

# St James' Church of England Aided Junior School

Reginald Street, Derby, Derbyshire DE23 8FQ

## Inspection dates

25–27 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders and governors have been too slow to react to the low standards that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve in writing by the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders' plans for school improvement do not contain necessary milestones and monitoring opportunities. Governors therefore cannot hold senior leaders fully to account for their actions.
- Governors are not robust enough in their monitoring of the school. Until recently, they have not had an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils use spelling, punctuation and grammar skills in pieces of writing across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not move middle-ability pupils on to more challenging work quickly enough in mathematics.
- Some pieces of work are presented poorly. Teachers do not always insist on high enough standards, and some work is left unfinished.
- Although improving, attendance rates for pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils, remain below national averages.

### The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed head of school, deputy headteacher and chair of governors have made improvements to the school over a short space of time. They have quickly gained the confidence of the local authority, diocese, staff and parents.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. They intervene sensitively should extra help be required and ensure that pupils do not become overly reliant on them by allowing some activities to be completed independently.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are very strong. Pupils are keen to learn, behave well and are respectful of visitors and each other.
- The school is a harmonious community where pupils of different backgrounds get on well together. Pupils are adamant that bullying is rare.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a good understanding of faiths and cultures that are different to their own.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - governors continue to build on their existing skills, knowledge and training, in order to hold leaders fully to account for school improvement
  - leaders fully embed the new assessment and tracking systems so that teachers are using them effectively, to identify underachievement and raise standards in writing
  - school development plans contain relevant milestones and monitoring opportunities, therefore enabling the impact of leaders' actions to be measured accurately.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - pupils consistently apply spelling, punctuation and grammar skills in written work across the curriculum
  - teachers move middle-ability pupils in mathematics on to challenging work quicker
  - all pieces of work across the curriculum are completed to a high standard.
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development and welfare by:
  - continuing to work with the families of those pupils who are most frequently absent from school to discourage absence from school and ensure that attendance and persistent absence rates are at least in line with national figures.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupil outcomes at the end of Year 6 have been too low for too long. This is particularly the case for standards in writing. Leaders and governors have not been swift enough in their actions to arrest this trend.
- Governors have not been rigorous enough in their monitoring of the work of school leaders. There is no robust system in place for reporting findings to other governors. Until recently, the governing body have not had an accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development of the school.
- Leaders have not ensured that systems for teachers to assess and track pupils' progress are fully embedded so that teachers can identify underachievement and help pupils to catch up. This is particularly the case for writing.
- School improvement planning does not contain accurate milestones and monitoring opportunities. As a result, it is not always clear when certain actions are due to be completed or who is responsible for ensuring that actions have been completed successfully.
- The head of school, deputy headteacher and chair of governors were appointed to their current roles during this academic year. They have done much already to improve the school. For example, strong systems are in place that allow leaders to make accurate judgements on the quality of teaching.
- The head of school has a good system in place for monitoring the allocation and impact of pupil premium funding. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are tracked carefully and receive support from a range of adults. Any pupils who are falling behind are discussed at pupil progress meetings and are therefore quickly given the help they need in order to catch up.
- Leaders responsible for English and mathematics are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They have developed strong systems for monitoring their areas of responsibility that include analysing pupil assessments, scrutinising pupils' books and observing other teachers. As a result, strengths and areas for development in these subjects are accurate and appropriate.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. There are some particularly interesting science experiments. For example, 'What is the melting point of chocolate?' There are also opportunities for pupils to develop skills in other subjects, such as art, and design and technology. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities, including football, cheerleading and golf.
- Leaders have made good links with other schools locally. This enables teachers to share good practice and moderate pupils' work to ensure that assessments, for example in pupils' extended writing, are accurate.
- Leaders responsible for subjects in the wider curriculum work strategically to monitor and review their particular area of expertise. They are supported well by senior leaders and have received training that enables them to discharge their duties effectively.

