

Avanti House School

Common Road, Stanmore, Harrow, HA7 3JB

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The ethos and practice of respectfulness is a unique feature of school's work. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional.
- Behaviour and attitudes shown by pupils and adults are exemplary because everyone believes in the school's core values.
- Most teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding, so most pupils achieve highly in many subjects.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and reach standards significantly above those typically expected by the end of Reception.
- Most pupils make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils attain highly in the school's specialist subjects of performing arts and mathematics.
- The curriculum is linked intrinsically to the school's vision. Pupils receive a wide range of distinctive experiences such as yoga, meditation, Sanskrit, philosophy and ethics.
- The school is fully inclusive and welcomes pupils of all faiths, religious beliefs and those with different abilities and needs.
- Pupils at risk of falling behind, those in need of extra care and pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are helped to catch up quickly and achieve the same as their peers.
- School leaders and governors, through the Avanti Trust, are wholly committed to ambitious outcomes for all pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school's action plan is for one year only. It lacks precision and limits how robustly leaders and governors check the school's work throughout the year.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding in each key stage.
- Not all pupils are challenged strongly enough to make rapid progress and exceed national expectations.
- Some teachers and middle leaders are inexperienced and still need to develop their roles and responsibilities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 19 lessons or part lessons. The majority were joint observations with senior leaders.
- During these observations, inspectors assessed pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning. Inspectors tracked pupils' learning experiences through a series of different lessons. They scrutinised pupils' work in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors held discussions with individuals and groups of teachers to evaluate teaching and the progress made by pupils over time.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of the leadership teams, students, and members of the governing body, including the Chair and the Director of Education for The Avanti School Trust.
- School documents and records were scrutinised, including information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, school improvement planning, the school's evidence on how well it is doing and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors listened to children reading, they spoke to pupils about their experiences at school. They observed lunch and break times and spoke informally to pupils.
- Informal discussions were held with groups of parents when they brought their children to school. Inspectors considered the 72 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ann Debono, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elaine Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector

Venetia Mayman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Avanti House School is an all-through Free School for pupils aged four to 18 years of age. The school is within the Avanti Schools Trust, an organisation based on Hindu philosophy, which has an inclusive approach and admits pupils of all faiths.
- Currently, the school is smaller than the average-sized school. There are 122 pupils in Reception and Year 1 and 178 students in Year 7 and Year 8. The school continues to grow in size and plans to be at full capacity with 1,680 pupils by 2018.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils supported at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below average.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest group is Indian pupils. Most pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Both primary and secondary phases have been housed separately and in different temporary sites during the first two years. The primary school is currently located at Krishna-Avanti School. In September 2014 these classes will be relocated again to a new temporary site within the locality. A permanent new location for the secondary school is proposed by September 2015 at which point the primary phase will move into the current secondary school building in Stanmore.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure more pupils make outstanding progress throughout the school by:
 - using assessment information to plan activities so all pupils make rapid progress from their respective starting points
 - focus more specifically on pupils' learning and progress when evaluating teaching
 - ensure that a greater proportion of teaching is outstanding in all key stages.
- Develop school improvement planning by:
 - including tight timescales and agreed outcomes for each priority
 - implementing a rigorous monitoring and evaluation schedule by leaders and governors
 - strengthening governors' strategic overview of the school's effectiveness
 - including objectives and outcomes to reflect the changing context as the school expands in the long term.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The majority of children start the Reception classes with skills and abilities typically in line for their age. Good teaching in school and valuable support from parents at home enable nearly all children to attain expected levels ready for Year 1. However, the number of children exceeding a good level of development is below national figures.
- Children attain highly in the Reception classes, except in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world where attainment is below national figures.
- Highly effective teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) in Reception and Year 1 has secured results this year in the phonics checks significantly above the national average.
- The attainment of Year 7 students when they start school is variable and an increasing number are admitted to the school during the year. Teachers assess the ability of students accurately when they join and, because of highly effective teaching and support from this point, mid-year tests show most students make at least good progress.
- This strong trajectory of good achievement continues into Year 8. School records, students' books and test data show at least good achievement in most subjects. It is outstanding in the school's specialist areas of expressive arts and mathematics.
- Across the school there are no significant differences in attainment between girls and boys. A very small minority of pupils are eligible for extra support using additional funding, pupil premium. These pupils achieve as well as their peers. Very strong pastoral systems support disabled pupils or those with special educational and additional needs to make excellent progress.
- Higher ability pupils and those who are gifted or talented are given work that challenges further their ability. As a result, in Key Stage 3, most make good progress to reach the higher levels expected of them. This additional challenge for the most able is not yet consistent practice in all primary classes.
- The majority of pupils who speak English as an additional language are fluent and confident in English. If not, key workers use pupils' home language, usually Gujarati, to help them understand.
- Teachers help pupils practise literacy, numeracy and technology in all subjects. A high level of support and attention to these basic skills and in different subjects means most pupils make at least good progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching is at least good, but it is not consistently outstanding. Teachers have very high expectations and they plan lessons to excite and engage pupils through practical tasks, drama and performance.
- Teachers use their specialist subject knowledge effectively, reinforced by cross-phase subject links. Secondary teachers work in the primary phase so that children in Reception and Year 1 learn yoga, Spanish and Sanskrit as well as learning through joint projects in expressive arts.
- Teachers instil excellent attitudes so that pupils develop curiosity and love for learning, building upon the school's core values. During inspection, lessons promoted deep and meaningful learning experiences in, for example, studies of Macbeth, badminton, modern dance and observing caterpillar metamorphosis. Scrutiny of pupils' books and work on display shows this wide and rich curriculum is typical over time.
- Teachers continually promote opportunities for pupils to show respect and understand different faiths. In a Year 8 ethics lesson, students discussed Christianity and the concept of miracles, aided by images of pilgrimages to Lourdes.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 read regularly. They enjoy books and use a range of reading strategies so they can predict accurately what will happen in a story. Teaching assistants skilfully teach phonics and spelling in an enjoyable way, with games and puzzles to help children practise and learn new letters and sounds.
- Teaching promotes good, and frequently rapid, progress. However, this varies between key stages and subjects. In primary classes some children, particularly the more able, are not given work to challenge their skills and aptitudes. Children told the inspector some of their mathematics work was too easy, and they were right. In one lesson, a child independently chose to double a series of three digit numbers; this challenge was not reflected in her mathematics book.
- In Key Stage 3, students do not routinely acknowledge teachers' marking. Nevertheless, in primary classes children frequently respond to teachers' feedback and this helps them to improve their next piece of work.
- Excellent provision for disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is a hallmark of the school's highly inclusive ethos. All adults know pupils' particular abilities. This is sensitively approached and managed within the classroom setting or through tightly focused interventions. Notable success has occurred for students with complex needs and vulnerable pupils who have transferred to the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are, without exception, respectful and polite. This is because they understand the importance of the school's core values of leading their own lives and caring for others. New pupils are immediately included, and those with additional needs or who experience difficulty settling in are sensitively inducted until they feel safe.
- Throughout the school, pupils have exceptionally good attitudes to their education. Teachers capitalise on this to promote good, and frequently rapid, progress in pupils' learning.
- Behaviour and support are modelled consistently by all staff who are non-confrontational and respectful. Lessons are almost never disrupted by poor behaviour, and pupils say bullying is very rare, but when it does occur it is dealt with fairly. Analysis of the school's incident records shows that feelings of both bully and victim are addressed meaningfully to prevent reoccurrences.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. The environment is secure and risk assessments are thorough. Pupils know adults care for them. They know how to be safe and understand the potential dangers when using the internet. Rare incidents of unkind text messaging are followed up robustly by teachers and year group tutors.
- Pupils have a high profile in decision making and they are involved in appointing new staff. They contribute to the school improvement plan. Pupils in primary classes show maturity when assessing their own learning. They are able to articulate why they find some work too easy.
- Parents readily gathered around the inspector at the start of the day to share positive views about the school. Older students told inspectors, 'We can rely on the teachers to look after us and they are all willing to help and they don't stop until we get it.' Observations of break times show harmonious relationships between pupils, staff and other adults.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Punctuality is good. Rare absence from school is closely monitored. Family support programmes engage some parents to help ensure that their children attend regularly.

