

Arc School Ansley

C/O Kedleston Schools, G20 Lakeside House, Stockley Park, UB11 1BD

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 resolute, good leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff, who aspire to the most effective learning opportunities for all students, have led to the development of an effective learning environment.
- The strong teamwork evident within the school, and the robust support and challenge from the proprietors, have resulted in good quality teaching and learning. Students' achievement is good as a result.
- The curriculum is good and supports students' learning effectively, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. The wide range of learning opportunities, indoors and out, capture students' interests and make very good contributions to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- As a result of the excellent provision for extra-curricular activities, students from all groups, including the most able, all make good progress in developing their self-esteem and confidence in their ability to succeed. Attendance has improved significantly.
- The consistency with which all adults treat students and manage their behaviour, combined with the regular routines of the school, ensures that the behaviour of students is good. This enables them to make good progress in their ability to work together as well as in their academic development.
- Provision for keeping students safe is good. Great care is taken to ensure their well-being at all times.
- School planning for improvement is relevant and linked to the most important things the school needs to do to improve. As a result, the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not all consistently apply the school's new marking policy and provide students with clear information on how they can improve their work.
- The emphasis on students' presentation of work is not consistently good, nor is the quality of legibility and letter formation of teachers' writing for students.

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

- This inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed students' behaviour and learning in eight teaching sessions or part sessions. Two of these were observed with the deputy headteacher and one with the headteacher.
- There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, to display parents' views. However, results of a recent questionnaire sent to parents by the school were reviewed.
- Discussions took place with staff and policies were examined, as were students' work and other evidence about their progress. Students were heard reading. Records of staff training were studied.
- 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 implementation. These included the data the school collects about students' learning and behaviour; records as to how the school keeps students' safe; attendance and admissions records; and the school's evaluation of its strengths and priorities for improvement.
- The inspector spoke informally and formally with students, observed their behaviour and examined the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector received and considered the views of the 14 staff who completed a questionnaire.
- The accommodation and facilities for pupils were checked.
- The inspector checked that all the required information for parents, carers and others, including a compliant safeguarding policy, were available on the school's website.

Inspection team

Sheelagh Barnes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Arc School (Ansley) is located in the village of Ansley, near Nuneaton in Warwickshire. It was registered as an independent school in June 2014 and this is its first standard inspection.
- When inspected in January 2012, the predecessor Arc School provided education on three different sites for pupils aged seven to sixteen years. Since then the provision has been registered as three separate schools.
- The Arc School (Ansley) provides education for 36 boys and girls aged eleven to 16 years. Students in Key Stage 3 started attending the school in September 2013.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Almost all have histories of severely challenging behaviour. Many have not attended school regularly for some time. Their behavioural needs are often linked to a range of social, emotional and mental health needs, autistic spectrum disorder, and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder.
- The school uses a system whereby each student is allocated a key worker to support their pastoral needs and facilitate their learning.
- Almost all students are White British and none has English as an additional language. A very small number are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average. This funding is from the placing authorities, who receive it for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school does not use alternative provision. It uses external facilities, such as local sports and leisure facilities, but teaching is undertaken by school staff in conjunction, on occasion, with the venue's staff, such as for swimming lessons.
- The school is owned by Kedleston Schools Limited. Kedleston Schools own nine other similar schools throughout England. The company employs a number of company heads of department for different aspects of the schools' work, such as for health and safety, safeguarding and education. They employ a 'cultural curator' to help plan and organise a range of cultural and community experiences, as well as an educational psychologist and therapists to support the schools' work.
- The governing body includes representatives of the proprietor, company employees and a small number of other governors recruited for their expertise in education, social care and business.
- The school had a number of staff changes in 2014, including the headteacher and several subject leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning further by ensuring that all staff consistently apply the school's marking policy and:
 - provide students with information on how they can improve their work
 - place greater emphasis on students' presentation of their work
 - ensure that teachers' writing in students' work books and on white boards is clear and legible, and provides students with good examples to follow.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior staff and the proprietors work very well together and are highly committed to making the school as good as possible. They have swiftly established a culture in which relationships are positive, teaching and learning can thrive, and students are expected to behave well. As a result, the atmosphere in the school is one of quiet industry and students do well.
- In the relatively short time since the school opened in its current form, leaders have put in place good systems which underpin teaching and learning. These are helping to drive improvement. Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. School staff work very well with other agencies, such as therapists and social care staff, to ensure that students have access to the resources, support and advice they need. The school fulfils its duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 in regard to the curriculum, the accommodation and the information it provides.
- Leaders have introduced a comprehensive system for assessing students' attainment and progress. They ensure that regular checks are made of students' progress and that this information is used effectively when planning learning. This makes sure that all students have equal opportunities to make good progress, both socially and academically.
- The leadership of teaching is good and there are effective systems for managing teachers' performance. Leaders carry out detailed checks on teachers' work and provide them with clear guidance and support. The Kedleston Schools Ltd provides good opportunities for all staff to undertake training and to share best practice across all of its schools.
- The deputy headteacher, subject leaders and teachers responsible for special educational needs make a valuable contribution to improving teaching and raising achievement. Key workers effectively ensure that students' behavioural and emotional problems do not impinge on their learning or that of others.
- The curriculum promotes students' academic and personal development well. Students have good opportunities to develop their basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They are motivated by a very impressive variety of interesting topics, educational visits and special events. Careers advice and guidance is good and all students in Year 11 who left last year went on to further education or training.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Assemblies and the very wide range of extra-curricular activities contribute greatly to this. The school effectively promotes British values, instilling in students the importance of qualities such as tolerance and honesty. It prepares students effectively for life in modern Britain and for the next stage in their learning.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to support disadvantaged students. Leaders have used the funding to provide extra support in literacy and numeracy, and to fund specific support to enable students to manage their anxieties and so focus on their learning. This has helped these students to make good progress.
- The school has exceptionally thorough systems for keeping pupils safe and its arrangements meet statutory requirements. Safeguarding is high on the agenda for the whole family of schools in the group. All staff have frequent training in all aspects of safeguarding and child protection. All staff are highly vigilant and quick to take action to make sure that pupils are kept safe.
- The school has made good use of the support of an external consultant, provided by the company. This has helped leaders in identifying strengths and areas for development.
- The school works well in partnership with parents and placing authorities. It keeps parents and relevant authorities well informed of the work their children are doing and how well they are managing socially and in their behaviour.

