, the achievement of the majority of pupils, across a range of subjects and year groups, is not good enough. Pupils' progress is highly variable, depending on the expectations of the teacher.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported by a range of individualised programmes. Historically, these pupils have not made the progress they are capable of from their different starting points. The school is unable to demonstrate that the progress of current pupils is any better.
- Pupils' progression to sustained training or education after Year 11 is well supported by the independent careers advice provided by the school. As a result, the vast majority of pupils successfully move on to their next stages. However, because many pupils do not achieve the grades they are capable of, their options are being limited.

School details

Unique reference number	123869
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10019969

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Charles Bradley-Hudson
Headteacher	Chris Beech
Telephone number	01963 32368
Website	www.kingarthurs.org.uk
Email address	office@kingarthurs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 June 2015

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2012.
- King Arthur's Community School is a smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as a second language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is average, and the number of pupils joining or leaving the school during their secondary education is about average.
- A small number of pupils attend The Mendip Partnership School, Reach or Crestmoor Construction alternative provision for their education.
- Pupils' attainment on entry to the school, in all year groups, is below average, and in some year groups is significantly below average.
- The school met the government's current floor targets, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in 2016 for key stage 4.

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupil premium and equality objectives on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 33 lessons, reviewed pupils' work and talked to them about their work. Samples of work across a range of subjects and year groups were analysed.
- Meetings were held with different groups of pupils to discuss their experiences of the school and listen to their views.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons, at break and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, governors, and talked to a local authority representative.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the development plan and pupil premium report. They looked at documents related to safeguarding, records of behaviour and attendance, and information on pupils' achievement, including the school's current assessment information. Inspectors reviewed governors' minutes and records of governor visits to the school. Documents relating to the management of teachers' performance were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of the 67 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including the written comments. They also considered 83 responses to the pupil survey and 27 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

David New, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Terry Fish	Ofsted Inspector
David Simons	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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