

Inspection of Arc School Napton

Vicarage Road, Napton-On-The-Hill, Nr Southam, Warwickshire CV47 8NA

Inspection dates: 14–16 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Every pupil is welcomed and accepted as a unique individual at Arc School Napton. Pupils feel included from the moment they join the school. They know that all staff are committed to making a positive difference for them. Staff care deeply about pupils and want them to be successful.

Pupils behave well because of the highly effective support they receive. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on their actions and talk about their feelings. Staff work with individual pupils to ensure that everyone is respected. Pupils benefit from the school's calm environment. Pupils talk about being different but equal. Bullying is rare. If it does ever happen, staff are quick to deal with it.

Pupils do not consistently get the best support from teachers in some subjects, including reading. This means they do not learn as much as they could. Leaders know there is more to do to help pupils achieve the best they can.

Pupils really enjoy their forest school activities, day trips and the residential visit. Staff make sure that pupils happily and successfully take part in all that the school offers. Parents are very pleased with the school. They say that their children are genuinely happy to go to school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

At the heart of the school, is a set of essential skills for learning. These are part of a bespoke character and values curriculum. This bespoke curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced. It helps pupils develop the skills they need to focus on their learning. Previously, many pupils have experienced difficulty and disruption to their education. As a result, they have gaps in their knowledge and find it hard to concentrate. Staff work skilfully to help pupils improve their listening, work independently and develop positive attitudes to their work.

Senior leaders make sure that the school complies with the independent school standards. They have put in place a broad curriculum so that all pupils study a wide range of subjects. Most teaching plans clearly set out the order of learning. However, some staff lack the subject knowledge necessary to teach subjects confidently, such as in mathematics. Leaders have training plans in place to address this.

Pupils enjoy learning science. The science curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced. Pupils talk confidently about what they are learning. Termly science challenge days provide pupils with the chance to use what they know in practical activities. Teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to use their reading skills in science lessons.

Across the school, staff place a high priority on reading. 'Drop everything and read' sessions are used to develop a love of reading. Pupils enjoy choosing books from the

online library. Older pupils read confidently and demonstrate an ability to understand what they are reading. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read do not have access to a high-quality phonics programme. Leaders have plans in place to introduce more regular phonics sessions and provide training for staff.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils know what is expected and follow routines well. Staff are skilled in supporting pupils' personal, social and emotional development. They know what makes each pupil 'tick', and they adjust the provision accordingly. Staff plan pupils' transitions to a new activity, class or school very carefully. This reduces pupils' anxiety. High levels of supervision ensure that pupils are very well cared for.

Staff work hard to get the balance right between managing behaviour and supporting learning. They know when to build in sensory breaks for pupils who need them. There are times, however, when teachers do not expect enough from pupils in their work. At these times, pupils do not learn as much as they could.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development well. Leaders ensure that SMSC opportunities are threaded through the curriculum and across the school day. Pupils' hopes, dreams and wishes are discussed regularly. Visitors such as local firefighters talk to pupils about their jobs. Pupils learn about Chinese New Year and Diwali by sharing food cooked by the school chef.

Pupils learn important life skills as part of relationships education. Personal care boxes containing toothpaste, deodorant and hairbrushes are available in each classroom. These help pupils take responsibility for their own personal hygiene. Pupils learn about the importance of being healthy and eating well. 'Hello Yellow' mental health day and the Race for Life event help pupils consider their physical and mental well-being.

The proprietor is deeply committed to supporting each individual pupil. He gets to know pupils in lessons and in less formal times such as when they are playing basketball outside. He ensures that directors and non-executive directors have the relevant skills and expertise to hold leaders to account. Robust systems and processes are in place to quality assure the work the school does. Timely support is provided. For example, a quality improvement partner visits the school weekly to work with the headteacher to develop the curriculum. This helps leaders focus on what pupils are learning to do academically.

The school and its grounds provide ample space for pupils to learn, play and relax. Leaders ensure that the building is well maintained, and that staff have the resources they need. Recent additions of a sensory pod and outdoor adventure equipment ensure that the specific needs of some pupils can be met more easily. The proprietor works with leaders to look for ways to further develop the learning environment. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Attendance is high and has improved significantly over the last three years. Parents say that their children are keen to come to school. Parents value the good

communication from school and the way support plans and individual risk assessments are shared with them. Leaders ensure that any concern or complaint is dealt with promptly. Detailed and comprehensive records are maintained, and action is taken to address issues raised.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff work as a well-trained, close-knit team to keep pupils safe. They are vigilant and nothing is left to chance. Morning and evening staff briefings ensure that concerns are noted, and prompt action is taken. Leaders work well with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive timely support.

Staff teach pupils how to manage risks they might face in their everyday lives. For example, pupils learn how to stay safe when playing computer games. Pupils have a network of adults they trust and who they turn to when anxious about something.

The school's safeguarding policy reflects current government guidance and is published on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading across the school but have not yet implemented a phonics programme. Leaders should provide training for staff in teaching phonics and early reading. This is to ensure that pupils at the early stages of learning to read, quickly secure their letter sounds so that they can decode effectively.
- Some staff do not have the subject knowledge necessary to teach effectively the full range of curriculum subjects. Leaders should review and improve the use of staff training so that teachers are well supported and confident about what to teach, when and why.
- There are times when the curriculum goals are not ambitious enough and staff do not challenge pupils sufficiently well in their learning. Leaders should support staff to develop their pedagogical skills so that they make the most of every learning opportunity with every pupil.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	141007
DfE registration number	937/6011
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10203996
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Proprietor	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Angela Heyes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,160
Telephone number	01926 817 547
Website	https://kedlestongroup.com/napton
Email address	arcnapton@kedlestongroup.com
Dates of previous inspection	10–12 July 2018

Information about this school

- Arc School Napton is a small independent day special school for pupils aged between 5 and 11. Most pupils have behavioural, emotional, social and mental health needs.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Nearly all pupils have histories of disrupted education, severely challenging behaviour and other needs such as speech language and communication needs or attention deficit disorder.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2018 after supporting the school as an interim co-headteacher from February 2018. At the time of this inspection, recent changes to the senior leadership team had taken place.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes. In September 2020, the school established provision to support key stage 1 pupils working within the early years foundation stage curriculum.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Kedleston Group Limited, which runs 10 day schools, three residential schools and three care homes in different parts of the country. The company employs several leaders to support its work across the different settings.
- The school's last full standard inspection was in July 2018.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors met with the proprietor, the headteacher and the operational manager. The lead inspector met with the director of quality and compliance from the Kedleston Group Limited.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and physical education. The deep dives consisted of visits to lessons, discussions with leaders and teachers, discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also talked to pupils more generally about their experiences in school. They observed pupils at breaktimes, spoke to them in the dining room and saw them at work in a range of lessons.

- Inspectors talked with staff to discuss how they are supported to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including school policies, curriculum documents and the school website.
- In checking safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised documentation, looked at the school processes for reporting concerns and the checks that leaders make on staff prior to employment.
- Checks were made relating to the independent school standards, including checks on the school's premises.
- Inspectors considered the two responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including two free-text comments.
- The lead inspector considered the seven responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and the six responses to the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mary Maybank

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021