

# The Arnold Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106826
<b>Local authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	377470
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Anna Dawson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	170
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Denise Venn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Hague
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Goldsmith Road Herringthorpe Rotherham S65 2LY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 828983
<b>Fax number</b>	01709 721185
<b>Email address</b>	margaret.hague@rotherham.gov.uk

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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Anna Dawson  
Kathryn Dodd

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent eight hours observing 22 sessions and four shorter observations of children's learning led by five teachers and 14 Early Years' practitioners. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and a small number of parents and carers. Although there were no formal meetings with children, opportunities were taken to talk to the children and listen to them talking to staff during their sessions in school.

Observations were made of the school's work, the children's records of achievement, photographic evidence and documentation relating to the children's attainment, the school's provision, leadership and safeguarding. The inspectors analysed 41 questionnaires from parents and carers and others completed by the staff.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized nursery, situated within The Arnold Children's Centre. It offers part-time and full-time places. Most children come from the surrounding area. The majority are White British. Twenty-one per cent of children come from a variety of backgrounds and are learning English as an additional language. Sixteen per cent of children are disabled or have special educational needs. The school holds a number of awards including the Quality Mark for Early Years.

The nursery shares a site with Badsley Moor Infant School and Badsley Moor Junior School. These schools and the day care for children in the 0-3 age range within the Arnold Centre are inspected separately. Their reports can be found on the Ofsted website.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of children</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of children</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. The parents and carers wholly support the school. They comment very positively on the high-quality education and care their children receive, for example, 'an excellent nursery', and 'I am delighted with the education, care and encouragement that my child receives.'
- From their starting points, children make rapid progress in all areas of learning and achieve exceptionally well. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Children learning English as an additional language, disabled children and those who have special educational needs benefit from skilled support and achieve equally well as others.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Any difficulties or barriers to learning are overcome. The staff are very skilled in their questioning and developing of children's thinking and problem-solving skills. Children's communication, language and social skills are assessed on entry and found to be lower than their other skills, but are particularly well-developed, especially during indoor activities. Occasionally, when children work outdoors, these skills are not as well-developed. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Behaviour is excellent. The children enjoy their learning immensely in this happy and inclusive environment. Relationships between the children and staff are excellent and children feel very safe and secure. Attitudes to learn are excellent and the children are motivated very well to learn independently. The welfare of the children is paramount and the children are cared for extremely well.
- The school is led exceptionally well by the headteacher, who, supported very effectively by the senior leaders, sets a clear agenda for continuous improvement to ensure that children reach their full potential. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are extremely good. The children are very well-prepared for their next phase of learning.

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

- Provide more opportunities and resources for children to develop their language and communication skills during their outdoor activities.

## Main Report

### Achievement of children

Most parents and carers believe that their children make at least good progress. The inspection evidence indicates that children's achievement is better and is outstanding. From their starting points, which are well below those typically expected of children of this age, particularly in communication, language and literacy, most make rapid progress and achieve extremely well. Immediate action is taken to evaluate and meet the needs of every child as soon as they start nursery. Those children who are disabled and those who have special educational needs are supported exceptionally well by specialist staff. Children learning English as an additional language are helped extremely well, with the aid of bilingual support and resources. Consequently, all groups of children enjoy their learning and achieve equally well. For example, children were enthralled by the story of the 'Tiger Who Came to Tea'. The subsequent discussion of the story prompted the children to write an invitation to the 'tiger' to invite him to tea. The children listened carefully to the 'tiger's acceptance letter' and in anticipation, the tables were set for a tea party. They were enthralled as their teacher entered the room in the role of 'the tiger'. All children thoroughly enjoyed their 'tiger tea'. The discussion during tea developed successfully children's thinking and learning. By the end of the session, children had increased their knowledge and understanding of tigers and different kinds of fruit and vegetables. The children demonstrated how well they are learning their sounds and letters as they made extremely good attempts at writing and reading their party invitations.

Small-group teaching to accelerate learning in language and communication skills where skills are low on entry have been successful in raising attainment over the last three years. This is particularly the case for boys, who start with skills that are slightly lower than the girls. By the time they leave, children's language and communication skills are slightly below those expected for the majority, but a significant minority is achieving as well as other children nationally. In other areas of learning, children achieve the skills and knowledge expected for their age and there are strengths in their physical, personal and social development which are above those usually found. The essential learning skills, such as the enjoyment of books, reasoning, problem-solving and knowledge of information and communication technology (ICT) are promoted very well.

### Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is outstanding and parents and carers agree. For instance, they write comments such as 'my child has come on in leap and bounds, not only with reading and writing but in his confidence and independence', which reflect an appreciation of the hard work and dedication of staff. Children's learning is very

frequently reviewed and when necessary, additional resources and help are provided to enable them to participate fully in all activities. For example, when appropriate, children receive effective individual support which helps them to overcome any barriers to their learning. The high quality of questioning and consistently challenging dialogue that constantly takes place develops children's thinking, independence, confidence and problem-solving extremely well. The small target group sessions led by the staff are particularly successful in accelerating children's learning. For example, a small group of children were learning very well how to develop their listening skills. During one activity, they listened very carefully to the sound of different musical instruments played by the teacher hidden behind a screen. As they heard the sound of each instrument the children enjoyed playing a matching game, correctly identifying the name of the instrument played and then checking their response was correct by replicating the sound they heard. The game challenged the children very well as it became progressively more difficult when more instruments were added with similar sounds. Although activities such as these are consistently taught very well by the staff indoors, the outdoor activities are occasionally not of the same high quality. Very detailed systems record accurately children's progress towards their early learning goals. Records are updated frequently and used very well by staff to plan activities to enable the children to achieve their best.

Curriculum topics and activities are varied and allow children to follow their interests and the different cultures and backgrounds of the children. For example, children enjoyed celebrating Eid by preparing and tasting a range of different foods. Such activities make a significant contribution to the children's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Behaviour and safety of children**

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Parents and carers agree with the inspection judgement that their children are exceptionally well cared for, feel safe and that behaviour is typically excellent. The children learn extremely well from the high expectations of the staff to respect others and have very good manners. Skills such as co-operation, taking turns in group discussions or matching games and sharing their resources are above those usually seen at this age.

There are excellent relationships between staff and children. The children listen to and follow instructions exceptionally well. For example, they move around the nursery sensibly and use resources carefully so they will not cause accidents. When they have finished an activity they tidy up very efficiently, for instance, by washing their paint brushes and palettes and putting them back ready for others to use.

Because the children know and follow the nursery rules and expectations there have never been any incidents of racism or bullying. Minor concerns are immediately and quickly resolved. The children are happy and feel safe and secure. When asked, they indicate that they really enjoy school.

The staff take great care of the children. For example, children are very aware of how to stay safe in the sun. They know they should apply sun cream and wear a hat when it is hot. Most have an increasing awareness of the importance of staying safe outside school. They understand how to cross the road safely, which is promoted very well by the local road safety officer. Attendance, although not statutory, is good

for this age. The vast majority of children attend regularly and any absence is immediately followed up.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Strong support is given from the very well-qualified senior leadership team. Success is underpinned by very effective monitoring which is followed up by a high emphasis on developing the professional expertise and skills of the staff. This is achieved by attending courses, learning from their own and external monitoring of performance and by sharing best practice with nearby similar schools. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The successful strategies to improve children's achievement are evident in the increasingly higher standards of the children's language and communication skills over the last three years. The school is in a very strong position to continue to improve.

The effective governing body receives very good information to enable it to act as a critical friend and work successfully alongside the staff to achieve the school objectives. All safeguarding requirements are fully met. There are robust systems in place for the care of children and the safe recruitment of staff.

The school is fully inclusive and all children have an equal opportunity to succeed. Steps are immediately taken to enable children to overcome any difficulties as they arise. There are remarkably good relationships with outside agencies, particularly with the staff from the children's centre who provide services, courses and family support. There are strong systems and extremely good support for children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The provision for disabled children and those with special educational needs is exceptionally good. There is very effective support for children learning English as an additional language.

The curriculum is exceptionally well-planned for the children to become independent learners as they are encouraged to follow their interests and devise their own investigations. The children's outstanding spiritual, moral social and cultural development is planned exceptionally well. Topics, reflecting other cultures, increase children's awareness of diversity within society. For example, they celebrate the 'Chinese New Year'.

There are excellent relationships with parents and carers who agree with the inspection judgement of outstanding leadership and management. The Arnold Centre is at the heart of the community. The staff work hard to provide the help that is needed and an increasing number of parents and carers support their children's learning at home and at school.

## 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 children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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 up 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 child's 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.
Floor settings	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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 children 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 children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children's 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.**



24 May 2012

Dear Children

**Inspection of The Arnold Centre, Rotherham, S65 2LY**

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly to Mrs Dodd and me when we came to visit the nursery. I know you get on with one another and help each other really well and have lots of fun together.

I am writing to tell you what we found out. Arnold Nursery School is an outstanding school. Mrs Hague and the teachers take great care of you and try their very best to help you.

We can see you are happy, enjoy all your activities and feel safe. We were really pleased to see you learning your letters and sounds so well. We enjoyed reading the invitations you wrote to invite the 'tiger' to tea and know that you really enjoyed your tea party. You get on really well together and play sensibly. We were pleased to see you taking care to wear hats and use sun cream outside when the sun was hot. You know it is important to drink plenty of water to keep well. We especially enjoyed reading your record of achievement books. The photographs we saw show us what lovely times you have at school. To help your school become even better, we have asked your teachers to help you even more with your reading, writing and speaking when you work and play outdoors.

Well done to all of you, we hope you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Dawson  
Lead Inspector

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