

School inspection report

21 to 23 April 2026

Arnold Lodge School

15 – 17 Kenilworth Rd

Leamington Spa

CV32 5TW

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as ‘the Standards’.

Contents

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS	3
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....	4
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS	4
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	5
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	6
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	7
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	9
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	10
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	11
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	12
SAFEGUARDING	13
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	13
SCHOOL DETAILS	14
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	15
INSPECTION DETAILS	16

Summary of inspection findings

1. The school's determination to realise its vision underpins school culture. Leaders' focus on developing the happiness, confidence and skills of all pupils, is mutually understood and actively promoted. Leaders have created a values-led culture of empathy and trust with appropriate safeguarding, behaviour and pastoral systems to support pupils in their care. Leaders listen to parents' and pupils' views exemplifying the standards of communication and positive relationships they establish. Pupils' happiness and wellbeing are central to all decision-making.
2. Leaders and governors are experienced and empathetic. Governors provide effective oversight of leaders' work. They ensure that leaders promote and prioritise the school's core values of honesty, kindness and hard work effectively, and that leaders have the skills and knowledge necessary to fulfil their responsibilities. Collectively, they ensure that the requirements of the Standards are met consistently.
3. The curriculum reflects the school's vision to provide pupils with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to be successful in whatever future career they choose. Teachers are supportive and create a positive learning environment where pupils receive timely feedback and make good progress. Pupils develop their skills and knowledge through an extensive extra-curricular programme.
4. The early years is a secure and stimulating learning environment. Skilled and enthusiastic staff have created an appropriate curriculum that focuses on positive relationships. They use encouragement and praise to help children be confident and feel safe. Teachers know the children well and use assessment precisely to provide timely support. The curriculum balances structured learning with play-based activities, supporting children to develop essential early understanding of reading, writing and number skills, as well as experiencing vital emotional, social and physical development.
5. Pupils behave well and responsibly. A restorative system is used to address behavioural incidents and pupils understand the importance of learning from mistakes. A culture of good behaviour is actively promoted. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationship and sex education (RSE) curriculums are well planned, supporting pupils' understanding of themselves and others. Pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing are very well supported.
6. The school encourages mutual respect. Pupils take responsibility and contribute positively to the school and local community. The curriculum supports pupils' understanding of important fundamental British values and enables the personal development of pupils. Leaders have created a careers guidance programme that is mindful of pupils' personal interests and is appropriate for older pupils. However, younger pupils in the senior school do not develop an age-appropriate, thorough understanding of the broad range of careers available to them.
7. Safeguarding is effective and follows statutory guidance. Leaders and staff know their pupils well. They have established a secure safeguarding culture that supports pupils' safety. Leaders implement appropriate training for staff which is updated regularly. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns promptly. Leaders keep suitable records of safeguarding concerns and take swift action as needed.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure younger pupils in the senior school learn about a broad range of careers so they have an age-appropriate and thorough understanding of the opportunities available.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders and directors share a clear vision for the development of the school. They prioritise the wellbeing of pupils in all decisions that they take, resulting in pupils feeling happy, confident and safe. Considerable thought has gone into developmental planning so that the school provides a well-balanced educational experience for the pupils. Leaders promote and communicate the core values of hard work, kindness and honesty effectively across the entirety of the school's provision.
9. Governors know the school community well and bring expertise and experience in their oversight of leaders' work. They undertake a range of activities to check on the effectiveness of the school, including frequent on-site visits and meetings with staff and pupils to gain better perspectives. They work closely with leaders and provide appropriate support and challenge. The core values of the school underpin all decision-making.
10. Leaders are rigorous in their self-evaluation of the school. They use the views of staff, pupils and parents to inform their self-evaluation. Where the need for improvement is identified, leaders take appropriate action. For example, leaders have recently reviewed the structure of academic departments in order to improve teaching. As a result, this is supporting more pupils to make good progress.
11. Teachers in the early years setting are suitably trained and effectively supported by skilled leaders. Leaders collaborate closely with parents and select engaging activities which are based on children's interests. They prioritise the learning and development of children which ensures that children's early learning needs are met. The well-planned curriculum, teaching and wider opportunities for children set them up well to be ready to transition into Year 1.
12. Leaders safeguard and promote the wellbeing of pupils through an effective management of risk. Staff are comprehensively trained to identify and manage risk on the school site, in the curriculum and during off-site activities. There are an extensive and appropriate range of risk assessments, that are thorough and detailed. As a result, leaders take all reasonable action to keep pupils and staff safe.
13. Proprietors and leaders implement suitable policies and systems in line with the requirements of the Standards and statutory guidance. The school fulfils its duty under the Equality Act 2010. There is an appropriate accessibility plan in place that is routinely reviewed. This ensures that all pupils can access the site and the curriculum. The learning support department meets with leaders and teachers regularly to ensure the allocation of suitable resources is matched to the needs of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide the required information using the school's website, and it is available to parents on request.
14. Leaders provide all required and appropriate information to parents and external agencies about individual pupils. For example, parents receive regular reports that detail information about their children's attainment and progress. Leaders inform the local authority if pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition times. Leaders also provide the local authority with the required information about pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), including that related to funding and finance.
15. The school process for responding to complaints is appropriate and in line with statutory requirements. Most complaints are resolved at an informal stage. Leaders maintain suitable records

