

Archway School

Address: Paganhill, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 4AX

Unique reference number (URN): 115723

Inspection report: 14 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	     
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a suitable and coherent personal development programme. For example, pupils learn about respecting others who may have different views or experiences to their own. They build knowledge and understanding over time, including about healthy relationships. This includes strengthening teaching about safeguarding and domestic abuse when leaders identify emerging needs in the local community. As a result, pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Leaders have implemented an effective careers information, education, advice and guidance programme. Pupils learn about jobs related to the different subjects they study. For example, they hear from relevant speakers. Older pupils and students undertake relevant work experience. This builds pupils' understanding of their future options. Leaders prioritise careers support for pupils who face barriers to learning, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or disadvantaged pupils. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils gain an understanding of fundamental British values, such as mutual respect and tolerance. Most pupils show respect for those differences that are protected in law, such as race and disability. Leaders ensure that the programme develops pupils' knowledge of rights and responsibilities. For example, pupils learn about how they can have a voice in the school and understand how their views can influence decision making. They are proud to represent others in the school council.

Leaders plan a broad range of extracurricular activities for pupils, including sports, arts and music. Leaders make adaptations to include pupils who are disadvantaged or who have SEND. Leaders track who takes part in opportunities. However, this is not fully developed. As a result, they do not have precise information to make further improvements to ensure all pupils can benefit from these opportunities.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' progress is inconsistent. Overall, pupil achievement is below average in national tests for most measures of attainment and progress. This inconsistency is reflected in the quality of work produced by pupils in all key stages. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress are more in line with their peers nationally. Pupils learn better when teachers use effective strategies in lessons. Where this is the case, teachers check pupils' understanding more precisely, identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and provide precise guidance to help pupils learn.

Many pupils do not attend school often enough. As a result, they have significant gaps in their learning. This becomes a barrier to pupils making suitable progress from their starting points. Leaders are starting to address this, but it is too early to tell if it is working. Leaders

support pupils well with their progression beyond school. Most pupils move on to the next stage of their education, employment or training successfully.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Too many pupils do not attend school often enough. Over time, pupils' attendance is significantly below national figures. Leaders have recently introduced more robust systems to track patterns of pupil attendance more carefully. Actions to support pupils to attend more often and to remove barriers that stop pupils coming to school regularly are in place. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, some of this work is very recent. It is too early for leaders to know if their strategies are working.

Leaders have created a calmer, caring and more orderly environment. Pupils usually behave well in lessons and around the site. Staff mostly reinforce expectations of behaviour. Pupils respond well when staff apply these consistently. However, pupil suspensions remain high. Work to reduce this has not had time to have an impact. Leaders do not tolerate bullying, discrimination or harassment. When this does happen, pupils are confident staff will act if they report these. Pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons sometimes vary. In some lessons, pupils are attentive. In others, they occasionally lose focus or opt out of tasks, disturbing others' learning. Leaders are refining strategies to support pupils with behavioural needs.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

In some parts of the curriculum, content is not taught well. This occurs across all key stages. Although leaders have designed an appropriate and broad curriculum, teaching does not accurately assess pupils' starting points for learning consistently. Where the curriculum is taught well, pupils have a more secure understanding of what has been taught because assessment here is used better to identify how to build on what pupils already know and can do.

Generally, leaders have an informed understanding of the curriculum. They organise staff, allocate resources appropriately, and ensure teachers have appropriate subject knowledge. The curriculum is well sequenced so that pupils can build their knowledge incrementally.

Leaders have identified what is needed to bring about improvement. They have designed suitable training for teachers and classroom staff to support teaching the curriculum with greater effectiveness. However, this has only recently been put into place. Pupils who are at an early stage of reading or need help to secure basic literacy or numerical skills have started to receive help. There is more to do to make sure that pupils practise the precise skills that they need. This means gaps in learning do not always close quickly and sustainably. Adaptations to teaching and the curriculum are considered inconsistently and are not implemented effectively. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who face other barriers to their learning do not always learn as well as they could.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

Leaders identify pupils who have barriers to learning, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, they do not consistently make timely or appropriate adjustments to support changing or emerging needs effectively. The teaching to support pupils with barriers to learning is not precise enough. For example, there are inconsistencies in how well teachers make adaptations to support pupils with SEND. This hinders how well some pupils with SEND achieve.

More recently, approaches implemented by leaders to support pupils who face barriers to their learning are starting to have a positive impact for some pupils. For example, teachers have received training to develop their expertise in using strategies to adapt learning activities in ways that pupils with different needs can understand. However, this work is in its infancy. Leaders work closely with other agencies to support pupils with their wellbeing.

Leaders evaluate and have a clear understanding of the impact of some strategies. This includes how they use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. However, in other areas, they do not build a precise enough picture. For example, leaders lack clear insight into how to further overcome the barriers that prevent some disadvantaged pupils from participating in wider activities outside the classroom.

Pupils known to social care typically receive the support that they need. Leaders make use of alternative provision appropriately.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders have identified and introduced a range of important actions to improve the school so that pupils benefit from a high-quality education. These actions are appropriate and well considered. However, these strategies and systems are very recent. The impact is not consistent or always visible.