The leadership and management are good

- Everyone shares the belief in the school's core values, 'Educational Excellence, Character Formation and Spiritual Insight'. This powerful vision, led by the Avanti Trust, cascades throughout the school to governors, leaders, teachers, pupils and parents.
- Leadership is outstanding in promoting exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural

understanding of all pupils. Pupils and staff proudly represent different cultures and beliefs; all are welcome and respected for their contributions. This has set an impressive start for the future of the new school.

- The curriculum is innovative and challenging and encourages pupils to excel from an early age. In Reception, children begin the day with chanting, Hindu prayer and yoga. Pupils from different faiths are actively encouraged to worship in dedicated prayer spaces. Older pupils are challenged through innovative experiences such as learning Sanskrit, philosophy and performing messages from the Ramayana through dance and music at London's Southbank Centre.
- Staff continually demonstrate high professional standards. They are open to feedback about their work and very keen to improve and achieve consistently outstanding practice. They are well on the way to achieving this aim.
- Pastoral care is at the heart of the school's work. Senior leaders have thorough knowledge of each pupil and member of staff. A comprehensive learning, attendance and behaviour programme helps leaders coordinate support for pupils at risk of falling behind. Regular reviews of this information make certain that vulnerable pupils achieve as strongly as their peers.
- Staff also receive a high level of support. Training and professional development ensure they feel confident and quickly improve their practice. Staff performance is managed effectively and targets for improvement are reviewed regularly. A response on the staff questionnaire demonstrates a commonly held view by staff, 'I am proud to be working for Avanti. I feel valued and respected in my position.'
- Teaching is monitored frequently, but not all leaders place sufficient emphasis on pupils' progress when forming judgements about its quality. Some new teachers and a few middle leaders are still developing their roles and their impact on improving achievement from good to outstanding. This is a reason why the school is not yet consistently outstanding.
- Systems to track pupils' progress enable leaders and governors to monitor standards across subjects and year groups. School records show a majority of pupils achieve well and they perform above national average in many subjects. Performance information does not yet focus strongly enough, however, on checking how well all pupils make rapid progress from their own respective starting points.
- The school is making good use of additional funding from the government to promote sports and physical education. The curriculum has been enhanced by teaching yoga throughout the school, following consultation with staff, parents and pupils.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are especially proud of its inclusive nature and that it celebrates a wide faith community. The 72 responses on Parent View wholeheartedly recommend the school to others. Parents trust school leaders and they told inspectors their children really enjoyed coming to school, despite several changes to the location of the school particularly in the primary classes.
- Safeguarding requirements are met. Staff and governors are well trained and aware of risk assessment and the latest child protection procedures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are totally committed to the school and to its vision. They are highly ambitious for its future success. They are knowledgeable and develop their roles further through additional training. Governors hold leaders to account for school improvement in different ways. For example, they visit regularly, meet pupils, attend parents' meetings and join collective worship.
 - Governors manage the school budget closely and ensure that additional funding has an impact on standards for all pupils, especially those in need of extra help. They interrogate the school's assessment data and evidence about the quality of teaching. They use this information effectively in managing teachers' performance and setting priorities for improvement.
 - Governors monitor the school improvement plan through the work of its committees, but this document is for one year only. Consequently, governors are not working strategically enough to check long-term goals and plans for the school's expansion.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138227
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	425467

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary and Secondary
School category	Free School
Age range of pupils	4–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kartik Khandwala
Headteacher	Gareth Jones
Telephone number	02082496830
Email address	avantihouse@avanti.org.uk

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