

Arc School Ansley

Ansley Lane, Ansley, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV10 9ND

Inspection dates

22–24 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and managers have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the individual needs of pupils. As a result, learning is well matched to the personal interests and aptitudes of all pupils.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' individual needs. They use prior information about pupils' learning to set work at the right level. As a result, the vast majority make good progress from their starting points.
- The personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils is a strength of the school. Staff work effectively with therapists and external agencies to support pupils so that most make strong social and emotional progress from their starting points.
- Leaders provide rich opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Consequently, pupils respect different beliefs and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils arrive at the school having experienced significant challenges; some have not attended formal education for prolonged periods of time. All staff build positive relationships with pupils and, as a result, pupils settle quickly and are proud of their achievements.
- The majority of pupils benefit from high-quality feedback that helps them to make progress. However, a few staff do not assess pupils' work consistently with the result that a minority of pupils fail to complete their work.
- Pupils are well supported socially and emotionally by keyworkers. However, occasionally pupils do not receive sufficient support in their academic work.
- On occasion, a few teachers miss opportunities to integrate literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not benefit from being able to practise basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics in a range of subjects.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the impact that leaders and managers have on pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that all staff consistently apply the schools' assessment policy so that all pupils benefit from high-quality feedback
 - developing the role of key workers to equip them with the skills and confidence to support pupils' academic progress.
- Further improve teaching and learning by:
 - providing consistent opportunities for pupils to practise reading, writing and mathematics in a wide range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, there have been various changes in leadership. Since the start of the academic year, the school has been led effectively by two headteachers, both with responsibilities for different aspects of school leadership. Together, they ensure that the school meets the independent school standards. As a result of the impact of leadership, the school has improved since the last inspection. The school's current development plans are precise and support continued improvement.
- The vast majority of staff feel supported and listened to and are highly supportive of leaders. They value their opportunities for continual professional development and all staff say that they are proud to work at the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have rich opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils often join the school with little experience of different cultures and public institutions. A wide variety of educational trips and visits are well planned and integrated effectively into the curriculum. Pupils talk positively about their visits to art galleries and museums as well as their opportunities to perform in school productions. Pupils enjoy a range of foods from different countries through regular themed days, including Italian, French and Chinese. Recently, the whole school engaged in African drumming and Brazilian samba dancing. Pupils discuss and debate confidently and show respect for the opinions of others. As a result, pupils are thoughtful and have an appreciation of wider experiences.
- Leaders at all levels know their pupils well and understand their needs. They take into account the challenges that many pupils have experienced and offer a broad and balanced curriculum to motivate them. Pupils study core subjects alongside practical areas including art, food technology, music, physical education (PE) and personal development. Leaders have made useful links with external providers to enable pupils to access dance classes and qualifications in construction. They continually review and evaluate the curriculum and make appropriate adaptations to ensure that it is personalised. Extra-curricular opportunities, including ice-skating, gardening and animal care, help pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding and improve their skills. Consequently, the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well.
- Leaders have created a culture of high expectations. They are highly aspirational for all pupils. They make sure that teachers use previous information on pupils' abilities to set challenging targets. They use detailed information to monitor pupils' progress. Where pupils fall behind, they quickly refine actions to secure improvement. Consequently, pupils are able to catch up and the vast majority make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have an accurate and comprehensive view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. Leaders regularly review the work of teachers to ensure that it has a positive impact on pupils' learning. On the rare occasions where teaching has not met the high expectations of the school, leaders and governors act quickly to provide support and coaching. Typically, this has resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Leaders have recently introduced a useful assessment policy. Where the policy is fully implemented, pupils benefit from high-quality feedback from teachers that helps them to

make progress. Tasks are appropriately challenging and promote further development. This results in improvements over time. The policy, however, is not applied consistently by a few staff, resulting in some pupils not completing follow-up work or not being sufficiently challenged.

