

Avondale Preparatory School

High Street, Bulford, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 9DR

Inspection dates

26–28 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has ensured that the early years regulations and the independent school standards continue to be met in full. The school continues to provide a good standard of education.
- Pupils' behaviour and their conduct, in and out of class, are impeccable. They show respect for one another and enjoy exceptionally strong relationships with teaching staff.
- The school's ethos of nurturing a joy of learning is tangible. The family feel of the school allows pupils to take risks and learn from their mistakes. School staff care for pupils exceptionally well.
- Children get off to a flying start when they join the Nursery. They quickly learn to write their own name, identify the sounds letters make and become independent.
- In the early years, most children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. However, teaching staff do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to demonstrate that they can work at standards above those typically seen for their age.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are particularly well catered for. The support they receive is effective in helping them overcome the hurdles they face.
- The teaching of mathematics is particularly strong. Pupils build a comprehensive understanding of the subject, which they use to solve problems in an efficient manner.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils read widely and often. They have a vast, rich vocabulary. As a result, their comprehension skills are well developed.
- Pupils do not make the same strong progress in their writing. Insufficient attention has been given to improving their writing and their spelling, punctuation and grammar. They do not present their work to a consistently high standard.
- All the necessary health and safety and safeguarding checks are undertaken. However, some administrative records are not maintained as fully as they should be.

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.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes in the early years by:
 - planning learning that precisely meets the needs of the children
 - increasing the proportion of children who exceed the early learning goals by the end of Reception.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - there is a cohesive strategy in place to improve pupils' writing and their spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - the highest standards of presentation are maintained across the school
 - administrative records are fully complete, accurate and maintained well.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has ensured that the school continues to comply fully with the independent school standards and associated regulations, including the promotion of equality and appreciation of diversity. The good quality of education has been maintained.
- The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Appropriate plans are in place to rectify any shortcomings. He has suitably high expectations of staff and pupils.
- Leaders have implemented a curriculum which is preparing pupils well for the next stage in their education. The curriculum is broad and ensures that pupils have the wide range of experiences that prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Older pupils speak of their discussions about politics. Younger pupils were enthusiastic about visits from police officers and the fire service. They enjoy the extra-curricular activities that the school offers, including visits to foreign countries.
- Leaders promote British values and equality of opportunity well. It is interwoven through the curriculum. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are clear about the difference between right and wrong. Pupils show respect and understanding of other cultures and traditions. They particularly enjoyed their exploration of Hinduism and the festival of Diwali, as is seen in their work.
- The leadership of SEN and disabilities is good. The needs of pupils are identified, and provision put in place to help them overcome the hurdles they face. Their progress and the effectiveness of the provision is regularly reviewed. The special educational needs coordinator and her team have fostered good links with specialists who provide advice about individual pupils' needs and train staff. The school is fully involved in annual reviews for pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The headteacher ensures that the premises are maintained well. Teaching spaces are bright and airy, clean and in good repair. The outdoor spaces are carefully tended, and pupils enjoy playing sports on the field and all-weather pitch. Younger pupils particularly enjoy climbing on the castle. All of the necessary checks, for example regarding health and safety, are carried out in good time.
- Every member of staff who completed Ofsted's staff survey is proud to work at the school. They feel well supported and receive a wide range of training, including safeguarding, to help them improve their work. All comment how the school has continued to improve since the previous inspection.
- Parents and carers receive regular updates about their children's progress from school staff. Leaders provide them with detailed annual reports and parents of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are consulted when individual education plans are being revised. Parents and grandparents take an active role in the life of the school and many attend concerts and events.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children are safe, happy and make good progress. They value the progress reports they receive. A few parents commented that they do not always receive information in good time.

- School staff complete risk assessments for the activities they plan and the venues they use. These identify potential hazards and include measures to minimise the risk of harm. Admission and attendance registers are maintained. In some aspects of the school's administration, the quality of record-keeping is not as rigorous as it needs to be.

