

Arc School Napton

Vicarage Road, Napton-on-the-Hill, Warwickshire CV47 8NA

Inspection dates

10–12 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is well led and managed. Leaders, governors and the proprietor have high expectations. They are using their clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses to improve the quality of education provided. They have ensured that independent school standards are met.
- The proprietor and governors hold leaders to close account. This has underpinned improvements in teaching, learning and assessment, outcomes and personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- The curriculum is tailored to meet pupils' needs and provides opportunities for pupils to learn about a range of subjects. It promotes their personal development very well.
- Almost all pupils make strong progress in most aspects of their learning. The vast majority improve their behaviour and their attendance after they join the school.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school.
- Spiritual, moral, cultural and social development and the promotion of fundamental British values are embedded within the curriculum. Pupils are effectively prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being are promoted very well. Pupils usually behave appropriately.
- Although attendance is improving, a few parents and carers do not ensure that their children attend as regularly as they should.
- Teaching is improving and there is some very high-quality practice in the school. However, as some inconsistencies remain, not all teaching matches the very best.
- Developing literacy in a range of subject areas is not fully embedded. The quality of the presentation of pupils' work is variable, and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to produce long pieces of writing.
- Recent strategies to secure outstanding provision and outcomes have not yet been reviewed, refined and embedded.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is constantly of the very highest standard by addressing inconsistencies in practice including:
 - making certain that all staff regularly plan activities that challenge pupils to make rapid progress from their different starting points
 - making sure that the school's marking policy is consistently followed
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to write at length
 - raising expectations of the presentation of pupils' work in some classes
 - improving the deployment of teaching assistants including at the beginning of lessons.
- Take further action so that leaders and managers realise their ambitious culture by:
 - embedding recently introduced systems and structures and robustly monitoring and evaluating their impact so that the very highest quality of provision and outcomes is secured
 - successfully promoting the teaching of literacy in a greater range of subjects
 - working closely with the parents of the small number of pupils who need to improve their attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school is well led and managed. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.
- Senior leaders are providing cohesive leadership. They have a clear vision that focuses on all pupils making strong progress in all aspects of their learning. They have high expectations and they have developed an ambitious culture.
- Leaders, governors and the proprietor have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Although they are taking effective action to continue to improve the school, some strategies have only been introduced recently. Consequently, they have not yet been reviewed, refined and embedded to have the maximum impact on school improvement.
- Leaders plan staff training well and use it effectively to improve the quality of education provided. Staff value the training that they receive as it helps them to improve their practice.
- Leadership beyond the senior team is not as well developed. Middle leadership is relatively new, and some staff are just beginning to assume leadership roles. It is too early to assess the impact of subject leaders.
- The curriculum is tailored to pupils' needs. It provides opportunities to learn about a range of subjects and promotes personal development very well. The personalised curriculum includes input from therapists and psychologists and helps pupils to improve their communication, behaviour and emotional well-being.
- A variety of extra-curricular activities help to enrich pupils' learning. Pupils take part in many sporting events and visit the local café and library. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of trips to places of interest that support their learning and develop their social skills. Pupils have recently enjoyed visits to the national space centre, a zoo and a chocolate manufacturer.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the promotion of fundamental British values are firmly embedded in the curriculum. Opportunities to enhance pupils' awareness of British values are identified and taken in every subject area. Assemblies, trips and visits, sporting events, projects and theme days are also used to develop an understanding of fundamental British values and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils learn about democracy and the rule of law. They are taught about cultures that are different to their own and they are tolerant of the beliefs of other people. Leaders and staff openly promote diversity and equality of opportunity, paying regard to the protected characteristics in the 2010 Equalities Act. Pupils are effectively prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively. Additional staffing and resources help to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils.

- Leaders and staff work well with parents. The school's good-quality website and newsletters are effective means of communication. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school.
- The proprietor offers strong support and challenge to school leaders through regular reviews, auditing and performance management.

Governance

- Those responsible for governance use their deep knowledge and wide-ranging experience to hold leaders to close account. They know the school well and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this information to support and challenge leaders to further improve the school.
- Governors' meetings cover the appropriate areas and they receive regular updates about the performance of the school. They analyse the information that they receive, ask pertinent questions about it and follow up any issues that arise.
- Governors have ensured that all legal requirements are met and that resources are used efficiently.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that strong safeguarding practice is a key part of the culture of the school. Robust procedures ensure that statutory requirements are met.
- Staff are well trained and have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities. They work closely with outside agencies and follow up issues tenaciously. Staff are trained to recognise potential radicalisation or grooming issues and they are very clear about their duties.
- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy that meets the government's current requirements. It is published on the school's website and available to parents on request.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff know the pupils well and use positive relationships to help pupils make good progress. They usually tailor activities to fully engage pupils in their learning.
- There is some teaching of a very high standard in the school. When teaching is of the highest quality, it is thoughtfully planned; activities really interest and enthuse pupils; resources are used well to aid pupils' understanding and teaching assistants are effectively deployed to help pupils make rapid progress.
- Staff have secure subject knowledge and use questions well to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding. Opportunities are often taken to help pupils think for themselves but teaching assistants do not consistently promote rapid learning. Occasionally, they do too much for the pupils and, during teacher-led activities, a few teaching assistants do very little.

