

Arc School Old Arley

Ansley Lane, Old Arley, Warwickshire CV7 8NU

Inspection dates

15–17 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have a strong positive impact on the quality of provision at the school and have ensured that all independent school standards are met. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Proprietors, working closely with the headteacher, have a considerable influence on the success of the school. Consequently, pupils with a variety of difficulties make outstanding progress in their personal development and behaviour.
- Safeguarding is robust. Pupils feel safe at all times. This feeling of security helps pupils to settle down. Parents greatly value the school's work in making such a difference to their children's behaviour and confidence.
- The new headteacher has quickly created a cohesive teaching, learning and pastoral care team. The team's skills in teaching, learning and behavioural support ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Leaders have robust systems for assessment, tracking and evaluation of both academic and personal development. As a result, they fully support pupils in every aspect of development.
- Leaders make sure that the views of pupils are considered in the day-to-day running of the school. As a result, pupils feel that they are valued and they treat adults with respect.
- A broad, varied and often inspiring curriculum motivates pupils. However, there is a lack of emphasis on learning vocabulary. As a result, some pupils' use of words does not improve fast enough.
- Teachers use good questions to encourage pupils' thinking skills. However, they accept very short verbal responses from pupils. Consequently, pupils do not develop their thinking and reasoning skills well enough.
- Pupils read in all lessons. Some pupils read exceptionally well. However, the school's planned procedures to improve reading development are not yet fully embedded. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress in reading as they do in writing.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that pupils:
 - develop a wide vocabulary to use in their talk and writing across the curriculum
 - have more opportunities to develop their spoken language, thinking and reasoning.
- Improve outcomes by further developing the school's reading procedures.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Their evaluation of how well the school is doing is accurate. They know their strengths and they know actions that need to be taken to effect improvements.
- Leaders have employed a wide variety of skilled teachers and specialists to deliver a broad, balanced and often inspiring curriculum. The combination of qualified teachers, art, music, cooking and sports specialists, well-trained teaching assistants and pupil counsellors works well. The senior leadership team combines expertise in pastoral care, special needs education and behaviour management. Consequently, pupils are supported in every aspect of their development.
- The bespoke nature of the curriculum enables pupils to follow education programmes for pre-GCSE, GCSE, functional skills and entry-level certificates as well as level 1 and level 2 Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) qualifications. As a result, every pupil is able to work towards success at his or her own level.
- Relationships at all levels are good. All staff who completed the Ofsted inspection survey indicated that they very much enjoy working at the school and the management are considerate of their well-being. From the large numbers of written comments from staff, a typical response was, 'I am proud to work here. We continue to improve week on week.' Another said, 'I have worked for this school over seven years and I now feel we have the strongest team we have ever had.'
- The school keeps detailed records of all pupils and their individual needs. Education, health and care (EHC) plans for all pupils are well documented and carefully followed. Records of each individual pupil's behaviour and starting points are thorough and provide a reliable basis for discussing their academic and social progress. Strong leadership ensures that pupils' individual needs are catered for well. Before pupils join the school, leaders work closely with parents and other stakeholders to gather information, which assists with the smooth transition process. Close working with a variety of other agencies contributes well to sustainable improvement in pupils' personal and academic development.
- Leaders have put in place assessment procedures to ensure that pupils' progress is monitored and recorded effectively in English, mathematics and science. These procedures are beginning to be used in other subjects. Consequently, they know pupils' starting points and how much progress they have made. They are also able to identify gaps in their previous knowledge so that these can be addressed in teaching. Teachers are also able to take measures to arrest any slowing of progress.
- Leaders also assess, monitor and track pupils' improvements in behaviour. They analyse behaviour patterns with a view to understanding the needs of pupils and groups. This close analysis has led to positive changes to the school day and management of pupils' individual needs. It has enabled them to be supportive both to individual pupils and to the teaching staff.

- The school has good relationships with relevant external agencies. Managers are appreciative of the support external specialists give to the school. They act swiftly on advice to create better working arrangements for pupils.
- Leaders have created strong relationships with parents and carers. They keep in regular touch with parents by email, texts and telephone. Parents know that they can contact the school for support at any time and that leaders will listen to their concerns. All parents spoken to were highly supportive of the school. Typical comments from parents were, 'They have listened to me and listened to my child,' 'My child's attitude has changed. He is academically engaged,' and 'The teachers are fair and just.'
- Leaders have ensured that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is embedded in the planning of all subjects. Educational visits and whole-school events like the Christmas fair and involvement in young enterprise projects enrich the experiences of pupils. They make sure that they take into consideration and act upon pupils' concerns and suggestions for change. As a result, pupils know that their concerns are important to the leadership.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the school staff, including a new headteacher, who was employed in November 2017. In addition, new teachers have been employed for English and science. The present headteacher has created a skilled and cohesive teaching, learning and pastoral care team very quickly. She has also effected beneficial changes in the management of and support for pupils' behaviour. As a result, staff morale is high and pupils greatly appreciate a happy learning atmosphere. However, this highly effective team has not yet had time to have a significant impact on pupils' academic outcomes, especially in reading.