- Pupils know their keyworkers well and value the help they provide. Keyworkers are effective in supporting pupils pastorally and emotionally. In lessons, they help pupils to remain focused on tasks and move learning forwards. On occasion, they do not support learning effectively. As a result, a very small number of pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Governance

- The arrangements for governance are effective.
- The school is fully supported by the company. Governors have a breadth of expertise that is used well to support the school. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to improve. Leaders produce comprehensive and detailed reports for governors to enable them to support and challenge across all aspects of leaders' work.
- Governors are highly aspirational for all pupils. They recognise that pupils join the school with lower starting points than those typical for their age; they make sure that pupils are provided with meaningful qualifications and the best opportunities to succeed. As a result, the minimum expectation is for all pupils to leave the school having achieved at least a formal qualification in English and mathematics.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding policy is detailed and meets current requirements. It is published on the school's website and is also available in paper format.
- The school ensures that all the appropriate checks are carried out on staff prior to working at the school. The single central register meets requirements.
- Highly effective safeguarding systems are in place. There are clear processes in place to safeguard pupils and protect them from harm. Four designated safeguarding leads are trained at an appropriate level and they are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Additional designated leads ensure that the role is covered at all times.
- The processes for reporting safeguarding concerns are effective. The school has a named safeguarding governor with clear responsibilities. All incidents are reported, logged and scrutinised. The designated leads for safeguarding say that they are supported fully by the company.
- Staff are all appropriately trained in child protection and able to recognise the signs of neglect and abuse. They understand their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. Staff have also accessed training on female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation. They fully understand the processes to follow. They leave nothing to chance and report concerns quickly and accurately.
- The school has high staff to pupil ratio and a culture of vigilance and as a result, staff

know pupils well and are quick to spot any changes in patterns of behaviour.

- Parents and carers have no concerns over the safety of pupils. In response to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, all staff said that pupils are safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- A highly personalised approach to learning exists in the school. Teachers use previous information about pupils as well as their own assessments to plan and provide learning to meet the individual needs and aptitudes of pupils. Often this requires adaptations to the learning environment and resources. As a result, all pupils benefit from specialised teaching that helps the vast majority to make good progress from their starting points. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and or/disabilities is highly effective. All pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans and teaching is carefully linked to pupils' personal targets. Teachers maintain detailed records of pupils' achievements so that their progress is carefully monitored.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are extremely positive. Prior to joining the school, many pupils have experienced exclusion from previous settings and are disengaged from formal schooling. Staff take time to get to know pupils well, they quickly identify areas where they are in need of support and ensure that this is provided swiftly. This results in the vast majority of pupils settling quickly into a happy, safe learning environment.
- Teachers use their secure subject knowledge and carefully planned strategies to engage pupils and sustain their interest. Expectations are high, resulting in aspirational targets for all pupils based on their starting points. Most pupils can explain their targets and understand what they need to do to improve. The most able complete additional challenging tasks to promote further learning. For example, in mathematics pupils solve complex problems and their work shows gains in skills over time. In science, pupils understand scientific processes like photosynthesis through practical experiments and plant growth. Teachers are quick to identify those who fall behind and reshape tasks to enable them to catch up. They provide additional support where appropriate. As a result, the vast majority engage positively, remain on task for the duration of the lessons and make good progress.
- The majority of teachers use effective questioning to promote understanding. For most pupils this approach challenges their thinking. On rare occasions, pupils' progress is hindered by teachers not allowing pupils to demonstrate their understanding fully in their responses to questions.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly. Their learning is reviewed every half term. Detailed annual reports are produced for parents outlining the progress their children have made. As a result, parents say that they are well informed and happy with the information they receive from school. Pupils recognise that they make good progress, they say that teachers have made a difference to their learning and they help them to do well. Pupils who met with the inspector said that they are proud of what they have achieved.
- Since September, pupils' progress in English has been slower than in other areas of the curriculum due to some inconsistencies in staffing. Leaders provide cross-curricular

opportunities for pupils to use literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects to develop their skills further. For example, in food technology, pupils write instructional recipe text and develop good evaluative skills when writing about the dishes they have made. They develop and extend vocabulary using adjectives to describe how dishes look, smell and taste. In some classes this is not as well established because teachers do not consistently promote literacy and numeracy skills. For a few pupils, this inhibits the progress they are able to make.