- There are minor inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, resulting in teaching that is good rather than outstanding. When teaching has less impact, information about pupils' starting points is not used quite as well to inform the planning of activities that would help pupils make very rapid progress. Occasionally, learning moves on rather slowly for the most able or too quickly for other pupils.
- Staff take opportunities to promote reading, communication and, particularly, mathematics in most subjects. Mathematical skills and knowledge are consistently used in different situations. For example, pupils were seen measuring out areas on the playground and developing numeracy skills on a space mission during the inspection.
- Leaders have identified improving writing as a key area for development. Initiatives such as 'writer of the week' are beginning to address this but the teaching of literacy in a range of subjects is not fully embedded. Pupils do not regularly write at length; poor presentation is not consistently challenged, and a small number of staff do not always model the good use of spoken and written English.
- Classroom displays, group learning areas and individual work stations celebrate achievements and support pupils' studies. The school is a positive and stimulating learning environment.
- Verbal feedback is used well, and the school's marking policy provides a clear framework for staff to provide effective feedback. However, the school's policy is not consistently followed by a minority of staff. At times, pupils are unclear about what they need to do to improve their work.
- Assessment is accurate, and the school gives parents clear information about how pupils are progressing and how well they are doing in relation to the standards expected of them. Pupils' reports outline what they need to do to improve and how parents can help them to achieve this. Almost all parents who made their views known during the inspection value the information that they receive from the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The promotion of personal development is a core part of the school's curriculum and staff actively support pupils' well-being.
- The curriculum is designed to nurture pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem and help them to become successful learners. Pupils regularly access many activities in the local and wider community that help them to develop their social skills and cultural awareness. 'Taking the reins' at local stables is one example of such an activity.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being are promoted very well. Healthy eating is encouraged, and pupils exercise regularly. Staff offer high-quality personalised support and the keyworker system provides frequent opportunities for pupils to talk about any concerns that may arise. Pupils trust the staff.
- Bullying is rare, and pupils are confident that staff will deal quickly and effectively with any incidents should they occur. Pupils learn about the impact of bullying and staff are trained in how to deal with it. Robust anti-bullying procedures are in place in the school.

- Pupils are taught to use the internet appropriately, and they learn how to stay safe in a range of situations. Pupils feel safe and staff and parents believe that pupils are safe in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils usually behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Clear routines are in place to promote positive behaviour. The start of the day is calm and orderly. Pupils are encouraged to use good manners and interact positively with staff and their peers at lunchtime.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed well. Staff are trained in de-escalating situations and instances of inappropriate behaviour are declining. The use of positive physical handling is also reducing.
- Pupils who find it more challenging to manage their own behaviour are effectively supported to improve their conduct. The behaviour of pupils improves during their time in the school.
- There have been no permanent exclusions since the last inspection and fixed-term exclusions are declining.
- Pupils do not consistently display excellent attitudes to learning. At times, when activities do not engage them, their interest declines and they lose concentration. Although learning was not disrupted during the inspection, evidence provided by school leaders indicated that a small minority of pupils have interrupted the learning of others in the past.
- Overall attendance has improved since the last inspection. Almost all pupils have improved their levels of attendance since joining the school and many pupils always attend regularly. However, leaders have identified that they need to work more closely with a few parents to help them recognise that occasional absence should be avoided.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current pupils are making good academic progress in a range of subjects, including reading and mathematics. Progress in mathematics is slightly better than in other subjects and progress in Year 6 is particularly strong. Progress in writing is not quite as good as progress in other subjects.
- The school's effective tracking system, confirmed by other evidence, shows that pupils improve their attitudes to learning during their time in school. They become more independent, grow in confidence and interact more positively with staff and their peers because they are developing self-regulatory skills.
- Last year's Year 6 pupils achieved well overall. They made good progress across the curriculum and they all improved their attendance and behaviour. This helped them all move onto appropriate secondary provision.
- Pupils are effectively prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. All pupils are helped to leave the school with the social and

emotional skills that they need to move successfully into secondary education. Processes to support this transition are strong.

- Pupils are encouraged to read throughout the school day. They have access to a wide range of appropriate books that they read for pleasure or to find things out.
- Pupils with additional needs, such as speech, language and communication needs are supported well to make good progress. However, staff do not consistently challenge all pupils, including the most able, to make very rapid progress in class. The most able pupils have not been given the opportunity to take national curriculum tests in the past.

School details

Unique reference number	141007
DfE registration number	937/6011
Inspection number	10047135

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 Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Kedleston Group Limited
Chair	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Adrian Gyles
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,160
Telephone number	01926 817 547
Website	https://kedlestongroup.com/napton
Email address	arcnapton@kedlestongroup.com
Date of previous inspection	3–5 June 2015

Information about this school

- Arc School Napton is a small special school for pupils aged between 5 and 11. It extended its age range to include key stage 1 pupils in September 2017.
- Most pupils have autistic spectrum disorder or social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language are very small.

- The school is part of Kedleston Group Limited, which runs six day schools, three residential schools and two care homes in different parts of the country. The company employs several leaders for aspects of its work across the different settings.
- The governing body includes representatives of the proprietor and company employees.
- The school has had a high turnover of staff since the last inspection. The substantive headteacher took up post in September 2016 and the interim co-headteacher joined the school in February 2018. Leadership capacity has been further developed by two assistant headteachers who have filled new posts created when the age range of the school was extended.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited a range of lessons throughout the inspection. He observed learning and looked at books with one of the assistant headteachers.
- The inspector spoke to pupils formally and informally and observed behaviour in lessons, at the start of the day and during social time.
- Meetings were held with the substantive headteacher, the interim co-headteacher, the two assistant headteachers and staff. The inspector considered 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector met with two representatives of the proprietor, both of whom are governors.
- There were not enough responses to Parent View for the results to be analysed but the inspector considered four free-text comments and 15 responses to the school's parent survey.
- Various documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and the inspector looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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