

Arc School Napton

Vicarage Road, Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire, CV47 8NA

Inspection dates

3–5 June 2015

Overall effectiveness

Good

2

Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- The new headteacher, school leaders and the proprietors are enabling pupils to achieve well.
- Leaders are determined to improve the school so that it becomes outstanding. They have created a strong culture for learning and well-being.
- The headteacher and school leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching is good and that all the independent school standards are met. As a result, pupils' learning and progress are good.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They have good attitudes to learning; they make excellent progress in improving their attendance, rapidly re-engage with learning and are eager to participate in school activities.
- The school's efforts to ensure the safety of pupils are good, as confirmed by parents and pupils.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations for learning and behaviour. Staff manage behaviour consistently well and they maintain very good relationships with pupils.
- Teaching assistants and key workers provide effective support for learning. They break tasks down into small steps and make good use of well-chosen resources to stimulate learning. This ensures that the pupils they support complete their learning tasks and make good progress.
- Pupils are making good progress in all areas of learning. The small number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making outstanding progress in reading, writing and number.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to extend their thinking.
- Teachers do not always inform pupils how to improve their learning nor do they usually check that pupils respond to the advice offered.
- Teachers do not always provide feedback on how well pupils are presenting their work and how they are using English grammar, punctuation and spelling to improve their writing in all subjects.
- Leaders have not developed assessments to measure pupils' progress in using and applying mathematics to deepen their reasoning skills.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited six lessons and saw all teachers jointly with the headteacher to observe the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- The inspector heard a few pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work in every year group. He also looked at a range of individual case studies.
- The inspector held meetings with the proprietor, the headteacher, senior leaders and representatives of the company.
- The inspector took account of the views of seven parents through telephone discussions and informal meetings. There were too few responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents, to be taken into account.
- The Department for Education census and 'point in time' surveys were examined as well as 14 questionnaires from staff.
- The inspector checked that all the required information, including a compliant safeguarding policy, for parents, carers and others was available on the school's website.
- The activities carried out to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards included the scrutiny of a range of school documents and their effective implementation. These included: records of behaviour and attendance figures; safeguarding policies, records of training and risk assessments; the summary self-evaluation and school improvement plan; records of pupils' progress over time.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Arc School (Napton) is located in the village of Napton-on-the-Hill, near Southam, Warwickshire. It was formerly an annex of The Arc School (Church End) and was previously inspected in January 2012. However, it registered as a separate independent day special school for pupils aged eight to 11 years with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties in June 2014. This is its first standard inspection since registration.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Nearly all have histories of severely challenging behaviour, poor attendance and a range of additional needs, such as autistic spectrum disorder, speech, language and communication needs, or attention deficit disorder.
- Nearly all pupils are White British and none has English as an additional language. A very small number are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils are taught in mixed aged classes. The small number of pupils in Years 3 and 4, known as *the nurture group*, are educated in a separate area of the school from those in Years 5 and 6.
- The school does not use alternative provision, although it uses external facilities in the locality, such as the local sports and leisure centre, a primary school for dance, a farm and a riding school.
- The school is owned by Kedleston Schools Limited, which owns eight other similar schools throughout the country. The company employs a number of heads of departments for different aspects of the school's work, such as health and safety, safeguarding and education. They employ a 'cultural curator' to help plan and organise a range of cultural experiences, as well as an educational psychologist and therapists to support the school's work.
- The governing body includes representatives of the proprietor and company employees.
- The school had a high turnover of staff in 2014 and a new headteacher took up post in April 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching to outstanding, so that pupils make outstanding progress over time, by making sure that:
 - teachers always provide opportunities to extend pupils' thinking
 - teachers systematically inform pupils how to improve their learning, including the presentation of work
 - teachers consistently check that pupils respond to the advice offered
 - teachers inform pupils how well they are presenting their work and using English grammar, punctuation and spelling to improve their writing in all subjects
 - leaders develop assessments to measure pupils' progress in using and applying mathematics to deepen their reasoning skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and leadership team receive strong support from the company, its heads of department and governors. They have ensured that all the independent school standards are met and the quality of education, including teaching and pupils' progress, is good despite staff changes. They successfully communicate their expectations for the school to be at least good and move towards outstanding. Consequently, parents have full confidence in the school, team work among staff is strong and their morale is high. This is reflected in discussion with parents and in the responses in staff questionnaires.
- Leaders have established an atmosphere that inspires pupils to re-engage with learning by making excellent improvements in their attendance and behaviour. All parents praised the school for improving their child's behaviour and attendance so well.
- Good leadership of teaching and effective procedures for managing the performance of staff have resulted in good teaching and learning across the school. All staff have completed their induction training, including that for child protection.
- Assessment is developing well. It is used effectively to plan lessons which build on previous learning and to record and track the progress pupils are making. Leaders have rightly recognised the need to develop the system further so that it will show the progress pupils are making in deepening their reasoning skills in using and applying mathematics.
- The school has an accurate view of itself and uses information gained from effective monitoring of its work to set clear priorities of improvement.
- The school's curriculum is well organised. It meets regulatory requirements and pupils have good access to all the required areas of learning. There is a strong emphasis on providing stimulating activities to re-engage pupils with learning and in developing their communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills. Staff are provided with a good range of resources that promote good teaching and learning in each area of learning. Each area of learning is developed through stimulating topics and themes which change each term, such as *The Americas*. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 greatly benefit from a nurturing environment which enables them to settle into their routines in very quickly, rapidly re-engage with learning and make excellent progress.
- The school makes good use of community resources and visits to stimulate pupils' enjoyment and creativity in learning. This promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have greatly benefited from visits by the Attorney General and a representative of the Parliamentary Education Committee. These have helped them to learn about parliamentary democracy and elections. The school has also developed 'five keys to safety and success' which makes a good contribution to pupils' awareness of British values. This helps them to manage their own behaviour and make a positive contribution in society.
- The forest school curriculum, music curriculum and enriched opportunities to participate in community events, such as boys' dance, are having a particularly good impact on pupils' personal development. There are many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. Their moral development is promoted well through the consistent implementation of the system of rewards and sanctions; this has a strong impact on improving pupils' behaviour.
- The school works closely with parents, therapists, external professionals and placing authorities to ensure that staff meet the needs of individual pupils effectively. Leaders have established strong links with the local safeguarding board, the educational psychology services in local authorities, and specialists in autism.
- The school uses the information it collects about pupils' attainment on entry to the school effectively to set challenging individual targets in learning for them to achieve over time. Levels of progress are