Governance

- The headteacher, who is the sole proprietor, has an accurate overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Investment in the school building and grounds have enhanced pupils' experiences. Where feasible, additional funds are allocated to improve teaching resources.
- In some aspects of the school's work, the proprietor has not ensured sufficiently that there are cohesive strategies in place that run through the classes. For example, in the development of pupils' writing and in the presentation of their work. Consequently, progress in these areas is not as strong as it should be.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher has made the arrangements necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. These meet the statutory requirements and are in line with the latest guidance from the Secretary of State. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and is available to parents in hard copy on request.
- Leaders who have specific safeguarding responsibilities are suitably trained and ensure that all staff are trained appropriately and are briefed on particular aspects of child protection. Staff are knowledgeable about the risks pupils can face and the signs they may display. As a result, the school has a strong safeguarding culture.
- Leaders are aware of the systems and processes they must follow when they have child protection concerns. School staff actively contribute to meetings when there are concerns about pupils.
- Teaching staff ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching staff have good subject knowledge, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers are accurate in their assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching of mathematics is strong. Pupils develop a secure understanding of new ideas and can solve mathematical problems efficiently. Teachers ensure that pupils can explain their thinking when tackling mathematical problems. Therefore, when faced with challenging examples, pupils confidently find solutions.
- The teaching of reading is good. Younger pupils are making good progress in their phonics. In the Nursery, many children can confidently identify initial letter sounds. Pupils can blend and segment unfamiliar words well in Years 1 and 2.
- Across the school, teachers actively promote regular reading of suitably challenging and

diverse texts. Consequently, pupils read fluently and with good intonation. As a result of the good teaching that pupils receive, they can analyse texts carefully and so make similarly strong progress in their reading comprehension.

- Pupils have a wide vocabulary and continue to extend this. Teachers encourage pupils to be increasingly independent as they mature. When improving the quality of their own writing, older pupils make effective use of thesaurus and dictionaries. Verbally, pupils are very articulate. However, their writing does not reflect this and inaccurate spelling and use of punctuation can detract from the quality of their work further.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress as their needs are met well. The evidence provided for annual reviews is detailed and helps to ensure that the provision is appropriately altered to meet pupils' needs.
- Intervention sessions for pupils who may have SEN and/or disabilities are planned well. They are effective in helping pupils to overcome the barriers they face.
- Teachers manage learning well. Their relationships with pupils are warm and strong, which makes classrooms happy places. As a result, pupils are not afraid to make mistakes or step out of their comfort zone.
- Teaching staff regularly assess pupils' understanding in subjects across the school. Pupils, particularly those in Years 3 to 6, use the feedback they receive to improve their work. However, occasionally, there is insufficient consideration of pupils' prior knowledge and understanding and so pupils do not make the accelerated progress they are capable of.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are well cared for and supported. As a result, pupils are knowledgeable, sensitive, self-confident and self-assured. Pupils talk eloquently about their experience of school. They comment on the family feel of the school, the nurture and helpful support they receive. They comment that they 'find staff to be firm but fair'.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards, and are excited about, their learning. Some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities can struggle to regulate their behaviour and excitement but, over time, they have shown significant progress in this regard.
- Pupils' respect for other pupils, members of staff and visitors is of the highest order. Pupils are swift to embrace and incorporate visitors into their activities. Many pupils have quickly befriended a group of Romanian children who are visiting. They ensure that they are integrated fully into the life of the school.
- Educational visits and off-site activities are used effectively to enhance pupils' experiences and understanding of risk. Many pupils enjoy the wide range of sports they play. They particularly enjoy competing against other schools in fixtures and competitions.
- Teaching staff give much thought to developing pupils' confidence. They plan activities where pupils can widen their experiences through trips and extra-curricular activities, such as the school's journalism club. This prepares pupils well for their next stage in education.

- British values are promoted well. Pupils are taught about the rule of law and are introduced to public institutions, such as the police and the fire service. In return, pupils are taught by these organisations about how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils make strong progress in their understanding of personal, social and health education. Younger pupils develop an understanding of rules, distinguishing right from wrong. Older pupils can reflect on the needs of different members of the local community, for example the elderly.
- Pupils show pride in their school. They wear their uniforms smartly and are generally well organised. When reminded, pupils show great pride in their work. However, pupils are not consistently presenting their work to the highest standard, particularly in handwriting.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They demonstrate good manners. Pupils are reminded when they do not meet the exceptionally high standards that staff expect and make amends. This is seen from the very youngest children in Nursery through all year groups.
- The reward system is particularly effective. Pupils really value the 'Gold Cards' which entitle pupils to receive prestigious certificates by the headteacher. This is conducive to promoting good behaviour.
- Behaviour logs show that incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare and are resolved quickly by staff. Observations by inspectors and discussions with pupils confirm that excellent behaviour is the norm.
- There have been no exclusions since the previous standard inspection.
- Attendance is higher than the rate typically seen nationally in primary schools. Persistent absenteeism is very low. Many pupils have not missed a day of school this year.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The vast majority of pupils make good progress during their time at the school. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are working at the standard expected for their age in reading, mathematics and English grammar, spelling and punctuation. The most able pupils in Years 3 to 6 make particularly strong progress.
- In Years 1 and 2, most pupils make steady progress, with a few making accelerated progress, especially in mathematics. The vast majority of pupils are working at the standard expected for their age but relatively few are working above this level.
- In the foundation subjects, pupils develop their knowledge of different parts of the world, the cultures, faiths and traditions. For example, when studying hot deserts, pupils explored the Islamic faith and show an understanding of the five pillars of Islam. They built a picture of the landscape and the history of the area or country being studied.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities use the support they receive well to help them overcome any barriers to their learning. As a result, any gaps in attainment and progress are reducing over time.
- In recent years, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has been in line with the standard expected for their age, although the proportion reaching the higher grades decreased in

