

# Inspection of Arnold Academy

Hexton Road, Barton-le-Clay, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK45 4JZ

---

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

Pupils enjoy attending Arnold Academy. They have many opportunities to develop their character and confidence. These include through the school council, and involvement in fundraising activities for charities, including cancer research and Ukrainian refugees. There is a range of clubs for pupils to attend, including art and yoga. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, which develops their resilience.

Trips and visits are linked to the curriculum to develop pupils' knowledge and stimulate their interest. Year 5 and 6 both recently attended 'faith tours' of Bedford, visiting places of worship. This helps pupils to learn about a range of religions.

Pupils feel safe and know how to report concerns. There is little bullying. If it happens, it is dealt with swiftly. They have a positive attitude to their learning. They behave well in lessons and are respectful to adults. Pupils are friendly to each other, although some do not always use appropriate language towards other pupils out of lessons.

All pupils access a broad and engaging curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are given effective support. This contributes towards pupils with SEND taking part and doing well in lessons.

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

The newly formed leadership team is highly ambitious for the school, and is beginning to make significant strides in improving the curriculum and leadership of the school. While this is the case, some newer subject leaders have not completed checks on the quality of the delivery of the curriculum. This means those leaders do not know how well pupils achieve in their leadership areas of the curriculum.

Leaders have put in place an ambitious curriculum with a focus on building pupils' knowledge over time. At the start of lessons across both key stages 2 and 3, teachers set pupils tasks that revisit previous learning. This help pupils remember what they need to give them the knowledge and confidence to move on to new learning. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and usually use this skilfully to explain concepts clearly.

Reading is increasingly prioritised. Weaker readers are identified. They are provided with support and texts matched to their ability to be able to practise their reading. These help them become more fluent and accurate readers, ensuring that they catch up with their peers. Much time is provided within the school week for pupils to read a range of texts. The school has invested in a new library and has recently been visited by a famous author. This is increasing pupils' enthusiasm for reading.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils with SEND. Staff accurately identify their needs well and, where required, they adjust their teaching for pupils to be able to

access the same curriculum as others. As a result, pupils take part in lessons and achieve well. Pupils in the Chiltern specialist resource base are provided with expert specialist support. In many lessons, for instance in mathematics, work is challenging for pupils. This develops their understanding and analytical skills. Some teachers, however, do not fully understand how to provide enough challenge for pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND do not always make the progress that they should.

Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. There is very little misbehaviour in lessons and as a result, pupils can focus on their work. A small minority of pupils routinely do not use appropriate language out of lessons to each other. Although pupils do not mean to offend, in these few cases, this behaviour is too readily accepted and is not reported. Leaders are aware and include this in their identified aspects to improve.

Pupils follow a carefully planned, age-appropriate, personal, social and health education curriculum which prepares them for life in modern Britain. This revisits and build pupils' knowledge over time. Pupils learn about topics such as drugs and alcohol and changes in their bodies. They also learn about careers and personal finance. This prepares pupils well for the next stages of their lives.

Staff, including early career teachers, say that leaders support them with their well-being and are considerate of their workload.

The trust provides many opportunities for schools to plan and train with each other. This supports the transition between junior, middle and upper schools. Governors are proactive and knowledgeable about the school. They hold leaders to account effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have set up robust systems to check that adults who want to teach at the school are safe to do so. Leaders have trained staff effectively to identify concerns and report them. Leaders work closely and tenaciously with local services to provide support for pupils and families who need it. Governors and the trust carry out regular checks on safeguarding in school.

Pupils know what to do if they have any concerns. They learn about topics such as online safety, healthy relationships and consent. They know how to keep themselves safe in and out of school, and online.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Newer subject leaders do not routinely monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum often enough, or with enough focus on improving the quality of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders are well trained to monitor the quality of the curriculum effectively so that they can gauge the impact of their intended curriculum on pupils' achievement.
- Some teachers do not fully understand how to match work to all pupils' needs and provide a high level of challenge. As a result, these pupils do not always make the progress that they should. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are provided with the training they need so that they consistently deliver a challenging curriculum that meet the needs of all pupils, including those pupils with SEND.
- A significant minority of pupils routinely use inappropriate language to each other, and pupils are too ready to accept this. This is because they have not learned what is and what is not acceptable language, and why. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum addresses these issues to create a positive environment where derogatory language is not used or accepted by other pupils.

## 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136829
<b>Local authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255078
<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9 to 13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	685
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Simon Oxley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Roberts
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.arnoldacademy.org.uk">www.arnoldacademy.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Arnold Academy is a member of the Pyramid Schools Trust.
- Leaders use one registered and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school runs a local authority funded SEND resource base on site called Chiltern. This specialises in support for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- There is a new leadership team in place. The headteacher joined the school in September 2022 and the deputy headteacher joined the school in January 2023.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinators.

- Deep dives were carried out in six subjects: English, science, mathematics, art, design and technology, and history. For each deep dive, an inspector met 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.
- Members of the local governing body and the chief executive officer of Pyramid Schools Trust met with the lead inspector.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors held a series of meetings with leaders and pupils to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised a range of records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the 134 responses, including 132 free-text responses, received during the inspection to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the 61 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 129 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Steve Woodley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Diana Osagie	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Gray	Ofsted Inspector
Cindy Impey	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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023