

# Avondale School

## Independent School

### Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	865/6005
Unique Reference Number	126523
Inspection number	333843
Inspection date	30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Elisabeth Linley HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

## Information about the school

Avondale School is a small independent day school situated in Bulford village and provides for girls and boys aged from three to 11 years. The school's catchment covers a wide area and a significant proportion of pupils who attend are from military families based in the locality. There are currently 111 pupils on roll; of these, 35 children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage with 20 children in Nursery and 15 children in the Reception class. The school provides an after-school care club for pupils who can stay on until 17.30 every day. Until recently this provision was registered separately to the school. This is no longer the case and so it is now inspected as part of the main school's inspection. The school's ethos is broadly Christian and places a strong emphasis on care, good manners, respect and self respect. The school aims *'to ensure that everyone's contribution is valued and that all members of our school are able to develop their full potential in every aspect of school life'*.

## Evaluation of the school

Avondale School provides a good quality of education and is successful in meeting its aims. The school is held in very high regard by parents. As one parent wrote, 'We are very happy with this school, particularly the family orientated environment in which the daily routine of school and learning revolves. Our children are very happy and have made good progress'. Parents are justified in their positive views. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. The school's provision for the welfare of all pupils is also outstanding. The curriculum and teaching are good and as a result, pupils make good progress whilst their personal development and behaviour are outstanding. Avondale School has improved since its last inspection and now meets all the regulations for independent schools.

## Quality of education

The school's curriculum is good. Avondale follows the National Curriculum and includes provision for French which is taught to pupils from Reception through to Year 6. The curriculum is planned appropriately and the school uses commercially based schemes of work to aid them in this respect. However, current opportunities

for pupils in Key Stage 1 to write for a range of purposes are not as good as they could be. As a result, more able pupils do not attain as well as they should do in their writing. Pupils who have been identified as needing additional support for their learning are supported effectively within the classroom or in the 'learning zone'. Pupils say they enjoy the individual or very small group work they receive to help them with their learning. Planning to meet their needs is underpinned by individual education plans (IEPs). However, targets set for individual pupils' progress within their IEPs are quite broad and evaluation of pupils' progress against these targets tends to be verbally reported rather than recorded formally. Nonetheless parents rightly have confidence in the school's work and this contributes to the effectiveness of the partnerships that have been established with parents. Similarly, effective links have been made with external agencies, for example for speech and language, to ensure that good support is in place for pupils' particular needs. The curriculum is well enriched with visits out of school such as a residential experience where pupils are encouraged to develop team work and leadership skills. Extra-curricular activities and individual coaching include an effective range of activities in, for example, the arts, music and sport and these are very much enjoyed by pupils.

Avondale provides a good and popular after-school club where pupils are well supervised and can play and learn in a comfortable and supportive setting. There is a broad range of activities available and pupils can choose to be part of a group or to occupy themselves alone if they wish. Five children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are currently on the register. They mix well with the older pupils. All share and take part in activities with great enthusiasm. The club is well resourced.

Teaching and assessment are good. As there are small numbers in classes, staff know their pupils well and work hard to meet their needs on an individual basis. Teachers encourage and praise pupils; relationships are of high quality and so pupils' confidence and excellent attitudes to learning are developed well. Good quality teaching overall enables pupils to make good progress. In a Year 5 English lesson for example, a good level of discussion was entered into by all pupils and the teacher to consider the pupils' writing in the first person and the impact this had on the quality of their work. Pupils made very good use of synonyms, adverbs and verbs. Other strengths seen in some classes included pupils' ability to assess each others' work in a thoughtful and sensitive way. Pupils are also involved in the setting and evaluation of their termly targets; pupils say their involvement in such tasks is a positive way in which they learn how to improve their work. Marking of pupils work is improving and this is seen particularly in English. However, the quality of marking is better in some classes than in others.

