



King Arthur's Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123869
Local Authority Somerset
Inspection number 292824
Inspection dates 14–15 February 2007
Reporting inspector Wiola Hola HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	West Hill
School category	Community		Wincanton
Age range of pupils	11–16		BA9 9BX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01963 32368
Number on roll (school)	680	Fax number	01963 33735
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Ian Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	14–15 February 2007	292824

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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

The school is slightly smaller than average. The proportions of students with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) and with statements of special educational need are average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The school became a specialist sports college in September 2002.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education and has clear strengths. The main strengths are: students' enjoyment of and achievement in mathematics; and the way in which students mature, work together and show initiative. Students' personal development is good. Students have positive attitudes to learning and, in most lessons, work with enthusiasm, rise to challenges, value their teachers' efforts and recognise their own progress. They are polite and considerate and express themselves confidently. Students' behaviour is mostly good and attendance is satisfactory.

Standards are average. Achievement is generally satisfactory although it has fluctuated in recent years. It has improved in Years 7 to 9, where it is now good. Achievement in science is a relative weakness: students and parents express concerns about some aspects of work in science. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but range from outstanding to inadequate, with some shortcomings in science. The school has put into place some good strategies for raising the overall quality of teaching and learning. These are bearing fruit in that the proportion of good lessons is increasing, but there are weaknesses in some teachers' skills in questioning students. The curriculum is good and includes a wide range of enrichment activities. The school is rightly seeking to develop provision for the most able students so that all subject areas provide equally well for them. The school's status as a specialist sports college has brought many benefits; for example, through links with other schools and the community, in enhanced resources and in the opportunities to develop students' teamwork and leadership skills. The school takes good care of students so that they are and feel safe. Students receive good support personally and academically. The school keeps a very close check on students' progress and identifies clearly any students that are showing signs of falling behind with their work. Students know what they are aiming for academically but they are not always entirely clear about the steps they need to take to get from one grade or level to the next.

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory overall with good features. Strengths and weaknesses are identified well and school self-evaluation is largely accurate. The headteacher has restructured the senior team to include a tier of 'school improvement leaders'. This relatively new arrangement is proving to be a positive force for change and staff value it because it enables them to debate and share good practice across departments. Action is taken to address weaknesses in teaching and learning but recruitment of teachers has been difficult in some subjects. A few shortcomings have yet to be dealt with, primarily in science. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, although the 2006 GCSE results showed a dip from 2005. The increased rate of students' progress in Years 7 to 9, the drive to improve teaching and learning, and the highly supportive management structure all demonstrate the school's sound capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in science by improving the quality of teaching and learning and students' enjoyment of the subject.

- Increase further the proportion of good lessons: strengthen some teachers' questioning skills so that they probe and check students' understanding more thoroughly, and use a wider range of strategies to do so.
- Ensure that all students are clear about what exactly needs to be done to improve on their attainment grades or levels.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and students' achievements are generally satisfactory. Students do particularly well in mathematics because teaching makes learning so enjoyable and satisfying. Since the last inspection, the school has worked successfully to improve boys' achievement, although boys are still not doing as well as they could in English. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve as well as their peers.

In Years 7 to 9, the rate of students' progress has been improving in recent years. It is now good for English and mathematics and broadly average for science. In 2006, the school exceeded its targets for test results in Year 9. GCSE results have been average in recent years but they dipped in 2006, when targets were not met. This year group made less progress than it should have because it included students with a high rate of exclusions. Students currently in Years 10 and 11 are making satisfactory progress. Some are making good progress and expected to meet quite challenging targets. In recent years, students have done well in French, English literature, applied ICT (information and communication technology), statistics and physical education at GCSE, as well as mathematics; they have done least well in science and geography.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Students establish and maintain good relationships with one another and with staff. They have good attitudes to learning, are attentive and conscientious in almost all lessons and, for the most part, behave well as they move around the school and at break times. Some incidents of poor behaviour do occur, and a few parents express concern about it. Students say that they feel safe at school and are confident that instances of bullying will be dealt with effectively. Students generally speak positively about the school and the opportunities that it offers but many do not enjoy science lessons. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved steadily in recent years but a significant minority of older students do not attend sufficiently regularly.

Students respond well to spiritual and cultural stimuli in art, music or dance, for instance, and give careful thought to moral issues such as those raised in religious education. They broaden their international understanding through educational visits such as those to Belgium, Italy or Spain. Students know how to lead healthy lives and how to keep fit. School council initiatives have resulted in improvements, such as those to the lunch menu. Students develop well the skills needed for working life and are

well prepared for their next stages, whether in further education or at work. They make good contributions to the school and wider community in many ways, including charitable ventures. Students of all ages enjoy taking part in school productions, such as *Oliver!*

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some teaching is outstanding but some is unsatisfactory, particularly in science. Good relationships exist between students and staff, classroom atmospheres are positive and students work hard because they want to learn and succeed. Even in the few lessons where the pace is slow or work undemanding, students are, in the main, cooperative. Students' homework diaries show the regularity with which mathematics homework is set: this homework and highly effective teaching contribute well to students' good achievement in this subject.

