

# Avondale Preparatory School

High Street, Bulford, Salisbury, SP4 9DR

**Inspection dates** 17–19 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good school.

- Pupils in all year groups make good progress and achieve high standards. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is typically at least good. Teachers know their pupils very well as individuals. Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and respectful.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the early years because the quality of teaching and provision is outstanding.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils behave impeccably around the school and in lessons. They are polite and courteous. They work exceptionally hard and want to do well.
- Pupils feel completely safe in the school, and are taught very effectively how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed very well. Pupils grow to be confident, articulate, thoughtful and tolerant young people.
- The good leadership of the headteacher ensures that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement continue to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment in writing is not as high as in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not always have the chance to write at length in different subjects.
- Although teachers' marking is frequent and detailed, teachers do not always check that pupils have improved their work as a result.
- The targets that teachers are set do not clearly identify areas for improvement. These targets are not linked directly to pupils' progress.
- Teachers in charge of subjects do not observe the quality of teaching or check pupils' progress in their subjects. This limits the impact they make on pupils' achievement in their areas.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule for the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day’s notice.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 14 lessons, two of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. They attended two assemblies and made a number of shorter visits to observe pupils at work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and looked at a sample of work from different year groups. They spoke to pupils informally about their views of the school, and observed their behaviour at break and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and with staff responsible for different aspects of the work of the school. Inspectors also met with two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents at the start of the day. Inspectors considered the 37 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and the results of the school’s own surveys of parents’ views. They also considered the 16 staff questionnaires they received.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including the school’s own review of its strengths and areas for improvement, its plans for improvement, records of the quality of teaching, information on pupils’ achievement, records on pupils’ behaviour and attendance, and at how the school keeps pupils safe.
- All pupils in Year 6 were out of school on a residential visit during the inspection. The work of pupils from Year 6 was included in the sample that was evaluated by inspectors.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors were assessing a request made by the school to increase the maximum number of pupils on roll from 150 to 180.

## Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Griffiths

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Avondale Preparatory School is an independent non-selective day school for boys and girls aged from two to 11 years. It opened in 1923 and has operated on the site of a large former private house since 1957.
- The school is registered for 150 pupils. Currently, there are 148 pupils on roll.
- The early years provision consists of part-time provision for two-year-olds, two part-time Nursery classes and a full-time Reception class.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Around two thirds of pupils come from military families based in the locality.
- The school follows the early years requirements for younger children and the National Curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified a small number of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- The school operates an after-school club which provides child care at the end of each school day.
- The school's aims are 'to provide a happy, safe, caring and structured environment where everyone's contribution is valued, and all children develop their full potential in every aspect of school life'.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2010. He also became the proprietor in 2013. There is no governing body.
- The school was last inspected in April 2009.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so all pupils make more rapid progress by making sure that:
  - pupils of all abilities have more chances to practise their writing skills in different subjects
  - teachers always check that pupils have responded to the advice contained in marking by improving their work
  - the targets that teachers are set identify more clearly their areas for improvement, and are more closely linked to the pupils' progress.
- Make sure that teachers in charge of subjects and other areas of the school's work have a greater impact on pupils' achievement in their areas by:
  - observing for themselves, and helping to improve, the quality of teaching
  - checking that all pupils are making rapid and sustained progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations of both pupils and staff. He has created a culture in the school in which good teaching, good achievement and outstanding behaviour can flourish.
- Pupils' progress is checked regularly. Ambitious targets are set for pupils' achievement. Good attention is paid to making sure that pupils from all starting points have an equal chance to be successful. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Staff are well trained in child protection issues, and provide a high level of care to pupils. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective and meet statutory requirements and the independent school standards.
- The building is suitable for school use and enables pupils to learn well. It is clean, well resourced, and well maintained. There are good outdoor facilities for pupils to play, and for lessons to promote pupils' physical well-being. There are appropriate facilities for the care of children who are sick or injured during the school day.
- The school's curriculum is broad and provides pupils with interesting topics and activities. It helps pupils enjoy school, and develops their skills well in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Modern British values are promoted effectively in a series of lessons, topics and special events. Pupils learned about democracy, for example, in a recent visit to the Houses of Parliament, and also when a local councillor visited the school. Pupils held a mock election timed to coincide with the General Election. Pupils are taught to respect people from different cultures and faiths.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. Pupils have the chance to take part in two residential visits in Key Stage 2, as well as visits abroad. Pupils raise funds for an orphanage in Romania, which some visit. A number of orphaned Romanian children visit the school and join pupils on their residential visit. There is a broad range of extra-curricular activities available. These are very well attended and include music, art, choir, drama, sewing and a number of sports clubs. All pupils are encouraged to represent the school in at least one sport. As a result of this range of experiences, pupils grow to become confident, articulate, thoughtful and tolerant young people.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire said their child is happy in school and is making good progress. They would recommend the school to other parents. This was confirmed in the conversations with many parents during the inspection.
- Leaders make sure that parents receive all the statutory information to which they are entitled. The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the independent school standards.
- Some leaders in charge of subjects are new to their roles. They are committed and enthusiastic, but do not routinely observe teaching in their subjects, or check and analyse pupils' progress. This limits their impact on improving pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher makes regular checks on the quality of teaching. The targets that teachers are set each year do not clearly identify areas for improvement in their teaching practice. These targets are not related directly to the progress of their pupils.
- The good leadership of the school has resulted in good teaching, good pupil achievement, excellent attendance and outstanding pupil behaviour.
- Inspectors recommend supporting the school's request to increase the number of pupils on roll from 150 to 180.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Whilst the school does not have a governing body, the proprietor makes sure that the school's finances are managed well, and that that all the independent school standards are met, including the statutory requirements relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
  - The proprietor has a good understanding of what data on pupils' achievement indicate about the performance of the school.
  - The proprietor makes sure that good teaching is appropriately rewarded, and that any underperformance in teaching is tackled robustly.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils told inspectors they are very proud to belong to the school.

