

# Archway School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	115723
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	385299
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Peter Sanderson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1136
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	168
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Pam Swindell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Colin Belford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8–9 December 2010
<b>School address</b>	Paganhill Stroud GL5 4AX
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Peter Sanderson

Her Majesty's Inspector

Hugh Betterton

Additional inspector

Helen Griffiths

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 27 lessons, taught by 27 teachers and two assemblies. Meetings were held with students, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and school staff, including the headteacher, senior and middle leaders. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, including students' books, and looked at a range of documents, including local authority reviews, attendance, exclusion and assessment data. As this was originally a section 8 inspection, Ofsted did not send out a questionnaire to parents and carers prior to the inspection. The school has recently sought some parents' and carers' views at a Year 11 parents' evening in November 2011 and a Year 9 parents' evening during the inspection. These are referred to in this report.

## Information about the school

Archway is a larger than average secondary school. It is the only non-selective secondary school in Stroud. Most students are of White British heritage and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below that found in most schools. The proportion of disabled students or those with special educational needs is also below the national average. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4. The school obtained specialist status in technology in 2001, holds the Sportsmark award and has Healthy School status. The sixth form works in partnership as one of four partner schools within the Stroud post-16 consortium.

When Archway School was inspected in December 2010, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school received two monitoring inspections prior to this inspection. At the last monitoring inspection, the school was judged to be making good progress.

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

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school now provides a satisfactory education for its students. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is also satisfactory.
- The percentage of Year 11 students attaining five or more A\* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics has risen since the last inspection. Attainment is now broadly average. However, the percentage of students attaining the higher A\* and A grades remains below the national average in a number of subjects. The achievement of all groups of students has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. However, there is variation in students' achievement between different subjects both in Years 7 to 11 and the sixth form.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving. The majority of teaching is now good, although there is too much satisfactory and not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that students make good progress. The quality of marking also varies across the school.
- The behaviour of students is good and they make a significant contribution to a harmonious school community. Students feel safe and report that incidents of bullying are rare, but if they do occur staff deal with the issues well. Attendance is average and improving and the number of exclusions is declining.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have high aspirations for all students. Teaching is improving due to robust monitoring linked to effective professional development for teachers. Systems to track students' progress towards challenging targets linked to effective interventions for underperforming students have been much improved. This information is now being used more effectively to hold middle leaders and teachers accountable for students' progress. These strategies are having a positive impact on students' attainment.

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

The governing body is well led and provides a good level of challenge and support to senior leaders.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Increase the percentage of the higher A\* and A GCSE grades attained by Year 11 students, by ensuring that all lessons provide higher attaining students with a suitable level of challenge.
- Increase the percentage of lessons in which teaching is good or better in the main school and the sixth form in order to further raise students' attainment by:
  - ensuring that all lessons proceed at a good pace and no time is wasted
  - ensuring that all teachers use effective targeted questions to check and develop students' learning and then respond by reshaping tasks to enable them to make good progress
  - ensuring that all marking gives clear and helpful advice to students about how to improve their work
  - continuing to employ effective strategies to share the best teaching and learning practice in the school.
- Reduce the variation in students' achievement between subjects by ensuring that all middle leaders rigorously monitor the quality of provision and outcomes for students in their subject area and take effective action to tackle underperformance.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Year 11 attainment in GCSE examinations in 2011 showed a marked improvement on those attained the previous year. Attainment for this year group was broadly similar to the national average. Attainment in mathematics rose strongly and achievement in this subject was satisfactory. There was some improvement in English attainment although a number of students, particularly more-able students, underachieved. Early entry GCSE results for current Year 11 students in English, plus lesson observations undertaken during this inspection demonstrate that students are now making satisfactory progress in English. Attainment is continuing to rise across the school, particularly the percentage of students on track to attain A\* to C grades, and students' achievement is now satisfactory. The percentage of students attaining A\* and A grades was below the national average in a number of subjects in 2011 and improving attainment at this level is less secure. School leaders have taken effective action to improve the achievement of boys, disabled students and those with special

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

educational needs. These students now make similar satisfactory progress to their peers. The questionnaires provided by the school indicate that generally parents and carers are positive about the progress being made by their children.

Since the last inspection school leaders have been successful in improving the progress made by students in lessons. In the majority of lessons students now make good progress because most teachers actively involve them in learning and pitch activities at the right level for them. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson students developed their understanding well of how characters interact in the play 'A view from the bridge', due to lively teaching, effective questioning and the opportunity to discuss in groups. However, when students are given too long to complete tasks or when work is not well matched to their needs their progress slows.

