

# School inspection report

4 to 6 June 2024

## **Avon House Prep School**

490–492 High Road

Woodford Green

Essex

IG8 0PN

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as ‘the Standards’.

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. Pupils are confident and happy at school due to the nurturing ethos that is established by school leaders who place pupil wellbeing at the centre of their work. Pupils are known personally to the staff and the individual strengths of pupils are recognised, which makes them feel recognised as valued members of the community.
2. Leaders work collaboratively with all members of the school community when reflecting and evaluating the school's development plan. Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupil progress is promoted at the same time as maintaining positive pupil wellbeing.
3. Pupils make good progress at school which is a result of teachers planning carefully to meet the individual needs of pupils. Teachers use robust assessments to ensure that pupils receive detailed feedback about their strengths. Precise support enables pupils to develop their learning further.
4. Pupils experience and benefit from a wide variety of opportunities to enhance their learning through the broad curriculum and variety of extra-curricular activities.
5. Pupils behave well at school. They have a well-developed understanding of behaviour expectations and are actively involved in reviewing the school's code of conduct for behaviour.
6. Pupils are positively engaged in the decision-making processes of the school and value the numerous pupil councils that enable their opinions to be heard. This has a positive impact on their self-esteem and confidence.
7. Pupils are respectful of others and have a well-developed understanding that everyone should be treated fairly.
8. Leaders and governors have implemented robust policies and procedures to ensure that safeguarding of pupils is paramount to their work. Governors use their training and knowledge effectively in their oversight of safeguarding so that pupils are safe at school. There are thorough systems in place for safe recruitment of staff. Leaders have a suitable knowledge of the checks they should perform to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen the oversight and monitoring of risk assessments.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders promote a positive, caring and supportive school culture in which pupils' wellbeing is central to their work. They are proactive in establishing suitable links with external agencies to further promote pupil wellbeing. Leaders take time to get to know pupils as individuals and make them feel an important part of school life. Leaders place emphasis on community spirit so that pupils feel valued and nurtured by the adults at school. As a result, pupils are happy and love going to school.
10. Leaders and governors adopt a collaborative approach to development planning, incorporating the views of staff, pupils and parents when evaluating the strengths and future actions of the school. They are reflective and evaluative about their practice to ensure that their actions effectively promote both pupils' wellbeing and progress.
11. Leaders identify and mitigate risk of harm through a range of risk assessments. Leaders ensure that there are risk assessments in place that include consideration of individual pupils' needs during the school day and when out on school trips. However, whilst risks are identified in order to protect pupils from harm, some risk assessments are less consistently detailed. When risk assessments are reviewed, evidence of this process, including any subsequent actions, is not always recorded in a methodical way.
12. Governors are involved in the appointment of senior staff to ensure that they have relevant skills and experience for their role. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively and use their knowledge and skills to review the Standards and ensure that they are met consistently. Governors challenge leaders through asking questions and scrutinising both policy and practice at governors' meetings and during governor visits to the school.
13. Leaders have successfully developed and implemented an accessibility strategy and plan to ensure that they fulfil the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders promote an ethos in which differences are respected. Leaders are proactive and reconsider their approaches to ensure that those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can access the curriculum fully.
14. Leaders have drawn up a suitable complaints policy which meets statutory requirements. This policy is well implemented, and complaints are handled in a timely and effective manner. Governors fulfil their role in the complaints process appropriately, including convening a complaints panel if required.
15. Leaders have ensured that the aims, values and approach of the school are clearly communicated to parents and other stakeholders. They have used relevant legislation and regulations to draw up comprehensive policies that are available on the school's website. Parents receive information about their child's progress at school, including a detailed report for all subject areas at the end of the academic year that outlines progress and any next steps to promote further improvement.
16. Leaders liaise effectively with the local authority for any pupil in receipt of an education, health and care (EHC) plan, including providing information related to annual reviews, additional funding and any other relevant evidence or documentation.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

