

Archway Academy

86 Watery Lane, Middleway, Bordesley, Birmingham B9 4HN

Inspection dates

21–23 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching has improved but is not yet consistently strong. Some teachers do not check pupils' understanding well enough. This means they do not spot and address pupils' misunderstandings quickly. Consequently, pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- Pupils are now making better progress across the curriculum. However, their progress in writing is less strong because teachers do not ensure that their basic grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are developed well enough.
- Some staff do not fully challenge the most able pupils, which limits their progress.
- The leader of special educational needs is new to the role. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has improved but is not yet fully effective.
- Leaders have improved pupils' opportunities to develop their reading. However, staff do not have a detailed enough understanding of some pupils' specific reading difficulties. As a result, some pupils do not make strong progress in reading.
- Staff receive professional development and support. This support has led to improvements in the quality of teaching but it is at an early stage of development and not fully embedded.

The school has the following strengths

- The new leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have made considerable improvements in a short amount of time and have ensured that all of the independent standards are now met.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils' learning is supported well by a range of extra-curricular visits.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) curriculum is excellent. It significantly contributes to pupils' social and emotional development.
- Pupils behave well and show respect for one another and all staff.
- Attendance rates have risen considerably.
- Governance supports school improvement well.

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?

- Improve teaching and thereby pupils' outcomes by ensuring that teachers:
 - fully challenge the most able pupils
 - develop pupils' basic grammar, punctuation and spelling skills in all subjects
 - check pupils' understanding carefully before moving them on in their learning
 - identify pupils' specific learning needs in reading more precisely.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - providing further support and training for the special educational needs leader
 - further developing appraisal and training systems to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Following the last progress monitoring inspection, a new leadership team was appointed. These leaders have taken swift and effective action to ensure that all of the independent school standards are consistently met.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils. All staff share the leaders' vision to help pupils engage positively and successfully in their learning. Leaders have an accurate and honest understanding of the school's strengths but also of where further improvements need to be made. Leaders continually strive to improve the school for the benefit of the pupils. Their work has resulted in some significant improvements over the last six months.
- The recently introduced appraisal systems are helping to develop the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders have also introduced more training and support to develop staff's skills. Staff receive feedback on their teaching and reflect carefully on the feedback. Staff have welcomed the support they receive. As a result of the support and professional development, there have been improvements in the quality of teaching. However, the appraisal systems and training are still developing and have not yet resulted in the quality of teaching being of a consistently high standard across the school.
- Leaders have redesigned the curriculum. The curriculum is planned to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are developed in a range of subjects, including vocational courses. For example, they attend physical education (PE) weekly at a local leisure centre, learn about a variety of history topics, develop painting and decorating skills and have regular English and mathematics lessons. All pupils, including those educated in the community, receive a broad and balanced curriculum which enables all areas of their learning to be developed successfully.
- The SMSC and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculums are a strength of the school. Staff take every opportunity to weave these aspects throughout the curriculum. For example, the importance of equality for men and women was explored through a history topic about suffragettes. The curriculum helps pupils to have a secure understanding of fundamental British values. Through this curriculum, staff have successfully helped pupils to re-engage in education and understand the importance of gaining qualifications to be successful in their futures.
- Leaders have gone to great lengths to supplement the curriculum with a range of trips and visits to enhance learning further. For example, pupils have opportunities to visit different places of worship and art galleries. Pupils also have opportunities to contribute positively to the local community. Pupils participated in the Birmingham canal restoration work and planted trees in the local community, for example. This enables pupils to understand the importance of helping others and how they can contribute positively to society.
- The leader of special educational needs is new to the post. Almost all pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The leader took decisive action to update pupils' EHC plans on her appointment. The majority of plans now reflect pupils' current needs. Where plans are yet to be updated, appropriate action is being taken to complete them as soon as possible. All staff have a clear overview of what pupils' needs are through the 'pupil profile'. They use this information to help them match learning to pupils' individual

needs. This helps pupils to engage more positively in their learning. The leader of special educational needs is developing their skills rapidly. However, further training and support is required to enable them to be fully effective in improving the overall quality of the special educational needs provision.

