

Inspection of Avondale Preparatory School

High Street, Bulford, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 9DR

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 February 2022

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
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| The quality of education | Good |
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| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
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| Personal development | Good |
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| Leadership and management | Good |
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| Early years provision | Good |
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| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |
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| Does the school meet the independent school standards? | Yes |
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They say it is like being part of a family. Staff warmly greet pupils as they arrive each morning. They make everyone feel welcome as members of the school community.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' learning. They continue to refine and improve the curriculum so that pupils can achieve well in all subjects. The school has a strong tradition in sports and the performing arts. Pupils excel in learning a musical instrument, competing in sporting fixtures and taking part in school productions.

Pupils get along well in lessons and at social times. They enjoy the various breaktime activities, from climbing on the castle to fitness challenges. Older pupils take on roles of responsibility to ensure that no one is left out. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying. They are sure that adults will sort out any worries without delay. This is a happy and safe place for pupils to be.

Leaders emphasise the importance of developing pupils' character. Pupils are keen to take on the weekly 'Avondale Way' challenges, such as holding doors open for adults and each other. This contributes to a sense of teamwork and responsibility.

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

The school meets the independent school standards and the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage.

Leaders' work to revamp and improve the curriculum is well underway. In science, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and physical education (PE), leaders have identified the order and sequences of learning. For example, the PE curriculum builds carefully on what pupils have learned previously. As a result, pupils are confident and competent in games such as tag-rugby and hockey.

There is a sharp focus across the school on getting all pupils to read well. Children in the early years get off to a strong start. In Nursery, they enjoy listening to adults read stories. Children in Reception Year are keeping up with the phonics programme. Staff use assessment effectively in order to pinpoint the sounds that children need to practise. While most pupils read confidently for their age, a minority are not as fluent as they could be. However, by the time pupils leave the school, they are proficient readers and well prepared for their secondary education.

Leaders and staff ensure that pupils achieve highly at Avondale. Most gain the knowledge and skills they need to thrive. In mathematics, for example, pupils apply their knowledge of missing numbers from Year 5 to help solve algebraic equations in Year 6. Nonetheless, in a few subjects, such as art and design, leaders have not mapped out clearly enough what pupils need to learn and develop from term to

term and year to year. As such, pupils do not gain the depth of knowledge they are capable of.

Assessment practices are highly developed, especially in Nursery and Reception classes. Staff keep a close eye on how children are getting on. They change lessons and resources accordingly if children struggle.

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the help they need to learn the curriculum. In the early years, staff provide prompt and effective support for children with speech and language difficulties. They carefully shape the curriculum so that it meets children's individual needs. Teachers develop bespoke provision for a small number of pupils with social and emotional needs. This helps pupils manage their emotions with increasing confidence. However, across the school, teaching is not always adapted enough to give pupils the precise support they need in some subjects. The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

Leaders and staff expect pupils to behave well, and they do. Pupils are motivated to learn. Lessons flow uninterrupted as they know what staff expect of them. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly in class and during social times. They are welcoming to visitors. Leaders' record-keeping shows few incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Inspection evidence supports this view.

The school's PSHE curriculum encourages pupils to become responsible young citizens. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to discuss social and moral topics, such as honesty and laws. Staff use real-life scenarios to help pupils understand what to do in different situations. Pupils say it is 'okay to make the wrong choice as long as you learn from it'. Through books and lessons, pupils learn about the importance of respecting everyone, regardless of their backgrounds or differences.

With the continuing impact of COVID-19, leaders have maintained a school-wide focus on pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils know the importance of looking after your mind and body. They know they can speak to an adult if they have any worries.

Leaders have created an environment where staff feel listened to and valued. They are mindful of staff workload and well-being. A focus on strengthening the curriculum and staff subject knowledge is making a positive difference to pupils' learning. Leaders know that they need to continue to monitor the impact of the curriculum provision in all subjects. While the school fully meets the independent school standards, the headteacher recognises that a few aspects of record-keeping could be sharper.

The majority of parents are positive about the work of the school. Many commented on the 'homely learning environment' and the 'individual attention' pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding policies and procedures pay regard to government guidance and are published on the school's website.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders take their roles and responsibilities seriously. They have effective systems to keep pupils safe, including the recruitment checks they make on staff employed at the school.

Staff know how to recognise and report any signs of concern in pupils. Leaders make well-judged decisions to ensure that families receive the help they need.

Pupils know many ways to keep themselves safe, including bike, road, water and online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- In a few subjects, leaders have not mapped out clearly enough what pupils need to learn and develop over time. In these subjects, pupils do not gain the depth of knowledge they need to achieve as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects clearly identify the key knowledge and skills pupils need to learn as they progress through the school.
- Some teaching is not adapted well enough to meet pupils' precise needs. This means that pupils do not always connect new knowledge with existing knowledge as they move through some sequences of work. Leaders should ensure that teaching builds on what pupils already know and deepens their understanding.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 126523 |
| DfE registration number | 865/6005 |
| Local authority | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number | 10212877 |
| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 102 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 12 |
| Proprietor | Stuart Watson |
| Headteacher | Stuart Watson |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £599 to £8,925 |
| Telephone number | 01980 632387 |
| Website | www.avondaleschool.org |
| Email address | office@avondaleschool.org |
| Dates of previous inspection | 26 to 28 June 2018 |

Information about this school

- Avondale Preparatory School is a non-selective independent day school. It provides education for boys and girls aged two to 11.
- The headteacher is also the sole proprietor. There is no governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteachers and other staff members.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, including art and design and PSHE.
- An inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read.
- An inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation. They met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and scrutinised safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school and the single central register. An inspector considered how well the safeguarding leader acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to pupils and staff about safe working practices.
- Inspectors checked compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including responses to the pupils' and staff's surveys.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Julie Carrington

Her Majesty's Inspector

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