

# Inspection of King Arthur's School

West Hill, Wincanton, Somerset BA9 9BX

---

|                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Inspection dates:         | 29 and 30 April 2025        |
| The quality of education  | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Behaviour and attitudes   | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Personal development      | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Leadership and management | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement        |

The headteacher of this school is Jonty Archibald. This school is part of Sherborne Area Schools' Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), David Watson OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Middleton.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

King Arthur's instils in pupils a belief that they can and will achieve beyond expectations. Staff encourage pupils to 'meet their dreams and lead their lives'. The school has developed strong links with the local community. Pupils learn in a happy and supportive environment. However, the quality of teaching that pupils experience across classes and subjects is inconsistent.

Pupils have a renewed confidence in their school. They feel safe and have a strong sense of belonging. Pupils rise to the high expectations that the school set for their behaviour. They appreciate the 'praise hard' approach that staff take towards them. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. At social times, pupils are respectful towards each other and engage well in extra-curricular activities.

Pupils benefit from a high-quality programme of enrichment. They attend trips abroad including to Berlin and Italy. Closer to home, many pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, visit universities and go on theatre trips. The school's 'Aspire programme' is celebrated by pupils and staff. Pupils participate in trips and activities that develop their leadership skills and encourage them to consider their future goals. Pupils also take on additional responsibilities such as being prefects or sports leaders.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Since the previous inspection, the school has been on a significant journey of improvement. Parents and carers are very positive about the actions leaders have taken to improve the school. The school's published outcomes have improved. Although pupils make improving progress through the curriculum, pupils' attainment remains below national expectations in some subjects.

The school has reviewed its curriculum offer to ensure it is broad and ambitious. Pupils receive appropriate guidance and support when choosing their options pathway in Year 9. An increasing number of pupils study the suite of subjects known as the English Baccalaureate, although this remains below the government's ambition.

King Arthur's is an inclusive school. The school successfully identifies pupils who may need additional support. Staff benefit from effective training to support their understanding of pupils' differing needs. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs met well in the classroom. Pupils with SEND are well represented in the school's wider offer of clubs and trips.

Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. Staff that teach out of their specialism are well supported. However, the quality of the delivery of the curriculum in some areas is too variable. Where practice is stronger, teachers use a range of approaches to check pupils' understanding well. However, on occasion, this is less precise and does not address pupils' misconceptions or their gaps in knowledge effectively. Therefore, these can persist.

The school has an ambition for pupils to read widely and often. Leaders have selected a range of diverse texts for pupils to read. The library is well resourced and welcoming. However, pupils' experiences of reading in school are variable. Reading opportunities are not always provided as leaders intend. On occasion, they do not capture the interest of pupils successfully.

Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read, although identified, do not receive appropriate support to catch up. They do not develop confidence and fluency in reading. For some pupils, this hinders their ability to access the curriculum.

The school has reduced the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Punctuality to school and between lessons has also improved. Pupils understand and follow the rules that are in place to support their positive behaviour.

Pupils receive strong careers advice and support for their next steps. They learn about digital literacy and employability skills. Pupils enjoy the study of philosophy and ethics which develops their understanding of the world around them. They learn the importance of looking after their physical and mental health.

Staff enjoy working at King Arthur's. They appreciate the professional development opportunities that they receive. There is a culture of mutual support, such as with the award of the 'Arthurs' to celebrate the effort of their colleagues. School leaders prioritise the wellbeing of staff and take steps to reduce their workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum is variable across classes and subjects. Some classroom practice does not build successfully on what pupils know and can do or consistently check pupils' understanding of what they have learned. As a result, in these instances, some pupils do not develop detailed enough knowledge or produce high quality work. The school and trust should ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently high, and that assessment is being used effectively.
- The school has not put in place an appropriate programme to support pupils at the early stages of learning to read. Additionally, the wider reading curriculum is in its infancy and is not implemented to a consistently high standard. Therefore, some pupils do not receive the support that they need to read fluently, and the ambition that pupils read widely and often is not realised. The school and trust should ensure that the reading curriculum for all pupils is of a high quality and delivered well, so that pupils learn to read at an age-appropriate level and develop positive reading habits.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

|                                            |                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 147016                                                             |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Somerset                                                           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10378973                                                           |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary Comprehensive                                            |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy sponsor-led                                                |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11 to 16                                                           |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                              |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 448                                                                |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees                                                  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | David Middleton                                                    |
| <b>CEO of the trust</b>                    | David Watson OBE                                                   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Jonty Archibald                                                    |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.kingarthurs.org.uk">www.kingarthurs.org.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 29 and 30 November 2022                                            |

## Information about this school

- A new headteacher joined the school in September 2024.
- The school uses one unregistered and four registered providers of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, two members of the academy committee, the interim director of education of the trust, and the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited some lessons, and sampled pupils' work, in science.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tom Hill

Ofsted Inspector

Nadine Lapskas

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2025