

Inspection of St James' Church of England Aided Junior School

Reginald Street, Derby, Derbyshire DE23 8FQ

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The executive headteacher of this school is Jonathan Gallimore. Daniel Walls is the head of school. The school is part of the Derbyshire Diocesan Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sarah Clark, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Charles.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils 'GROW'. 'Every child, every chance, every day', pupils are helped to 'give thanks, remember manners, only do their best and to wear a smile.' Pupils understand these aims and do their very best to live up to them.

Pupils are proud of the wide range of cultures, religions and backgrounds that make up their school. Diversity is celebrated. As one pupil said: 'We are an inclusive school. Everyone gets on.'

Pupils behave well. They are motivated by the rewards on offer. Earning points, messages home, being placed in the 'Golden Book' and receiving the huge stickers from the headteacher are all highly prized.

The school provides a comprehensive range of help, advice and support to parents and pupils. The large proportion of pupils who do not speak English when they first join the school get on well. Time in the 'Learning Zone' ensures that these pupils quickly learn the most important words and phrases that they need.

Relationships between adults and pupils are consistently positive. The school is highly cohesive.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leadership and management at the school is exemplary. At all levels, leaders know their school well. They are quick to identify where improvements can be made. The actions that they take bring around tangible and sustained improvements. Senior leaders have created a clear and determined vision which is shared by staff and pupils alike. The school continues to 'GROW' and go from strength to strength.

The schools' curriculum is broad. It is well thought through. Across all subjects, it makes clear what pupils are expected to know and remember at each stage of their education. It builds incrementally on what has gone before. Topics, including 'Pharaohs', 'Peasants, Princes and Petulance' and 'Alchemy World', help pupils to make links between what they have learned across different subjects.

Teachers plan and deliver engaging lessons. The 'Activate' sessions help pupils to remember what they have learned. Lessons are engaging. However, in a small number of cases, teachers do not check closely enough on pupils' learning. They do not always pick up on errors that pupils make. As a result, in these cases, pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they could.

The school has prioritised reading. Pupils who still need to master phonics get expert help. Phonics is taught consistently well. The books that pupils read are closely matched to the sounds that they know. All pupils, including those who are new to the English language and those who speak English as an additional language, catch up quickly.

The school caters for a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including many with education and health care (EHC) plans. These pupils do well. The school ensures that the right sort of help is in place. The targets that are set for these pupils are precise and measurable. Pupils' individual plans ensure that all staff know how to help.

Pupils benefit from a rich personal development offer. This is underpinned by a well-planned curriculum for relationships, social and health education (RSHE). The 'St James' 40' ensures that pupils receive a rich and wide range of experiences, including visiting the seaside and seeing a West End show in London. The school makes sure that all pupils join in the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. No one misses out.

Rates of attendance are low. They have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The school is tackling this robustly and acting decisively. They provide families with the right balance of challenge and support. They work closely with a range of external agencies. This has resulted in a demonstrable improvement. However, attendance remains too low. Too many pupils still miss too much school. Too many pupils are still persistently absent.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of cases, teachers do not assess pupils' progress closely enough. They do not accurately identify and address pupils' misconceptions in lessons. As a result, these pupils do not learn the curriculum as well or as rapidly as they should. The school should ensure that all teachers accurately assess how well pupils learn the curriculum in lessons and adapt teaching in light of their findings.
- Although improving, too many pupils still miss too much school. Rates of persistent absenteeism remain high. This means that too many pupils receive a fragmented education. The school should continue to implement its' policy and procedures so that attendance moves closer to that found nationally.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148368
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10298550
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	300
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Charles
CEO of the trust	Sarah Clark
Headteacher	Jonathan Gallimore (executive headteacher) Daniel Walls (head of school)
Website	www.stjames.derby.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St James' Church of England Junior School converted to become an academy with Derby Diocesan Academy Trust in February 2021. When its predecessor school, which was also called St James' Church of England Aided Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2019, it was judged to require improvement.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.
- The school shares an executive headteacher with another school in the trust, which is Hardwick Primary School.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Derby. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place on 8 February 2024.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, the assistant headteachers, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and groups of staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in five subjects: reading, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education (P.E.) and history. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. Inspectors also spoke to leaders, looked at curriculum documentation and visited lessons in music and science.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body. He met with the chief executive, the deputy chief executive of the trust and a representative of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors spoke informally to parents outside the school. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed school documents, including those relating to governance, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors scrutinised leaders' plans for improvement and their assessment of the school's effectiveness.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils at breaktimes, in the dining hall and on the playground. An inspector visited the school's breakfast club.

Inspection team

Vic Wilkinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Helen Atkins

Ofsted Inspector

Caroline Evans

Ofsted Inspector

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