

Arc School Old Arley

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

Inspection dates

12 November 2024

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2 (1) (a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i)

- At the last standard inspection, the curriculum was not well organised or suitably ambitious. In addition, the approach to teaching early reading was ineffective because the school needed an operational phonics programme, and the staff needed to have the expertise to teach phonics.
- Since that last inspection, a considerable amount of work has been completed to ensure that there is now a strong intent for the curriculum. The school has ensured a strong curriculum policy is in place, supported by clearly defined long-term plans for the curriculum. These plans are carefully written to support the pupils' conceptual understanding. The school knows that, in the past, there were gaps in the pupils' knowledge, so they have chosen both academic and vocational pathways to ensure that pupils are ready for the next steps. The curriculum is sufficiently broad from key stage 2 to key stage 4, ensuring that the pupils gain the necessary linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic, and creative education.
- The development of the new vocational curriculum at key stage 4 has been positive in preparing the pupils for the next steps. A purpose-built construction room and a hair and beauty classroom have brought a fresh new dynamic to the curriculum. Pupils told the inspectors that they enjoy completing catering or computing courses. They believe that this is helping them to understand what they want to do after Arc School Old Arley.
- The school is now dedicated to teaching phonics and early reading. Staff are trained in this, and pupils across the school have opportunities to read frequently. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to read across the curriculum in, for example, history or mathematics lessons.
- These standards are now met.

Paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- At the time of the last inspection, the school's attention to pupils' wider development was underdeveloped. The school had not supported pupils to understand their potential and responsibilities. The careers programme was insufficient to develop pupils' ambitions for their future careers or training pathways.
- Career education is now stronger. Not only has there been a shift in focus to providing real-life vocational opportunities in the curriculum, but different parts of the school have been designated as vocational learning spaces. Pupils could articulate this vision for their careers and how they had been supported in developing this knowledge. There is evidence of careers running through the school's curriculum and pupils gaining access to impartial advice and guidance. The vocational curriculum development has been compelling and well-received by the pupils and staff.
- These standards are now met.

Paragraph 3(b), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h)

- At the time of the last standard inspection, the curriculum had become fragmented. Staff did not know how to develop and implement the curriculum. Assessment was also weak, so staff needed to know where to pitch learning.
- Since that inspection, there have been considerable changes to the teaching staff at the school. Subject specialists have been appointed to many of the curriculum areas. Existing staff have been nurtured into roles where they can lead the development of the curriculum as a whole. In those lessons that the inspector visited, it was evident that more staff had strong subject knowledge of the curriculum.
- There is now a strong and well-articulated framework for assessment across all subjects. This has recently been implemented so leaders know that it is too early to use the outcomes from this assessment to inform future curriculum development. However, there is strong evidence of a secure baseline, knowing what the pupils know now and what their next steps should be.
- These standards are now met.

Paragraph 3(a), 3(c), 3(d)

- At the last inspection, some of these lessons worked well, and pupils engaged and learned. However, many pupils needed help to adjust to higher expectations of the new leadership and curriculum at that time. Pupils also frequently left lessons or needed help to accept directions or support from staff. This disrupted learning, and staff were not always sure of the best way to respond to pupils' behaviour.
- Since that inspection, a renewed focus has been on developing high-quality learning experiences. Training for all staff has raised expectations about how the curriculum should be implemented and how staff should regularly check on what the pupils know and understand from those lessons. However, there remains some variability in how well the lessons are accurately matched to the needs and prior attainments of the pupils, meaning that some pupils cannot retain the new knowledge that is needed. Staff only sometimes have a deep enough understanding of the additional needs of the pupils so they can adapt the curriculum accordingly.
- These standards are not met.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii), 5(b)(iii)

- At the time of the last inspection, the school was not consistently supporting pupils in understanding their potential and responsibilities. This resulted in some pupils' low self-esteem, low aspirations, and poor choices. The school did not support pupils in learning the difference between right and wrong, taking responsibility, and learning to contribute positively to the school and wider society.
- Since the last standard inspection, pupils have been well supported in developing greater levels of self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Leaders worked closely with staff and pupils to identify the right whole systems to implement. A culture now focuses on the positive and celebrates achievements at all levels. For example, pupils were proud to talk about how their 'percentage of engagement' in lessons improved and how they achieved the right percentage to go on trips or represent the school football team. Pupils were confident talking to the inspector about the behaviour at school and how staff support those who need help.
- These standards are now met.