They wear their uniform with pride, as well as taking very good care of their environment.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils work exceptionally hard and display a thirst for learning in lessons. Pupils want to succeed, and are keen to answer questions and contribute their ideas in class discussions. They cooperate well in lessons and help each other learn.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is impeccable. Pupils are polite and courteous towards each other and towards visitors at all times. They hold doors open for each other, and routinely thank one another. Older pupils take good care of younger children at break and lunchtimes, and help out in their classrooms.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire have no concerns about pupils' behaviour.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The site is very secure, and pupils say they feel completely safe in school. Visitors to the school are checked carefully when they arrive. Pupils are taught effectively how to stay safe in potentially dangerous situations, such as when using the internet.
- Parents are confident that their children are safe and well looked after at the school.
- Bullying and racism are almost unknown in school. Pupils are well taught about different types of bullying. They told inspectors that if bullying did happen, they are confident that it would quickly stop if they told an adult.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff are regularly trained on child protection issues, so all are clear on policies and procedures. Thorough checks are carried out on staff before they are appointed.
- Pupils' attendance rates are consistently high, and pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. Many pupils attend after the end of the school day to take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.
- The school's after-school club provide pupils with enjoyable and stimulating activities in a safe and secure environment.

## The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching across the school is typically good, and inspectors saw some examples of pupils making outstanding progress. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects, and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Much teaching is creative and imaginative, so pupils are fired with enthusiasm, enjoy learning and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers know their pupils very well as individuals. This means they are able to plan tasks at the right level of difficulty for them.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are warm, positive and respectful. Pupils told inspectors that teachers make learning fun, and help them if they are stuck. As a result, pupils enjoy learning, work hard and want to do well.
- Pupils are set regular homework, which they complete diligently. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' good learning.
- Teachers' questions check pupils' understanding well, and make pupils think hard. Teachers encourage pupils who have done well to share their work with other pupils. This helps to build pupils' confidence, and encourages pupils to try and achieve their best.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are well taught, and are supported by teaching assistants in lessons and by receiving additional help in one-to-one sessions.
- Assessment procedures and checks on pupils' learning are accurate and regular. Teachers' marking is frequent and detailed, and gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. Teachers do not always check that pupils have acted on this advice.
- Teachers have recently concentrated on improving the teaching of writing in English lessons. As a result, pupils' writing skills are improving rapidly. Teachers do not always encourage pupils to apply what they learn in English lessons by writing longer pieces in their other subjects.

## The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join the school with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment in writing is above national average levels, and their attainment in reading and mathematics is well above average. This represents good progress.

- Pupils learn to read successfully. Younger pupils understand phonics (the sounds that letters make) well, so they are able to work out unfamiliar words confidently. Older pupils are enthusiastic readers who enjoy a range of books.
- Pupils' skills in mathematics develop very well. Pupils learn to calculate accurately, and they are able to apply their skills to solve mathematical problems.
- The school's most able pupils make good progress because they are set appropriately challenging tasks in a range of subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates because their needs are identified early. They receive effective individual support, both in class and in additional individual sessions.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils make better progress in reading and mathematics than in writing. In 2014, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics was well above national figures. Their attainment in writing was broadly average.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. School data indicate that pupils are on course to achieve results in National Curriculum tests in 2015 that will be broadly in line with those in 2014. Checks made by inspectors in lessons and in pupils' books confirm that pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils' writing skills develop well, but their standards in writing are not as high as those pupils reach in reading and mathematics. Recent improvements to the teaching of writing in English lessons mean that pupils are now making faster progress in writing than in the past. Pupils do not always practise their writing skills by writing at length in different subjects.

### The early years provision

### is outstanding

- Children join the Reception Year with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. They make outstanding progress because of excellent teaching and carefully planned activities that help them to learn exceptionally well. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year in 2014 was well above average. Results in 2015 show further improvement.
- The quality of teaching and provision is outstanding. In both the indoor and outdoor areas, in all classes, there is a good balance of adult-led tasks and activities chosen by the children themselves. Teachers plan imaginative and exciting activities that are closely matched to children's interests and abilities, including the most able children and those who find learning more difficult. Children in the Nursery class very much enjoyed, for example, a lesson with a theme of pirates, which was extended, in line with children's interests, to include construction, painting and measuring activities.
- Children are very happy learners, and their behaviour is outstanding. All staff are very supportive and caring. The learning environment is totally safe and secure. Children are taught effectively how to keep themselves and others safe. Children, even the youngest, are polite, friendly and supportive of each other. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.
- The early years provision is exceptionally well led. Leaders focus fully on raising children's achievement further, improving the quality of provision and making sure that children are kept completely safe and secure. There are excellent plans to improve the provision further. Leaders make good use of expertise and advice from the local authority. Teachers' assessment of children's progress is frequent and accurate, and the analysis and use of data on children's achievement make a significant contribution to their outstanding learning.
- Leaders help children settle into school quickly, and effective relationships are established with parents. Communication with parents is excellent, and is facilitated by the online 'Daily Learning Journeys' which tell parents what their children have learned, and enable them to contribute to this record. Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their support for, and appreciation of, the early years provision.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126523
<b>Inspection number</b>	462872
<b>DfE registration number</b>	865/6005

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Preparatory school
<b>School status</b>	Independent
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	148
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	62
<b>Proprietor</b>	Stuart Watson
<b>Chair</b>	N/A
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stuart Watson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April 2009
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£4,947–£7,347
<b>Telephone number</b>	01980 632387
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