

Avonbourne College

Harewood Avenue, Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 6NY

Inspection dates

14–15 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The chief executive officer has overseen the development of the school from 11 to 16 secondary provision for girls to an all-through school with a co-educational sixth form and a co-educational primary school with, currently, Years R to 2. She has been continuously ambitious for the school and has been successful in providing a good standard of education for pupils in the three different phases.
- Teaching is good and supports pupils' progress across the different phases of the school.
- The behaviour of pupils is good and provides a calm and purposeful climate for learning to take place.
- The care and attention paid to the emotional well-being of pupils are a considerable strength. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving steadily as a consequence.
- The provision in the sixth form is good and caters for students' individual needs. This has led to students finding appropriate education, employment and training at the end of their time at school.
- There is a wealth of activities in which pupils can participate. Pupils thrive on this and have achieved some strong outcomes as a result.
- The children in the early years are making good progress. Parents are effusive in their praise of the setting.
- Governors are committed and enthusiastic. They receive support from the directors on a range of policies, which enables aspects such as managing staff performance to be effective and rigorous.
- Despite the school's measures to improve attendance, the attendance of a minority of pupils in each phase has remained stubbornly low.
- Teachers have taken part in several development opportunities and a host of initiatives. However, evaluation of how these activities have had an impact on pupils' outcomes is lacking. As a result, improvements in teaching are inconsistent.
- Expectations and support for pupils with lower ability are not good in some subjects in the secondary phase. Here, these pupils are not progressing as well as others.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that standards continue to rise by:
 - evaluating the many initiatives in teaching to gain a clearer understanding of those that have the most impact on pupils' progress and use these to consistently improve teaching
 - monitoring the teaching of pupils with lower ability more rigorously so that their progress improves
 - monitoring and improving attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The chief executive officer is an excellent role model for leaders and staff at the school. They appreciate her open-door policy and the support and guidance that she has given them. This support has enabled many to develop their careers. Pupils benefit from this because the staff are committed to providing them with a worthwhile education that prepares them well for the future.
- Unforeseen fluctuations in staffing in recent months have been offset by succession planning. This has enabled each phase to operate without interruption and continue to provide a good standard of education for the pupils.
- Leaders have created an effective learning environment. This has required tough decisions about, for example, monitoring pupils' behaviour and dealing with both fixed-term and permanent exclusions in the secondary phase. Now, pupils are working well and improving more rapidly because their learning time is less disrupted.
- Within the three phases, pupils are polite and respectful of each other, staff and visitors. Leaders have ensured that the high academic expectations are reflected in social and extra-curricular activities. The development in this area is exceptional in some cases. For instance, a group of Year 10 girls won a business and enterprise event that will enable them to host a black-tie evening function in London. The task they completed was to raise funds to sponsor entrepreneurs internationally, and they achieved this in 79 countries.
- Across all three phases the curriculum is purposeful. It covers all relevant aspects and has much that leads to success for individual pupils. A tailored approach allows leaders to provide choices and offer options in GCSE subjects and sixth form programmes. This is further secured by the excellent independent guidance given to the older pupils to make sure they follow appropriate career paths. All pupils follow an education, employment or training path when they finish school.
- The spending of the sport premium has enabled primary pupils to use specialist equipment during unstructured times, such as the lunch break, that maintains their physical skills. In addition, specialist teachers in physical education (PE) come from the secondary phase to teach the pupils to enhance their skills further. Primary staff learn from this model and use it to maintain standards in teaching PE.
- The school promotes tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith well. Pupils have a very inclusive attitude to differences between each other. This is strengthened by the work of the World Language Centre in the school. This facility provides bespoke teaching for all pupils who speak English as an additional language within the trust, and each pupil is successfully integrated into the mainstream schools promptly. Outcomes for these pupils are in line with others. In addition, approximately 25 international students join the sixth form annually. Avonbourne's sixth form students value the additional learning they gain from discovering the way other countries teach subjects.