■ The governance of the school:

Governance is good and has some very strong features because the proprietors, governors and company heads of departments have been very successful in ensuring that students' learning remains good, despite changes in staffing and as the school has extended its age range to include Key Stage 3 students.

Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met. The company heads of safeguarding and health and safety monitor progress and practice regularly and rigorously. They ensure that all checks, such as fire safety, are carried out meticulously.

Policies, such as safeguarding and complaints, are available to parents and placing authorities on the website and contain all relevant details. Governors ensure that information about students' progress is provided very regularly to parents and placing authorities.

The governing body knows the school extremely well and ensure that all regulations are met. They

hold the senior leadership team to account very well.

Governors are clear about how well the school is doing. They hold staff to account for students' progress and well-being effectively through the performance management system. They provide good support for staff development, together with regular training opportunities within the company and outside. Several staff, for example, have been supported to take further qualifications relevant to the school's work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. They show good attitudes to their work because of the consistent messages they get from all staff and the effective behaviour management systems the school adopts.
- The school fosters mutual respect between students and between students and adults by promoting the school's values strongly and by the positive examples of staff. Students are supportive of each other and respond positively to this approach. They are confident, polite and respectful, and are able to talk sensibly to each other and to the adults in the school.
- Students say that there is no discrimination, bullying or racist behaviour and they are confident that, should it happen, it would be dealt with quickly by staff. They are given good information on the various types of bullying and how to avoid it. They say adults in the school help them if they are concerned about anything. They feel safe, secure and cared for. Parents and staff who expressed an opinion agree.
- At break times and lunchtime, students socialise in and across all year groups, including with their key worker groups at breakfast. The school provides a good level of supervision and adults oversee all activities to ensure students are safe. Older students are encouraged to take responsibility by helping younger students, for example as learning mentors.
- The school environment is clean and tidy. There is no litter. The well-presented displays on show around the school fully reflect the values of the school. On occasion, the standard of presentation of students' work in workbooks does not match this high standard.
- Attendance is improving steadily. The school follows up all absences rigorously and discourages term-time holidays. Pupils are punctual to lessons and to school. The level of exclusions has radically diminished since the school opened because of the consistency with which all staff now apply the behaviour management policy.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Safety and security are held in high regard. All staff ensure that movement in and around the school is monitored efficiently. Discriminatory and derogatory language is not tolerated.
- Risk assessments are undertaken carefully and the premises are kept to a very high standard of repair and cleanliness. Great care is also taken when students visit other venues, such as for residential stays and for outdoor and adventure activities, to assess potential risks and ensure students are safe. Any identified risks are addressed promptly.
- Parents who responded to the school's questionnaire agree that the care taken to ensure that their children are kept safe is good. As a result, students feel confident and make good gains in their personal and social development.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and enables students to make good progress. Learning in lessons is reinforced effectively through the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities which effectively promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Lessons are planned carefully to meet the needs and interests of students. Careful assessments by teachers of what students know and can do are used effectively to ensure that work is suitably challenging but achievable. As a result, students develop their confidence in learning and successfully acquire and develop a range of skills, including tenacity.
- Teachers and support staff set out clearly what is expected in terms of behaviour and application to work. As a result, students know what to do and generally settle quickly into school routines. On the rare occasion that a student cannot settle without help, their key worker supports them so that their learning and that of others is not interrupted. As a result, students develop good attitudes to work and the confidence to move onto the next stage of their learning.

