

Inspection of Arnfield Independent School

c/o Arnfield Care Ltd, Brookbank House, Wellington Road, Bollington, Cheshire SK10 5JR

Inspection dates: 3–5 December 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils attend the school for short periods of time. They then return to mainstream education. Staff care for pupils' needs skilfully. They know pupils well and establish strong, trusting, relationships.

Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils receive bespoke, individual education. Teachers expertly adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' personal and academic needs. Pupils behave well because staff support them to manage their behaviour. Pupils told us that staff listen to them and take time to talk with them about any worries they have.

Pupils take part in inspiring activities and experiences. Outdoor education is fundamental to the high-quality personal development the school provides. For example, pupils take part in camping expeditions. They experience activities such as trail biking, canoeing and rock climbing. Pupils enjoy trips and work experiences that prepare them well for life in modern Britain. They visit courts of law, art galleries and theatres. They work in businesses to help them make informed choices about their future careers. Pupils relish these chances. They say that the school helps them to live healthier, more active lives.

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

Staff nurture and teach pupils to develop their self-confidence and resilience. Pupils learn how to maintain good mental and physical health. Teachers teach them to plan for future education and career choices.

Leaders want all pupils to make progress and achieve success. They find out what pupils know and can do in different areas of the curriculum. Teachers plan each pupil's learning to suit their needs. Pupils are supported to develop their various talents and interests. These include jewellery making, animal care, cooking and sports.

The school's curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Curriculum subject plans build on pupils' existing knowledge and interests. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is motivating. They want pupils to enjoy learning and re-engage with education. Teachers teach pupils in individual classroom environments. This helps pupils to make good progress in different subjects. Pupils are well prepared to continue their education when they leave the school. However, some curriculum subjects are not planned as well as others. Some pupils do not progress as well as they could in some areas of the curriculum. Leaders are aware of this. They are developing subject plans to ensure that the quality of education in these subjects improves.

Pupils get on well with their teachers. Teachers personalise learning for pupils. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers check that pupils remember by revisiting learning in other subjects. For

example, pupils revisit mathematics and English in their independent living lessons. They practise persuasive writing techniques by writing letters to apply for university funding. They use their mathematical knowledge to create spending plans based on specified budgets.

Leaders place a high priority on developing pupils' English and mathematical skills. They encourage pupils to read in creative ways. Pupils read recipes and blogs and use electronic devices and computers to read a variety of texts. Teachers use books as a focus for learning.

Learning in mathematics builds pupils' knowledge logically. The curriculum helps them to learn essential skills to use in life. Teachers are flexible with their teaching of the curriculum. They make sure that pupils learn in a way that is comfortable for them. For example, teachers help pupils to develop their understanding of measurement through cooking.

Leaders offer outstanding personal development for pupils. They provide high-quality care. Pupils have a range of different experiences. Outdoor educational experiences take place in the Peak District National Park. Pupils develop an understanding of different cultures and diversity through the curriculum. The many extra-curricular experiences enhance this further. Pupils enjoy taking part in community events. They organise fund-raising for national and local charities. Leaders aspire for pupils to achieve their best. Pupils either gain or continue a range of appropriate qualifications. All pupils continue in education when they leave the school.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate that leaders are considerate of their well-being. The proprietor and headteacher have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school complies with the Equality Act 2010. It ensures that pupils have appropriate careers advice and guidance. Both school sites meet the premises standards. Personalised risk assessments and learning plans meet pupils' needs well. Classrooms are well equipped and appropriate places to learn. Health and safety requirements are met. Pupils have extensive opportunities to develop their personal, social, health and economic education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The proprietor has created a good culture of safeguarding. Staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training. They share information effectively. This means they are vigilant to any worries about pupils. Staff can explain the process for reporting any welfare concerns. Leaders keep detailed records of concerns. They access external support for pupils when needed. However, we found that leaders' assessments of the risks for pupils leaving the school site are not thorough enough. They did not contain all the information they should. Leaders have now reviewed their risk assessments. Effective procedures were put in place before the end of the

inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Leaders have risk assessments in place, including for individual pupils. However, leaders need to ensure that all risk assessments for pupils leaving the school site are regularly reviewed. This is to ensure that any risks to pupils are precisely planned for and robustly addressed.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	135187
DfE registration number	830/6034
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10094055
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	12 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Arnfield Care Ltd
Chair	Paul Knowles
Headteacher	Jennifer Wager
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,777
Telephone number	01457 860200
Website	www.arnfieldcare.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@arnfieldcare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–21 October 2016

Information about this school

- Pupils attend this school after periods of significant absence from their previous schools.
- All pupils have social, emotional or mental health difficulties.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative providers.
- Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has changed to Arnfield Care Ltd.
- The school has informed the DfE of the change in proprietor.
- The headteacher has been in post since June 2018.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, the educational consultant for the school and the chair of the proprietorial board.
- We undertook an in-depth review in English, mathematics, personal, social and health education, and art and design. We met with the lead teacher for each subject, visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and met with pupils.
- We met with leaders and staff to discuss safeguarding. The lead inspector checked the school's single central register. She scrutinised a variety of documents, including the school's self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement, the overview of the school's curriculum planning, information about behaviour management, information relating to the school's use of the pupil premium funding and funding for pupils with SEND, the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils, and information relating to meetings of the proprietary board.
- We took account of one response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the four responses to Ofsted's survey for staff. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their school and took account of the one response to Ofsted's survey for them.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector Her Majesty's Inspector

Christine Horrocks Ofsted Inspector

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