of these concerns and the follow up. Directors monitor this information to help inform any future decision-making.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

16. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

17. Leaders have created a broad curriculum that reflects its aim to provide pupils with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to be successful in their future careers. Leaders have planned schemes of work precisely, considering the order in which the content is taught, over time, so that it helps pupils to gain the important knowledge and skills that they need to learn. Leaders regularly review the curriculum to ensure it is effective and meets the needs of pupils. The curriculum is underpinned by the belief that every child should be happy, valued for their strengths and confident in their abilities. The curriculum aims to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education as they transition through the year groups.
18. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. They plan lessons well, thinking carefully about the important knowledge and content that they want pupils to learn. They embed the core values in lessons, mentor time and extra-curricular activities. Teachers across the school create a positive, encouraging environment and know their pupils well. The supportive ethos of the school emphasises the wellbeing of pupils and the importance of strengthening their self-confidence. Teachers model this encouraging approach and identify when pupils are struggling and provide timely support and detailed feedback. As a result, pupils focus on their work, try hard and behave well in lessons.
19. Owing to effective planning and skilled teaching, pupils are keen to learn and make progress. Younger pupils develop important foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. They demonstrate a range of appropriate skills and make perceptive observations. This includes, for example, identifying and comparing the different bones when studying the human body in science. Pupils are well prepared to move on to the rigours of secondary education. Older pupils develop precise understanding and knowledge of subject-specific content which they apply with increasing complexity and independence. For example, pupils in Year 9 confidently identify specific terms in geometric sequences, and in Year 13, pupils make perceptive links between inflation in the UK and current events. Pupils across the school develop a thorough and safe understanding of the use of different forms of technology to enhance their learning. For example, pupils create and explore design through a range of digital media and research and debate the impact of social media.
20. Early years staff plan carefully so that children have a wide-ranging programme of adult-led and child-initiated activities that create secure foundations for later learning. Teachers have created an appropriate curriculum that focuses on positive relationships and learning through structured and play-based learning. They are adept at supporting children's early communication, physical development and social skills. Teachers use precise assessment to support children who need more help. They work closely in collaboration with children's parents, so their learning is supported at home. Children's learning and development through their time in the early years means that they are ready to transition into Year 1.
21. Leaders have established an appropriate framework to monitor, measure and support pupils using assessment. Leaders and teachers use a range of assessment information to identify how pupils are faring across a range of skills and subjects and establish targets for improvement. Leaders use this information to identify when pupils need more help, in lessons and through additional intervention. They also promote the 'aspire' programme to ensure that lessons and activities provide further challenge for pupils. Leaders ensure that teachers are accurate and knowledgeable in their use of assessment, including examination requirements. As a result, pupils learn and achieve well over

time, including in their GCSE and A-level qualifications, and go onto appropriate degree courses or apprenticeships in a range of institutions.

22. The needs of pupils who have SEND are identified promptly by specialist staff when pupils join the school. Teachers are given guidance on how to support these needs and effectively adapt lesson plans. For example, tasks are set with frameworks that adapt tasks to meet the needs of individual pupils. As a result, pupils who have SEND achieve well from their differing starting points.
23. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are well supported. There is a very small number of pupils who speak EAL and who are in the early stages of learning English. Leaders and teachers support pupils well by identifying their linguistic needs and providing in-class and additional intervention to help them develop important reading, writing and speaking skills in English. Over time, these pupils develop essential language skills and access the curriculum effectively.
24. The extra-curricular programme is extensive. Pupils pursue interests and develop their knowledge and confidence in a wide variety of areas such as, music, creative drawing, robotics and sport. Leaders have created a programme that includes clubs at lunchtime and after school focusing on sports, the arts, creative hobbies, subject support and academic extension activities which pupils support enthusiastically.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 25. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