- Assessment systems have been improved considerably. Leaders set pupils half-termly targets for each academic subject, plus a personal target based on social and emotional needs. Leaders carefully review pupils' progress towards meeting these targets. This now means that leaders have a more detailed understanding of how well pupils are achieving. Leaders use information from the reviews to set further targets for pupils to work on, based on past achievements. This means that pupils are building on their prior learning, rather than repeating what they have done before. Leaders also track pupils' progress through the qualifications they achieve. This ensures that pupils now enter progressively higher qualifications.
- Parents are exceptionally supportive of the school and show a strong appreciation for the support their children receive. All parents spoken to expressed their gratitude for the way staff care for their children. They value the way that staff take time to get to know and understand their children's individual needs and provide an education which is matched to those needs.

Governance

- Since the last progress monitoring inspection, the governing body has been reconstituted. It now includes a governor who is independent of the school. The governing body reflects carefully on the school performance and what actions need to be taken to drive further improvements. They review these actions to check that they are successfully improving pupils' outcomes.
- Governors have, rightly, focused on ensuring that all pupils are safe and receive a broad and balanced curriculum. They ensure that funding is used appropriately. Their work has contributed to the strong improvements across the school over the last six months.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest government guidance and is available on the school's website.
- Leaders place a very high priority on keeping pupils safe. They have comprehensively reviewed all safeguarding policies and procedures to check that they are fit for purpose. They make careful checks on everyone who works in the school to ensure that they pose no risk to pupils.
- In January of this year all staff received updated safeguarding training. Leaders ensure that staff understand their responsibility to safeguard pupils. Leaders have also reviewed all risk assessments. These are detailed and alert staff to possible dangers which pupils may face and what to do if there is an issue, especially in the community.
- Leaders take the risks of radicalisation and extremism very seriously. The deputy headteacher has received training in all the local authorities that the school receives pupils from. This ensures he has a comprehensive understanding of the potential risks

faced by pupils in their different communities.

- In addition to this, leaders make sure that pupils have a detailed understanding of what radicalisation and extremism is and how to protect themselves. All pupils complete the government's online 'Prevent' duty training when they start the school. Staff regularly review this training to check that pupils understand the potential risks they may face when outside school.
- Pupils learn about how to use the internet safely. Through activities such as drama workshops, they are taught about safe and positive relationships and mental health. Leaders understand pupils' vulnerabilities and go to great lengths to help pupils understand how to protect themselves.

The school's progress towards meeting standards that were not met at the previous inspection and progress monitoring inspection

- Leaders have rewritten the curriculum plans and schemes of work. These outline how pupils' skills and knowledge in all subjects will be developed over time and link to appropriate qualifications. The schemes contain information about how work can be adapted to meet a range of special educational needs such as dyslexia and autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Work in pupils' books shows that they learn about a range of different subjects and make progress across the curriculum. Pupils benefit from PE lessons weekly. The quality of teaching is now more consistent. All pupils, including those who are educated in the community receive a full-time education.
- Leaders have updated the majority of the pupils' EHC plans. They are taking appropriate action to update the remaining plans.
- The safeguarding policy has been updated and is available on the school's website. All staff received updated safeguarding training in January 2019. Leaders have checked their understanding. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures during the inspection.
- The school's admissions register has been updated and meets statutory requirements. Contact numbers are completed for every pupil. Where pupils' destinations remain unknown, leaders have received information from a local authority to confirm that the pupils are now being placed by the local authority.
- The complaints policy meets statutory requirements.
- Leadership and management have ensured that all of the independent school standards are now met. A new leadership team was appointed in November 2018. They took decisive action to address the remaining unmet standards, following the last progress monitoring visit. All documentation is now held on one site. All policies have been updated and reviewed. The school's action plan is now fit for purpose.

