



# King James I Community Arts College

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 114306  
**Local Authority** Durham  
**Inspection number** 289872  
**Inspection dates** 24–25 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Tom Grieveson HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	South Church Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Bishop Auckland
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18		County Durham DL14 7JZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01388 603388
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	701	<b>Fax number</b>	01388 663536
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	111	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs T Sutton
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A S Rodchester
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

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<b>Age group</b> 11–18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 24–25 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 289872
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

King James I Community Arts College is located in the town of Bishop Auckland in the south west of County Durham. It is a smaller than average size college catering for 701 boys and girls, which includes 111 in the sixth form. Most students reside locally, although a minority travels from further afield, some to access the college's provision for young people with disabilities. The proportion of students eligible for free college meals is twice the national average. Few students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language. The college has a higher proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is found nationally. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is below average and a significant proportion of students have low literacy skills when they enter the college.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

King James 1 Community Arts College provides a good and increasingly effective education for its students. It excels in the level of care it provides for them.

The college is successful because the decisive leadership of the headteacher and senior staff has maintained a relentless focus on raising standards and meeting the needs of all learners. Their collective determination to improve matters, and the skill and expertise they apply to their work, demonstrates high capacity to bring about further improvement. This has ensured that good progress has been made since the previous inspection.

Those in leadership positions rigorously monitor the college's performance. Strengths and weaknesses are well known and understood. Targeted actions to improve matters have been mainly successful, although more progress is still required to tackle ineffective and underachieving departments.

Most students enter the college with standards which are below average. Their literacy skills are particularly weak. Nonetheless, the majority make good progress even though standards overall remain below average by the end of Year 9. Students make outstanding progress in Years 10 and 11. Consequently, the percentage of students achieving five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE is now well above average. Although standards are below national average when English and mathematics are included, the strong progress of recent years to improve performance in these subjects has been maintained.

Most teaching is good and the rigorous monitoring of teachers' performance by senior staff and subject leaders ensures that areas of weakness are rigorously addressed. The majority of teachers take great care when preparing lessons. They use the college's highly effective assessment system to track students' progress in exacting detail. The most effective teachers use this information to prepare activities which meet students' learning needs well. Consequently, work is challenging, the pace of lessons is brisk and students thrive and do well. Not all teachers, however, use this information well enough yet to plan lessons. When this occurs, the most able students in particular do not progress as well as they should.

The majority of students enjoy their learning and take pride in their achievements. They are proud to attend King James 1 College and enjoy their association with it. Behaviour is good and the majority of students demonstrate positive attitudes towards staff and each other. Good relationships are a strong feature of the college community. The college provides an exceptional level of care towards students' welfare. This helps them to feel secure and reinforces their commitment to the college and their studies. The college achieves good value for money.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

King James I sixth form is satisfactory. Induction procedures are good, with students being offered effective guidance when choosing their courses. The college has broadened provision significantly in recent years. Extended partnership working with neighbouring providers will shortly offer opportunities for students to choose from a wider, and more suitable, range of courses and qualifications than at present. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory because there is a clear understanding of where improvement is required and actions taken demonstrate that the capacity to improve further is good. Most students enter the sixth form with lower than average attainment. Students on GCE A level and AS level courses achieved below average standards in 2005 and 2006, but these results represent satisfactory progress given their attainment at the end of Year 11. Teaching in the sixth form is mainly satisfactory, although, good teaching is evident in some lessons. Detailed tracking of students' work enables most teachers to support learning effectively. However, not all teachers use this information as well as they should and this limits the progress of some students. Students' personal development and well-being are good. They benefit from a high degree of care within a supportive environment. Sixth form students make a substantial contribution to the development of the college through their work as college council representatives, as participants in the college's own radio station, 'Radio King James' and through the support they offer to younger students in their learning. They are enthusiastic about their work, their teachers and as members of the sixth form. The sixth form provides satisfactory value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

Improve consistency in the way teachers use assessment information to plan work to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners.