In the most effective lessons, teachers take care to ensure students understand very clearly what is expected of them and how to achieve high standards, for instance, by asking them to use examination assessment criteria to assess each other's work. Students' knowledge and understanding are checked with probing questioning and teachers sustain a challenging pace. In less successful lessons, teachers' questioning is superficial and does not always uncover the extent of students' progress or their misconceptions. Sometimes, the tasks set are pitched at too low a level, so that students repeat unnecessarily work done in earlier years.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and includes many enrichment activities. In Years 10 and 11, a flexible curriculum provides a good range of compulsory and optional courses. Some students take vocational courses such as agricultural studies, animal care and motor vehicle maintenance at the local college. The school curriculum includes Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) sport and dance and GCSE catering, for example. Gifted and talented students have been identified and the school is seeking to develop the curriculum to ensure that these students all achieve their best.

All students benefit from a personal, social and health education programme that promotes citizenship and safe and healthy living very well. Provision for work-related learning is good. An impressive range of visiting speakers, instructors and coaches enhances the curriculum in a number of areas.

Sports college status has allowed for a significant development in the range of physical education courses, with an ensuing increase in the numbers of students involved. The Junior Sports Leaders Award has been particularly successful and all students in Year 10 now complete this course. The physical education department has also contributed to the developments in improving the quality of teaching and learning across the

school and in the use of peer- and self-assessment. A significant contribution has been made to the development of physical education in several local primary schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Appropriate and effective systems are in place to ensure students' safety. Procedures for child protection are robust. Issues relating to bullying or harassment are dealt with promptly. Staff know their students well and students say staff are approachable and helpful. Vulnerable students and those experiencing difficulties with learning or attendance are clearly identified and supported well. Some good links have been developed with local primary schools, businesses and colleges of education. These provide for a good transition between schools. Subject information and careers guidance are good, and effective in enabling students to make study choices that match their abilities and preferences. Assessment information is compiled, analysed and used well to keep students' progress under review. Students appreciate the support they receive through the established pattern of academic guidance and mentoring meetings. However, some students are not given clear enough guidance on what they need to do to reach their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with significant strengths in the senior and school improvement teams. Staff have a shared vision to raise achievement in the context of a caring school that fosters students' personal development well and provides a wide range of educational experiences for students of all abilities and interests.

The headteacher, faced with variability in the quality of middle management, undertook an innovative restructuring of leadership and management responsibilities so as to provide strong support for school improvement in all areas of the school: this is proving to be generally effective, but shortcomings in science have not yet been tackled with success. There are clear indications, in lessons and in attainment data, that satisfactory achievement has been restored in the main: the students currently in Years 10 and 11 are expected to achieve average GCSE results.

The school's procedures for self-evaluation are good and strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified. Teaching and learning are kept under review well and appropriate support and intervention are provided where necessary to staff or students. The proportion of good lessons is increasing. Financial planning is good and efficient use is made of resources. Falling rolls are beginning to place a strain on finances and necessitating a gradual reduction in staffing levels. Governors are supportive and take good care over many important areas but have not challenged the senior staff enough over the standards that students achieve.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

Thank you for your welcome when a team of inspectors visited the school recently. We were very pleased to have many opportunities to talk to you in lessons and break times. Thank you for sharing your views about the school so candidly, confidently and politely. We found that the school is providing you with a satisfactory education overall and it includes some strengths as well as areas for development.

- These are the best features about your school:
- The school gives you many opportunities to develop your interests and become confident and articulate young people who are prepared well for their next stages in education or work.
- Your attitudes and behaviour are mostly good and, in the main, you work hard in lessons.
- The curriculum is good with a wide range of courses in Years 10 and 11.
- The school's status as a sports college is enabling it to enrich provision in physical education and elsewhere in your own school and in some others.
- The school takes good care of you so that you feel safe and supported.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are very clear about what the school does well and how it can improve. They have put into place some good strategies for improvement.
- The following are the most important things that the school should do, so that you all achieve your best. The school should:
- Make sure that you do better in science. The school should improve the overall quality of teaching in science so that you learn faster and enjoy it more.
- There are many good lessons but there should be even more of them and no unsatisfactory ones. Some teachers could be better at posing questions that enable you to show how much you understand.
- Teachers should help you to be clear about exactly how to improve your grades or levels; you should be able to explain what you need to do in each subject to get better results, apart from revising harder.

Most of your parents told us that they are happy with your work and progress. A few were concerned about some instances of poor behaviour. Several mentioned science as having shortcomings and inspectors agree about this.

We wish you all the very best for your own futures and for the future of the school.