- Teachers use questioning very effectively to check students' understanding and to make them think more deeply. They make adjustments as necessary to ensure that learning progresses as swiftly as possible and aspects are reviewed, if needed. This results in students' good progress from their starting points, which are sometimes low due to missed schooling in the past.
- Students are fully involved in the evaluation of their work through a variety of methods. Consequently, they can celebrate their successes and understand how work might be improved still further. For example, in one lesson students were asked to identify their confidence in a new area of learning by placing their name on a chart at the beginning and again at the end of the lesson so that they could measure the increase.
- Teaching places a strong emphasis on developing students' skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. There is also a strong practical emphasis for students who find written work challenging in subjects, such as music and design and technology. Numeracy and literacy skills are well developed through these practical approaches.
- Students are prepared effectively for the next stage in their education or work. The school can point to many success stories of students who are now continuing their education in colleges and training. Teaching successfully promotes in students the belief that they can aspire to and attain the highest possible standards.
- Support staff make a positive contribution to students' behaviour management. They are encouraging and friendly, which all helps to contribute to a calm working atmosphere in the school.
- School leaders have recently developed and introduced a new marking policy to provide students with information of how well they have done with written work. However, this policy is not yet applied consistently across the school. Although all work is regularly marked, teachers do not always let students know what they could do to make their work even better. Teachers' writing in students' workbooks is not always of a high enough standard to provide a good example to students. This contributes to students' good rather than outstanding aspirations and progress.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement is good because, from their different starting points on entry, students make good progress in all subjects including English, mathematics, science and information technology. Students take a range of Foundation Level GCSEs and Entry Level qualifications, including English and mathematics.
- The school does not use early entry to GCSE at this time.
- The progress students make in reading is particularly good, often from low starting points. This is helped by a number of initiatives, such as mentoring of younger students by older ones and the 'reading to dogs' system, whereby an agent of the Pets as Therapy initiative visits each week with Archie the dog to hear readers.
- Students make good progress in writing because of the many opportunities they have to practise writing in a range of styles and for a range of different purposes. The marking of their work in English is contributory to the good progress students make. It is meticulous and gives students good information of how they can improve their work still further.
- Progress is good in mathematics for students of all levels of prior attainment. This is because the work set challenges all students at a level that they can accept and succeed in doing. Activities involve many practical resources, such as when students were learning about reflective symmetry, and this grabs their attention and interest so that concentration levels are high.
- Achievement of the most-able students is good. Some of these have started at the school with levels of attainment below their potential because of missed schooling in the past. The way the school builds on these students' self-belief enables them to tackle greater challenges than they would previously attempt and to succeed. One student explained, 'If you ask for harder work, you will be given it.'
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium benefit from the support and extra help this provides. On occasion, the school has used this to provide therapeutic support, which has then had a positive impact on attitudes to work, self-esteem and eventual academic success. Pupils supported by this funding make the good progress in relation to students nationally.
- Students across the school achieve well because of the improvements in their attitudes to learning. Activities such as the weekly assemblies, where students are rewarded publicly for their effort and achievement, contribute strongly to students' determination to do their best.
- Students are very effectively prepared for the next stage in their education by a range of activities, including careers guidance. As a result, all of the students who left the school in Year 11 last year went on to further education or training.

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	141008
Inspection number	462983
DfE registration number	937/6012
Type of school	Independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Kedleston Schools Ltd
Chair	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Christian Williams
Date of previous school inspection	First standard inspection
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,053
Telephone number	01676 543810
Fax number	n/a
Email address	ansley@arcschool.co.uk

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