



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

ARNOLD LODGE SCHOOL

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Arnold Lodge School

Full Name of School	Arnold Lodge School		
DfE Number	937/6004		
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Head	Mr David Williams		
Proprietors	Newman Schools Ltd.		
Age Range	3 to 16		
Total Number of Pupils	268		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (174 boys; 94 girls)		
Numbers by Age	3-5 (EYFS):	64	5-11: 115
	11-16:	89	
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	22 Mar 2011 and 23 Mar 2011		

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in February 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Arnold Lodge School is a day school for pupils aged from three to sixteen years in the heart of Leamington Spa. Founded in 1864 as a boys' boarding school, it developed into a co-educational preparatory school with pupils aged four to thirteen. In 2008 the decision was taken to expand incrementally up to the age of sixteen, the current Year 11 being the first to reach this age. Owned by a company whose two directors are joint proprietors, the school is housed in a variety of buildings surrounding a central playground and grassed area. Its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), with pupils aged from three to five, has accommodation for its Reception in the junior school building. Nursery children have a separate building with its own access and outdoor area.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a safe and stimulating environment, giving equal consideration to social, physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual development, in which pupils strive to reach their full potential, equipped to meet the challenges of the future. It seeks to offer a broad and balanced curriculum through flexible and responsive teaching styles in a stimulating learning environment, ensuring strong care and guidance and developing appropriate attitudes and views.
- 1.3 Admission to the school below Year 7 is not academically selective. The school maintains a broad intake, though entry at Year 7 is via examination and interview. Competitive scholarships and awards are available for entry at Years 3 and 7. Means-tested bursaries are available throughout. Some pupils leave at the end of Year 6 to continue in local independent or maintained schools. Since the previous inspection, the extension of the school's age range has resulted in significant changes in premises, staffing and curriculum. Results in nationally standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the junior school is above the national average, with a fairly wide spread of abilities represented. The ability profile of the senior school is above the national average.
- 1.4 At the time of inspection there were 268 pupils on roll, of whom two-thirds are boys. Of the 64 children in the EYFS, 27 attend part-time, all in Nursery. The school's cosmopolitan population reflects its local community. It includes a range of ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Fifty pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), 23 of whom receive specialist learning support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN).
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The school uses this nomenclature, except in the EYFS. The year group nomenclature used by the school in EYFS and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