The school now meets the following requirements

- Part 1 paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), (2)(a), 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e) and 3(f)
- Part 3 paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1)(c) and 15
- Part 7 paragraphs 33, 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i) and

33(j)(ii)

- Part 8 paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Following the introduction of the new curriculum, pupils, including those educated in the community, learn about a wide range of subjects. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills across all subjects. However, this is not at the expense of developing pupils' skills and knowledge in subjects such as history and science. Staff understand the importance of providing pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, to ensure that they benefit from a full education to prepare them for life after school.
- Staff have a clearer understanding of what pupils' learning needs are. They use the 'pupil profiles' to match teaching more carefully to these needs. As a result, pupils are now making better progress in all subjects. However, while staff now have higher aspirations for all pupils, they do not provide a sufficient level of challenge for the most able. This does not enable these pupils to make as much progress as they should.
- Staff encourage pupils to discuss their learning. This helps to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Sometimes, staff do not pay close enough attention to what pupils show they do and do not understand through these discussions. Additionally, staff do not routinely question pupils to check pupils' understanding. When this occurs, pupils do not have a strong enough grasp of key skills before being moved on in their learning.
- The teaching of English has improved. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop and practise their writing skills. For example, they study poetry and write diary entries and stories. Nevertheless, pupils' basic grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are not developed well enough in English and in other subjects. Consequently, pupils' progress in writing is less strong than in other areas of learning.
- Leaders have recognised the need to develop pupils' engagement in reading. A library area has been created and new reading resources have been purchased that are suitably matched to pupils' needs. Staff ensure that they give pupils regular opportunities to read in school. Some pupils have made strong progress in their reading. However, some support to develop pupils' reading is less effective. This is because staff do not identify and support pupils' specific learning needs in reading well enough. This limits the progress these pupils make in their reading.
- Staff develop pupils' mathematical skills well. They ensure that they build carefully on pupils' prior learning. Staff ensure that pupils apply their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, accurate measuring is reinforced through bricklaying.
- Where pupils are educated in the community, staff use these spaces well to enhance their learning. Staff use pupils' travelling time to and from the venues to good effect to further promote learning through activities such as 'talk therapy'. In addition to this, pupils are encouraged to engage positively and safely with people within the community. These pupils make strong progress in developing their social and emotional skills, as well as their academic skills.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Some pupils have previously had very negative attitudes to education. Staff have successfully re-engaged pupils with learning. Pupils understand that to achieve their goals they need to learn basic skills. Staff have helped pupils to develop more resilience and an acceptance that they will make mistakes in their learning. Pupils now have positive attitudes to education which are enabling them to make stronger progress in their academic learning.
- All staff have an acute understanding of pupils' social and emotional needs. They respond to these needs exceptionally well. They recognise when pupils need support but also what type of support. Staff give pupils time and space when they need it to enable them to control their emotions. This enables pupils to remain engaged in learning for longer periods of time.
- Pupils show a high level of trust in staff and say that staff respect them. They value the support and guidance they receive from staff. Staff address any derogatory language if it does happen and support pupils to understand why it is not acceptable. Through events such as cake sales, pupils are given opportunities to understand the importance of raising money for charities and thinking of others. Pupils are considerate to one another's views and opinions.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They say that bullying doesn't happen but are also secure that, if it did, staff would stop it immediately.
- The excellent SMSC and PSHE education curriculums play a significant role in helping pupils to develop socially and emotionally. As part of this, leaders provide pupils with high quality and impartial, careers information, advice and guidance. For example, pupils visit careers conventions at the National Exhibition Centre, which includes information about apprenticeships and universities. Staff help pupils to complete personal career plans, with advice on different pathways they could follow. Staff encourage pupils to consider a wide range of options. As a result, pupils are aspirational and have clear goals to achieve when they leave school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour consistently. Pupils have a clear understanding of staff's expectations of their behaviour and respond well to the rewards system. Staff work closely with parents and pupils when behaviour issues arise. Together, parents, pupils and staff explore ways to find strategies that effectively support pupils' behaviour. This successfully helps pupils to improve their behaviour.
- Behaviour throughout the day is generally calm, including during lessons and breaktimes. Pupils show good manners at lunchtime and socialise positively. Leaders record and analyse any incidents of poor behaviour carefully. Their analysis shows that these behaviour incidents have reduced over time because of effective behaviour management.