Paragraph 5(b)(v)

- At the last inspection, opportunities to develop further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures needed to be better planned and integrated throughout the curriculum.
- In the past, pupils spoke about cultural days when they learned about African, Jamaican, or Indian cultures. However, they told the inspector that this is yet to happen. Leaders acknowledge this and agree that some work remains to be done on further developing tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.
- This standard is not met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- At the time of the last inspection, safeguarding was ineffective. The school's implementation of written policies and procedures was not reliable or consistent. Systems for reporting and analysing safeguarding concerns or behaviour incidents were poorly implemented or utilised. This made it harder for leaders to spot patterns and harmful behaviours or learn from events. Some pupils repeatedly climbed over the school's boundary fence and put themselves in harm's way. Not all these incidents were recorded.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have worked tirelessly to develop the school's safeguarding systems and processes. There is now a robust system for reporting concerns that are reported and acted on appropriately. Processes for reviewing and monitoring the quality of reports are now powerful, meaning that staff are constantly challenged to spot those times when pupils might be at risk. Ongoing training, discussions through debriefing or weekly pastoral meetings have raised considerably the safeguarding profile. The pastoral team has also provided added capacity to work closely with pupils and their families.

- These standards are now met.

Paragraph 9(b)

- At the time of the inspection in February 2024, pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning and to others, including staff, were poor. Pupils were not taught or supported to understand and manage their behaviour. This meant frequent lesson disruptions and lost learning time during the inspection. Not all these incidents were recorded. Furthermore, when staff recorded behaviour and attendance incidents, they were unsure how to categorise them.
- The school's work on improving pupils' behaviour has been exceptionally strong. Rightly, leaders focused on developing a culture where pupils feel safe and are safe. Systems for behaviour management are now more rigorous and swiftly identify those who need help. Pupils understand better how their behaviour is improving and what they need to do to improve their learning. Pupils are proud of their achievements and quickly show off their work in books. Leaders have created a strong analysis of reported behavioural incidents, which has empowered them to develop their provision.
- The systems and processes for monitoring attendance are now equally strong. Leaders use recording systems to accurately analyse why pupils might be away from school so that the right support can be provided. The analysis demonstrates to leaders that, over time, attendance is improving. A higher expectation of pupils' lesson attendance and engagement has been established. Consequently, more pupils attend to their learning and engage with the curriculum than at the last inspection.

- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 10

- At the last inspection, the proprietor did not ensure that bullying at the school was prevented in so far as possible by drawing up and implementing an effective anti-bullying strategy. Bullying was evident across the school and, in too few cases, reported and acted upon. The analysis of and response to bullying incidents was inconsistent, meaning that little was done to reduce the chance of repeated and ongoing bullying.
- Since then, leaders have demonstrated tenacity in identifying and implementing a robust system for reporting, recording, and responding to perceived bullying. When any perceived case is reported, leaders have identified a robust process for understanding whether it is bullying or isolated harmful behaviour. When bullying has been confirmed, they have identified a restorative approach to working with the victim, the perpetrator, and their families to reduce the risk of it happening again.

- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 11

- At the last inspection, the proprietor did not ensure that relevant health and safety laws were complied with by effectively drawing up and implementing a written health and safety policy.
- Since then, considerable investment has been made in health and safety systems at the school. A detailed policy articulates the systems and processes to keep the community safe. Additional fences have been installed to reduce the risk of absconding, and the whole site has been refurbished to enhance security. Training for all staff is frequent, using both face-to-face and online opportunities. Records of training are detailed, which

means that leaders can act quickly when staff might need more help or guidance. There are additional security measures on certain doors across the school, including the front entrance, such as fob access controls, so that pupils can only move through with supporting staff.

- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 14

- At the last inspection, the supervision of pupils needed to be stronger, and staff members were often unsure how to support pupils when they left lessons.
- Since then, leaders have developed robust communication systems among staff and supervision protocols to raise awareness of pupils needing closer help and supervision. Weekly communication meetings, staff debrief sessions and detailed behaviour support plans raise awareness of the risk of pupils absconding and the actions that staff need to take to support pupils. Consequently, the prevalence of poor behaviour and absconding from school have drastically reduced over time.

- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16 (b)

- At the last inspection, the welfare of pupils at the school was not safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce identified risks.
- Since that last inspection, leaders, supported by the proprietor, have considerably raised the profile about risk assessment and appropriate measures that need to be implemented. The policy statement, within the health and safety policy, sets a clear expectation for all staff to have regard to risk assessments and be vigilant to potential new risks. During the inspection, the inspector witnessed the use of radios to raise awareness of additional risks that might need addressing quickly. The environmental changes to enhance security have been carefully considered and based on a secure assessment of the previous risks and behaviours in the school.

- These standards are now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)(c)

- At the last inspection, safeguarding was judged to be ineffective, and there were several concerns about how the well-being of pupils was promoted. Behaviour was often poor, and the well-being and welfare of pupils was at risk. Some pupils repeatedly climbed over the school's boundary fence and put themselves in harm's way. Bullying, swearing and rough behaviour happened. Staff did not always know how to deal with this.
- The school's work on pupils' welfare, health and safety has been exceptionally strong. Rightly, leaders focused on developing a culture where pupils feel safe and are safe. Systems for safeguarding are now more rigorous and swiftly identify those who need help. Pupils are now more self-aware and understand the importance of their behaviour in getting the most out of school. Health and safety policies, risk assessments, and anti-bullying policies are well written and implemented, and training logs demonstrate the school's tenacity to ensure that all staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to keep pupils safe.

- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- At the last inspection, it was evident that there had previously been a decline in standards and high levels of dissatisfaction from staff and pupils. However, during that last inspection, there were some positives as Kedleston Group had appointed leaders with a proven track record of success in similar settings. These leaders showed they had the capacity and commitment to drive necessary school improvement.
- In a very short time, the current leadership team at the school has completed a considerable amount of work supported by a caring and attentive proprietor. They have systematically gone about the necessary development needed to meet the standards. They are clear in their evaluations and have set up multiple layered approaches to ensure that further development happens. The staff group is optimistic about the developments and feel that the school is moving in the right direction. However, some standards in parts 1 and 2 need to be consistently met. There remains some variability in how the curriculum is adapted and implemented for pupils with a wide range of additional needs, and not all pupils develop a strong appreciation and understanding of the different cultural traditions in the community.
- These standards are not met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	125790
DfE registration number	937/6092
Inspection number	10357218

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Kedleston Group Ltd
Chair	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Jenny Arnold
Annual fees (day pupils)	£69,586
Telephone number	01676543200
Website	www.kedlestongroup.com/our-locations/schools/arc-school-old-arley/home
Email address	arcoldarley@kedlestongroup.com
Date of previous standard inspection	20–22 February 2024

Information about this school

- Arc School Old Arley is an independent day school that provides education for pupils between the ages of 7 to 16. The DfE registered the school on 3 October 1989.
- The school operates from: Ansley Lane, Old Arley, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV7 8NU.
- Pupils attending the school have a range of social, emotional, and mental health difficulties. Most have an education, health, and care (EHC) plan. Most have been

permanently excluded from or were at high risk of being permanently excluded from their previous school.

- Since the last standard inspection, there have been several changes to the leadership team, including a new headteacher and deputy headteacher who took up posts in June 2024.
- The school does not use any registered or unregistered alternative provision.
- The school's last full standard inspection was from 20 to 22 February 2024

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the school's progress in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- At the school's last inspection, which took place on 20 to 22 February 2024, the school did not comply with all the independent school standards.
- The Department for Education required the school to prepare two action plans.
- Ofsted evaluated these action plans on 16 May and 19 May 2024.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection.
- Leaders were not given any prior notice of this progress monitoring inspection. The inspector arrived at the start of the school day.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a group of staff members. He also met with the proprietor's representative and the quality improvement officer.
- The inspector examined several policies, schemes of work and plans, visited classrooms, spoke to pupils, and looked at work in pupils' books.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders to discuss safeguarding procedures and review relevant documentation.
- The inspector examined the school's most recent action plan and considered evidence of progress against planned actions. The inspector discussed the progress against the previously unmet independent school standards with the head teacher, deputy headteacher, the quality improvement officer and the proprietor's representative.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor-
 - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which-
 - 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;

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;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection but are now judged to be met at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and

- 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
- 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
 - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
- 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor-
- 5(b)(i) enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
 - 5(b)(ii) enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;
 - 5(b)(iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely;

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
- 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively; and
- 10 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 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 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request;

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)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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