Early Years Foundation Stage Setting

School	NC name
Kindergarten	Nursery
Reception	Reception

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 Pupils' achievements are good. They are well educated in accordance with the school's aims, enabling them to strive to reach their full potential in a safe and stimulating environment. They listen well and are extremely confident, articulate and polite. Throughout the school pupils develop good levels of knowledge, understanding and skill, in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Their independence of thinking and their reasoning skills develop strongly. The recent extension of the school's age range to sixteen has resulted in a change to the pattern of leaving and the range of destinations. At the time of the inspection, no pupils had reached the stage of leaving after GCSE. However, in recent years pupils have been successful in gaining a place at their school of choice, some gaining scholarships. Pupils participate enthusiastically and achieve well in an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, including musical, dramatic, sporting and other cerebral pursuits.
- 2.2 Results in national tests at the age of seven have been good, and at the age of eleven excellent in relation to the national averages for maintained primary schools. Because of the extension of the school's age range, the use of standardised measures of assessment at senior level is in its infancy. The school is yet to accrue sufficient data to make a judgement. On the basis of what is available, pupils are achieving at a higher level than predicted by mock examinations and standardised measures of performance. Inspection judgements, based on lesson observation, confirm this evaluation of pupils' attainment, which indicates that pupils make good progress over time, in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils have a positive attitude towards their learning; they are strongly motivated and apply themselves well to their studies. Their good relationships with one another and their teachers create a good working atmosphere in the classroom and strongly support their ultimate success.
- 2.3 Progress is enhanced by a well-balanced curriculum, augmented by lessons in extra-curricular time to broaden the number of GCSE subjects available. Parents are happy with the breadth of the curriculum and the range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils benefit strongly from links with the community, including charity work and visits to homes for the elderly by the choir. The curriculum is further enriched by educational visits and overseas trips.
- 2.4 Teaching is good overall. A high proportion of the teaching observed was good with some outstanding. The best teaching provides excellent subject matter, well matched to the ages and aptitudes of the pupils, and demonstrates a good awareness of the needs of the most and least able. Inspectors observed examples of teaching engaging pupils in the excellent use of mathematical language and expressing their ideas and opinions succinctly. Teaching enables pupils to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills through their application in other curricular areas. The quality of marking and assessment is variable. The best provides excellent feedback, encouragement and target setting. However, punctuality and thoroughness are inconsistent and the setting of tasks and targets in the marking is not always followed up with a check to ensure that these have been completed.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.5 Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The school is highly successful in achieving its aims in this respect. Pupils' excellent spiritual awareness is demonstrated by their confidence and strong sense of self-esteem. Through assemblies and their studies they demonstrate insight in their awareness of the world in which they live and its wonders. They demonstrate excellent moral development and a clear understanding of what constitutes right and wrong. Their behaviour is exemplary, as shown by their excellent manners and politeness. Pupils' social development is strong. They show clear empathy for the needs of others. They contribute strongly to the life of the wider community, running charity events. From an early age they take responsibility for their actions and support others with considerable confidence. Their leadership skills develop strongly within their own classes, through tutor group assemblies and in election to the school council. Pupils are knowledgeable about public institutions; the visit of a barrister and recorder prompted them to gain an understanding of the justice system by holding a mock trial. Pupils have a strong awareness of their own and other cultures. They learn about and develop a strong appreciation of other cultures and faiths, both within and beyond the curriculum.
- 2.6 Arrangements for the safeguarding, welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are excellent. The quality of pastoral care is outstanding, drawing strongly on the teachers' excellent knowledge of the pupils and the high degree of trust evident in strong relationships between pupils and staff and amongst the pupils themselves. Staff are vigilant for the pupils' safety and well-being; the physical measures to ensure their safety are of high quality. Pupils commented that they feel safe in their surroundings and on educational visits. They are confident that there is an adult to turn to should they have a problem. Risk assessment procedures, for both on-site and off-site activities, are thorough and are closely monitored. Staff have appropriate first aid qualifications. The school's measures to deal with and record accidents and illness and to care for pupils with particular medical needs are of a high quality. Arrangements for fire safety are thorough. Admission and attendance registers are completed appropriately and an accessibility plan details clearly the school's measures for addressing the needs of those with special needs or disabilities. Staff have undertaken safer recruitment training and thorough recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers ensure that adults are appropriately qualified and suitable to work with children. All staff have undertaken relevant child protection training. Well-developed policies to prevent bullying and promote good behaviour are strongly supported by aspects of an excellent scheme of work for personal, social, health and economic education.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.7 The governance of the school is good; the proprietors support the school strongly in meeting its aims. They have a detailed knowledge of the school and a deep understanding of its successes and challenges, which are underpinned by extensive experience in education and finance. Their sensitive stewardship provides rigorous support and challenge for the school's leadership. Careful oversight, including regular days in school, ensures that their obligations in relation to safe recruitment, the welfare, health and safety of pupils and child protection are securely met.
- 2.8 The quality of leadership and management is good with some excellent features. The school's leadership demonstrates clear vision. Its positive and enthusiastic style is the main reason for the school's recent improvement. The leadership team,

though mostly relatively new in post, is experienced and its commitment ensures successful outcomes for pupils at every stage. The school's self-evaluation process has accurately identified areas for development, such as the need to update the school development plan, ensuring improvements in several areas of school life during the current academic year. The lack of an appraisal system for staff has resulted in inconsistencies in the monitoring of teaching, the sharing of best practice and the absence of a systematic approach to professional development. However, a revised appraisal process is ready to be implemented. Recruitment procedures are robust and appointments are correctly recorded on the central register. Premises are well maintained and best use is made of the limited outdoor space. Lunches are nutritious and the menu is varied. Pupils enjoy their meals.

