



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Arnold House School

November 2022

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School's Details

School	Arnold House School		
DfE number	213/6034		
Registered charity number	312725		
Address	Arnold House School 1–3 Loudoun Road St. John's Wood London NW8 0LH		
Telephone number	020 72664840		
Email address	office@arnoldhouse.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Giles Tollit		
Chair of governors	Dr Michele Badenoch		
Age range	3 to 13		
Number of pupils on roll	360		
		EYFS	80
	Juniors	157	Seniors 123
Inspection dates	22 to 24 November 2022		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Arnold House School is an independent day school. It is registered as a single-sex school for male pupils and has a charitable foundation, whose trustees provide governance. Founded in 1905, the school occupies a main site for junior school pupils from Year 1 to Year 4 and a senior school for pupils from Year 5 to Year 8. The school has a separate sport and activities centre in Canons Park. Since the previous inspection the school has opened an Early Years department nearby on its own discrete site. The headmaster was appointed in September 2021 and the chair of governors was appointed in June 2018.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school's aim is to provide academic excellence within a culture that nurtures individual achievement. It seeks to enable pupils to become good citizens within a caring Christian ethos that values the broad curriculum. The school aspires for pupils to develop self-confidence and a love-of-learning, to reach their full potential in preparation for successful progression to senior school.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from diverse professional family backgrounds living within a five-mile radius of the school. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 60 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism, of whom 47 receive additional specialist support. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Two pupils are identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), whose needs are met within the classroom curriculum. The school modifies the curriculum for pupils it identifies as the most able in the school's population in preparation for senior school scholarship examinations.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are

maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils make strong overall progress and achieve at a very high level in almost all areas.
 - Pupils have exceptional communication skills; they are eloquent and articulate.
 - Pupils are sophisticated problem-solvers in mathematics.
 - Pupils are deeply knowledgeable.
 - Pupils outstanding approaches to study are sometimes not recognised in opportunities for them to direct their own learning in lessons.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils' social understanding is highly developed.
 - Pupils have a self-awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.
 - Pupils' moral understanding is excellent.
 - Pupils make a significant contribution in service to their school.

Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
- Enable pupils to take greater initiative in directing their own learning to enhance their independent study skills.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The achievement of pupils is outstanding, and far in advance of expectations for their age in literacy and numeracy. Even from above average starting points, EYFS children achieve strongly and well-above the expectations for their age. Pupils in all age groups continue this high rate of progress. Pupils with SEND often achieve in line with their peers and occasionally, as a result of leaders' high level of focused support, achieve far above expectations from data. Pupils' make considerable short-term progress in lessons. For example, Year 8 pupils made significant progress in their accurate use of spoken French when debating the reasons for choosing different holiday locations. Pupils are highly successful in gaining places to independent schools with demanding entrance hurdles. Many achieve further success by gaining scholarships for academic achievement.

- 3.6 Pupils are highly eloquent. They speak with confidence of expression and accuracy of language, clearly and concisely conveying their intent. Year 5 pupils in art gave articulate explanations about the inspiration for the 'mirror rooms' they were creating. Pupils debate with enthusiasm, being able to successfully argue from opposing perspectives with conviction. Year 4 pupils in science contributed sophisticated ideas to a discussion on the digestive system. Pupils' listening skills are finely honed. They listen well to instructions and often need little reiteration before successfully undertaking set tasks. For example, Year 2's highly attentive listening skills in art enabled them to successfully follow the teacher's demonstration and then replicate the task for themselves. Pupils read with passion, selecting a wide variety of interesting and challenging books from a broad spectrum of genres, some well in advance for their age. For example, Year 8 pupils' written reactions to "Of Mice and Men" were exceptional in their maturity and intensity of feeling. In discussions, pupils identified with enthusiasm a range of books they have enjoyed, giving compelling explanations for what had particularly held their attention. Pupils' technical writing skills are exceptional, demonstrating high levels of skill in punctuation, spelling and composition. They write fluently, with prose that is full and detailed in response to questions or tasks. For example, Year 1 pupils made excellent use of adjectives to make their writing more exciting.
- 3.7 Pupils' numeracy skills are highly developed and amongst much else that is excellent a significant strength. They enjoy the challenge of solving complex numerical problems showing both creativity and persistence in their efforts to reach the correct solutions. This was seen in their highly ordered work and full responses to feedback. Pupils have fluent computational skills and readily respond accurately to mental arithmetic questions. For example, Year 4 pupils thought strategically when tackling highly challenging calculations using division with remainders. Pupils successfully apply their numeracy skills across many other subject areas. Year 2 used their measuring skills to accurately mark out and fold bits of card into the three equal lengths to form triangular tubes in art.
- 3.8 Pupils are highly knowledgeable and have an avid thirst for learning. Their scientific understanding and knowledge are strongly developed. Year 3 pupils demonstrated an excellent knowledge of seed dispersal using the correct scientific vocabulary in explanations to peers. Their linguistic skills are highly secure as seen in Year 7 pupils' accurate use of prepositions when conversing with confidence in French. They have excellent skills for learning enabling them to achieve success across all areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 8 pupils demonstrated sophisticated compositional skills in music when blending elements from different cultural traditions. Pupils' physical co-ordination skills are advanced for their age. This was seen when Year 2 pupils demonstrated extremely well-developed gross motor skills whilst playing dodgeball in teams.
- 3.9 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They engage with high levels of enthusiasm, arriving at lessons ready to learn. They are highly collaborative in lessons, willingly supporting each other to ensure all make progress. Their considerable attention to teaching ensures they make strong progress. For example, EYFS pupils' high levels of focus enabled them to rapidly proceed with the main activity of an art lesson. Pupils show significant independence when undertaking lesson tasks. Year 7 pupils in geography showed high levels of independence when successfully completing written work and diagrams on the formation of gorges. Pupils' responses to written tasks are full, ensuring a high volume of work is achieved across the year. Scrutiny of Year 8 pupils written work across all subject areas revealed that they have completed a significantly large amount of work.
- 3.10 Pupils achieve considerable success outside of the formal curriculum. They take a full and active part in the wide range of sport and extra-curricular activities offered both by the school and peers. Pupils' achievement in music is exceptional with a high proportion of pupils learning instruments and participating in the many ensembles and groups organised by the school. Many pupils attain highly in grade examinations, some at advanced levels for their age. Pupils perform with confidence and considerable success in the many drama productions organised both within the school and as part of national festivals. Pupils' artwork, displayed throughout the school and in the regular exhibitions hosted by the school, is excellent. Pupils achieve considerable individual sporting success with a