- Across the curriculum, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of online dangers, including the risks of grooming, exploitation and radicalisation. They know about different types of bullying and how to report their concerns. As a result, pupils told the inspector that they feel safe and happy at school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils well and develop strong relationships. They understand the barriers and challenges they face and they work with pupils to help them to overcome previous difficulties. Pupils are well supported and, as a result, the vast majority of pupils settle well into school life.
- The personal development of pupils is a key strength of the school. The curriculum is well planned and covers a range of important themes including positive relationships, healthy lifestyles, mental health and keeping safe. Teachers carefully plan and provide these sessions to meet the needs of individual pupils, taking into account their emotional and behavioural starting points. The school's own information shows that the vast majority make progress socially and emotionally over time. Consequently, pupils are fully prepared for their next stage of learning.
- Due to the small number of pupils in classes, and the high ratio of staff to pupils, teachers know all pupils well. They have a good understanding of how group dynamics may be affected through detailed record-keeping and observations. As a result, they are able to plan and provide appropriate activities to support social and emotional development effectively.
- The school uses therapy dogs to support pupils' well-being and sustain a calm learning environment. Pupils respond well to the dogs. The social interaction between the dog and the pupils provides a calming influence and prevents inappropriate behaviour from escalating.
- Leaders have introduced a breakfast club as part of the core day and routines are well established. Pupils arrive on time and sit in staff and peer groups. As well as being a social time, pupils have the opportunity to review the learning of the previous day and plan their targets. As a result, pupils are calm, ready to learn and well prepared for the day ahead.
- The school meets the therapeutic needs of pupils well. The school is supported by a wider team of specialists, including art therapists and educational psychologists. They work directly with pupils and with the staff to ensure that additional needs are identified and supported. For most pupils this has led to increased engagement and significant social

and emotional progress.

- Careers education is well planned, personalised and impartial. Specialists from the local authority support the careers education programme within the school. Pupils engage well in personal development sessions where they learn about presenting a professional image and preparing for interviews. They also have regular opportunities to visit careers fairs. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Many of the pupils arrive at the school having experienced social, emotional and behavioural challenges in previous settings. Often, this led to permanent exclusions and, for some, significant prolonged absences from formal learning. A high proportion of pupils arrive at the school with negative attitudes towards education. Staff work hard to build positive relationships with pupils based on trust and a celebration of success. The school has a detailed behaviour policy in place that is consistently applied by all staff and pupils understand the policy well. As a result, the school's information shows that over time incidents of negative behaviour have decreased. Pupils' positive behaviour both in lessons and during unstructured times reflects the high expectations of the school and contributes to the progress they make.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. The small number of recorded cases were acted upon quickly by staff and swiftly resolved. Pupils say that they have confidence in staff and know they will 'sort things out'. As a result, pupils who met with the inspector said that they felt safe at school.
- Many pupils arrive at the school having experienced behavioural difficulties in previous settings. Leaders use standardised tests to identify pupils' social, communication and emotional starting points. They use this information carefully to plan and provide activities to support pupils' development effectively. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils now manage their own behaviour well, resulting in a significant decrease in behavioural incidents over time.
- Leaders apply rigorous, well-established processes for improving pupils' attendance. The school combines regular communication with parents and external agencies with effective intervention strategies. This has resulted in the vast majority of pupils improving their attendance over time. Parents recognise improvements in their child's attendance. One said, 'My child has always struggled in the past, but now he is here, he loves it.' For a very small number of pupils with complex emotional issues, attendance has improved but is still low.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to engage in activities to boost their self-esteem and self-confidence. Pupils engage in music, sport and outdoor activities. Teachers ensure that they celebrate and recognise academic success frequently. This has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are highly positive. They arrive on time in full uniform and have the equipment they need for lessons. They are interested in their work and they want to do well. As a result of established routines and high expectations, they are well prepared for school and settle quickly into learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils join the school at any point during the academic year. Many of them arrive with starting points much lower than pupils of a similar age. Teachers quickly identify areas of need and produce detailed pupil profiles based on pupils' EHC plans, standardised tests and their own assessments. They combine effective planning, appropriate teaching and learning strategies and specialist resources to enable pupils to make good progress from their initial starting points.
- Leaders are highly aspirational for all pupils. While they recognise that the vast majority of pupils have significant gaps in learning, they pursue excellence. As a result of high expectations, pupils who left school during the previous academic year did so having achieved a range of qualifications, including English and mathematics. Most pupils achieve well. Some pupils achieved in excess of 14 separate qualifications, including GCSEs and equivalencies in a wide range of subjects.
- Current pupils' work demonstrates gains in knowledge and understanding from their starting points. This is particularly evident in mathematics, where their skills and confidence increase over time, resulting in the completion of challenging tasks. As a result, pupils show resilience and learn from their mistakes. Although progress in English has been slower for some pupils, their work demonstrates that, over time, their range of vocabulary has increased and their use of language is more sophisticated.
- Generally, pupils arrive at the school with reading ages below those expected for their age. Teachers use standardised packages and guided reading sessions to encourage reading. This results in increased confidence and in some cases rapid progress from starting points. Some pupils regularly read to the therapy dogs, sounding out difficult words using their phonic knowledge. This helps them to read aloud with increased confidence and develop their skills. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils' reading ages improve, allowing them to access material appropriate to their age.
- The school works well with pupils across the curriculum to prepare them for their next phases. They attend local colleges' careers fairs and are aware of how education impacts on their future plans. Current pupils in their final year of school know what they want to do next and say that teachers support them well. Destinations for previous cohorts are extremely positive; all pupils moved on to further education, employment or training. The majority are accessing vocational-based courses, and a few are studying A levels.

