

Inspection of The Avon Valley School and Performing Arts College

Newbold Road, Newbold-on-Avon, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 1EH

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Avon Valley is an inclusive, warm and welcoming school. Pupils are very well cared for and pupils know this. There are strong relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils embrace the school values of 'aspire, engage and achieve'. Pupils say they feel safe. Pupils say that bullying does not happen often, but when it does, staff are quick to sort it out.

Pupils behave well. In lessons, they display positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers have extremely high expectations of pupils and these are well understood and communicated through the 'The Avon Valley Way'. Leaders have placed a great emphasis on improving attendance, particularly after the pandemic. Pupils attend well. They move around the school site sensibly and are polite and friendly to visitors.

Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities outside of lessons. These activities broaden their horizons and encourage pupils to be confident and resilient. For example, pupils take part in a wide range of sports and drama clubs. They are keen to contribute to their local community and fund raise through events such as 'letters against loneliness' and 'the gift of giving'. Parents and carers are particularly supportive of the school.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know, do and understand in key topics. Leaders have sequenced the curriculum effectively to achieve this.

Teachers use assessment strategies such as 'closing the gap' well to check that pupils have learned the important knowledge that they need. Teachers use assessment information effectively to revisit learning that pupils may have forgotten and to pinpoint and address pupils' misconceptions.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Their needs are identified swiftly and communicated clearly to staff. Teachers have the information to help them meet the needs of these pupils. However, not all teachers use this information well. This means that some pupils with SEND do not get the support they need to access the curriculum. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They have introduced initiatives such as 'drop everything and read'. However, this is not always consistently embraced by all pupils. Leaders identify pupils who need support with their reading. Staff use a range of strategies to support these pupils. This is beginning to help them become better

readers. Leaders recognise that there is more work to do to help some pupils become fluent readers.

The proportion of pupils at key stage 4 who choose subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) - the combination of academic subjects that help to keep pupils' options open for further study - is much lower than the government's ambition. Leaders have plans in place to increase the numbers of pupils who will study the EBacc.

Pupils display very positive attitudes to their learning. Instances of low-level disruption are rare. Teachers address any issues quickly. Leaders have set very high expectations for pupils' conduct. They have thought carefully about how they can teach pupils to behave well rather than simply issue sanctions. Pupils care about their school and are proud to be members of it.

The school's efforts to develop pupils' wider development is a strength. Leaders have constructed an effective curriculum that teaches pupils about a range of important issues, such as healthy relationships, media portrayal and consent. The school's inclusive nature means that pupils respect different cultures, beliefs and characteristics. Pupils experience a comprehensive careers programme. It gives pupils effective guidance on their next steps in education, apprenticeships or training.

Governors are very well informed and know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They hold leaders to account for the performance of pupils. They visit the school regularly to speak with leaders, check safeguarding records and talk to pupils.

Staff are proud to work at the Avon Valley School. They value the ways in which school leaders care about their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture. They have ensured that staff are clear about the dangers that pupils may face. This includes when pupils are online. Staff are extremely knowledgeable about the local safeguarding risks. Adults report concerns about pupils in a timely manner and leaders follow up on these concerns appropriately.

Leaders work effectively with external partners. They are tenacious in their efforts to ensure that pupils and their families get the help that they need. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They are taught about issues such as violence and consent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not provide pupils with SEND with effective support in lessons. As a result, pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff are making the necessary adaptations to their lessons so that all pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Some pupils do not see the importance or value in reading widely and often. As a result, despite leaders' efforts to prioritise reading, some pupils do not benefit from strategies to encourage reading. Leaders should ensure that there is a well-implemented strategy to promote a culture of reading across the school.
- There is a low take-up of pupils studying the combination of subjects that make up the EBacc at key stage 4. This means that too few pupils choose to study the range of academic subjects that make up the EBacc. Leaders should continue their efforts to ensure that the EBacc sits at the heart of the curriculum.

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	125764
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10256890
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Janet Gilbert
Headteacher	Alison Davies
Website	www.avonvalleyschool.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 July 2017

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, including the SEND coordinator.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, modern foreign languages, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities and personal development programme with leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally. They took account of responses to a pupil survey and Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke to staff in relation to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with safeguarding leaders.

Inspection team

Neil Warner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Gail Peyton	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Considine	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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