number having been selected to represent teams at borough and county level in cricket, football, tennis and gymnastics. Sports teams have been successful in national competitions with similar schools in sailing, golf, basketball, football and gymnastics. Pupils have been highly successful at national level in chess, debating and history essay writing competitions. Pupils regularly are awarded scholarships in art, drama, music and sport to senior schools.

- 3.11 Pupils have excellent ICT skills. Year 7 pupils' sophisticated coding skills enabled them to successfully create interesting and complex games. They have an extensive knowledge of standard work applications and skills. For example, Year 3 pupils made rapid progress in their learning of how to copy and paste images from a source into their own documents. Pupils confidently use their ICT skills across many areas of the curriculum. Year 8 pupils' highly skilled use of music sequencing software enabled them to create complex and interesting compositions of their own. Pupils make full use of digital resources to support their learning, for example when finding information online for inclusion in presentations to present to peers. For example, Year 3 and Year 5 pupils successfully delivered excellent digital presentations about their hobbies in an assembly.
- 3.12 Pupils study skills are highly developed. Their work is well-organised and reflective. They respond well to teachers' feedback, often writing detailed and full responses to the comments received. In many of the pupils' responses they display deep consideration and higher-order thinking. For example, Year 6 pupils reflected with maturity on the complex ethical issues that arise when international sports events take place in countries with controversial human rights records. Pupils have excellent skills of analysis. Year 8 pupils successfully analysed various sources of evidence about vaping to determine which gave reliable information. They can apply their understanding from one subject to another. For example, Year 4 pupils rapidly understood the discordant relationship between damage caused to whales from microplastics in the ocean and the disposal of plastic wrappings in school waste bins. The school very successfully fulfils its aim for pupils to develop a love-of-learning, and to reach their full potential. The high quality of teaching contributes much to this, although in the pre-inspection questionnaires a small minority of pupils said that they did not find lessons interesting. Pupils have strong appetites for enquiry, but occasionally these are not exploited in lessons, which limits the development of pupils' ability to take initiative in their own learning. In discussions with inspectors, Year 8 pupils indicated a range of areas they would have liked to explore further, including history related to the diverse traditions represented within the school.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils have a very strong social awareness. They manage their interactions around the school site with high levels of consideration for others within a complicated layout. They are sensitive to the needs of others and readily offer support to one another. For example, Year 4 pupils showed unprompted compassion towards an injured classmate by carrying his belongings between classrooms. Older pupils willingly give support to younger pupils, for example as peer mentors. In discussions with inspectors, younger pupils confirmed they found this support highly valuable. They show consideration for one another by freely responding to feedback. For example, Year 8 house captains quickly adjusted their approach to house assemblies to ensure these became more accessible to younger pupils. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to work effectively in groups. For example, Year 8 pupils successfully collaborated through debate to identify the key ethical dilemmas revealed in a series of parables. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips pupils with effective team working, and collaborative skills.
- 3.15 Pupils' self-understanding is excellent. They are highly enthusiastic participants in lessons and maintain exceptional levels of focus and interest. Pupils have high levels of self-confidence enabling them to take risks in their learning. For example, Year 3 pupils showed excellent resilience when trying to add, move and re-size digital pictures of Ancient Egypt into their factual writing. Pupils are highly

resilient, rapidly recovering from set-backs to enable long term growth and success. For example, Year 2 pupils displayed excellent perseverance and progress when trying to make joins in their handwriting. They maintain high levels of self-discipline in lessons, participating appropriately, and not allowing inhibitions to hinder their participation. For example, older pupils showed great self-control and dignity when portraying different emotions to one another in a drama activity. In discussions with inspectors, Year 8 pupils showed considerable maturity in their understanding of how to overcome challenges in their learning, both through perseverance and by breaking tasks down into manageable chunks.