- A significant number of trainee teachers, newly qualified teachers and recently qualified teachers work in the school. The recently qualified teachers gain good leadership experience from mentoring the trainees and newly qualified teachers. They, in turn, are mentored well by experienced colleagues. Recruitment is secure because the trainee teachers value the support given to them and are keen to continue working in the school when possible. Pupils are, therefore, provided with skilled practitioners who are secure in their subject knowledge.
- Middle leaders are rigorous in monitoring colleagues. For some, this extends to monitoring across other schools in the trust. They have considered carefully the best programmes of study to provide for pupils and resource them well, which leads to good outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders hold middle leaders accountable and do not shy away from taking robust measures when necessary. This leads to improvement in areas which have been less successful in the recent past, such as science.
- Trust directors oversee the performance management of staff. The systems are tightly monitored and targets are set that improve pupils' performance and move the school forward effectively.
- Leaders recognise the importance of linking with the community. Good work has taken place to make sure parents, businesses and other community members are engaged and benefit from the school's facilities and resources.
- For pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, funding has secured improvement. Many pupils have complex needs and the special educational needs coordinator provides clear guidance for teachers in adapting their teaching, as well as using external agencies as necessary, to ensure pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- School leaders are clear in their moral purpose regarding equality of opportunity, and dismiss any form of stereotyping. Pupils appreciate this and the high expectations aligned with it. As a result, pupils' aspirations allow them to recognise their worth and plan effectively for their future career paths.
- The pupil premium funding has been used effectively to support the learning of the majority of disadvantaged pupils, who are doing as well as others or catching up quickly. However, the funding has not led to improvements in the attendance of some pupils in this group.
- A comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities are well attended. The school provides opportunities for pupils to excel physically, emotionally, culturally and creatively. The school monitors the uptake of these events. Disadvantaged pupils do not attend as much or as often as other pupils. Leaders have not made effective changes to enable more of these pupils to attend.
- Many initiatives are undertaken to support the professional development of teachers, and they appreciate this. Evaluation of the impact and success of these initiatives is not detailed and comprehensive enough. Leaders are not clear about which ones are having the greatest effect on progress.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school emanates from the directorial board. The strategic processes at board level are secure and provide overarching policies that are statutory and applied throughout the trust.
- Each phase has its own local governing body and a respective chair who doubles as a director. Chairs have a secure grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the phases of the school and a clear oversight of the spending of public funds, such as the pupil premium.
- Other governors are committed but rely on the chairs and directors as decision-makers and holders of knowledge.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The chief executive officer has developed a culture that advocates personal safety and well-being for all pupils and staff. Secure processes are in place for monitoring and recording any safeguarding concerns. School leaders work well with a range of multi-agencies, including police from the neighbouring county, and health and social workers. Similarly, leaders work sensitively with parents and monitor and support pupils and families. Staff are trained on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. This further supports the health and safety of pupils within the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations and pupils benefit from this. The learning environment is positive because relationships between pupils and staff are strong. This allows pupils to progress well in the majority of lessons.
- Teachers' planning in the primary phase is particularly secure and supports the younger pupils in making a good start at school. The mathematics and English teachers in the secondary phase plan well based on what pupils know and understand. As a result, pupils are taught well and are making better progress. Planning is more variable in other subjects, apart from in the sixth form. Here, teachers provide very good support and challenge which leads to the high level of academic success.
- In the better teaching, pupils consolidate and deepen their knowledge. This is reinforced through probing questioning that stretches pupils' understanding. Here, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, flourish.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge for whatever age range and ability level supports pupils' progress well.
- Teachers use assessment information regularly to monitor progress and intervene when pupils underachieve. The analysis of which strategies are most successful is not evident and this hinders rapid progress in some areas.

