

Inspection of Arnfield Independent School

Arnfield Independent School, Po Box 446, Glossop, SK14 9EY

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
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Personal development	Outstanding
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit enormously from their time at Arnfield Independent School. There are warm and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils enjoy learning in a welcoming environment. They say that this is a safe school. They are well cared for.

The school ensures that the curriculum is motivating. Staff want pupils to enjoy learning and to re-engage with education. Pupils receive bespoke care, which means that pupils, including those who have been out of school for some time, soon settle and are ready to learn. The school's determination for pupils to succeed results in many pupils gaining qualifications and essential life skills. Staff have high expectations of every pupil and pupils respond to this.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of everything that the school does. It is woven into all aspects of the curriculum and wider provision. All staff are committed to providing pupils with high-quality educational experiences that also develop pupils' self-esteem, confidence and resilience. Pupils thrive as a result. Pupils' learning is not limited to the classroom. For example, pupils spoke about enjoying experiences such as the Three Peaks Challenge, camping, fishing, a visit to a crown court, visiting museums, rock climbing, working on the new allotment and many more.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that ensures that pupils access a broad range of academic and vocational subjects. Pupils have the opportunity to take vocational qualifications and GCSEs. Leaders have linked curriculum content closely to pupils' interests. Pupils benefit from individual teaching and support in lessons. This helps them develop good knowledge and skills in most subjects as they progress through the curriculum.

The school's curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Curriculum plans are well structured. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and pupils' progress is evident. In mathematics, for example, one pupil's book showed them moving from learning two-digit addition to expanding brackets. However, some teachers do not deliver the curriculum well enough. They do not ensure that pupils' learning builds securely on what they already know. Some teachers do not match teaching activities precisely enough to the important knowledge pupils need to learn. This prevents some pupils from learning more and remembering more in some subjects.

Teachers are mindful of gaps pupils may have in their learning due to interruptions in their previous school experiences. Staff check pupils' learning in lessons. They identify, and help to resolve, pupils' errors and misconceptions. However, the use of

assessment is inconsistent. Teachers do not always consider how to use assessment in lessons to check understanding and recap on prior learning.

Staff encourage a love of reading and incorporate as many opportunities for pupils to read as they can. Many pupils are fluent readers. The school is introducing support for pupils who are at an early stage of reading.

Staff have warm and respectful relationships with pupils, and this promotes the orderly atmosphere in the school. While most pupils have not engaged well with their previous educational settings, the school enables pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning. Staff spend time getting to know each pupil when they join the school. They manage behaviour skilfully and help pupils to regulate themselves and to manage their emotions and behaviour.

Pupils' personal development is catered for exceptionally well. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to build their confidence and self-esteem. They learn about different religions and festivals and about equality, diversity and democracy. Much of the work is targeted specifically at the needs of individual pupils, helping them learn and develop important life skills. Pupils develop independent social skills ready for their next steps. They have outings to the local community, and some pupils have regular volunteer work placements that reflect their interests, such as working with animals or with local charities.

The school is well led, and managed with a strong moral purpose. Leaders know the school's strengths and priorities for development.

Staff at Arnfield feel valued and cared for. They know that leaders take into account their well-being and workload. One view from a leader shared by many was, 'We don't want 'ordinary' for the children here, we want something special.'

The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards (the standards) are met. The school's premises are maintained to a good standard. The procedures in relation to first aid, fire safety and health and safety are appropriate. All necessary information is available to parents. The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, teachers do not deliver the curriculum effectively enough to ensure that pupils' learning builds securely on what they already know. This prevents some pupils from learning as well as they should in these subjects. The school should ensure that the planned curriculum is delivered consistently well across all subjects.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' prior learning and identify gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge. The school must make sure that assessment identifies pupils' next steps in learning and that teachers use this to inform their teaching so that pupils learn as well as they should in all subjects..

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.

School details

Unique reference number	135187
DfE registration number	830/6034
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10312795
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Proprietor	Arnfield Care Ltd
Chair	Elaine French
Headteacher	Jessica Neary
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,908
Telephone number	01457 860200
Website	www.arnfieldcare.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@arnfieldcare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–5 December 2019

Information about this school

- Arnfield Independent School is an independent special school. Pupils who attend the school have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 20 pupils. There are currently 12 on roll, aged 14 to 16.
- The headteacher was appointed in November 2023.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in December 2019, when it was judged to be good.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and the chair of the board of directors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at pupils' books and work for science.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; reviewed safeguarding records; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site and at breakfast and lunchtime.

Inspection team

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Steven Barnes

Ofsted Inspector

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