- 3.16 Pupils moral understanding is excellent. In discussions with inspectors, older pupils gave well-reasoned arguments for the importance of school rules. Pupils have a well-grounded sense of justice and fairness and can explain why codes of conduct are useful. They have excellent manners and show increasingly high levels of consideration for one another as they progress through the school. In the questionnaire, nearly all pupils agreed that the school has high expectations of them in terms of their behaviour, although a small minority said that pupils were not always kind to each other. Pupils meet relationship challenges successfully, showing each other high levels of tolerance and respect. On a small number of occasions a few younger pupils are not always able to successfully regulate their own behaviour. They are, however, often successfully challenged by peers, who show resilience and determination in their robust responses. Pupils are further enabled to meet senior leaders' high behaviour expectations by the focused support and sensitive interventions of staff when required and the positive and open culture nurtured by leaders.
- 3.17 Pupils make an excellent contribution to their school. They enthusiastically engage with the many school-wide initiatives to affect change. For example, the school council with representatives from across the school has been successful in securing additional playground equipment. Pupils actively choose the charities they want to support and then take the initiative in planning fundraising activities. For example, pupils have chosen to raise funds and collect clothing and toiletries to donate to their local food bank. Pupils also actively engage with the school's fundraising efforts for national charities for the care of war veterans and international charities supporting female rights and education. House captains in Year 8 prepare house assemblies with diligence and show consideration in their efforts to adapt their approach to meet the needs of the very youngest pupils. Pupils show initiative in their willingness and enthusiasm to create school clubs. For example, pupils in Year 3 set up an art club to make use of materials found in nature.
- 3.18 Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and maintain good health. They are highly confident and knowledgeable about how to stay safe online, with older pupils able to give detailed and accurate advice to younger pupils on simple precautions they can take to ensure their own privacy and safety. Pupils are active and maintain good levels of physical fitness through ready participation in the many sports and activities offered by leaders and teachers. For example, Year 5 pupils enthusiastically explained to inspectors in discussions the value of protein as part of a healthy diet. Consequently, they make excellent choices of food at lunchtime, willingly taking salad and fruit as additions to their main courses. Older pupils have an appropriate understanding of the health impacts associated with drug use. Pupils have a mature understanding of the need to maintain good mental health and can readily identify strategies that help them to achieve this. Nearly all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school encourages pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Inspection evidence confirms this to be true.
- 3.19 Pupils spiritual understanding is excellent. They participate in acts of worship with respect. For example, pupils sang the assembly hymn with conviction and gusto. They enjoy the excitement of discovery, for example when Year 3 pupils expressed delight on discovering how to copy and paste images from a source into a document. Pupils thoughtfully engage with prayer, often reflecting sensitively on personal connections during national commemorations. Pupils' aesthetic appreciation, particularly of art is exceptional. Year 2 pupils expressed admiration for an artist's use of oil pastels to create landscapes. In discussion with inspectors, Year 8 pupils readily connected beauty to a diverse

range of concepts such as sport, nature, aircraft and friends. Their nuanced and mature views on the merits of happiness over material wealth showed recognition that gratification may be delayed and it is all right to be unhappy at times.

- 3.20 Pupils are confident and successful decision makers. They make sensible decisions in collaboration with peers, for example, when deciding which charities to support. They can show high levels of initiative when deciding to pursue a particular idea or interest by setting up a club. EYFS children make excellent choices of activities in lessons, often choosing to complete the most challenging tasks on offer first. When explaining their choice of senior school, Year 8 pupils gave compelling reasons for their decisions, such as the range of sports on offer, or the facilities available to support their interests.
- 3.21 Pupils are tolerant and highly inclusive. They show respect for one another in their positive interactions both in lessons and around the school. They recognise the diversity that surrounds them and many engage actively in seeking to understand the cultures of those from backgrounds different from their own. Pupils almost always show each other tolerance, regardless of their backgrounds or differences, strongly supported by the excellent example set by staff. Older pupils strongly articulate values of inclusivity and recognise the richness that diversity can bring to their lives. Younger pupils show good levels of tolerance and understanding towards their peers.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Matthew Lovett	Reporting inspector
Mr Charles Banbury	Compliance team inspector (Senior master, IAPS school)
Mr Adrian Downie	Team inspector (Senior master, IAPS school)
Mrs Valerie Holloway	Team inspector (Former head of nursery and kindergarten, IAPS school)