**17. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Pupils experience a suitable breadth of subjects that enables them to acquire new knowledge in a variety of different curriculum areas. Pupils particularly appreciate that they learn two modern foreign languages. They also benefit from opportunities to link their different areas of their mathematical, scientific and creative learning. This was evident in the preparations for a science fair, with pupils incorporating their scientific, linguistic and computing knowledge to prepare presentations that also relied on their well-developed oral language skills.
19. Lessons are well planned and are appropriate to pupils' ages and aptitudes, Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of their subjects to advance the pupils' learning. Teachers use a range of different activities and resources to ensure that pupils are engaged in, and enthusiastic about, their learning. Pupils are keen to work in groups, where they are articulate and collaborative. Pupils are also self-motivated learners when working independently. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is often impeccable, allowing them to learn effectively.
20. Teachers' assessments are thorough and robust. This, together with detailed feedback, enables pupils to understand their strengths and identify their targets to build on prior knowledge and attainment. Leaders and managers have suitable oversight of assessment and use data effectively to inform them of next steps in planning to assist pupils to make further progress. Teachers and leaders oversight supports pupils to make good progress from their varied starting points.
21. Leaders ensure that individual pupils' needs are met through a range of strategies, including additional support for those who need it. The inclusion department is effective in identifying and reviewing the academic, social and emotional needs of individual pupils, including pupils who have SEND and pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). In lessons, pupils receive extra help when they need it, particularly with learning new skills before being able to complete tasks on their own. As a result, these pupils receive targeted support which helps them to learn well, make good progress and feel confident in their abilities.
22. Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and leaders use the local sports club particularly well to provide sporting activities for the pupils. The variety of learning opportunities provided in the extra-curricular programme successfully enables the pupils to deepen and extend their knowledge and understanding in an enjoyable way.
23. Leaders in the early years have effective oversight of the curriculum to ensure that it meets the children's needs. Targeted support is provided to extend children's learning. For example, teachers using drawing tasks, and asking pertinent questions to help children develop understanding. As a result, children make good progress according to their starting points by the end of Reception. Effective communication between the early years department and teachers in Year 1 ensures that individual children are supported as they make the transition to Year 1.
24. Practitioners in the early years plan activities that successfully support the development of children's communication and language. Oral and practical activities, as well as a wealth of opportunities to develop children's understanding of the world, help the children to make demonstrable progress with their language skills.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

**25. All the relevant Standards are met.**



## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

26. Leaders have successfully implemented a behaviour policy that promotes positive pupils' wellbeing and high aspirations for behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are clearly defined and consistently applied by staff. Pupils understand the behavioural expectations. Pupils have been instrumental in creating a class charter and behaviour chart for every class. This is effectively used to promote moral understanding and to help pupils regulate their own behaviour.
27. Pupils behave appropriately and are confident that their teachers will help them if there are any concerns about behaviour or bullying. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of bullying because of an effective anti-bullying strategy. There are many opportunities to raise awareness of anti-bullying at school, including anti-bullying week and regular assemblies. Incidences of bullying are rare, but school leaders deal with these swiftly and effectively when they do occur.
28. Pupils are influential in making decisions about school life through their involvement in several pupil councils where they can propose changes that would benefit pupils. For example, introducing halal food options. Pupils say that having their opinions valued by the staff has a positive impact on their self-esteem and self-confidence.
29. Pupils are confident and happy at school due to the nurturing ethos that is established by school leaders. Pupils are known personally to the staff and their individual strengths are recognised, which also positively impacts their self-esteem.
30. In religious education (RE) lessons, pupils learn about different religious beliefs and religious festivals. Pupils discuss spirituality in age-appropriate ways. Pupils often talk about their own spiritual beliefs during RE lessons and assemblies about different festivals. This enhances the mutual respect that is evident amongst the pupils.
31. Pupils' medical and first aid needs are suitably met. Suitable accommodation is provided for first aid care and treatment. Leaders have ensured that all members of staff have paediatric first aid qualifications, including those in the early years. Pupils receive appropriate care in the event of an injury or illness.
32. Leaders ensure that premises and accommodation are well organised, clean and carefully managed so that pupils are safeguarded effectively. Access around the site is well managed; for example, staircases have highly visible yellow markings and fire escapes are well maintained. Staff supervise pupils vigilantly at all times of the school day to keep them safe. Appropriate ongoing health and safety checks are made.
33. School leaders have developed a comprehensive programme of activities to support pupils' physical health through effective teaching in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and the physical education (PE) curriculum. Leaders make use of a local sports centre which enhances the pupils' opportunity to develop their skills. Initiatives to promote physical health, such as the daily mile, are enjoyable and valuable ways for pupils to be more physically active. Children in the early years and older pupils have a well-developed understanding of the need to eat a balanced diet and benefit from the nutritional food choices available at school.

