

Armley Grange School

Armley Grange Drive, Armley, Leeds LS12 3QH

Inspection date

14 November 2024

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g)

- At the school's standard inspection, inspectors found that some aspects of the school's academic curriculum were underdeveloped. The key knowledge that the school intended pupils to learn had not been identified. Staff needed greater guidance to ensure that pupils could do more and remember more as they progressed through the school. Staff did not routinely check pupils' learning in some subjects. Furthermore, while curriculum resources were in place, they were not sufficiently understood or utilised by staff.
- The school submitted an action plan to the Department for Education (DfE) in May 2024. This was rejected by the DfE. The school proposed to track pupils' attainment. This was intended to support teachers' understanding of pupils' attainment, education and health care (EHC) plan targets and pastoral targets. Furthermore, staff were to receive further training on suitable pedagogical approaches, the effective use of curricular resources and the school's chosen approach to the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics.
- A new senior leadership team has prioritised and addressed with urgency the curriculum weaknesses identified at the school's last inspection.
- The school has developed ambitious schemes of work. These motivate pupils through engaging and well-resourced learning activities. Activity choices enable pupils to develop subject-specific skills and understanding. Pupils' work reflects this, often showing focus and pride. An urgent focus on developing teachers' pedagogy and subject knowledge has been impactful. Teachers now lead learning, including across the wider curriculum. Their knowledge informs the whole school community. Sequences of learning are rigorously assessed. Staff ensure that pupils' individual targets are at the forefront of all learning. Pupils' academic and pastoral next steps are keenly identified.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet requirements in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)

- The most recent government guidance is reflected in the school's safeguarding policy. The context of the school is clearly reflected, setting out how pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) affect practice and policy. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. This is thorough. It is tailored to pupils' needs, including those who cannot communicate verbally. The school utilises an online system that staff use to record any concerns. Leaders are promptly aware of any concerns recorded by staff and take swift action. They also hold regular meetings to review any cases of concern.
- Leaders work closely with other agencies, including the local authorities who place pupils in the school, to make sure that pupils and families get the help they need.
- Pupils feel safe. They are generally relaxed in school. Those who find verbal communication difficult have visual supports to help them to make themselves understood. This helps them to let staff know if they are worried about anything.
- These standards continue to be met.

Paragraph 9 and 9(c)

- Inspectors previously found that record-keeping was not consistently used to ensure that sanctions for misbehaviour were recorded in a timely way.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in May 2024, it was judged that the leaders' proposed actions were too narrow. They did not, for instance, consider misbehaviour which might pose a safeguarding threat.
- The school's new senior leadership team, which includes those responsible for safeguarding, have prioritised the precise recording, monitoring and evaluation of such records. Leaders' tenacity in improving this aspect of the school's work has had a positive impact on the school's work.
- The school now ensures that all records, including incidents of misbehaviour and safeguarding, are maintained on the school's online system. Staff are well trained in reporting all incidences. The school monitors and acts on these rigorously. Robust evaluation means that any behaviours which do not meet the school's high expectations are quickly identified. Pupils are then ably supported to manage their behaviour.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet requirements in this part.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 17–21

- These standards were met at the previous standard inspection in 2023.
- Statutory checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are carried out and recorded as necessary. The proprietorial body assures itself that the necessary checks have been completed. Records are well maintained and promptly updated as necessary.

- When agency staff are required, the proprietorial body assures itself that the necessary checks have been completed. All agency staff are inducted into the school's processes prior to them starting to work at the school.
- These standards remain met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and is available for parents to view should they wish to do so. The policy has due regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- These standards continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)

- At the school's previous standard inspection, it was found that the proprietorial body had not ensured that all school policies were implemented effectively. The curriculum was not implemented consistently in all subjects. Systems to record safeguarding concerns or behaviour incidents were not used robustly. This meant that the independent school standards were not all met.
- There has been a focus on developing staff's curriculum and pedagogical expertise and ensuring that records and concerns are recorded consistently. There has been rapid progress in many areas. Staff are united in their vision to promote the best outcomes for each pupil. Subjects in the academic curriculum are clearly sequenced. They interest and motivate pupils to learn. Staff are now clear how pupils' individual targets are integrated into the taught curriculum. There is clarity in what pupils have understood and staff are able to devise next steps with confidence.
- The proprietors have ensured that robust processes are in place to record incidents of non-compliance with leaders' high expectations for behaviour. Staff have received comprehensive training in the use of bespoke online recording systems. Records are detailed and accurate. The proprietor is able to evaluate the impact of the school's actions effectively.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet requirements in this part.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

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 that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(c) a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	149399
DfE registration number	383/6017
Inspection number	10353322

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 status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Proprietor	P Bloom Ltd
Chair	Richard Powers
Headteacher	James Shutt
Annual fees (day pupils)	£65,000 to £90,000
Telephone number	0113 826 7709
Website	www.armleygrangeschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@armleygrangeschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	11 October to 10 November 2023

Information about this school

- This is the school's first progress monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement in November 2023.
- The school is registered to accept 40 pupils aged between five and 19 years. The school accepted its first pupils in January 2022. Since then, numbers have risen to 40 pupils.
- All pupils attending the school have EHC plans. Pupils are referred to the school by a number of different local authorities. Pupils have a range of needs, including social, emotional and mental health difficulties, autism and communication and interaction needs.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

- The school is owned by Options Autism Ltd, which is a fully owned subsidiary of the proprietor body P Bloom Ltd. They are part of Outcomes First Group, a provider of children's services with a range of schools and homes catering for children and young adults with complex health needs and learning difficulties.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- Armley Grange was judged not to comply with all of the independent school standards at its standard inspection in October and November 2023.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection. It was conducted at no notice.
- The DfE required the school to submit a statutory action plan. Ofsted evaluated the school's action plan in May 2024. The DfE chose to reject the action plan.
- During the course of the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders from the school.
- A meeting was held with a member of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors considered the school's safeguarding arrangements, reviewed the single central record and spoke to staff about their recent training and local safeguarding risks.
- Inspectors looked at a range of different documents during the inspection, including records relating to pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Marcus Newby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Patricia Head

Ofsted Inspector

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