Governance

- The combined expertise of highly experienced managers, employed by the Kedleston group to support all their nine schools, has a significant effect on strategic leadership of the school. Regular monitoring visits from educational and pastoral experts give exceptional support to the headteacher and her team.
- Governors have put in place a fair and effective performance management system. Consequently, all staff are motivated to perform well.
- Governors monitor and evaluate provision, reacting swiftly to needs. They do not hold back from making significant changes that provide more effectively for pupils.

Safeguarding

- Leaders have created a strong culture of shared responsibility for protecting pupils. Consequently, pupils are safe and well supported.
- Leaders have ensured that a good-quality safeguarding and child protection policy is available on the website. The safeguarding policy and practice are extremely robust and meet current government requirements.
- All staff are appropriately trained in all aspects of safeguarding. Leaders are tenacious in following up concerns and ensuring that they inform outside agencies when a pupil is at risk or missing from education. Staff keep appropriate records that detail

safeguarding concerns and actions. Staff are well trained to recognise signs of extremism and radicalisation.

- The building is well maintained and kept to an appropriately safe standard, with clear access to doors in case of fire. The health and safety officer regularly checks the building for fire risk and other safety hazards. Leaders rigorously maintain risk assessments for all aspects of school life and for individual pupils where necessary. This includes detailed risk assessments of all off-site facilities that the pupils use.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- A calm learning environment ensures that pupils feel secure and therefore able to apply themselves to learning. Teachers care deeply about pupils' personal well-being and educational progress. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect. All of this helps pupils to work steadily and to make good progress.
- The school's assessment processes ensure that they know pupils' starting points as soon as they arrive in school. Regular diagnostic assessment identifies gaps in learning that have developed because of the lengths of time that pupils have not been attending their previous schools. Teachers are then able to ensure that these gaps in learning are filled. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this and knowledge from assessments to plan appropriately for their pupils.
- Pupils have the vast majority of their lessons in small groups with pupils from their year group. These groups are taught by a teacher as well as a teaching assistant. Groups are typically small, with four or five pupils. Teachers plan most effectively to cater for the different abilities and starting points of pupils. As a result, pupils work in a supportive atmosphere where their individual needs are met. All pupils are challenged at a level that enables them to make good progress.
- Teaching staff make good use of high-quality resources they have to promote pupils' learning. Learning areas are of good quality and well resourced. Teachers regularly give choices to pupils. As a result, they know that their views are considered. They use the learning areas well to provide a mix of group and individual activities that meet pupils' needs well and support their progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at managing pupils who have presented high levels of challenge to teachers in other schools. They manage behaviour well because they have close, trusting relationships with their pupils. They ensure that lessons are taught at a pace that suits each learner.
- All pupils have English, mathematics and science lessons. They also have lessons in information and communication technology (ICT), history and geography, personal, health, social and economic (PHSE) education, music, food technology, art, religious education (RE) and forest school education. Pupils have opportunities in alternative provisions to learn, for example, mechanics, animal care, construction, sports and fitness and media development.
- Learning about equalities is deeply embedded in the work of the school. For example, work about the Second World War in Year 10 included work on persecution of the Jews and particularly on Anne Frank's diary. Good links with literacy were made when pupils wrote diaries of their own that showed great empathy with the Jews. A project

about the Industrial Revolution in Year 8 focused on inequality between the rich and the poor, especially in relation to children working in the mills. Pupils in the class were highly affected when reading the dramatic account of one child being caught in a machine.

- English lessons successfully enable pupils to develop their writing ability and focus appropriately on spelling and grammar. However, for some pupils, particularly those with a limited vocabulary, teachers do not ensure that they extend their use of words well enough. As a result, pupils do not develop their vocabularies quickly enough to cope fully with the demands of the curriculum. They sometimes do not understand all the words that they read.
- Teachers encourage pupils to develop their thinking skills, especially in mathematics and science. They ask good questions that require considered responses. However, they accept very short answers from pupils that do not show their reasoning well enough and do not develop their reasoning skills. Consequently, pupils do not develop their spoken language, thinking and reasoning well enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. It provides for a variety of extremely vulnerable pupils, all of whom have EHC plans.
- The whole staff team demonstrates the school's ethos of care. They have created a powerful communication-friendly environment based on trust, respect and mutual understanding. As a result, pupils are able to settle to learning, often after long periods of absence from other schools. After poor experiences of education in other schools, they begin to realise that the staff in this school are very willing to listen and want them to do well.
- The school is a welcoming environment where pupils say that they always feel safe. Pupils' confidence grows as they become more accustomed to the fact that adults are all striving for their success and well-being. All pupils spoken to said that they love the school because the new headteacher has made great changes that have had a significant effect on their daily lives.
- Working with therapy dogs is extremely beneficial to pupils with anxiety and other emotional issues. Two therapy dogs are key to the development of empathy among the pupils. When they have emotions that are hard to contain, they have opportunities to spend time with one of the dogs, walking and talking to a member of staff. Simply stroking and petting alleviates tension and enables the pupils to enjoy the trusting nature of the dog. As a result, they begin to learn to trust those around them. Some pupils enjoy walking the dogs so much that these opportunities are also offered as rewards for good work or good behaviour.
- Staff are highly skilled at recognising pupils' emotions and are able to pre-empt any difficulties that might occur in lessons. Pupils are offered regular opportunities for