26. Leaders have established effective approaches to managing pupils' behaviour. Pupils and staff understand leaders' expectations, including the importance of rules and learning from mistakes. Staff and students have a positive relationship based on respect, centred around the school's core values. Leaders deal quickly and effectively with any incidents of misbehaviour including incidents of bullying, which are rare in the school. A culture of good behaviour is promoted through a range of methods including house points, sticker jars and the Arnold Lodge shield that recognises pupils who embody the school's values. As a result, pupils behave well and kindly to one another.
27. In early years, children's physical and emotional wellbeing are well developed. The curriculum supports children's early development of fine and gross motor skills, through the play-based activities as well as lessons that help them to learn to throw, catch, balance and jump. Leaders carefully plan activities that encourage independence, confidence and self-regulation. Staff help children to understand their feelings, and effective use of praise helps children to settle quickly and be confident. As a result, children are happy and respectful towards one another, they learn to regulate their emotions and develop well emotionally and physically.
28. Leaders support pupils to reflect and develop spiritual awareness in a range of ways. For example, leaders have created a programme across all phases of the school centred on the mantras of each of the three houses. Pupils are routinely asked through their mentor groups and assemblies to take time to reflect on the non-material aspects of their lives.
29. The physical education (PE) curriculum is appropriate and designed to meet the needs of the pupils. It is underpinned by a robust system of assessment and feedback. It offers pupils a wide range of sporting activities as they mature, including football, netball, mini-gym, hockey, cricket, rounders, athletics and swimming. Pupils' physical health is a focus as well as providing opportunities for them to participate in local inter-school competitions. The Everest programme supports pupils performing at a high level through one-to-one mentorship. The curriculum, alongside PSHE, teaches pupils also about the importance of exercise and other aspects of healthy lifestyles, such as sleep.
30. The PSHE and RSE programmes are appropriate and carefully planned to help pupils develop an understanding of themselves and others in an age-appropriate way. Pupils cover a wide range of topics that support healthy lifestyles and relationships and help them stay safe. Leaders routinely review the curriculum to ensure that it meets the contextual needs of pupils. For example, they have developed the syllabus with a greater emphasis on artificial intelligence and online safety and have created a programme of visiting speakers on topics such as emotional and mental health. Leaders collaborate with families to ensure that they are aware of the content and requirements of the RSE programme.
31. Leaders ensure that they meet the requirements for health and safety, including fire risk. The school site and buildings are routinely checked, clean and well maintained. Required health and safety checks and servicing of equipment are carried out and recorded methodically. There is appropriate accommodation for medical treatment, with well-trained staff administering first aid, including paediatric first aid, appropriately and in line with the school's policy and procedures. Staff in the early years are knowledgeable and manage the additional vulnerabilities of caring for younger

children. Supervision levels throughout the school are appropriate including suitably qualified staff in the early years setting.

32. The admission and attendance registers are suitably kept in line with statutory guidance. Leaders work with families and external agencies, when needed, to support the attendance of any pupils where there are concerns. The local authorities are informed when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition times.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 33. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

