

Archway Academy

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	330/6120
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135406
Inspection number	386825
Inspection dates	6–7 March 2012
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Archway Academy provides education for boys and girls aged 10 to 16 years who have learning, behavioural or social and emotional difficulties which make it difficult for them to cope with mainstream education. Students participate in one of three types of provision: one-to-one tuition by an education and skills mentor which may take place on site or at an alternative location; alternative provision which is mostly delivered on site; or vocational training for students who only attend part time. The school is registered for 30 students. There are 54 students on roll, 17 of whom attend part time. Thirty six students have a statement of special educational needs and six are looked after children. The school is located in the Digbeth area of Birmingham. Students receiving one-to-one tuition work from a base in Worcester. The school is privately owned. It opened in 2004 and was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2008.

The school's mission statement is: 'Integrity is non-negotiable; exceed expectations; challenge conventional wisdom; respect for all.'

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education is good. The school is highly successful in achieving its mission and re-engaging young people in purposeful education. This is the result of an outstanding curriculum and excellent relationships between staff and students. Although teaching is good, it is not sufficiently challenging to make the most of the curriculum. The school has continued to improve since the previous inspection and meets all of the regulations. The school has implemented robust procedures for the safeguarding of students.

Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding. It is extremely well matched to the needs of the individual students. It is underpinned by robust schemes of work which are adapted very well to support each student's specific needs. Consequently, the school is extremely successful in developing students' positive attitudes to learning and enabling them to re-engage very successfully with education.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

The school's induction procedures are very detailed ensuring that, through discussions and assessments, it gains a thorough understanding of each student's learning and personal needs. As a result, the school ensures that students' individual programmes are highly personalised. Each student has a year plan to ensure full curriculum coverage. These are shared with students, parents and referring agencies to ensure all stakeholders understand the planned learning. Virtually all of the students who have a statement of special educational needs receive one-to-one tuition which is planned carefully to meet the student's individual needs and interests, while adhering to the requirements of the statement. Several students remain on the role of maintained schools. Archway Academy has developed very strong partnerships with these schools as well as with the local authorities. Weekly meetings and written reports provide an excellent level of detail about individual student's learning and development.

Each student's programme includes a broad range of subjects including a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education as well as physical education. The programme provides very good opportunities for students to develop their social skills. The provision of art for all students is an improvement since the last inspection. Visits to places of interest are very carefully planned to enrich students' learning experiences. They are purposeful and are followed up well with reports and projects, frequently providing excellent links between different areas of the curriculum.

The school offers a range of accredited qualifications at entry level focusing on key basic skills of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, science and principles of business administration. Students can also gain qualifications in subjects such as bricklaying, carpentry and hospitality. These vocational courses are particularly effective in engaging students in purposeful learning.

Students receive good quality careers guidance through the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) qualification and through focused activities such as 'job club'. This programme prepares students very well for their future training or employment.

Teaching and assessment are good. Tutors and mentors know their students extremely well and have developed very effective relationships with them. Consequently, students have a high level of trust and self-confidence. They respond well to the high expectations of their tutors. Each session is thoroughly planned, based on good levels of subject knowledge, to ensure that teaching time is purposeful and students learn effectively. Tutors inspire students to learn. For example, a talented student was enabled to develop his interest in history and literature leading to the publication of his own book of short stories. The school makes very good use of alternative venues in the community, such as libraries and cafes, to put students at ease and encourage them to learn. Tutors are very patient and use clearly established routines and encouragement very effectively to keep students focused on their learning.

Students make good progress. It is not better than this because tutors do not take full advantage of the outstanding curriculum to ensure that students' understanding is fully developed. They miss opportunities to ask sufficiently detailed questions to challenge students' thinking and extend their understanding. On a few occasions, tutors tell the students too much or do things for them rather than guiding their learning through careful questioning. On occasions, students are left to work on a task for too long without sufficient guidance from the tutor to move learning on more quickly.

The school's assessment and reporting procedures are good. Initial assessments are an important step in planning individual programmes. These assessments use functional skills tests alongside detailed interviews to assess students' learning needs, including their academic ability and their individual learning styles. Students' progress is then tracked through daily reports and monthly assessments based on their individual targets which include recognised qualifications.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students thoroughly enjoy their time at Archway Academy. Attendance levels are rising year on year and far exceed the poor attendance that many students had at previous settings. Students feel that they are respected and they appreciate the time that staff give to them. They show high levels of respect for each other and are extremely courteous to visitors or when working in public places. For example, they listened carefully, and politely asked pertinent questions during a presentation by two police officers. This helped to develop a positive view of how the police work to promote law and order rather than the negative view of authority that many students may have from past experience.

The staff are very effective in helping students to build a high level of self-esteem. As a result, students feel better about themselves and show pride in their work. They have excellent attitudes in lessons and there was virtually no slowing of pace as a result of inappropriate behaviour. They have a very good understanding about right and wrong and respond very well to the school's strategies to manage behaviour. Students who have come to the school with significant behaviour problems have quickly developed effective strategies to manage their own behaviour, enabling them to learn and make progress. Consequently, students' behaviour is outstanding.

