

Inspection of Archway School

Paganhill, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 4AX

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a growing sense of ambition among pupils and staff in the school. Staff are expecting more of pupils, and they are rising to the challenge. There are established routines that help pupils to know what to expect and how to behave. Pupils recognise that the atmosphere in the school is increasingly calm as a result.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. For example, leaders consider it essential that all pupils leave school able to swim. They provide extra classes in the on-site swimming pool for pupils who need more help to develop their confidence in the water.

Pupils are encouraged to make their aspirations a reality. Leaders invite professionals from different industries into school to share insights with pupils. Students who attend the sixth form are taking up places at universities in increasing numbers. The school has a good track record of supporting the route into an apprenticeship.

Most pupils say that bullying is rare. They describe a community atmosphere in the school. However, some pupils and staff have noticed examples of disrespectful behaviour and derogatory language from a small minority of pupils. They would like leaders to do more to address this.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have brought about significant improvement in pupils' conduct, particularly in lessons. Pupils concentrate without disruption so are learning the curriculum successfully.

Leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum they want pupils to learn and how this should be taught. Staff work with the local primary schools to make sure that the curriculum builds on what pupils already know. The proportion of pupils studying for GCSEs in English Baccalaureate subjects is rising rapidly. Leaders have revamped the curriculum for younger pupils in French. Consequently, pupils know and remember more. This gives them the confidence to continue learning a language for longer.

Leaders bring useful examples of evidence-based research to the attention of teachers. This has helped subject leaders to develop their curriculum thinking. For example, planning focuses sharply on pupils learning subject-specific vocabulary. As a result, pupils are confident to use this precisely. Students in the sixth form write with increasing sophistication and those who still need support to produce well-structured writing receive this.

In some subjects, leaders use assessment more effectively than in others. Where assessment is used well, leaders build a clear picture of where pupils might need more help. They think again about the sequence of learning within the curriculum and make changes to help pupils to learn successfully. Where assessment is used

less well, teachers and leaders wait too long before adapting the curriculum. Pupils are moved on to new content despite having gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in the life of the school. They participate well in lessons. Leaders provide teachers with information about pupils' needs. However, leaders, including subject leaders, do not use their subject expertise well enough when planning support for pupils with SEND. As a result, the support for some pupils with SEND in some subjects is not as effective as it could be.

Leaders ensure that pupils read widely. They introduce pupils to a wide range of age-appropriate texts. Pupils who arrive at the school having fallen behind with their reading receive support. For pupils in the earliest stages of reading, this includes elements of a phonics programme. Leaders recognise that the curriculum could be further adapted so that learning to read has an even greater priority for these pupils.

There is a well-designed curriculum for personal, social and health education. This is complemented by further work, across the curriculum, through which pupils develop positive personal qualities. For example, pupils explore their own moral code. Pupils are encouraged to have 'a say' in school-wide developments. For example, the governors invite pupils to attend their meetings to contribute to strategic planning. Senior staff are working alongside pupils on a whole-school mental health plan.

Leaders provide an aspirational careers programme. This helps pupils to make ambitious plans for their futures. For example, in the sixth form, students explore careers linked to their subject choices. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Staff are proud of the school and enjoy working there. Governors consider the views of staff on key issues such as their workload and well-being and the behaviour of pupils. The great majority of staff report that leaders support them well. However, some staff would like more support with their efforts to challenge any lapses in pupils' good conduct around the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand local risks to pupils' safety. They know that the COVID-19 pandemic has made some pupils vulnerable and have adapted the support they provide in response. Leaders refer their concerns to other professionals when appropriate. They engage a range of services to support families.

There are strong relationships between staff and pupils. Most pupils can identify an adult they feel comfortable reporting a concern to.

Leaders have provided training for staff to increase their awareness around key safeguarding issues, such as sexual harassment and abuse and child criminal exploitation.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders do not use assessment well enough to evaluate and improve the impact of the curriculum. This results in staff not addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge before they move on to new concepts. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used effectively in all subjects.
- Leaders have not thought enough about how subject-specific teaching choices affect, and can be used to support, pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not know and remember key points of the curriculum as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in each subject meets pupils' needs effectively.
- Despite the marked improvement in the general standard of pupils' behaviour, some pupils and staff remain concerned about disrespectful behaviours and derogatory use of language among a small minority of pupils. Leaders and staff should work together to ensure that all pupils play their part in creating a positive and respectful school culture.

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

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	115723
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10211718
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	929
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stewart King
Headteacher	Kieron Smith
Website	www.archwayschool.net/
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and chair of governors have changed.
- The school includes on-site provision for sixth-form students.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, including the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and a group of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, French, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To gather evidence on the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead in order to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered 93 responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including 68 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered 59 responses to the staff survey and 212 responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

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