- The special educational needs coordinators in the different phases consider carefully what support is necessary for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so these pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Similarly, teachers are aware of the needs of disadvantaged pupils and know how to aid them. Barriers to learning are removed successfully.
- Engagement with parents and the wider community is beneficial. Parents receive comprehensive and meaningful reports on their child's progress, with individualised comments to support better progress in the future. This is helpful to parents. In the primary school, parents were effusive in their comments on the support their children had received and the progress they are making.
- Teaching encourages diversity of thought and rejects stereotyping. This is supported by the useful links that are made with local businesses so that pupils gain valuable work experience in a full range of roles.
- Inconsistencies in the way teachers apply the school's marking and feedback policy have a negative impact on the lower-ability pupils. In a range of subjects, these pupils are not given adequate information and structures to support a review of their learning in a systematic and consistent way. As a result, they make too many errors and do not consolidate and extend their understanding. This aspect is more apparent in the secondary phase than elsewhere.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are proud of their school and keen to share their views.
- Pupils are positive about their learning and this has helped them improve their outcomes.
- Pupils listen carefully to each other and are able to discuss topical subjects such as terrorism with sensitivity.
- Pupils receive very thorough, impartial careers advice and guidance. Pupils appreciate this and are able to use it skilfully to support applications for further study at the school or elsewhere.
- Staff are very clear about intolerance towards bullying. Pupils know that if any occurs, it is dealt with quickly and efficiently. Pupils are taught about the spectrum of bullying and how to tackle it to keep themselves safe and emotionally stable.
- The open culture of the school, led by the chief executive officer's role modelling, promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Pupils are safe and feel safe. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including the dangers of social media, sexting and other aspects of web communication.
- The strength of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that pupils are reflective. This helps them in their preparation to become conscientious citizens.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The majority of pupils behave well within school and in their unstructured times. The few disaffected pupils, mainly in the secondary phase, understand and accept the sanctions imposed and, in the majority of cases, learn from the error of their ways. The consistent application of the behaviour policy has led to a complete sea change in pupils' attitudes over time.
- The school is an orderly environment and pupils are quick to respond to any instructions from staff. This allows pupils to make good progress and focus on their studies.
- Leaders have made real inroads into improving attendance at the school but there is still a stubborn minority who fail to attend regularly. The school has worked well with many families in changing poor attendance habits and helped them realise the importance of education.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Strong progress is made in English and mathematics. Supportive work in literacy and numeracy allows pupils' good starting points in these core subjects to be developed further in a wide range of subjects across the curriculum.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils within the secondary phase and sixth form is good. Disadvantaged pupils are working as well as others nationally and some of the most able are applying for places at prestigious universities such as Oxbridge. There are too few disadvantaged pupils in the primary phase to comment on their progress.
- Pupils achieve good outcomes in GCSEs and A levels that allow them to move on appropriately at the end of key stages 4 and 5. School leaders ensure that pupils are prepared well for their examinations and progress is not hampered in any way.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points. Their needs are understood. Progress and achievement is monitored carefully so that these pupils can maintain the same level of work as their peers.
- Pupils supported by the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium are making continual improvements in their reading and are doing as well as other pupils, based on their starting points, by the end of the year. A smaller group are making good progress in mathematics and, of those who are successful, many are now making better than average progress. Support continues in Year 8 for those still struggling at the end of the Year 7 so that pupils can catch up eventually.
- The strength of the work in the World Language Centre means that pupils who speak English as an additional language are making very good progress. Pupils integrate well with mainstream pupils and advance rapidly in their studies once the language barriers are overcome.
- The teaching of phonics is assured and competent in key stage 1. This prepares pupils in reading and spelling so that literacy outcomes are secure. Pupils read fluently and

well. Some of this is because of the work in the primary sector and it is enhanced by the reading developments that are encouraged in tutor time in the secondary school.