- Many pupils have been out of education for some time before starting the school. Almost all pupils' attendance has improved since they have started at the school, significantly so in some cases. Where pupils have specific needs that prevent them from attending school, staff have a strong understanding of their needs and ensure that they receive the right support when they return to school.
- When pupils do not arrive at school, leaders follow up their absences swiftly to check that they are safe and well. If leaders have any safeguarding concerns, they report them to external agencies immediately. Staff who teach pupils in the community also report any absences instantly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Almost all pupils have an EHC plan and are disadvantaged. Some pupils have been out of education for prolonged periods of time, prior to starting at the school. Pupils have a wide range of abilities and starting points.
- Because previous teaching has been weak, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is low. However, improved teaching and staff's higher expectations of what pupils can achieve are beginning to help pupils make stronger progress. Work in pupils' books also shows that they are beginning to take more pride in their work.
- The previous curriculum provided pupils with very limited experiences in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment in these subjects is well behind where it should be. Pupils now benefit from regular teaching in all aspects of academic learning. Pupils' work clearly shows a range of academic skills being developed. Nevertheless, it will be some time before the teaching enables pupils to close the gaps in their learning.
- Pupils are entered for a range of qualifications. Leaders have a clear picture of which qualifications pupils have achieved. This means that pupils are entered for examinations at a higher level, rather than repeating qualifications that have already been achieved. Pupils have a clear understanding of which qualifications they need to achieve to enable them to enter the training programmes and apprenticeships they are aiming for.
- Pupils who are educated in the community make strong progress in all aspects of their learning. They benefit from the bespoke and individualised support from the staff. These pupils' books show that their skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects are being successfully built upon and developed.
- Currently, there are no pupils following a post-16 programme. It is anticipated that the current Year 11 pupils will continue into post-16 programmes in the school.

School details

Unique reference number	135406
DfE registration number	330/6120
Inspection number	10092454

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Jim Ryan
Chair	Jim Ryan
Headteacher	Jim Ryan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£19000–£28006
Telephone number	0121 7727772
Website	www.archwayacademy.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@archwayacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–19 October 2017

Information about this school

- Archway Academy is a school registered for 14- to 19-year-olds. It caters for pupils who have previously had disruption to their education. Almost all pupils have education, health and care plans. The last full inspection was in October 2017.
- The previous progress monitoring inspection was in October 2018.
- The school has admitted a number of pupils below its registered age range and continues to do so.
- The school receives pupils from two local authorities outside Birmingham.

- The governing body is made up of the proprietor, three members of staff and an independent representative not employed by the school.
- The school currently has no students on post-16 programmes.
- There have been significant changes since the last standard inspection and the last progress monitoring inspection. Following the last progress monitoring inspection, a new leadership team was put in place by the proprietor. The school is now situated solely on the Birmingham site.
- Four pupils are currently educated by the school's staff at various locations in libraries and public spaces in the community. They rarely come to the main-school site.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector toured the site fully to check the facilities against part 5 of the independent school standards.
- Inspectors also toured the sites where pupils are educated in the community.
- The inspectors met with the proprietor, the deputy headteacher, the quality assurance leader and the human resources leader. Discussions were held with a tutor in school and two tutors who educate pupils off-site.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school, including a range of policies, behaviour and attendance analysis, pupils' EHC plans, pupils' attainment information, safeguarding documentation and information relating to the quality of teaching. The lead inspector also checked the school's single central register.
- The inspectors observed learning at various points in the day during the inspection. They reviewed pupils' work, which covered learning in a variety of subjects, including English and mathematics. They listened to a number of pupils read.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and during lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of pupils' views through informal discussions.
- The lead inspector met with one parent and held telephone conversations with four parents. Inspectors considered one response to the free-text service. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to analyse. The inspectors took into consideration the two responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- The Department for Education commissioned Ofsted to undertake a progress monitoring inspection as part of this standard inspection. This was to evaluate the school's progress against its action plan and whether it met the independent school standards. This was the second progress monitoring visit.
- The school's action plan submitted to the Department for Education in January 2019 was found to be unacceptable. The revised action plan was evaluated during the inspection and was found to be acceptable.

Inspection team

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mary Maybank

Ofsted Inspector

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