recorded and the progress each pupil makes, relative to their starting points, is discussed every half term. Leaders ensure the information is used effectively to provide additional support and strategies to further improve pupils' learning. As a result, all pupils make good progress during their time in school.

- The school promotes equality and diversity very well by focusing on individual needs and working closely with other agencies. The school fulfils its duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. As a result of the good progress all pupils make, the school prepares them well for transfer to secondary school.
- Leaders promote safeguarding effectively by implementing the school's policies and procedures to protect the interests and well-being of its pupils. All staff, company directors and visitors to the school are thoroughly vetted, all training is up-to-date, and all potential risks in school and on school visits are thoroughly assessed.

■ The governance of the school:

Governors provide good support and levels of challenge in driving improvements forward. They ensure that all the legal requirements for safeguarding are met through the effective implementation and regular review of the school's policies and procedures.

Governors carefully monitor the impact of teaching on pupils' learning during their time in school and use data effectively to influence priorities for further development.

Governors have developed strong procedures for managing the performance of staff based on their accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching.

Governors ensure that the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, including British values and procedures for dealing with any form of extremism.

Governors are making sure that financial resources are used efficiently and effectively to ensure that staff are well deployed and pupils make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are well behaved in lessons and around the school. Pupils make rapid progress in their behaviour and in their attitudes to learning. This is because staff maintain excellent relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour consistently well. The rich variety of stimulating learning experiences, such as tennis coaching and forest school, together with the staff's judicious use of praise and encouragement, ensure pupils are well motivated. This enables pupils to re-engage with learning quickly and make good progress. The school places a strong emphasis on building pupils' resilience. As a result, pupils persevere with challenging tasks and usually complete all their learning activities, including homework tasks.
- Pupils' attendance also improves rapidly, with many pupils achieving 100% attendance within two terms. However, pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because occasionally some display challenging behaviours which they do not control and require adult support. On other occasions, pupils may switch-off learning in a lesson because they prefer to do something else.
- Staff establish positive climates for learning in their classrooms where pupils' work and efforts are celebrated and routines are predictable. This enables pupils to settle down quickly to learning. When the school first opened, exclusions were high due to the turnover of staff. Now, they have reduced significantly because staff work consistently as a team to prevent and minimise challenging behaviour. They implement well-conceived plans to manage behaviour consistently well. Pupils, staff and parents say that pupils make excellent progress in managing and improving their behaviour.
- Pupils learn to share, to take turns and to show responsibility as, for example, school councillors. Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning reflects the school's five keys for safety and success. These impact well on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and their parents agree. It is not outstanding because occasionally pupils do not behave safely and damage school property when they lose self-control. Nevertheless, on such occasions, staff intervene skilfully, in accordance with the school's policy for handling pupils safely, to diffuse the situation and restore calm. Staff are thoroughly trained in keeping students safe and promoting their emotional well-being. There are a good number of first aiders available at all times, both in school and on visits.
- Pupils are well supervised and encouraged to stay safe at all times. Pupils say that bullying sometimes occurs but when it does, it is dealt with quickly by staff. Parents and staff also confirmed this. Records of behaviour and harassment show a marked decline in the number of recorded incidents as pupils move through the school.
- Pupils know what unsafe behaviour is and are aware of how to stay safe. They participate safely in forest school activities, such as lighting and extinguishing a fire, and in out-of-school activities, such as caring for horses and competitive sports. They handle equipment and learning resources safely, including computers. Staff rigorously promote pupils' understanding of e-safety.
- The school premises are safe and secure. Robust systems are in place to assess all potential risks for pupils during activities in and out of school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan a range of interesting activities to motivate pupils and re-engage them with learning quickly. For example, as part of *The Americas* theme, some pupils made Native American tepees and a totem pole; other pupils wrote about the Aztecs and the history of Mexico.
