

Inspection of a good school: Avondale Primary School

Durham Road, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 1NN

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 July 2023

Outcome

Avondale Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are respectful and kind. They enjoy positive relationships with each other and with the staff, who take good care of them. Pupils respond well to the high expectations that leaders have of their conduct. They are happy at this school.

Most pupils work hard to meet the high aspirations that leaders have of their achievement. This includes children in the early years. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Leaders deal effectively with any rare cases of bullying that may occur. Pupils said that they have trusted adults that they can speak to if they have any worries or concerns. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils take part in a wide range of activities that help them to become confident, resilient and independent young people. They relish opportunities to take on leadership roles such as reading buddies, house captains and school council members. Older pupils are particularly proud of the support that they provide for children in the early years to get them ready to start Year 1.

Pupils enjoy taking part in adventurous activities during a residential visit to a local outdoor centre.

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

Leaders are ambitious for the achievement of all pupils, including pupils with SEND. The subject curriculums have been carefully sequenced so that they build on the strong start that pupils enjoy in the early years. Pupils benefit from the emphasis that leaders have placed on studying the local area, such as when they learn about the history of Darwen Tower and India Mill. Most pupils are well prepared for each stage of their education.

Teachers use their subject knowledge effectively to deliver the curriculum well. They present information clearly and they design activities that help most pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding successfully across the wider curriculum. In the early years, the interactions that adults have with children make a strong contribution to children's development.

Staff make regular checks on what pupils know and remember. Most staff use this information effectively to identify any gaps that pupils may have in their knowledge and understanding. Sometimes, staff miss opportunities to address the misconceptions that some pupils have about their learning. In the early years, staff use what they know about the needs of pupils to ensure that they develop well over time.

Pupils with SEND are well supported so that they can access the curriculum alongside their peers. Leaders accurately identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND, and they secure timely and appropriate support for these pupils so that they achieve well.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading, which begins as soon as children join the Reception Year. Staff deliver the phonics programme effectively so that most pupils learn to sound and blend accurately and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders make regular checks on pupils' phonic knowledge and they ensure that less-confident readers receive the support that they need to catch up quickly. Leaders have ensured that the books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they learn. This helps most pupils to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils read widely and often. They enjoy the books that their teachers read to them, which cover a wide range of themes such as human conflict, friendship and different cultures.

Throughout the school, including in the early years, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Staff deal effectively with any rare incidents of low-level disruption. As a result, pupils learn without interruption. A small number of pupils benefit from the support that leaders provide to help them to improve their behaviour.

Leaders have designed an extensive programme of experiences that help pupils to develop their understanding of the wider world. Pupils learn about how to care for their physical and mental health. They know how their body changes as they grow. Pupils are respectful of the differences that exist between people.

Members of the governing body have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. They support and challenge the work of leaders effectively. Staff value the time and training that leaders give them so that they can carry out their roles. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make the necessary employment checks on staff. They ensure that staff receive the training that they need to identify pupils that may be at risk of harm. Staff know how to report any concerns that they may have about pupils. Leaders respond in a timely manner to the concerns that staff share, and they ensure that these pupils receive the support that they need to keep them safe. This includes working with other agencies as necessary.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, the misconceptions that some pupils have about their learning are not addressed in a timely manner. When this happens, these pupils are not as well prepared as they should be to tackle new learning. Leaders should ensure that staff receive the support that they need to rectify the misconceptions that some pupils have, so that these pupils achieve as well as they should.

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 June 2018.

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	119294
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10291419
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	399
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Iain Scofield
Headteacher	Vicky Brown
Website	www.avondaleschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 and 6 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders make use of one registered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. The inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils. He also met with the leaders of science and geography to discuss the curriculum in these subjects.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The inspector met with school leaders to discuss early reading, SEND, the curriculum, pupils' behaviour and the provision for pupils' wider development.
- The inspector held meetings with the school effectiveness officer from the local authority and the school improvement officer. He also met with members of the local governing body, including the chair and vice chair of governors.

- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He took account of the responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted’s online survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with leaders, staff and pupils. He checked a sample of leaders’ safeguarding records and reviewed the recruitment checks made on staff.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life and their views of behaviour and bullying. The inspector observed pupils’ behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

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