

Inspection of Arbour Academy

Canterbury Gardens, 640 Eccles New Road, Eccles, Salford, Greater Manchester M5 5AG

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The headteacher of this school is Donna Hindley. The school is part of Kings Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Amanda Nicholson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Laurence Cooper.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Arbour Academy do not benefit from a high-quality education. Expectations for pupils' achievement are not high enough. Pupils do not achieve well.

Pupils usually behave well. They show respect to each other, to adults and to visitors. Pupils mostly concentrate in lessons. However, sometimes, when they do not receive the support that they need, they become distracted and disengage from their learning.

Pupils are typically happy to be in school. They have secure relationships with the adults in school, who show genuine care for them. Pupils know who they can chat with if they have any worries.

The school's approach to careers information is more developed than other aspects of its provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils gain useful information to help them make decisions about their next steps in education, training or employment. Even so, some pupils do not receive the information that they need to be fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

The quality of education at the school has declined since the previous inspection. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should across many subjects. This is because, over time, they have not benefited from a coherent curriculum. However, this situation is beginning to change for the better. Trustees have an accurate understanding of the weaknesses at the school. They have taken some suitable steps to bring about much-needed change. They have established the foundations on which to build further improvement.

The trust has raised staff's expectations for pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance. Subject curriculums are being updated. In some subjects, this work is further ahead than in others. In these subjects, the school has thought about what they would like pupils to learn. Pupils encounter new learning in a more logical order. This means that they have more opportunity to build on previous learning.

In other subjects, however, the school is in the early stages of making sure that the curriculum helps teachers to know what should be taught and when this should happen. In the absence of this guidance, teachers choose what to teach without considering how this will help pupils to gain a broad body of knowledge over time. This results in pupils' learning being disjointed. It leads to their weak achievement.

The lack of clarity in the curriculum also means that teachers are hampered from accurately assessing if pupils have learned and understood what has been taught. As a result, misconceptions in pupils' learning are not identified or addressed. Pupils who do not attend school regularly fare the worst. Teachers do not check what

pupils have remembered from their previous learning or spot gaps in their understanding. These pupils are often given work that they cannot complete successfully.

Weaknesses within the assessment system also have a negative impact on those pupils who join the school at different points in the year. The school does not collect enough information about the starting points of these pupils. This makes it difficult for teachers to support pupils with their learning if they remain with the school for a long period. It also does not aid pupils' transition if they return to their mainstream school. Although all pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), their additional needs are not identified quickly enough. This hampers teachers from adapting their delivery of the curriculum to make sure that pupils are supported in their learning.

The school has begun to think more carefully about developing pupils' reading knowledge. For example, it has chosen texts which support pupils to develop a wider appreciation of literature. However, this approach is relatively new, and as such, the difference that this is making to pupils' desire to read is not evident. In addition, the support provided for pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read is receiving greater attention. Even so, there is currently no coherent programme in place to help these pupils become successful readers. This hinders their access to the curriculum and compounds their weak achievement further.

Pupils' behaviour has improved. The school is a calm environment. Pupils move sensibly from lesson to lesson. The relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Staff understand the specific needs of different pupils. They help pupils to manage their emotions increasingly well. Pupils are courteous to each other, often showing an understanding of each other's needs.

Over time, pupils' rates of attendance have been poor. The trust has introduced appropriate changes to the way in which the school deals with absence. This is having an impact on some pupils, but pupils' attendance rates remain low. Currently, the structure of the timetable means that some pupils do not have to attend the school site full time. They receive some of their learning online instead. This is having a detrimental impact, not only on their learning, but also on their social and emotional development. The trust has appropriate plans in place to address this inequality.

Pupils in some year groups are taught the full content of the school's suitable personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. However, those pupils who follow a restricted timetable do not learn all that they should. This limits these pupils from gaining a full appreciation of modern day Britain. Pupils have the opportunity to go on some trips. For example, they visit places of worship, such as a cathedral or mosque. This helps them to develop an understanding of different faiths, religions and beliefs. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including online.

Trustees have been particularly mindful of staff's well-being during this period of change. Generally, staff feel supported with their workload. They are positive about the changes to the curriculum in some subjects, as they can see that these changes are beginning to make a difference to their teaching practice and to pupils' learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school ensures that staff are well trained in spotting the signs that may indicate pupils are at risk of harm. When appropriate, the school works with other agencies to make sure that pupils receive the help that they need.

Staff report their concerns about the pupils' welfare quickly. Mostly, the school responds appropriately to such concerns. However, the school does not routinely record the actions that it has taken in response to some of these incidents. This makes it difficult for trustees to assure themselves that the risks to pupils' safety are reduced.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Until recently, the school had not acted quickly enough to address the decline in pupils' quality of education. This means that pupils do not build a secure body of knowledge that helps them to be well prepared for the next steps in their lives. Trustees must ensure that the recent improvements are maintained and built upon with greater urgency, so that pupils benefit from an education that enables them to be successful.
- Over time, a lack of cohesion in the curriculum has led to pupils' weak achievement. In some subjects, the school has not ensured that staff receive the information that they need to build pupils' knowledge over time. This means that pupils do not achieve well. They do not gain the qualifications that they need to successfully progress to an appropriate next stage of education, training or employment. The school must make sure that the curriculum provides staff with the information that they need to enable pupils to learn all that they should.
- The school's systems for assessing pupils' learning and identifying the gaps in their knowledge are underdeveloped. This means that misconceptions are not corrected, nor are gaps in learning spotted for those pupils who join the school partway through the school year. As a result, pupils do not have a secure foundation on which to build new learning. The school must ensure that staff are well versed in a range of suitable assessment strategies so that pupils are able to know and remember more over time.
- There is no coherent programme to support those pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read. This means that these pupils do not overcome gaps in their reading knowledge to help them read with confidence. This hinders their access to other areas of the curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils who find

reading difficult receive the support that they need to read with fluency and accuracy.

- The additional needs of pupils with SEND are not identified. This means that the delivery of the curriculum is not shaped well enough to enable these pupils to overcome their barriers to learning. The school must ensure that the additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified early and consistently met.
- Some pupils are on a reduced timetable. This means that they are missing out on learning and the wider opportunities to enhance their personal development. Trustees and the school must ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement to education so that they have every opportunity to achieve well and develop their social skills.
- Pupils' attendance rates are low. As a result, pupils miss out on important learning and key messages about growing up in modern day Britain. The school should ensure that the recent changes to identifying the barriers to pupils' attendance are implemented fully so that absence rates reduce.
- In some instances, the school has not ensured that it keeps suitable records to identify the actions that have been taken in relation to safeguarding incidents. This means that trustees cannot be fully assured that pupils at risk of harm are receiving all of the help that they need. The school should ensure that the actions that it takes to protect pupils' welfare are clearly recorded.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	149590
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10294431
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Laurence Cooper
CEO of the trust	Amanda Nicholson
Headteacher	Donna Hindley (Acting Headteacher)
Website	www.arbouracademy.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Kings Multi-Academy Trust.
- A new headteacher was appointed in May 2024. At the time of the inspection, there was an acting headteacher.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Arbour Academy converted to become an academy in April 2023. When its predecessor school, The Canterbury Centre, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, PSHE and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders to discuss pupils' rates of attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders to discuss pupils' wider development.
- The lead inspector met with trustees, including the chair of the trust.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. He also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. They scrutinised leaders' records of behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan and the school's self-evaluation document.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gil Bourgade

Ofsted Inspector

Adam Sproston

His Majesty's 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 2024