Students from a variety of cultural backgrounds work and socialise together very well. They report no bullying or racial intolerance. The curriculum includes excellent opportunities to develop an understanding of different religions and cultures. For example, students participate in activities to celebrate festivals such as Eid, Diwali and Easter. Individual programmes include a wide range of visits where students are able to develop their cultural understanding and sense of wonder, such as when they visit art galleries and museums. Students who had completed their hospitality course were taken to an exclusive restaurant enabling them to experience and evaluate the

subject through first-hand experience. Their written reports demonstrate a good depth of understanding.

There is a very good sense of community in the school. For example, students worked together to use their skills to create a Christmas scene; bricklaying students built a chimney stack while art and design students created a backdrop inspired by the work of Vincent Van-Gogh. Students make a significant contribution to the community through such things as the students' own fundraising initiatives, voluntary work in charity shops and making and donating bird boxes to local primary schools.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. Although many aspects of this provision are excellent, it is only good overall because a few of the school's policies and procedures have not been kept fully up to date. For example, the bullying policy has been reviewed recently but does not take sufficient account of the latest guidance. Nevertheless, the school's procedures are effective in ensuring that there is no persistent bullying and students feel very safe. They undergo a comprehensive induction programme when they join the school. This includes safeguarding training as well as familiarisation with the wide range of policies implemented to help keep them safe. The behaviour policy is clearly written and sets out succinct and clear expectations.

The child protection policy is detailed and clearly written. It is overseen by the safeguarding committee, all the members of which have undertaken training at an advanced level. The school routinely collects students' views about safeguarding through questionnaires. It takes appropriate action to address any issues that arise. For example, it has introduced student-friendly risk assessments in workshops, and provided drug awareness training for staff and students.

The school has implemented robust procedures for identifying and minimising risks to students both on and away from the school site. It makes good use of an external consultancy to provide expert guidance on health and safety issues. Procedures for fire safety and first aid meet requirements.

Students maintain their fitness through participation in weekly physical activities and most are enthusiastic about these. They have a good understanding about healthy eating, although many choose to consume too many unhealthy drinks and snacks at break and lunchtimes. Hospitality and catering lessons provide excellent opportunities for students to develop their understanding of healthy eating. One student who was cooking a meal was able to explain clearly how the different constituents of the meal contributed to a healthy diet.

The school has prepared an accessibility plan which meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school carries out all of the required checks on staff prior to their appointment and maintains a single central register in line with requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is housed in a two-storey unit on a former industrial site. It has been suitably adapted to meet the needs of the school. The refurbishments have been carried out to a good standard to provide an attractive learning environment. There is good provision for the teaching of specialist subjects including information and communication technology, art, hospitality, bricklaying and carpentry. There is limited outdoor space, but good use is made of local facilities for sport and recreation both indoors and outside. Local venues such as libraries and cafes in Birmingham and Worcester are used well for one-to-one tuition.

Provision of information

The school provides all of the required information for parents, carers and others through its website and prospectus. Parents and carers are provided with clearly written reports about the attainment and progress of their children at the end of each term.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a clearly written complaints procedure which fulfils the regulations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Make more effective use of questioning in lessons to assess understanding and move students on more rapidly in their learning.
- Take a more proactive approach to developing healthy eating habits among the students.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special		
Date school opened	2004		
Age range of pupils	14–19 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 32	Girls: 5	Total: 37
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 17	Girls: 0	Total: 17
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 32	Girls: 4	Total: 36
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 3	Girls: 3	Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72 to £125 per day		
Address of school	86 Watery Lane Middleway Birmingham B9 4HN		
Telephone number	0121 7727772		
Email address	jim.ryan@archwayacademy.org.uk		
Headteacher	Jim Ryan		
Proprietor	Jim Ryan		

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.



8 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Archway Academy, Birmingham B9 4HN

Thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome when we visited your school this week. We very much enjoyed talking with you and observing your lessons.

You are right when you say how well the school meets your needs. It has continued to improve since it was last inspected. The curriculum is now outstanding because it has been planned particularly well to match your needs and interests. Your tutors and mentors know you all very well and are very good at keeping you focused on your learning. You make good progress in most of your lessons. I have suggested that your tutors might try to ask you some more challenging questions to help you to develop an even better understanding of what you are learning about.

The opportunities you have to learn through practical subjects, such as hospitality and catering, and bricklaying help you to understand the importance of education for your futures. I very much enjoyed sampling your cooking, but was a little disappointed to see many of you consuming a lot of unhealthy snacks and drinks.

Your behaviour is excellent and you are very courteous to visitors. You listened well to the visiting police officers and politely asked some sensible questions.

Please keep up your excellent attitudes to your work, and try to eat more healthily.

Yours sincerely

Mark Mumby
Her Majesty's Inspector