counselling before their emotions escalate. This vigilance results in a calm environment that promotes learning.

- Pupils' personal planners enable them to track their own learning and development. They complete the diaries each day, logging their successes. The diary sets out key expectations so that they are clear to pupils. Each day the pupil uses the diary to create their own targets for success and to log progress. Targets relate both to academic and behavioural successes. Pupils achieve points against targets that lead to rewards at the end of each week. This highly successful system leads to bronze, silver and gold rewards at the end of each half term. It is clear that this system is extremely successful because there has been a significant rise in gold awards from September 2017 to May 2018.
- Advice from an external occupational therapist has led to development of a 'sensory friendly environment'. Leaders have created a 'sensory room', where pupils can go to spend time in a calming environment. They have also bought a considerable number of sensory resources that pupils can use within the classroom so that they can calm themselves while continuing to learn. This equipment has supported them to learn how to self-regulate.
- PHSE education lessons support pupils to develop a full understanding of themselves. The trusting relationship they have with adults helps them to feel confident to talk about issues that affect their own lives. They all say they feel safe in school and they know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They are fully aware of how to remain safe online.
- High-quality careers advice and work experience are offered to all pupils. One member of staff is a qualified careers adviser. She is also supported by a careers adviser from 'Prospects', who comes to the school four times in each year to help pupils to consider their futures and create action plans. All staff support pupils with the choices they make for the future. All pupils spoken to by the inspector had clear ideas about their preferences and future careers. As a result, when pupils leave the school they are well prepared for the next steps in their lives.
- Pupils study a variety of religions in their RE lessons. They have visited a local church and will visit a mosque later in the term. They are encouraged and supported to share their experiences of their different faiths, within the school. As a result, they have an open attitude to people's different religions. For example, a typical remark of a pupil was, 'You should respect people for the way they are. Everyone has equal rights.'
- A well-established school council represents the views of all the pupils. A display in the hall shows the concerns of pupils that have been raised and the responses of the staff. As a result, they learn how democracy works and develop a good knowledge of British values. They also know that the staff listen to them.
- A rich programme of external visits widens pupils' experiences. They visit, for example, museums, theatres, garden centres and farms. They enjoy outdoor pursuits both within the school day and during after-school activities. In addition, they benefit from residential visits and Duke of Edinburgh bronze and silver awards. As a result, they gain a greater knowledge of the world and learn to collaborate in team work.
- Teachers ensure that pupils take part in a variety of youth enterprise projects. For example, they baked cakes to sell and advertised their work on a local radio station.

They made money for a variety of charities by making items and selling them. For example, pupils made wooden reindeer during forest school lessons to sell at the Christmas Fair. In this way they learn about the world of business.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education supports pupils to develop their relationships and understanding of the local community and the wider world. They can talk about differences between people and have a good understanding of equalities. They have a wide variety of responsibilities in the school, from caring for the rabbits by feeding them and cleaning them out to walking the dogs, belonging to the school council and the anti-bullying group. They have helped the local community by volunteering to keep the forest area litter free and by helping in a local food bank. Cultural development is enhanced in high-quality music lessons where they use African drums or art lessons where they make masks. As a result, they have a good understanding of the locality and the wider world.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They have come from schools where their behaviour was unacceptable because of the challenges they faced. Time in this school has enabled them to develop much more confidence. As a result, they are courteous and friendly and very keen to meet and talk to visitors.
- The vast majority of pupils have good attendance. The welcoming ethos of the school ensures that the minority who attend less often improve their attendance very quickly.
- Pupils have a deep understanding of responsibility for both themselves and others. They were able to describe the variety of responsibilities that they are given. However, they were also clear that responsibility extends into all aspects of life and particularly into their own homes.
- Behaviour of pupils has improved markedly over the academic year. The longer pupils are in the school, the better they behave. A well-structured anti-bullying project gives pupils a considerable influence on the development of greater understanding. The anti-bullying pupil group ensures that types of bullying are recognised and fully discussed. Pupils say that there is no bullying in the school.
- Parents are most appreciative of the school. They are extremely grateful for the marked improvement in their child's behaviour since starting at the school. A typical remark from a parent was, 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds.'