Secure improvement in underachieving departments.

Extend the range of course options to better meet the needs of all post-16 students.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Standards on entry to the college are below average with most students having weak literacy skills. At Key Stage 3 the majority of students make good progress, although standards overall remain below average at the end of Year 9. Standards at Key Stage 4 have improved markedly in recent years. In 2006, the proportion of students achieving 5 or more A\* to C grades at GCSE was well above the national average because students made outstanding progress. Whilst the percentage of students achieving 5 or more A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, remained below average in 2006 this demonstrates good and sustained progress overall. This significant improvement has occurred because the monitoring of students' progress is highly effective. This

enables most teachers to organise courses and plan lessons which meet students' learning needs well. In addition, the impetus provided by the college's specialist arts status has seen the introduction of new courses, including vocational options, and these have contributed significantly to the good progress being made in art, drama and media studies.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students' personal development is good throughout the college. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively developed through religious education and personal, social and health education programmes. Students demonstrate a high degree of respect towards different views, cultures and beliefs. Their behaviour is good. They understand their rights and respect their responsibilities within the college community. Most enjoy college, exhibit positive attitudes and enthusiastically participate in out of college activities. Attendance is now good and continues to improve. The 'You Can' centre offers highly effective offsite educational provision for those at risk of exclusion. Exclusion rates have decreased markedly. Students are encouraged to make informed, safe choices because of the emphasis the college places on the importance of healthy lifestyles. Students value the good relationships they have with their teachers. They feel safe in college and, if bullying does occur, they know how to get help and advice. College council and year councils make an outstanding contribution to college life and are increasingly influential in decision making. Members of these groups are confident and assured young people who take their roles seriously and with great dedication. Students are active in support of local community projects, including participation in the popular 'citizenship' afternoons.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Teaching and learning are good overall in the main college and satisfactory in the sixth form. It is good because most lessons have a clear, specific focus which takes account of students' learning needs by recognising the differing abilities in each class. In preparing these lessons, teachers have made effective use of the college's very good assessment information when preparing activities. They use an increasing range of teaching strategies to engage students and keep them interested. They make good use of the college's information technology facilities to support students in their work. In these lessons students demonstrate positive attitudes, work hard and the majority, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress. A minority of staff do not use assessment information well because they take insufficient

account of the learning needs of all students when planning activities. Where this occurs, the most able students in particular are not challenged enough and this restricts their progress.

Most teachers mark class and homework assiduously. This helps students to improve their work because they better understand what they are required to do next to make progress towards meeting their targets. Students commented how much they enjoy assessing their own work and that of their peers. This active involvement helps them better understand how to improve but not all teachers offer them this opportunity.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum is good in the main college and satisfactory in the sixth form. It meets all statutory requirements and includes all recent national initiatives. Students' extensive involvement in arts activities and the higher numbers studying vocational options have contributed significantly to meeting their needs, interests and aspirations and to raising standards. Community arts college status has enriched learning opportunities across the college and contributed substantially to improved results in art, drama and media studies. It is now beginning to have wider impact on the overall improvement in standards and achievement across the whole college. New staff appointments have successfully addressed previous weaknesses in music provision and extended the college's capacity to offer arts education for both students and the community. In addition, the increased amount of English and mathematics teaching at Key Stage 3, to support those students with below average skills, is having a beneficial effect on raising standards.

The provision of extra-curricular activities is outstanding. These include study support, a broad range of sporting clubs and 'Radio King James' run by students during breaktimes. In addition, the 'Bishop Auckland Theatre Hooligans' (BATH) is a major feature of the college's provision and contributes substantially to students' personal development. As one student commented, 'it's amazing how people of different ages and types get along like family' when reflecting on the work she and the group were rehearsing on tribal conflict in Rwanda.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of care and guidance is good with some outstanding features.

