

Inspection of Arnold Nursery School and Children's Centre

The Arnold Centre, Goldsmith Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S65 2LY

Inspection dates:	29 and 30 April 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Children get off to a flying start to their education in this welcoming and highly inclusive school. From the moment they arrive, the school treats every child as an individual. The school has high expectations for achievement, attendance and behaviour. Children make strong progress through the curriculum and achieve well. Staff model the behaviour that is expected of children. As a result, children treat each other with respect and can resolve minor conflicts themselves. They are happy and confident at school.

The exciting curriculum provides opportunities for children to take risks in their learning. For example, they frequently use the fire pit in the outdoor area and have lots of opportunities for climbing and exploring. The school places strong emphasis on teaching children to be safe. Children practise 'stop, drop and roll' before they use the fire pit and learn to cross the road safely when moving between the two school sites.

Children benefit from a range of experiences to support their learning. During the inspection, a mobile farm visited the school. This linked with the current story, 'The Little Red Hen' and helped to prepare children for reading 'Jack and the Beanstalk' next term.

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

The curriculum is highly ambitious and meticulously well designed. The school gives careful thought to children's starting points and previous experiences. Children achieve exceptionally well, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school provides excellent support for children with SEND. It has a clear process to identify their needs effectively, ensuring they get help quickly. Classrooms are well equipped and organised, giving all children equal access to activities. For example, tools like 'sound buttons' and 'communication boards' are widely used.

Early reading is central to the curriculum. The school chooses texts carefully to support language development and to ensure learning builds over time. Books are usefully available throughout the provision. Children borrow them weekly from the library. Older children build early phonics skills precisely through activities such as recognising different sounds. Younger children eagerly engage in songs, rhymes and stories with staff.

The school provides staff with extensive training. Consequently, they are highly skilled and knowledgeable. Interactions between adults and children consistently promote language development. Staff design purposeful activities that enable children to practise what they have learned. Children talk enthusiastically about their learning, using the key words they have been taught. For example, children talk about how to plant seeds and know that they will need water to help them grow.

The school regularly checks children's progress through the curriculum. It provides extra help to those who need it through interventions or focus groups. These are successful in helping children to catch up with their peers. Parents and carers receive frequent guidance on how to support their children's learning at home. The school builds strong relationships with families.

Children behave exceptionally well because of clear routines and consistent expectations from staff. They show perseverance and resilience in their learning. The school strongly emphasises the importance of regular attendance. It works closely with families to build positive habits to prepare children for the next stage of their education.

Opportunities for pupils' personal development are woven through the curriculum. Children learn how to lead safe, healthy lives and how to be a good citizen. For example, children have opportunities to vote and are expected to tidy away at the end of a session. Some visitors to school, such as a mechanic and a bricklayer, help to promote aspirations. Other visitors, such as a fire safety officer, help to reinforce and enhance learning. Children learn to respect and celebrate difference. They celebrate different religious festivals and see children from diverse backgrounds in stories.

The school has a reflective and supportive culture. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a drive for continual improvement. Governors oversee the school effectively, working with leaders to prioritise staff workload and well-being. This creates a positive environment where staff take pride in their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

How can I feed back my views?

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

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

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	106826
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10394246
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James Fisher
Executive headteacher	Lynsey Hadfield
Website	www.thearnoldcentre.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has formed a federation with another local nursery school. The executive headteacher is responsible for both schools.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- A breakfast club operates daily. This is run by school staff and overseen by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school and other senior leaders. In addition, they spoke to the chair and other members of the governing body and the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited classrooms to observe children in the provision, spoke to teachers and spoke to some children about their learning. In addition, inspectors reviewed the curriculums in some other areas of learning, such as literacy.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first. In addition, inspectors considered how the school meets the early years welfare requirements.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of children in the provision and at lunchtime.
- An inspector spoke to some parents and carers as they arrived at the school and considered their views through the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View. This included reviewing any free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Philippa Kermotschuk, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gerry Wilson

Ofsted Inspector

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