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All pupils are supported by EHC plans. All have made outstanding progress in their personal development. This includes pupils who are looked after by local authorities. This is because staff are highly skilled in the management of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. They enable pupils to settle down quickly, feel secure and enjoy their learning.
- As pupils settle into school, they begin to realise that adults care for them and want the best for them. The confidence they gain from this ensures that they become more and more able to self-regulate and concentrate on learning. They achieve

qualifications and are able to take control of their own lives. The vast majority of pupils sustain this learning ability and go on to further education.

- The very few pupils in key stage 2 have only been in the school for a few months. The vast majority of these pupils have settled down well and are beginning to learn. This is because of the good induction processes when pupils begin at the school. It is also because of the welcoming attitudes of all staff and because of the detailed assessment processes that establish their needs on entry.
- The vast majority of pupils in key stage 2 and key stage 3 have made good progress from their starting points in English, mathematics and science, with some making outstanding progress. This includes pupils who are looked after by local authorities. This is because the accurate assessments made when the pupils arrive in the school are used to plan effective individualised learning programmes. A minority of pupils have made insufficient progress because of poor attendance.
- Pupils are entered for entry level 1 to 3 and level 1 and level 2 functional skills examinations in English, mathematics and ICT, as well as GCSEs in double science mathematics, English and art. They are entered for BTEC level 1 and level 2 food studies and entry pathways in humanities.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in a range of vocational subjects. They achieve awards and qualifications, for example in construction, vehicle maintenance and repair, computing, Duke of Edinburgh bronze and silver awards, as well as Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) sports awards and entry pathways in humanities.
- All pupils in Year 11, in July 2017, found places in further education colleges to study, for example art, life skills, engineering or mechanics.
- Pupils who are at present in Year 11 all have either confirmed or conditional places in further education colleges to study, for example, computer education, animal care, construction or landscaping.
- Pupils have good opportunities to read in all lessons. Some read exceptionally well and enjoy reading for pleasure. However, progress in reading has been slower than progress in writing. This is because procedures for the development of reading are not yet fully embedded into practice.

School details

Unique reference number	125790
DfE registration number	937/6092
Inspection number	10047127

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	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Kedleston Group Ltd
Chair	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Victoria Bates
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,160 to £55,875
Telephone number	01676 543200
Website	https://kedlestongroup.com/old-arley
Email address	oldarley@arcschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–22 May 2015

Information about this school

- The Arc School Old Arley is located on the outskirts of the village of Ansley, near to Nuneaton in Warwickshire. It was originally registered in 1987 as the Old School. The school moved to premises in Old Arley in November 2015.
- A previous inspection of Arc School Old Arley was undertaken in May 2015 when overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. Almost all have histories of severely challenging behaviour. Many have not attended school regularly for some time. Their behavioural needs are

often linked to a range of social, emotional and mental health needs, autism spectrum disorder or attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder.

- The vast majority of pupils are White British and none speak English as an additional language. A small number are looked after by local authorities.
- The school uses alternative provision at the Coventry Building Workshop, North Warwickshire and Hinkley College and Hereward College. Pupils attend these courses as part of their vocational studies.
- The school is owned by Kedleston Schools Limited. The company owns nine other similar schools throughout England. It employs a number of company heads of department for different aspects of the schools' work, such as for health and safety, safeguarding and education. They employ the services of educational psychologists from the local authority and speech and language therapists from the National Health Service to support their work.
- The governing body includes representatives of the proprietor, company employees and a small number of other governors recruited for their expertise in education, social care and business.
- The school has had a number of staff changes since the previous inspection, including several subject leaders and support staff. There have been two changes of headteacher since the previous inspection. The present headteacher and a new deputy headteacher were appointed in November 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector undertook joint observations of several lessons along with the headteacher and a learning walk with the deputy headteacher. She also observed a tutorial session with pupils in key stage 2.
- The inspector made observations of pupils as they moved around the school and in the dining hall.
- The inspector held a meeting with the proprietor and Kedleston's director of quality and compliance as well as several meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the senior management team. She held meetings with members of staff with responsibility for careers education, pastoral care and PHSE education.
- The inspector held discussions with two groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils more informally during the school day.
- The inspector toured the school premises.
- The inspector scrutinised schemes of work and lesson plans as well as a variety of documents about pupils and safeguarding. She scrutinised risk assessments about the school building, individual pupils and external visits.
- The inspector spoke to several parents on the telephone and took into account 34 staff questionnaire responses to the Ofsted survey. There were not enough responses to Ofsted's Parent View online questionnaire for them to be viewed.

Inspection team

Mary Maybank, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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