

King Arthur's Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123869
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340447
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	585
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Paul Taylor
Headteacher	Ms Tamra Bradbury
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 25 teachers for 30 minutes each and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at data on students' attainment, tracking data, work files, action plans for departments and policies and procedures including those related to safeguarding. They also considered the views of parents expressed in the 195 parental questionnaires that were returned during the inspection and those from students and from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of the school's strategies for rectifying the dip in attainment in 2009
- the impact of the school's strategy on behaviour for learning
- the quality of teaching and whether it is challenging and skilled enough to promote good learning for pupils of all levels of attainment
- the extent to which the school meets the needs of gifted and talented students.

Information about the school

King Arthur's School is smaller than the average size secondary school and draws most of its students from Wincanton and the surrounding area. Well over 90% of students are of White British heritage. The proportion whose first language is not English is low. An above average proportion of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The highest proportions of these students have specific (dyslexia) learning needs, moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, social and emotional needs. The school has been a specialist sports college since 2002. There is a community sports centre and a private nursery on the campus which are not managed by the school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Overall, students enter the school with below average basic skills. They achieve well, enjoy their learning and make good progress. By the end of Year 11, attainment is broadly average and improving. In 2007 and 2008, the proportion of students achieving the higher GCSE grades including mathematics and English were at, or above, average expectations even given their below average starting points. In 2009, because of a number of factors including staffing issues, English GCSE grades fell back and were significantly below average. The inspection focus on students' current attainment and analysis of progress in key subjects and the results of Year 11 modular courses already assessed confirm that the school is back on track to achieve its challenging targets for this year. Students of all ages are eager to learn and develop their academic and personal skills. Behaviour is good and there has been a major reduction in incidents leading to exclusion since the appointment of the headteacher two years ago. Staff successfully emphasise the strong link between regular attendance and achievement. Attendance is broadly average and there is rigorous first day follow up on absences.

The quality of teaching is good because the headteacher and senior leaders have robust procedures in place to improve classroom practice. These are underpinned by strong self-evaluation processes and good staff development programmes. In weaker lessons there is not enough focus on meeting the needs of groups of average students within mixed ability or setted classes. In the most successful lessons seen, ongoing assessment helps teachers to challenge and meet the needs of individuals and groups. However, this approach is not consistently followed. Students' learning and progress are also good because of the wide additional range of very well targeted and focused interventions geared to the needs of the individual. These include one-to-one tuition, skilled use of effective teacher assistants, additional sessions and a regular half-termly review of each student's learning profile across all subjects. Gifted and talented students perform well. For example, all 35 students entered for GCSE statistics in 2009 achieved the higher GCSE grades. The curriculum has strengths in meeting the needs of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and is well matched to their capabilities. All the above factors indicate that the school is well placed to sustain its improvement in 2010.

Safeguarding is good and security is constantly being reviewed in the light of the new entry points and exits from what is a large community site with a separately run sports centre and a private nursery. Parents and carers and students confirm that they feel safe in school. In a specialist sports college students have a good awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and they eagerly participate in a wide range of physical activities. The school's policies relating to equalities and discrimination are good and are

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regularly and systematically reviewed. There is little difference in performance between boys and girls. The governing body supports the school effectively and works closely with the school on rigorous and productive self-evaluation projects. Partnerships with agencies and institutions outside the school are good. They are well targeted to meet the needs of a range of groups and of individual students. There are very strong links with the local community but regional contacts are fewer. The audit, action plan and impact of the community cohesion initiative are at an early stage and there is not enough focus on the diversity and cultures of other regions in the British Isles. The leadership and management of the headteacher, her deputy and her senior leadership team are effectively sustaining high morale amongst both staff and students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Remove remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment so that all teachers:
 - follow the school's systems for lesson planning
 - use the high quality feedback and guidance evident in the best lessons to help, particularly average achievers, know what they have to do to improve.
- Implement fully the school's community cohesion action plan by developing stronger links with other regions of the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Students enjoy their learning and so make good progress. Attainment is broadly at the national average and improving. Overall achievement is good. Students currently achieve well in English and mathematics; science has improved significantly since the last inspection. Older students develop good vocational and employability skills. The quality of students' learning in lessons can vary from outstanding to satisfactory depending on whether teachers pick up on which students are ready to move on to more demanding work. This is more often the case for students of average ability. In a number of vocational subjects, such as catering, students learn practical skills and make outstanding progress in their personal development. Students compete successfully in regional competitions such as the 'Young Chef' heats. Students' learning in lessons is complemented well by homework and extensive intervention programmes which focus effectively on individuals' learning needs. Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning because of the support they receive from teachers and learning support assistants working alongside them. Staff work very closely with a wide range of external agencies to meet the needs of the most vulnerable students. Boys and girls develop confidence in the use of information and communication technology and use it effectively in their learning.

