

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



28 June 2024

Louise Hamilton
Executive Headteacher
Avon Valley Academy
Recreation Road
Durrington
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP4 8HH

Dear Miss Hamilton

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Avon Valley Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 6 June 2024, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) and director of secondary education of the trust and the chair of trustees the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I met with several staff members, including subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke to pupils informally during social times and looked at documents relating to school improvement. I also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- Continue to improve attendance and behaviour so that more pupils learn the ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum that is now in place.
- Ensure that the work that pupils complete enables them to acquire the knowledge that they need.

Main findings

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to leadership. Many leaders have joined the school or have taken up new roles. The school has carefully considered how best to bring about improvement. It has worked on improving the culture across all aspects of the school, for example making links between learning, behaviour and personal development clear for all staff and pupils.

Leaders have established effective routines for movement around the site as well as for the structure of lessons. High levels of adult supervision and bespoke support for pupils who need it foster positive relationships with staff and help pupils to feel safe and welcome. Staff are well supported to manage pupils' behaviour. As a result, the school site is typically calm and orderly, and interruptions to learning have become less common.

Since the last inspection the school has made improvements to the quality of education. The curriculum is now well sequenced in most subjects. This enables pupils to build on what they already know. The knowledge which is essential for pupils to learn has been identified. Difficulties in recruiting staff have hindered improvement in some subjects. The school is well aware of this and has clear plans to improve the few remaining subjects that have not yet made sufficient progress. Staff from across the trust have worked with the school to ensure that work on the curriculum in all areas has begun, though progress has been slower in some subjects.

Leaders have drawn on educational research to make decisions about the way in which the curriculum is taught. Staff now have the training they need to understand how best to teach the curriculum. As a result, pupils now acquire a greater breadth and depth of knowledge. However, the activities that pupils complete do not always link well to the intended curriculum. Staff are beginning to understand how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders know that there is more to do to ensure that the curriculum is taught effectively, particularly for pupils with SEND.

Reading is now prioritised by the school. Checks are made to ascertain whether pupils can read well enough to access the curriculum. Those who do not read well enough get support that is specific to the aspects of reading that they have not yet mastered.

Pupils who do not access all of their lessons due to specific needs still follow the curriculum, focusing on learning the 'unmissable knowledge'. This helps them to keep up with their peers so that they do not have gaps in their knowledge.

The school has identified how it will rectify the areas of weakness found in the previous inspection. It has rightly prioritised improving behaviour and attendance as critical to the development of a positive school culture. Pupils' attendance has improved but some pupils, particularly those with SEND, do not attend well enough.

School leaders' self-evaluation is supported and challenged by the trust. This gives leaders an accurate insight into how effective they have been in securing the improvement needed. The school knows what needs to be done next and how improvements made will be sustained in the future, in light of an upcoming change of headteacher. The current headteacher will continue to be involved in the school as executive headteacher, maintaining continuity for staff, parents and pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the Acorn Education Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Favager-Dalton
His Majesty's Inspector