Leaders and governors know their school well and have accurately identified the school's strengths and development areas. These are outlined in the school's plans and priorities for improvement. Governors work closely with the school. They fulfil their statutory duties well and have a detailed knowledge of the school's work.

Leaders have not been able to implement change as swiftly as they would have liked. However, leaders work purposefully with staff to put into place improvement strategies in all areas that need development. Leaders have started to work with groups of staff to improve these areas of the school's work. Staff share their ideas for improvement and help make sure they happen. Leaders ensure that changes are thought about carefully so they make the positive impact the school would like to see. However, some staff would like to see changes happening more quickly.

Typically, staff appreciate leaders' care and consideration for their workload and wellbeing. Teaching and support staff have opportunities to access useful professional development in and out of school. This includes nationally accredited training.

The achievement and progress of post-16 students is inconsistent. Where teaching is effective, students perform well. In some subjects, students are challenged to think deeply about the subject. This is reflected in high-quality work. Where there is less challenge, the learning and work are below what is expected of them. Students generally perform closer to others nationally in applied subjects. Those who face barriers are usually well supported.

Leaders recognise this inconsistency and are taking steps to address it. These improvements are at an early stage and are yet to have the required impact. Some teachers support students who face barriers to learning or wellbeing well, for example those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or receiving a bursary. They generally ensure that students have the necessary support to keep up. However, this can be inconsistent, as teachers do not adapt their lessons consistently to suit these students effectively.

There is a well-established enrichment programme that prepares students for life after school. It helps them to broaden their horizons and gain a range of skills. Students are well supported by an effective careers programme. They receive appropriate information about next steps, including about universities and apprenticeships.

Students feel safe and are safe. They feel that the sixth form is a tolerant place. However, the personal, social, health and emotional programme is not effectively implemented for students. The planned content of the programme is appropriate, but it is not consistently delivered well. As a result, some students do not value it. They struggle to recall important information leaders want them to know.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

At Archway, pupils enjoy being part of their school community. They appreciate the opportunities they have to develop their interests, for example in the arts or sporting activities. Most pupils enjoy their learning. However, some pupils do not receive the support that they need in lessons to build on what they have learned before. For example, some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who face other barriers to learning do not benefit consistently from adaptations to teaching so that learning is well matched to their needs. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they could. Post-16 students also experience inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in some parts of the curriculum. This affects how well they achieve, including in their A-level courses.

Pupils generally have positive relationships with their peers and staff. Most feel that staff support them with their learning and provide valuable experiences beyond the classroom. For instance, pupils benefit from educational experiences, including opportunities to perform in an annual school musical or going on a skiing trip. Pupils build their resilience and character in different ways. For example, many take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Some pupils hold leadership positions, such as being members of the school council. These opportunities build their understanding of how to be a positive member of the school and wider community.

Most pupils behave well and meet the school's expectations for pupil conduct. However, a minority of pupils cause disruption. Some do not show enough respect to others. Pupils can see the work leaders are doing to deal with poor behaviour. Bullying is dealt with effectively. This helps pupils to feel safe. Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough, with the proportion of pupils who miss several days of school being higher than national averages. This hinders their achievement and participation in personal development activities.

Next steps

- Leaders need to ensure that identified pupils with barriers to learning have their changing or emerging needs tracked and that appropriate strategies to remove barriers are implemented effectively.
 - Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is adapted consistently well in all subjects and across all key stages to meet the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that all pupils know more and remember more over time.
 - Leaders need to ensure that teachers have high expectations of all pupils in all key stages, which would be reflected in high-quality work being produced.
 - Leaders need to ensure that newly introduced strategies to remove attendance barriers help more pupils to attend regularly.
 - Leaders need to ensure that the ambition and challenge of the post-16 programme of study is consistent so that students achieve consistently well.
 - Leaders need to ensure that the well-considered strategies to improve areas that need development are embedded so that their positive impact is realised.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Gill Ferry.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, teachers and governors during the inspection.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses 3 alternative providers, including 2 that are unregistered.

There have been significant changes in governance and leadership since the last inspection.

Headteacher: James Woollin

Lead inspector:

Sarah Wilson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Deirdre Fitzpatrick, Ofsted Inspector

Matthew Collins, Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Lovett, Ofsted Inspector

Rachel Hesketh, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 14 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,045

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,215

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

26.79%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.25%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.77%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	40.4%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	37.0%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	41.9%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	43.3	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	40.7	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	45.1	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.36	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.23	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	17.6%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	21.6%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	21.2%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	32.3	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	30.5	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38.6	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.19	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.30	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	17.6%	53.1%	-35.5 pp
2023/24 (final)	21.6%	53.1%	-31.5 pp
2022/23 (final)	21.2%	52.4%	-31.2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	32.3	50.4	-18.1
2023/24 (final)	30.5	50.0	-19.5
2022/23 (final)	38.6	50.3	-11.7

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.19	0.16	-1.35
2022/23 (final)	-0.30	0.17	-0.47

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	94%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	22.41	34.99	Below
2023/24 (final)	24.95	34.38	Below
2022/23 (final)	27.17	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.8	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.1	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	11.3%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	11.3%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	10.1%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	34.0%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	35.8%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	31.3%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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