School details

Unique reference number	141008
DfE registration number	937/6012
Inspection number	10047136

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietor	Kedleston Group Ltd
Chair	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Simon Goddard/Ms Heather Millington
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,160
Telephone number	01676 543810
Website	https://kedlestongroup.com/ansley
Email address	ansley@arcschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–5 June 2015

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 is housed in purpose-built premises. The school was last inspected in June 2015 when it was judged to be good in all areas.
- The Arc School (Ansley) provides education for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 years.
- All pupils 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 formal education regularly for some time and have significant gaps in their learning.

- The behavioural needs of pupils are often linked to a range of social, emotional and mental health needs, autistic spectrum disorder, and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder.
- During admission to the school, each pupil is allocated a key worker to support their pastoral needs. The role has recently developed to include more facilitation of learning and academic support.
- The majority of pupils are White British. A small number of pupils have English as an additional language. A very small number are looked after by the local authority.
- The school makes use of alternative provision. Pupils have the opportunity to engage in construction qualifications at a local training provider. A small number of pupils also attend a variety of courses at Warwickshire and Hinkley College and a local dance school. The dance school is not registered with Ofsted.
- The school also uses external facilities, such as local sports and leisure facilities where teaching is undertaken by school staff.
- The school is owned by Kedleston Schools Ltd. Kedleston Schools own nine other similar schools throughout England. The company employs a number of company heads of department for different aspects of the school's work, such as for health and safety, safeguarding and education. They work alongside a clinical team including an educational psychologist and therapists to support the school's 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.
- Since the last inspection, the school appointed a new headteacher in September 2016. There are now two headteachers who share leadership responsibilities. The school has also recently appointed a team of middle leaders.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Meetings were held with a number of key staff, including the headteachers, senior and middle leaders, the proprietor and those responsible for governance.
- The inspector toured the premises accompanied by members of the senior management team. The inspector also visited the local leisure facilities to observe PE.
- The views of seven parents expressed via Ofsted's online survey, Parent View and other sources collated by the school were considered as well as 26 responses to the staff questionnaire. Meetings were also held with groups of pupils.
- The inspector observed teaching in all year groups across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, PE, food technology, personal development and art.
- The inspector observed the behaviour of pupils during unstructured times of the school day including at breakfast club and breaktimes.
- The inspector reviewed the work in pupils' books and scrutinised the school's assessment information.
- A number of key policies were examined, including safeguarding, behaviour, admissions, attendance, anti-bullying and the curriculum. The checks made on staff's suitability to work with children were evaluated.

Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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