2016 before returning to the more typical level in 2017.

- In the early years, the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development in 2017 was low. In 2018, this has returned to the proportion more typically seen.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education. Older pupils understand the different types of secondary school and use this understanding when selecting their secondary school. Pupils are prepared well to move on to Year 7.
- Pupils' progress in writing continues to be less rapid than in reading and mathematics. In Years 1 and 2, pupils do not routinely use their phonics to improve the accuracy of their spelling. This is hindering their writing.
- Across the school, the quality of pupils' handwriting is variable. Many pupils show that they can write neatly when it is demanded of them, but this is not seen consistently in their work.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a flying start when they join the Nursery. Staff in the Nursery have high expectations of children's progress and children rise to the challenge. Many of the youngest children can write their names at an early age.
- Throughout the early years, teaching staff have created rich learning environments which help pupils develop their knowledge of language and number. Children are suitably stimulated by the range of activities and equipment available to them.
- Children in the early years are well cared for. The requirements of the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' are met in full. Staff take their duties very seriously, including keeping children safe. Staff provide helpful information to parents about their child's learning and their personal development and behaviour very regularly.
- The children are courteous and show good manners. They play well and eat their lunch together sociably. When at lunch, they use their cutlery well and engage in conversations with each other and adults.
- Staff are accurate in their assessments. Inspection evidence and moderation by the local authority confirm this.
- Over recent years, the proportion of children reaching the 'good level of development' has been high, although in 2017 the proportion was much lower than the national average. In 2018, the proportion has returned to the more typical level, which is higher than the national average.
- The level of challenge for children is not high enough in some groups, considering their starting points. Some staff do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding above that typically seen for their age. This is particularly the case in writing and the application of phonics.
- The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years. Both the early years leader and headteacher recognise that the monitoring of children's progress through the early years needs to be more rigorous. They have identified the need to strengthen the teaching of phonics and to improve outcomes for pupils by the end of the Reception Year.

School details

Unique reference number	126523
DfE registration number	865/6005
Inspection number	10047181

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	Independent day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Number of part-time pupils	32
Proprietor	Stuart Watson
Headteacher	Stuart Watson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,897 to £8,397
Telephone number	01980 632387
Website	www.avondaleschool.org
Email address	office@avondaleschool.org
Date of previous inspection	17–19 June 2015

Information about this school

- Avondale Preparatory School is a non-selective independent day school that is registered to provide education for boys and girls aged two to 11. It opened in 1923 and has operated on the site of a large former private house since 1957.
- The school aims to nurture the joy of learning in an environment in which all children feel valued and confident, and where they can reach their full potential.
- The early years provision consists of a Nursery for children aged two to four and a Reception class. Most of the children in the Nursery attend on a part-time basis.
- The school follows the early years requirements for younger children and the national curriculum in Years 1 to 6.

- The school has identified a number of other pupils who may have SEN and/or disabilities but do not have involvement from other professionals. Leaders have made appropriate provision for these pupils.
- The school operates an after-school club, which provides childcare at the end of each school day.
- The headmaster is also the sole proprietor of the school. There is no governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school's previous standard inspection was undertaken on 17–19 June 2015, when the school was judged to be good. At that inspection, the proprietor sought to increase the maximum number of pupils that could be admitted. Subsequently, the registration authority increased the capacity from 150 to 180.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in a range of subjects in all classes. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' work and information kept by the school about pupils' learning and progress.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, staff members and leaders throughout the inspection. One inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- The lead inspector reviewed the curriculum plan and other resources provided by the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. School policies and documentation, including risk assessments, were also examined. In addition, the lead inspector undertook a tour of the premises.
- Inspectors considered the views of 11 members of staff who completed Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and took into account the views of 16 parents who responded to Parent View.

Inspection team

Iain Freeland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lizzy Meadows

Ofsted Inspector

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