The college demonstrates outstanding care for its students. Considerable time is given to their transition from primary school and from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. Year 9 students speak positively about the 'taster modules' they receive before making their option choices for Key Stage 4. The Aim Higher programme provides very good guidance and support with regard to higher education opportunities from Year 9 onwards. A

very effective pastoral system provides daily support and guidance through form tutors and this is enhanced by the learning support team. Students speak highly of the help and guidance they receive from their teachers and this supports them to improve.

Effective procedures, properly underpinned by risk assessments, ensure that most aspects of students' health and safety are covered effectively. However, whilst the college is strengthening site security through the construction of a new entrance, further consideration is required in relation to access arrangements to the middle college building. Safeguarding procedures are in place; they are understood by staff, and efficiently maintained.

The college has a rigorous system for tracking students' progress and for taking action when weaknesses are identified. Most teachers, though not all, use this information well. Its use is helping teachers make a significant impact on improving standards. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well cared for and integrate successfully into college life. They make good progress.

Highly effective arrangements have been made to support disaffected students and those at risk of exclusion, in the 'You Can' centre. This is a very good example of the college's strong partnership with external agencies, to promote an effective multi-agency team approach to supporting students. This work has had a substantial impact on reduced rates of exclusion and improved attendance.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The highly effective leadership of the headteacher and senior team has ensured a sustained and well targeted drive to raise standards for all students. Their ambition for the college enjoys the widespread support of the community. The majority of staff exhibit high expectations to improve their effectiveness, both as individuals and collectively as a team. The college's strengths and weaknesses are known in exacting detail. Consequently, improvement planning is precisely targeted and resources directed towards where they are needed most. Quality assurance procedures are rigorous and this has ensured a relentless focus on improvement. Middle leaders are held suitably accountable for the performance of their departments. Where they are effective, standards are rising and the quality of teaching and learning is good. However, as the college has identified, a minority of subject leaders lack the necessary skills and determination to deliver sustained improvement. Governors provide challenge to the college and demonstrate an insightful understanding of its strengths and where improvement is required. Decisions are well informed because the college provides accurate and detailed information upon which decisions are based.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The College Council

King James I Community Arts College

South Church Road

Bishop Auckland

County Durham

DL14 7JZ

26 January 2007

Dear Students

Thank you for welcoming Mrs Jaffray, Mr Stafford, Mr McGrath and myself to your college on the 24 and 25 January 2007. We very much appreciated the time you gave us and for answering our many questions. You are excellent ambassadors for King James. The views which you expressed and the written submissions from your parents helped us understand what makes your college the place it is.

King James I is a good community arts college and the level of care it provides you with is outstanding. We were impressed by the quality of leadership provided by your headteacher and the senior staff. Their determination to constantly raise standards has greatly improved the quality of teaching and learning which you receive. Your teachers work hard and have your best interests at heart. They are equally keen that you should all achieve and do well.

We enjoyed observing you in lessons and talking to you about your work. Nearly all students have good attitudes to learning and want to succeed. Well done. Your College Council and Year Group representatives were excellent. They take their roles very seriously and are keen to serve the needs of all students well. What has been achieved by students through these councils is very good. Your headteacher takes a great interest in your views and opinions and many good things have happened as a result.

This is probably the only inspection report to mention the word 'hooligans.' However, the work of 'BATH' is exemplary and makes a wonderful contribution to the life of the college and the local community. However, it is only one example of many good things which you have opportunities to take part in. I know how much you appreciate them.

I have asked your headteacher and staff to concentrate on improving three things.

- To ensure that all staff use the college's very good assessment information when planning lessons to ensure that the needs of all students are constantly met.
- To ensure that those departments which are underachieving make the necessary improvements to raise standards.
- To ensure that the range of options available in the sixth form continue to expand so that the needs of all students can be fully met.

Thank you once again for the welcome you gave the inspection team and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tom Grieveson

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Her Majesty’s Inspector