- In all lessons seen, teachers had high expectations for learning and behaviour. These were also seen in pupils' work and confirmed in the good progress pupils were making over time. For example, all pupils are provided with weekly homework tasks to consolidate their learning with an expectation that these are always completed, which they do. Pupils are also given clear targets to improve their behaviour and learning, which are constantly referred and consistently rewarded when achieved. In a music lesson, the teacher rapidly developed a pupils' skill in playing Beethoven's *Fur Elise* and then moved his learning forward very quickly, so that by the end of the lesson he sang another piece confidently while visitors were present.
- Staff work closely with coaches and other specialists to encourage and support pupils to do particularly well in community activities, such as dance performance in front of a large audience.
- Good support by teaching assistants and key workers was seen in nearly all lessons. In a phonics lesson with younger pupils, the teaching assistant used well-chosen flash cards to enable them to identify letter sounds quickly. The pupils were then challenged to identify words beginning with the initial letter sound as the teaching assistant encouraged pupils to segment each word. As a result, these pupils made good progress.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good with a wide range of opportunities to promote these skills in different subjects.
- Pupils' books show that teachers often provide opportunities to extend thinking. However, sometimes there are missed opportunities to do this, as seen in lessons where pupils are given low-level tasks, such as colouring-in instead of writing.
- Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress. Their marking of pupils' work in books is usually good but occasionally teachers miss an opportunity to inform pupils how to improve their work. When they give

good guidance to pupils, they do not always check that pupils are responding to this.

- Teachers usually encourage pupils to present their work neatly but occasionally this is not the case. Equally, in subjects other than English, teachers miss an opportunity to provide pupils with feedback on how they are using English grammar, punctuation and spelling to improve their writing.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The schools' data and pupils' work show that in the relatively short period of time the school has been registered, pupils are making good progress from their low starting points on entry. This is because they are re-engaging with learning quickly.
- Pupils make good progress in reading writing and mathematics. The school's accurate data and pupils' work in their books show that pupils in Years 3 and 4 make outstanding progress in reading, writing and number. Reading records show that pupils read widely and often. Their books show that they make rapid progress in writing, particularly in writing sentences and in their use of imaginative words to describe characters and event. They develop their use of English grammar and punctuation well in English. Occasionally, when they spell words incorrectly or do not use the correct punctuation in subjects other than English, this is not always picked up by teachers.
- The school makes good use of its assessment to identify pupils who are falling behind and put in place strategies for them to catch up. Pupils' progress across all areas of the curriculum is accurately assessed, including number skills, and shape space and measures in mathematics. Although pupils' work shows they are making good progress in using mathematical skills to solve problems and deepen their reasoning skills, there are no formal systems for recording this progress over time at present.
- Pupils with additional disabilities and special educational needs, such as speech, language and communication needs, make good progress. This is because good support is provided by all staff and the effective involvement of outside agencies helps to accelerate their learning.
- The very few most-able pupils are making equally good progress as their classmates. This is evident in the school's data and in pupils' work where sometimes their progress is outstanding.
- Pupils' topic books, homework and displays show they are making good progress across a range of subjects. A few pupils are making outstanding progress in the performing arts, such as dance and music.
- Occasionally, pupils of different abilities are given low-level tasks, such as colouring-in, which does not extend their thinking sufficiently and limits the progress they are making.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the GOV.UK website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	141007
Inspection number	462981
DfE registration number	937/6011

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Number of part time pupils	None
Proprietor	Kedleston Schools Limited
Chair	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Emma Pearce
Date of previous school inspection	First standard inspection
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,160 to £55,875
Telephone number	01926 817547
Fax number	n/a
Email address	emma.pearce@arcschool.co.uk

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