

# Inspection of Arc School Old Arley

Ansley Lane, Old Arley, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV7 8NU

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Inspection dates: 12 to 14 July 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**No**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a lively and caring school. Pupils enjoy coming here and most attend regularly. Leaders recognise that, in the past, many pupils have not had a positive experience of school. Staff take the time to get to know the individual needs of all pupils. They use this knowledge to good effect, to build trust, and to re-engage pupils with learning.

Pupils feel safe and well supported here. Leaders take bullying seriously. Leaders teach pupils about what they have termed 'bullying behaviours'. Pupils talk confidently about these. They know what is acceptable, and what is not. When incidents do occur, 'bullying ambassadors' are on hand to support fellow pupils. Staff take swift action to make sure it stops.

Pupils study a range of subjects across all key stages. However, the curriculum does not contain enough content in some subjects. This does not help pupils gain the knowledge they need to be successful.

Most pupils behave well in lessons. On occasion, pupils do not always behave as well as they should. This disrupts learning. Staff do not consistently challenge this. Some staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. For instance, some staff do not always insist that pupils produce their best work.

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

The headteacher is committed to ensuring that all pupils can succeed in life. She is well supported by her leadership team, whose members share her ambitious vision. Recent changes to the structure of the curriculum have been significant. These have had a positive impact. Leaders focus on developing pupils' knowledge in English, mathematics and science. This helps pupils to catch up on important learning they may have missed in the past.

At key stage 4, the curriculum is well structured. Leaders have planned a curriculum that considers the important things that pupils need to know and remember. They have carefully ordered this to make sure the new knowledge builds effectively on the things pupils already know. This helps pupils to remember what they have been taught, and so pupils make strong progress. Pupils study for qualifications suitable for their stage of development, including GCSEs and functional skills. Pupils can also study for qualifications in a range of other subjects, such as information communication technology and work-related learning.

The curriculum is less well developed in key stage 3. In some subjects, leaders have not considered the precise knowledge that they want pupils to know, and the curriculum does not contain enough content. When this happens, pupils do not learn what they need to be successful in the qualifications they may follow. As a result, pupils are not always prepared well for the next steps in their education.

Leaders are committed to developing pupils' love of reading. Pupils are expected to read for 30 minutes each day during tutor times. Staff match the texts they read to pupils' interests, which helps to engage pupils. A few older pupils act as reading ambassadors, supporting younger pupils with their reading. This programme is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' confidence and their enjoyment of reading. Some pupils have significant gaps in their phonics knowledge. Leaders are developing their approach to the teaching of early reading to close these gaps. Some staff have received the training they need to deliver the programme. However, others have not. Consequently, staff do not have sufficient expertise to deliver the programme consistently well. Additionally, the school lacks the full range of resources needed to fully implement the scheme. For example, the books pupils read are not well matched to the sounds they know. This slows their progress in learning to read fluently.

Leaders prioritise pupils' well-being. They assess pupils quickly when they arrive at the school to identify their individual needs. Leaders have made sure all staff have the information they need to support the development of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the main, pupils receive appropriate support in lessons. Most teachers successfully adapt the curriculum to make sure all pupils can access the learning. However, this is not always the case. In some subjects, the curriculum is not as well adapted to meet pupils' needs as it could be. This hampers pupils' learning.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' wider personal development is a strength of the school. There are a wide range of opportunities that help to develop pupils' understanding of social responsibility. For instance, older pupils recently completed the bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Many pupils also recently raised money for a local foodbank. 'Around the world' days support pupils' understanding of the world through different perspectives. Pupils value these experiences. Pupils in key stage 3 and 4 benefit from a comprehensive range of work-related experiences tailored to their individual interests and aspirations. As a result, pupils develop a strong sense of the opportunities available to them. Leaders are rightfully proud of this work.

Leaders have not made sure that the risks to pupils are reduced in certain activities. For instance, risk assessments for off-site visits do not always take account of the specific risks associated with the activity. Where leaders have correctly identified risks, staff do not always successfully follow the risk assessments. Consequently, risks are not minimised.

Leaders provide the proprietor body with a range of information about the school. However, the proprietor body does not always challenge the school over the information sufficiently well. In addition, the proprietor body has not made sure that leaders meet all of the independent school standards. The school meets its duties under section 10 of the Equalities Act 2010.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website and is compliant with the latest government guidance. Staff have an impressive understanding of individual pupils' needs. This means that they are vigilant to any changes in pupils' behaviour which may suggest a child is at risk of harm. Staff raise all concerns, no matter how small. Leaders act quickly to involve social services and other agencies when concerns are raised.

Leaders work with external agencies to develop their understanding of risks to pupils within their community. Leaders are beginning to use this information to adapt the curriculum. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from harm, including online, and how to build and maintain healthy relationships through the schools personal, social and health education (PSHE) and information communication technology programmes.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The new phonics scheme has only recently been introduced. Some staff who teach early reading have not had the training they need to deliver the programme effectively. The school also lacks the range of books and resources they need to implement the curriculum successfully. This means that some pupils do not learn to read soon enough. Leaders should review the phonics scheme and make sure that all staff are well trained in the delivery of early reading.
- The curriculum in some subjects, particularly in key stage 3, does not contain enough content. When this is the case, pupils miss out on knowledge that might be important for their next steps in education. Additionally, in some subjects, the curriculum is not as well adapted to meet pupils' needs as it could be. Leaders should ensure that all subjects contain sufficient content in key stage 3 and are adapted well to meet pupils' needs.
- Some staff do not have consistently high enough expectations of pupils' conduct, or what they can achieve. Consequently, some teachers do not give pupils the work that they need in order to make the progress they should through the curriculum, and poor behaviour is not challenged consistently well by a few staff. Leaders should ensure that all staff share their high expectations, provide pupils with challenging work and insist that pupils always produce their best work.
- Some of the schools' processes for carrying out risk assessments are weak. For example, off-site risk assessments do not always take account of the actual risks associated with the pupil or the activity. The proprietor should ensure that the risk assessments produced by leaders:
  - are carried out effectively

- record risks carefully
- contain clear and appropriate actions to mitigate risk
- are reviewed regularly.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

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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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 125790   |
| <b>DfE registration number</b>             | 937/6092   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Warwickshire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10220397   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Other independent special school   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Independent school   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 7 to 16  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 62   |
| <b>Number of part-time pupils</b>          | 0  |
| <b>Proprietor</b>                          | The Kedleston Group  |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Mr Paul Brosnan  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Emma Green   |
| <b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>            | £53,222  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01676 543200   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.arcschoololdarley.co.uk">www.arcschoololdarley.co.uk</a>       |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | <a href="mailto:arcoldarley@kedlestongroup.com">arcoldarley@kedlestongroup.com</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 15 to 17 May 2018  |

## Information about this school

- The school was registered by the DfE on 3 October 1989. This is the school's fifth standard inspection.
- The school caters for pupils who are at risk of exclusion or have been excluded from another school.
- All pupils who attend the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- The school does not currently make use of any alternate provision.

## 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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including from across the governing body. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the SEND coordinator. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, early reading, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy, spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors took account of parents' 'free-text' comments and the responses on Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

## Inspection team

Alexander Laney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alun Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school failed to meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
  - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

#### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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