Students across the school feel safe and value the support within the school from adults and their peers. Behaviour around the school is orderly and helps to maintain a safe environment. The bullying and racial incident logs show few incidents and those that do occur are dealt with effectively in line with the local authority guidelines. Disruptive

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behaviour in lessons is rare. The school is a well-established specialist sports college and students participate enthusiastically in physical activities. For example, they are involved in running health-related activities through the Junior Sports Leaders Award. Students have good opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community. Very nearly all students progressed to further education in 2009 which demonstrates well the school's emphasis on career guidance and support. Students' moral and social development are good and spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that teaching is good. Planning is thorough. A good lesson planning template is used which helps teachers to plan a variety of activities to meet the learning needs of different students. However, this level of individual or group planning is not always seen in lessons. Teaching assistants support individuals and small groups of students effectively and help them to make good progress. Assessment systems provide an accurate understanding of the performance and participation of all groups of students and help leaders and managers to fine tune

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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individual support for learners. However, in a number of otherwise satisfactory lessons teachers did not use assessment information sharply enough to accelerate learning. In the best practice, teachers are adept at using probing questions to check students' understanding and help them to 'think more widely'. This brings out the very best in the students and they make rapid progress. Students are encouraged to develop skills in evaluating their own work and that of others, and to hone their independent learning and collaborative working skills. In an outstanding Year 7 mathematics lesson, students worked very articulately in pairs to resolve compound shapes. Two students demonstrated their work by using the electronic whiteboard. Their classmates challenged them to explain differences they put forward with the teacher showing the way 'I'm not convinced, it's just a number' explain.'

There is a rich and impressive range of courses on offer for older students which match their interests and needs. There is a very strong curriculum focus on employability skills and this is raising achievement across all groups of students. Link courses with local colleges and BTEC courses in school are an integral part of the framework of choice. As a result, almost all Year 11 students remained in education after they left school in 2009 'a clear indication that the school ensures that they continue to see the value of education. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit greatly from nurture groups, flexible learning programmes and links with other schools. Extra-curricular clubs and learning groups are well supported. Strengths include Junior Sports Leaders Awards, sports outreach with primary schools in the Wincanton Federation and in the wider community, as part of sports college status. Vulnerable students receive effective support. Transition arrangements across all phases are good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Through her presence around the school during lessons and at breaktimes, the headteacher personifies and models the determination of all the school's staff to do the best for each student irrespective of background. Senior leaders have played a key role in the effective implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems. The school tackles discrimination well and is good at creating, and then forging, effective partnerships with colleges, local business and public services and local authority support services. Multi-agency work is strong and effective. These partnerships have been particularly effective in helping the school develop the vocational element of the

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curriculum. Partnership with parents is satisfactory, although a few parents feel that more could be done to help them support their children's learning. The school provides access to specialist services where needed, and helps to ensure a good equality of opportunity for every person associated with the school.

The school's work to promote community cohesion is very strong within the local community but less so in regional and international contexts. The school recognises that further work is needed to consolidate the work already started, especially initiatives concerned with extending students' understanding of the diversity of communities represented in the United Kingdom. Governors have good systems to scrutinise the work of the school through involvement in school evaluation reviews with managers. Governors also take more informal opportunities to meet with parents and carers, for example at parents' evenings. Safeguarding is good given the very complex building environment. Governors, headteacher, support staff and senior managers review and respond to new challenges in safeguarding very quickly. Procedures and practices for keeping students and staff healthy and safe are effective and are compliant with the necessary statutory regulations.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

One in three of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Of these, the vast majority say their child feels safe in school and that they think that teaching is good. In nine out of every ten questionnaires parents and carers stated that they are happy with their child's progress. However, a few do not feel that the school deals effectively with

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unacceptable behaviour, and also that the school does not do enough to help them support their child's learning. Inspectors identified a wide range of strategies, both rewards and sanctions, in the school to encourage good behaviour and observed that, almost without exception, students behaved in an orderly way.

Inspectors noted that a few parents and carers do not feel that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. The school is addressing this aspect in its school development plan.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at King Arthur's Community School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 195 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 585 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	31	112	57	22	11	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	27	130	67	7	4	3	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	34	108	55	18	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	29	120	62	13	7	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	44	23	130	67	16	8	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	24	109	56	38	19	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	22	116	59	32	16	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	69	35	101	52	14	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	30	116	59	16	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	19	102	52	37	19	10	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	23	114	58	21	11	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	61	31	109	56	14	7	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	35	105	54	13	7	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of King Arthur's Community School, Wincanton BA9 9BX

Thank you all for welcoming me and my three colleagues to your school on the 9 and 10 February. We enjoyed our visit and judged that King Arthur's is a good school. You make good progress in your learning and achieve well. The quality of teaching is good and in the best lessons your teachers check up regularly on how you are doing and move you on as soon as you are ready. The questionnaires that you answered show that almost all of you feel safe at school and nearly all of you believe that adults care for you. However, a significant minority of you would like behaviour to be even better, although our experience was that you were almost always well behaved. Your specialism as a sports college gives you many opportunities to develop physical education skills. You take very good advantage of the opportunities offered for a wide range of sports. For example, we were impressed with the students we saw performing so well in the after school indoor bowls club and in the girls' rugby group.

You told us that you develop good personal qualities, have a wide range of opportunities to take on additional responsibilities and receive good support, and we agree.

There were two areas we felt your school could improve further.

We would like teaching to become more consistent, so that:

- all teachers plan work which is at the right level for different groups in the class, especially for those of average ability
- you all get regular feedback on your progress and guidance on how to improve.

We also agree with school that you should have better opportunities to find out more about different communities in other areas of the United Kingdom.

You can of course contribute to this by working as hard as you can in all lessons to achieve your best. In addition, you will also help by continuing to report your views through your student council so the school knows exactly what it is doing well and what it could do better from your perspective.

Thank you again for your help in this inspection and I would like to wish you all the best in your studies and every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Evans

Lead inspector

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