

# Inspection of Avon Park School

St John's Avenue, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 5HR

---

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 November 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

---

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

For many pupils attending Avon Park School, it is a life-changing experience. Pupils get a fresh opportunity to succeed in education, sometimes after previous negative experiences. Pupils appreciate the ambitious, high-quality curriculum provided. They know that staff will do whatever they possibly can to support them. Pupils feel safe, listened to and understood.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. The positive culture and respectful relationships stand out. There are clear, embedded routines that help new pupils to settle quickly. Pupils work hard in lessons. Where pupils find this a challenge, staff are skilled at motivating them. This ensures that they re-engage in learning. As a result, pupils make impressive progress and achieve well. Pupils can talk knowledgeably about a variety of subjects.

The work the school does to develop pupils for life beyond their time at the school is exemplary. From the time pupils start at the school, they learn about how to be independent. Younger pupils learn about safety near roads and water. Older pupils learn about managing money and how to apply for a job. The school provides many rich experiences to enhance the curriculum. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the residential, clubs, visits and community events.

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

Everything that happens at Avon Park School is purposely planned to help pupils achieve the best possible outcomes they can. The school and the proprietor body are passionate about making a difference to the lives of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and they do.

All pupils at the school have SEND. Their individual needs have usually been identified before they join the school. However, the clinical team carries out detailed assessments during pupils' first 12 weeks at Avon Park. This helps the school to understand identified needs further and ensures that there are no previously unidentified needs. Following this, close collaboration between the clinical team and other school staff ensures that the school can tailor the provision to meet pupils' needs.

Teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects they teach and the varied needs of their pupils. Through skilful questioning and modelling, they break down learning into clear steps. Staff know the specific strategies that work for individual pupils. They use this knowledge to make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum. This ensures that all pupils can access the curriculum, which is deliberately designed to give pupils lots of opportunities to revisit key learning. Thorough assessment enables staff to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and to target the specific gaps. All this work helps pupils to make excellent progress through the curriculum. For example, in mathematics, pupils can explain clearly how to carry out calculations

involving fractions by drawing on prior learning. Pupils also speak eloquently about their knowledge of different artists and what art is.

The school places a high priority on reading. It focuses on a love of books and learning to read. This starts with developing pupils' awareness of sound but quickly moves to lessons in phonics. Pupils read daily and many make rapid progress in reading once they join the school. For pupils who find reading more challenging, the school provides extra support to enable them to catch up. This helps them to read with developing confidence and fluency. As pupils move through the school, they explore a range of ambitious texts. Staff expertly help pupils to develop a sophisticated understanding of how authors use language and other techniques.

Leaders are planning for what kind of future the pupils can have from the time they start at school. They place pupils' personal development at the centre of these plans. The attention to detail in this area is impressive. Staff are dedicated to empowering pupils to know themselves as unique individuals. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' character and resilience so that they are well prepared for the next stage. The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education teaches pupils important knowledge about relationships, well-being and fundamental British values. There are a range of bespoke programmes that support pupils to prepare for their future. These include 'Functional Living Skills', 'Skilled-up' and 'Futures'. Together with the provision for careers, this prepares pupils very well for independent living and the world of work.

The wider curriculum also offers numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. Pupils and staff organise a wide range of different clubs, such as fantasy role-play and film club. Pupils on the school council are positive ambassadors for the school. They are rightly proud of the positive contributions they make to the school and wider community.

The proprietor body has a clear oversight of the work of the school. They carry out a range of quality assurance visits. The school meets the independent school standards securely and consistently, including the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued and supported by leaders. Many parents and carers commented on the difference that the school has made to the lives of their children.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## 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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140354
<b>DfE registration number</b>	937/6008
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10284429
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	104
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Witherslack Group Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Bonny Etchell-Anderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kerri Louca-Weston
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£83,576 to £106,695
<b>Telephone number</b>	01788 524448
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://witherslackgroup.co.uk/avon-park-school">https://witherslackgroup.co.uk/avon-park-school</a>
<b>Email address</b>	avon-park@witherslackgroup.co.uk
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	14 to 16 January 2020

## Information about this school

- Avon Park School is an independent school that is part of the Witherslack Group.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of complex learning difficulties, communication difficulties and challenging behaviours. A significant number of pupils have been diagnosed as having autism. Almost all pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school was first registered in October 2013 and registered its first pupils in November 2013.

## 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the proprietor body, including the regional director, the chair of the board and the head of school development.
- Inspectors also met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, teachers, pastoral staff, staff from the clinical team and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector toured the premises to check for compliance with the independent school standards. A number of key documents were also reviewed, including policies relating to admissions, behaviour, curriculum, complaints, health and safety, and safeguarding.
- The views of staff, parents and pupils, including responses to Ofsted's online surveys, were considered.

## **Inspection team**

Helen Forrest, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Buckle

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023