- 2.9 The school's links with its parents are excellent. The positive responses to the questionnaire sent to parents prior to the inspection indicate that, in particular, parents are pleased with the way the school communicates with them. A broad range of approaches ensures successful communication, including formal and informal meetings, newsletters and other information documents and the increased use of electronic communication. Parents reserved particular praise for pastoral care, their children's progress, high standards of behaviour and the school's promotion of worthwhile attitudes and views. A small number of parents expressed disquiet about the manner in which their concerns were handled. Inspectors found that the school handles complaints with due care, according to its complaints policy, which meets requirements.
- 2.10 Parents receive both summary and detailed reports, which give good information about pupils' attainment and progress. Some provide clear targets for improvement, but this is not consistent across the curriculum. A recently relaunched parents' association strongly supports the work of the school.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 3.2 In order to build further on recent progress, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Complete the introduction of an appraisal system for staff in order to improve the monitoring of teaching and the sharing of best practice, and to develop a more formal system for professional development.
 2. Extend the good practice noted in some subjects in marking and assessment to ensure consistently high standards across the curriculum.
 3. Work together as a cohesive unit to produce an EYFS development plan, identifying and prioritising areas for future improvement.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

4.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.1 The overall effectiveness of the setting is outstanding. Excellent teaching nurtures and directs children, encouraging independent thinking and promoting confidence and eagerness to learn. Every child is treated as a valued individual. The caring environment and the strong partnerships with parents are strengths of the school. Parents particularly value the warm, kindly atmosphere and the supportive environment which ensure that their children are happy and have a secure start to their education. Children's personal development is excellent. The setting achieves its aim to provide a happy, stimulating and nurturing environment in which children can grow and develop their abilities and interests. Recent self-evaluation demonstrates a strong awareness of areas for future development.

4.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Effective policies successfully safeguard children and eliminate discrimination. Excellent parental links and relevant outside agencies contribute significantly to children's welfare and development. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in their development. Parents receive regular reports detailing their children's progress, which are the products of careful observations and very detailed tracking. All staff attend training regularly as part of their self-development. Leaders and managers are ambitious for the success of the setting and work well together. Regular departmental meetings enable the planning and prioritising of further improvements but there is no EYFS development plan.

4.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.3 The provision is outstanding. Children learn well and make rapid progress. They develop imagination and acquire considerable problem-solving skills through a wide range of good quality resources. Links between the indoor and outdoor classroom are effective and the staff provide excellent opportunities for enhancing the children's knowledge across all areas of learning, balanced between child-initiated and adult-led activities. Rigorous recording and extremely effective tracking result in accurate profiles of each child to inform staff about the next steps in their learning, and parents of their children's progress. Children's welfare is a high priority; they are taught about being safe in many contexts. Parents and other adults are welcomed into school to share their knowledge and experiences with the children. Staff promote the welfare and safety of children assiduously and the calm, orderly daily routines create an atmosphere in which children feel secure and thrive.

4.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.4 Outcomes for the children are outstanding. From different starting points children make substantial progress towards the early learning goals. By the end of the EYFS, most children achieve high standards in all six areas of learning. They are inquisitive, industrious and articulate, working very well both individually and co-

operatively. They listen keenly, answer questions enthusiastically and are confident to make reasoned guesses. They respond most positively to adults, are keen to share their experiences and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Nursery children can recognise colours, shapes and words, and say and use number names in order in familiar contexts. Reception children are able to control movements of their bodies with increasing confidence, as in yoga, and use developing mathematical ideas to solve practical problems. They understand that physical exercise and healthy eating, together with personal hygiene, are essential for a healthy lifestyle. Children feel safe and talk freely to adults. They form happy friendships and are friendly, courteous and considerate.

Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

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