The attainment of students entering the sixth form is lower than that seen nationally across all sixth forms. In the past, some students started courses that were not appropriate to their needs and abilities, and as a result did not achieve a pass grade at AS level. The school has addressed this issue by broadening its curriculum offer and providing better advice and guidance to students when choosing courses. As a result, Year 12 students are now following courses more appropriate to their needs and abilities. Due to this and improved teaching they are now making satisfactory progress. Students' attainment at the end of Year 13 is below the national average, but given their starting points they make satisfactory progress on the courses they follow.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. As one student said, 'teachers have raised their game since the school was placed in special measures.' The majority of teaching observed was good; however, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that students make good progress and attain well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are generally well planned using a common format. In the better lessons, tasks are well matched to students' learning needs, actively involve them in learning and promote discussion through paired and group work. For example, in a Year 12 chemistry lesson students developed their understanding of the structure and oxidation of alcohols well through solving problems, which were well matched to their abilities, together in groups. They then shared their findings with each other, aiding their understanding. In the majority of lessons, teachers carefully target their questions to involve different students, and ask students to explain their answers in some detail, thereby checking and developing their learning well. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school. In some lessons, students are given too long to complete tasks and teachers do not check students' learning frequently and effectively enough through targeted questioning. Tasks set for students are also sometimes not matched well to their ability, particular more-able students. Teachers are now provided with much clearer advice about how to support disabled students and those with special educational needs. Most teachers are making skilled use of this information to tailor activities and in-class teaching assistant support to ensure that these students make

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

similar progress to their peers.

The curriculum provides good opportunities for students' cultural and spiritual development as lessons in a range of subjects teach them about different lifestyles, cultures, races and religions well. The good practice seen to promote the development of students' literary and numeracy skills in some subjects is not routinely embedded across the school.

Some marking is of high quality and provides good advice to students through 'how to improve' comments. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school and teachers' written comments vary in the detail and advice they provide. The questionnaires provided by the school indicate that parents and carers feel that teachers generally have high expectations and provide their children with good opportunities to learn.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students report that they feel safe and say that adults are very approachable if they have any concerns. They have a good understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed, both within and outside of school. Students have a good understanding of different forms of bullying and report that bullying in any form is rare. Students express confidence in the school's systems for dealing with any such occurrences.

Students are welcoming and friendly and movement around the school site is orderly. Generally, students are respectful and get on well with their peers. They socialise well with each other and have a good moral understanding of right and wrong. Students report that behaviour has improved since the last inspection and that the behaviour for learning policy is used more consistently by teachers. During this inspection behaviour was good in lessons and around the school site. Students with identified behavioural difficulties respond well to the school's strategies to help them behave well and engage with learning. Exclusions from school, which in the past had been above average, have decreased and are now average. Attendance is also average and improving. The questionnaires provided by the school indicate that parents and carers have a positive view of behaviour in lessons and around the school. A small number expressed some concern about low-level disruption in lessons. Inspectors found that on the rare occasions when low-level disruption occurs in lessons, it is, in almost all cases, a response to less engaging teaching rather than disengagement from school life.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations of staff and students and are driving forward improvement through rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Teaching has been improved through regular and robust monitoring and the skills of stronger teachers in the school have been effectively harnessed to support staff whose practice was in need of improvement. Significant improvements have been made to the school's tracking systems in both the main school and the sixth form.

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

Frequent assessment points enable senior and middle leaders to identify underachievement at an early stage and intervene. For example, a range of interventions such as revision and booster sessions and individual mentoring are in place. The impact of school leaders on improving students' achievement, teaching and behaviour since the last inspection indicates the school has good capacity to improve.

The responsibilities of middle leaders in driving improvement have been made clearer since the last inspection and they are being increasingly held to account through more effective line management meetings. Middle leaders are supportive of the new systems that have been introduced; however, not all are equally effective in driving improvement. As a result, although attainment is rising across the school there is variation in students' achievement between subjects.

The effectiveness of the curriculum has been evaluated and developed well in recent years. It is becoming increasingly tailored to students' needs and changes referred to in the previous inspection report have now had time to impact positively on students' achievement. The curriculum has continued to be broadened in both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form so that more vocational-based courses are available to students. The school's drive to improve 'learning through talk' and the quality of students' writing across the curriculum is having an impact on students' progress but is not yet fully embedded. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well across the curriculum.

The governing body has been restructured since the last inspection. It is well led and is well informed of the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement. It provides senior leaders with good support, and effective challenge has led to school improvement. The determination of the governing body and senior leaders to ensure equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination is evident in the successful action that has been taken to reduce the gaps in achievement between boys and girls and between disabled students and those with special educational needs and their peers. Along with senior leaders, governors have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are robust and meet statutory requirements.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



23 February 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Archway School, Stroud, GL5 4AX**

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school recently. As you know, the school has been receiving some extra help called 'special measures'. I am delighted to tell you that the school no longer needs this help because the school's governing body, senior leaders and staff have made some important improvements. We think the school now provides you with a satisfactory education both in Years 7 to 11 and the sixth form. The school has a good capacity to get even better. Here is a list of the school's main strengths.

- The progress you make in your lessons is improving and is now satisfactory. As a result your attainment is rising and more of you are attaining A\* to C GCSE grades in examinations at the end of Year 11.
- Your progress is being monitored well and those of you who are not making the progress you should are provided with effective extra help, particularly in English and mathematics.
- You behave well, told us you feel safe in school and that incidents of bullying are rare.
- You are provided with a broad range of both academic and vocational courses in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form that meet your needs and interests well.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked the governors, headteacher and staff to make the following improvements.

- Increase the percentage of A\* and A grades attained in GCSE examinations.
- Ensure all your lessons proceed at a good pace, that teachers use questioning to check your learning well and provide you with tasks that are well matched to your ability, and that marking gives you clear advice about how to improve.
- We have asked subject leaders to ensure that you make similar, good progress in all your subjects.

You can help to make these improvements by attending school regularly and continuing to get actively involved in activities arranged for you by staff.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sanderson  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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