34. Children in the early years are well supported to develop their physical skills. Staff have implemented a new programme which is proving effective in developing these skills further. Many pupils are making considerable progress with their physical development, particularly in their fine motor skills and coordination. Children in the early years effectively develop their emotional health through regular activities with adults at school about how to identify and manage their feelings.
35. Older pupils take regular opportunities to mentor younger pupils at school, such as weekly reading sessions. Pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility, such as school leaders and house leaders in Year 6 and librarians in Year 5. This enables them to develop their sense of duty to the school community. Older pupils value these roles to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to be suitable role models for younger pupils.
36. Leaders ensure that the provision of relationships and sex education (RSE) is effectively delivered in an age-appropriate way, enabling pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of how to form effective relationships. There is a clear progression of learning that builds on work carried out in the early years relating to feelings and friendships. Leaders ensure that information about RSE is shared with parents annually so that they can support this aspect of their child's learning at home.
37. Leaders ensure that the school's admission and attendance register is maintained. Leaders notify the local authority about the attendance and absence of pupils, including those leaving or joining at non-standard times.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing**

- 38. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

39. Pupils are respectful towards others and know that their individual liberty is important. Pupils know that discrimination is not acceptable. Teachers promote the virtues of tolerance and inclusivity through PSHE lessons, and through being a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. Pupils' foster a positive attitude towards other people. Pupils are proud of the way in which all pupils are fairly treated, and how differences between people are valued.
40. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to collaborate with each other in lessons which helps them to behave respectfully towards each other and develop social skills. Pupils are kind and friendly, and display maturity in their social interactions. Adults in the early years successfully support the children's social development through identifying and recognising feelings and emotions. This enables children to show empathy and reflect on how their actions would make other people feel.
41. Teaching in PSHE ensures that pupils are given numerous opportunities to develop their economic understanding in age-appropriate ways. For example, children in the early years buy cookery items as part of their 'weekly walk' and regularly incorporate pretend money into their play; Year 3 pupils consider how to budget their money; and, as part of the school's plume of feathers award, Year 6 pupils undertake a collaborative enterprise activity to write a business plan to develop their economic literacy.
42. Through their work in pupil councils and the house system, teachers encourage pupils to work together in identifying and selecting charities to support. Pupils actively engage in these activities and have a well-developed sense of awareness that it is their responsibility to help those less fortunate than themselves. Recent charity events include a much enjoyed 'colour run' to raise funds for a local children's hospice and putting together hampers of food for a local food bank.
43. Leaders' emphasis on involving pupils in the school's decision-making is evident in the numerous pupil councils, where pupils are developing their understanding of democracy and respect for the law. The pupil code of conduct is reviewed and amended by school council so that pupils have a well-developed understanding of right from wrong. In addition, a recent visit to the House of Commons and a follow-up visit from the local Member of Parliament helps pupils to learn about the process of democracy and how government institutions operate.
44. Pupils celebrate and respect the many different cultures of the school's pupil body and local community. As well as learning about different religions in RE lessons, there is a wealth of opportunities in the curriculum where pupils gain an appreciation for different cultures, such as 'language of the month', cooking and music activities for black history month, and when pupils deliver assemblies about different religious festivals. In addition, pupils visit local places of worship, including a church and a gurdwara. Pupils show a high level of respect towards each other and other cultures. The recent addition of a diversity council at the suggestion of a Year 6 pupil has further enhanced the pupils' cultural understanding and respect for others.
45. Pupils are well prepared for their transition to secondary school, including thorough preparation for the 11+ examinations, school entry examinations, and regular transition sessions to their chosen secondary school. These sessions also involve focusing on the values of the school's character