Pupils' work is assessed on an ongoing basis and most teachers keep careful notes of the progress pupils make. This assessment is underpinned by the results of nationally standardised tests and optional tests that pupils take. The results show that pupils make good progress overall and some pupils make outstanding progress particularly in Key Stage 2 when they attain standards that are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. However, the results also show that more able pupils in Key Stage 1 do not achieve as well as they should do in their writing. The school is now working with a new framework for the recording

of the standards that pupils' attain in English and mathematics. This is to ensure that a more rigorous approach is adopted for the tracking of pupils' progress through school.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Staff have high expectations of all pupils to behave well and to be respectful and considerate of others. As a result, pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are keen to take on the different roles and responsibilities within school that are available for them. These include positions such as librarians, recycling monitors, helpers in Reception and Nursery, house captains and prefects. It is testament to the maturity of the older pupils that others say they are happy to go to a prefect with a problem if they have one. Pupils say they enjoy school very much and this is reflected in their attendance which is very good. Pupils are keen to support the wider community by fundraising for charities such as Save the Children and by taking part in Comic Relief and Red Nose Day whilst being involved in sponsored walks, such as the 'Wessex Walk'. Pupils' understanding of different cultures and the promotion of racial harmony is developed effectively through the curriculum and through assemblies. In an assembly during the inspection, issues to do with 'journeys of faith' were explored with great sensitivity. The assembly was skilfully led by the staff and well received by the Key Stage 2 pupils involved. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being. Through the good progress they make whilst in school and the very good standards they attain by the time they leave, pupils develop strong basic skills that aid their next steps. Pupils develop an ability to work effectively with others and a confidence and maturity that serves them well as they move on to their next school.

## Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school makes outstanding provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. There are robust procedures for child protection which comply with statutory requirements on safeguarding. These are supported by effective, well established policies and excellent pastoral care which ensure that pupils are able to learn and play in a secure and safe environment. They are well cared for on visits outside the school setting. Pupils say that adults are easily approachable if they have concerns. The school has rigorous fire precautions and there are well-practised emergency procedures. An appropriate number of staff members are trained in first aid. A comprehensive programme of personal, health and social education, augmented by outside agencies, ensures that pupils are encouraged to stay healthy and safe. School lunch times are a particular favourite with the pupils; 'the lunches are the best' wrote one pupil. Pupils learn about the importance of following a healthy diet and of taking regular exercise. The school underpins this by providing a wide range of physical activities.

The school meets all requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 which is an improvement since the school's last inspection.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Because of the lively and innovative teaching children make rapid progress in all areas of learning. At the end of the Reception year most are working well beyond their Early Learning Goals and are very well prepared for the literacy, numeracy and social skills required in Year 1 demonstrating their outstanding achievement. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is outstanding and provides a good balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to develop their creativity and independence. Effective use is also made of the pleasant outside areas to support children's learning. The curriculum in Reception is enriched by the addition of French. Teachers plan challenging activities to aid children's learning and development and there are excellent systems to record and assess children's progress from their entry to the Nursery. Teachers make skilful use of questioning to establish children's understanding and they take every opportunity to improve their communication skills. Children learn to read and spell through rigorous teaching of phonics and regular consolidation. The children's personal development and well-being are outstanding as shown by their behaviour and attitudes to learning which are exemplary. Children learn to interact well with each other and excellent relationships contribute strongly to the enjoyable and purposeful environment. Provision for the children's welfare, health and safety is outstanding. There are effective systems in place to ensure that children are able to learn in a safe, healthy and caring setting. Staff are appropriately qualified and the school meets requirements for the number of adults needed. The Early Years Foundation Stage has strong leadership and management. Classroom practice is evaluated to provide good continuity between Reception and the Nursery.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that activities planned for pupils in Key Stage 1 enable all to achieve as well as possible and in particular ensure that more able pupils attain the standards in writing of which they are capable
- as planned, ensure that pupils' progress throughout school is tracked rigorously
- improve the quality of marking where it is less effective
- ensure that individual education plans show clearly the progress that pupils make against small and readily measurable targets set for their development.

# Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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## The quality of education

Overall quality of education	√			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	√			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	√			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	√			

## Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of pupils	√			

## Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	√			
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## The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	√			
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?	√			
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	√			
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	√			
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	√			
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?	√			

## School details

Name of school	Avondale School		
DCSF number	865/6005		
Unique reference number	126523		
Type of school	Independent co-educational day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1923		
Age range of pupils	3–11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 48	Girls: 43	Total: 91
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 12	Girls: 8	Total: 20
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees	£5,460		
Address of school	High Street Bulford Salisbury Wiltshire SP4 9DR		
Telephone number	01980 632387		
Fax number	01980 632387		
Email address	avondale.school@tiscali.co.uk		
Headteachers	Mr R P McNeall and Mrs S E McNeall		
Proprietors	Mr R P McNeall and Mrs S E McNeall		
Reporting inspector	Elisabeth Linley HMI		
Dates of inspection	30 April 2009		