

Inspection of a good school: The Avenue Primary School and Children's Centre

7 the Avenue, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 9AA

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 January 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The inspector is recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a fully inclusive school where everyone is respected and treated fairly. This is underpinned by the school's six core values of aspiration, positivity, pride, respect, resilience and responsibility. Pupils are happy and play harmoniously. From the early years children join in together and share resources to reach a common goal, such as sorting the pom-poms using tweezers. This sense of collaboration and support develops throughout the school. Pupils from the school's Resource Base classes also join in with school life and daily activities.

Expectations for how pupils behave are high. Generally, pupils rise to these expectations. Some pupils require additional support with this and leaders make appropriate adaptations. Bullying is rare. However, if it occurs, staff take swift action to remedy it. This helps to create a culture where pupils feel safe.

Pupils enjoy learning. They recall activities and are keen to discuss these. However, they sometimes struggle to recall what they have learned because of weaknesses in the curriculum. As a result, pupils are not learning as well as they could. Leaders, with support from the trust, have taken swift action to address this, but the changes are new.

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

Leaders successfully ensure that children in the Nursery have a strong start to school life. Staff choose activities to engage learners and develop children's vocabulary. Children understand and follow the shared routines. In Reception, children are starting to develop more awareness of these routines. Leaders have recently made changes to the structure of the class. This means that there is now greater consistency in the delivery of key content.

The curriculum is well planned and sequenced with key content that pupils will learn identified. Much of this is new and in response to the change from mixed-age to single-age classes this year. Due to weaknesses in the old curriculum, pupils struggle to recall their prior learning and do not make links between key concepts. Leaders are aware of this and are continuing to embed the changes. There are appropriate systems in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Learning is adapted for these pupils so that those in the mainstream can access this alongside their peers. In the Resource Base classes, staff create a personalised curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils.

Until recently, teachers have not identified the knowledge that pupils should remember over time in subjects other than English and mathematics. Therefore, they have not checked what pupils have learned over time. Due to this, they have not gathered a realistic picture of pupils' learning. This has meant that pupils have not achieved as well as they could across the curriculum.

Leaders identified that pupils' learning in phonics was not good enough and outcomes were too low. They have successfully prioritised phonics in order to address this. Children in the early years learn to read from the start of school. There is now a consistent approach towards the teaching of early reading. Consequently, pupils are learning to read more quickly. The books that pupils read are matched to the sounds they have learned. Targeted intervention enables pupils who find reading more difficult to access the same learning as their peers.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. This means that behaviour around school is generally positive. Clear expectations of learning routines are developed from Nursery, where children listen attentively and wait for their turn. Some pupils have complex needs and require more help to regulate their behaviour. Leaders recognise this and provide appropriate support. This includes working with external agencies. There are some inconsistencies in how well the school's behaviour policy is applied across the school. Not all staff members understand how to apply the policy and do this routinely.

There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils relish the chance to become a representative in the school. They are proud to be student leaders and house captains. Pupils talk positively about the range of clubs they can attend and the ways they can represent their school. This includes attending sporting tournaments as well as performing in a dance festival. Through the curriculum, pupils explore a diverse range of artists, musicians and authors. Older pupils discuss mature themes from the personal, social and health curriculum in a sensible and articulate way.

Leaders aim to provide a high-quality education for all pupils. However, this vision is not yet realised. There has been a period of instability in the school. In response, the trust has ensured that there is appropriate support for the school and that rapid change has been implemented. This has allowed the school to take swift action to address weaknesses in the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone has a clear understanding of their responsibility for pupils' safety and well-being. Staff have all completed safeguarding training. They have a consistent understanding of safeguarding and know the procedures to follow if they have a concern. Where there are concerns that a child is at risk, the school is swift to take action. Building positive relationships is central to the school's commitment to working with families.

Pupils are taught how to be safe in a number of ways and can name a trusted adult to talk to when they are worried. They are able to give examples of how to do this in the real world and online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Until recently, leaders have not identified the key content that pupils need to know and remember. This means that pupils have not secured the intended knowledge across the curriculum. Leaders should continue implementing the new curriculum and monitoring the impact of this.
- Weaknesses in the curriculum have resulted in pupils being unable to recall their learning. This means that they have gaps in their knowledge in foundation subjects. Teachers must check what pupils have remembered to ensure that the intended curriculum is learned over time.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2017.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	141619
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10256761
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	292
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Middleton
Headteacher	Caroline Thomas
Website	www.avenue.wilts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses four unregistered providers of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and the executive headteacher. She also met with other school leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with the CEO and director of trustees from Acorn Education Trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, music and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also reviewed curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about mathematics, history, physical education and religious education.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. The inspector also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- The inspector considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector took account of the 55 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional 30 free-text responses. The inspector talked with some parents on the second morning of the inspection.
- The inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan and school self-evaluation.

Inspection team

Sara Staggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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