education programme to enable pupils to reflect on how these values will help with their transitions. As a result, pupils feel ready and confident for the next stage in their education.

46. School leaders have developed the plume of feathers award, a bespoke programme that enables pupils to develop life skills to help them be prepared for the next stage of their education as well as life in British society. This also gives pupils an understanding of important public services in England. For example, children in early years are encouraged to learn about different careers through parent visits to talk about their jobs, for example, a doctor, dentist and train driver. Pupils can also dress as who they would like to be when they grow up as part of an annual careers event at school.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society**

- 47. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

48. Leaders have implemented a suitable safeguarding policy that meets statutory requirements and governors have appropriate knowledge and understanding of safeguarding to oversee this process. Pupils are protected from harm and incidents are managed effectively. School staff carefully monitor the pupils and keep thorough records of any concerns or contextual risks. These records are regularly reviewed, and leaders initiate and implement considered actions that are tailored to support pupils according to their individual needs. Leaders are effective at liaising with appropriate external agencies if required to support pupils and protect them from harm.
49. Staff receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training and updates so that they have the relevant knowledge and understanding to promote safeguarding of pupils. Pupils are confident to approach a teacher should they have any worries; they also know that they can use the 'worry box' should they want to raise something anonymously.
50. Safer recruitment processes are clear and thorough, and leaders ensure that all appropriate checks are made on adults working with pupils. A suitable single central record of these checks is maintained. Governors have effective oversight of leaders' work. They check that recruitment processes are rigorous, and the safety of pupils is promoted.
51. Leaders have established robust health and safety procedures, such as fire and lockdown drills, a secure site, and vigilant supervision, that effectively safeguard pupils and actively promote their wellbeing. This ensures pupils can engage with the full educational experience offered in a safe and well-managed environment.
52. Pupils learn how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including online. Leaders have established appropriate procedures to ensure that pupils stay safe online through a combination of proactive teaching about online safety in their computing lessons, and effective filtering and monitoring of devices. Leaders work with parents to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities to support and monitor their children when online at home.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 53. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	Avon House Prep School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	317/6059
<b>Address</b>	Avon House School 490–492 High Road Woodford Green Essex IG8 0PN
<b>Phone number</b>	02085041749
<b>Email address</b>	office@ahsprep.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.avonhouseschool.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Avon House School Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Matthew Barrett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Amanda Campbell
<b>Age range</b>	3–11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	261
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 to 16 January 2020

## Information about the school

54. Avon House is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 3 and 11. The school is situated on the edge of Woodford Green in the heart of Epping Forest. The school is a limited company and has a board of trustees who oversee the legal and financial matters of the school. The school has an advisory board consisting of six governors.
55. The school has 55 pupils in the early years organised into one Nursery class and two Reception classes.
56. The school has identified 18 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
57. English is an additional language for four pupils.
58. The school states its aims are to equip pupils with the confidence, humility and resilience to thrive in everything they do; encourage a love of learning indoors and outdoors; inspire each child to realise their unique talents and reach for their full potential; and enhance and enrich pupils' personal, social, creative, academic and physical development.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

4 to 6 June 2024

59. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

60. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

61. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.



**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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