34. The curriculum is comprehensive and well structured. It reflects the core values of honesty, kindness and hard work. It supports pupils' understanding of important fundamental British values and enables the personal development of pupils. For example, pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong, and the importance of taking responsibility for their actions. This is demonstrated through their behaviours and actions during the school day and in class. They learn about values and concepts, such as democracy through the PSHE and philosophy, politics, religion and ethics (PPRE) curriculums and in practical ways, such as the Parliament week. Pupils can express their views through taking part in weekly meetings with pastoral leaders and through regular formal surveys. As a result, pupils are listened to and their views are considered when school policy is decided.
35. The school encourages mutual respect through the mentor curriculum and other activities. Pupils are taught about the protections afforded to people based on their protected characteristics and why this is important. An array of activities, such as assemblies based around the school's core value of kindness, help pupils to appreciate the different experiences of people in society. Leaders and external speakers present on topics including race, religion and disability and there are events and celebrations that recognise different religious festivals. As a result, pupils treat one another with mutual respect and celebrate diversity.
36. In early years, children develop social and collaborative skills through structured play and positive modelling by staff. The curriculum includes an appropriate programme of activities that promote social development, such as sharing of toys and collaboration tasks involving construction. As a result, the youngest children develop maturity and collaborative skills. They share kindly with other children, listen carefully and wait patiently for their turn.
37. Leaders have created a careers guidance programme that is mindful of pupils' personal interests, abilities and ambitions. The school delivers impartial advice. Careers guidance for older pupils includes guidance on apprenticeships and higher education institutions. Pupils in Years 10 and 12 are well supported in preparing for work experience, further education, training and employment. However, the curriculum content for younger pupils in the senior school does not help them develop a thorough understanding of a full range of careers available to them, in an age-appropriate way.
38. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and contribute positively to the school and local community. Pupils take on roles and responsibilities in the school, such as on the school council or within the house system. Older pupils take on roles mentoring and supporting younger pupils, including through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE). Many pupils undertake activities through the school's 'aspire' programme where they volunteer, fundraise and lead mentoring sessions as well as raising funds for charity.
39. Pupils develop an understanding of economic principles through the PSHE programme and other curriculum areas including the mentor programme. This curriculum supports pupils to be ready, in an age-appropriate way, to be financially aware. For example, in the sixth form, leaders have created an enrichment programme which teaches pupils to budget and prepare themselves for their transition into further education, training and employment as young adults. Outside of the taught curriculum, pupils organise house bake sales and, in the senior school, they complete the '£1 challenge' to raise funds to support local and international charities.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

40. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

41. Leaders have created a safeguarding culture that prioritises pupils' safety. The wellbeing of happy, safe and confident pupils is central in leaders' decision-making. Leaders' systems are underpinned by effective safeguarding policies and procedures that are aligned with statutory guidance. The policy is available on the school's website.
42. Safeguarding leaders are well trained. They act swiftly and appropriately when concerns are raised. Leaders respond to pupils' safeguarding needs appropriately, including supporting their mental health and wellbeing through in-school support. They liaise with organisations to identify local safeguarding concerns to teach pupils how to stay safe in the community. When required, leaders work effectively with external agencies, such as children's services, the local authority designated officer and police. Suitable records are kept securely.
43. Staff receive regular training about their safeguarding responsibilities and updates, including those related to online safety and low-level concerns about adults working with pupils. New staff receive comprehensive induction training. Staff are vigilant to signs of concern and make timely referrals to safeguarding leaders.
44. Governors are appropriately trained and fully understand their roles and responsibilities to safeguard pupils. The designated safeguarding governor meets regularly with the safeguarding team, visits the school, reviews documentation and speaks to pupils and staff. Governors use a range of information to evaluate the effectiveness of leaders' work and ensure the effective implementation of the school's safeguarding policy.
45. Pupils are provided with a range of ways in which to report their concerns, including through approaching trusted adults. The school provides pupils with an online system for anonymous reporting should this be preferred.
46. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including when online, through lessons in mentor time and a comprehensive programme of assemblies and presentations. Leaders meet regularly with parents to educate them and promote a culture of safeguarding. The school has an effective system for filtering and monitoring.
47. Those responsible for recruitment procedures carry out all required pre-employment checks on adults before they work with pupils. A record of these checks is kept on the single central record, which is routinely checked by leaders and governors.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 48. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Arnold Lodge School
Department for Education number	937/6004
Address	Arnold Lodge School 15 – 17 Kenilworth Road Leamington Spa Warwickshire CV32 5TW
Phone number	01926 778050
Email address	reception@arnoldlodge.com
Website	www.arnoldlodge.com
Proprietor	Newman Schools Limited
Chair	Mr Wynford Dore
Headteacher	Mr David Preston
Age range	4 to 19
Number of pupils	442
Date of previous inspection	3 to 5 May 2023

Information about the school

49. Arnold Lodge School is an independent co-educational day school in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. The school is owned by Newman Schools Ltd, whose directors provide governance. It comprises three sections: a junior section, for pupils aged 4 to 11 years; a senior section, for pupils aged 11 to 16 years; and a sixth form, for pupils aged 16 to 19 years.
50. There are 18 children in the early years setting, comprising one Reception class.
51. The school has identified 140 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Seven pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
52. The school has identified English as an additional language for seven pupils.
53. The school states its aims are to develop the happiness, confidence and skills of each pupil so they can be successful in their aspirations.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

21 to 23 April 2026

54. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

55. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to facilities for physical education
- visits to the facilities for the youngest pupils
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

56. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

For more information, please visit isi.net