- Ambition and expectations are not always high enough for low-ability pupils and many are not achieving well from their starting points. There is not enough individualised focus and structure in the learning offered. Teachers do not challenge common errors and pupils continue to make the same mistakes.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership in the early years is strong and, as a result, children are making good progress. The majority are reaching a good level of development. Children are well prepared academically, socially and physically for Year 1.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is effective because planning is detailed and focused on the individual needs of children. For instance, the end of year assessment for the early learning goals in 2015 and 2016 showed that boys were not doing as well as girls. To make topics more interesting to boys and enhance learning across the curriculum, additional stimuli such as a nature pond were added.
- In the recently established Reception Year, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is secure. Most children are making typical progress and write sentences that are punctuated with capital letters and full stops. They count to 20, at least, and respond well to any numerical challenges.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively and are making good progress from their starting points.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils in the early years to comment on their progress.
- Children respond well to adults. They take responsibility for their actions eagerly. They are keen to learn. Children show resilience and tenacity over an extended time.
- Children are settled in their learning. The routines established ensure that children respect the equipment used. Children are polite to each other and to staff. They are enthusiastic about being involved and are confident in their abilities.
- Children's personal and social development is strong because staff know the children well. Activities are set up where children can integrate, learn to share and take turns.
- Parents have a good understanding of the progress made by their children through a web-based package used by the school as well as an open-door policy that encourages daily communication. Parents respond well to the information that is reported home and this supports the more rapid progress of children.
- Very good transition arrangements for the children from the neighbouring nursery providers allows children to settle swiftly in to the new environment and expectations.
- Resources are selected and used well so that greater challenge is provided to the most able pupils. However, some activities are not structured in a developmental way so potential for outstanding achievement is missed.
- Variability in the teaching between classes has an impact on progress. Rigorous and secure monitoring and coaching is not yet embedded within the Reception Year, though school leaders have allocated time for shared planning and meetings.

- The leader ensures that children are safe and free from harm.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership of the sixth form is good and has maintained strong outcomes for a period of years. Consequently, numbers are increasing and programmes of study are developing further, which provides better opportunities for students.
- Academic courses are successful and students are achieving well in A levels. They are gaining grades that allow them to move on successfully to their desired choices.
- The comprehensive careers programme supports students in the sixth form, as well as pupils in the other parts of the school. Students are successful in their applications to apprenticeship schemes and universities.
- Retention rates between Years 12 and 13 are high; very few students leave and those that do make the decision based on pragmatic and practical reasons. They develop their futures positively elsewhere.
- Students are achieving well in level 2 qualifications. Published data does not include the many international students who are successful in these. Over 40 students achieved level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics last year. They are supported efficiently by focused teaching.
- Teaching stretches students' thinking and provides them with purposeful structures and commentary to ensure that they make continually improved progress from their starting points. Students are proud of their achievements and motivated to achieve their best.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are progressing as well as others because of the specific care and advice given according to their needs.
- All students do work experience, enabled by the good relationships with local employers. This aids sixth form students in their eventual prospects and applications.
- Students are safe, and feel safe, because of the explicit messages that are delivered throughout the school. They are well prepared for the dangers when using social media.
- Students contribute well to the wider life of the school. They work with and provide support to younger pupils in creative and sporting activities. This offers support and nurtures aspiration.
- Attendance is below the national average in the sixth form. The leader is aware of the particular circumstances of the students involved and is determined and committed to improving attendance.

School details

Unique reference number	138193
Local authority	Bournemouth
Inspection number	10033091

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,179
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	152
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Chris Shiel
Chief executive officer	Debbie Godfrey-Phaure
Telephone number	01202 398451
Website	www.avonbournetrust.org
Email address	debbie.godfreyphaure@avonbournetrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Avonbourne College is part of the Avonbourne Academy Trust.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average; the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress at key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons, many jointly with senior leaders.
- A wide sample of pupils' work, from all year groups and a range of subjects, was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils from key stages 1 to 5, as well as with pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the chief executive officer, heads of phase and middle leaders, and members of the governing body.
- Documentary and other types of information were evaluated, including evidence relating to safeguarding, assessment, school evaluation and external reviews.
- Inspectors took account of the 105 responses and 98 comments in the online Parent View survey, the parental survey undertaken by the school and the 92 responses to the staff and 79 responses to the pupil online survey.

Inspection team

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Diana Denman	Her Majesty's Inspector

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