- Performance management is robust. Staff are set challenging targets regarding pupil progress, the teacher standards and leadership where appropriate. There is a mid-term assessment where leaders ensure that teachers are on track to achieve their targets.
- The leader responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. There are regular visits to classrooms to check on the progress of individual pupils, which help to ensure that the pupils are receiving appropriate support. Effective links with external agencies, such as the autism team, ensure that pupils and their families are well supported and that staff are well informed about how to support pupils in class.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport additional funding is spent effectively. Pupils and staff have benefited from specialist coaching, and a new scheme of work has been purchased along with new equipment for the playground. The proportion of pupils who take part in extra sport or PE is steadily increasing.
- The majority of parents are positive about the school and its work. Several commented on improvements that have been implemented recently by the new senior leaders, for example improved communication between school and home. There are a high number of negative responses on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors took account of these views during the inspection and investigated the issues thoroughly. However, inspectors did not find evidence to substantiate the negative views made by these parents.
- Staff who completed the questionnaire were positive about the new leadership team, with one commenting, 'I now feel that the school is moving on at a quicker pace.'

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have not been proactive enough when checking the work of the school. Some monitoring visits have taken place. However, they have not been linked closely enough to the current school improvement priorities. Meetings between governors and the linked member of school staff are planned but have yet to take place.
- The system in place for governors to monitor the work of the school and then report findings back to other governors at meetings is not rigorous enough. Therefore, not all governors have a clear enough picture of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Governors have not always focused on the right priorities. They have at times become distracted by operational matters, such as changes to the lunchtime arrangements and how these will be communicated to parents. They have not been sufficiently strategic in their outlook, or held leaders to account effectively for school improvement.
- The new chair of governors is skilled, experienced and knowledgeable. It is clear that since her recent appointment, the effectiveness of governors has improved and the level of challenge to leaders has increased. She uses her skills effectively to ensure that governors stay focused on the right priorities, for example asking questions regarding pupil progress and the quality of teaching.
- These improvements to governance are strengthening the leadership of the school and increasing its capacity to improve further. For example, the chair of governors used her expertise to carry out an audit of the school's safeguarding practices. This enabled

leaders to identify areas of strong practice and those that required improvement.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong safeguarding culture exists in the school. There is a robust system in place for the recording of any concerns and subsequent referrals made to outside agencies. The designated leads are tenacious in ensuring that pupils and families receive any extra support they require quickly.
- Staff are alert to the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm and ensure that even minor concerns are passed to leaders. Together, leaders and staff make sure that they monitor all pupils about whom concerns have been raised, even when additional support is not required.
- All staff have received appropriate safeguarding training including 'Prevent' duty, which helps them to protect pupils who are at risk from extremism and radicalisation.
- Pupils unanimously told inspectors that they feel safe at school and adults help to keep them safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because teachers do not ensure that pupils use spelling, punctuation and grammar skills when writing across the curriculum. Their skills are not as developed as they could be, because they have too few opportunities to practise these skills in a wide range of activities and subjects.
- Teachers do not move middle-ability pupils on to challenging work quickly enough in mathematics. As a result, these pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not always insist on the highest standards of presentation from pupils. In some classes and subjects, pupils' work is untidy, careless and, on occasion, unfinished.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English make good progress in reading and writing in daily nurture sessions. These lessons are lively and engaging. For example, pupils were observed working well together in groups to retell and sequence the story 'Oi Frog!'
- Relationships between adults and pupils are strong, and this promotes learning well. Pupils in all classes are eager, listen attentively and show positive attitudes in lessons.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop and practise mathematical skills through a range of problem-solving and reasoning activities. Consequently, teachers are able to assess pupils accurately and plan effectively for the next steps in learning.
- Pupils enjoy reading and their reading diaries confirm that they read often. When reading to inspectors, pupils read with enthusiasm and confidence. Reading books are at the appropriate level, therefore matching pupils' abilities. Pupils talked about their favourite authors, including Jacqueline Wilson and David Walliams.

- Teaching assistants are a strength. They support the learning of pupils well and help them to develop knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. They intervene appropriately should extra help be required and promote independence by allowing pupils to complete some activities independently.
- Pupils take part in a wide variety of homework activities that enable them to develop knowledge and skills in a range of subjects and topics. One particular example was in Year 6, where pupils had the challenge to research a famous Victorian. They produced detailed and interesting accounts of Dr Barnardo, Mary Seacole and Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Strong relationships exist between staff and pupils. Senior leaders have a good knowledge and understanding of pupils and their families. Consequently, any help or extra support that is required is offered quickly. The school counsellor is available for those pupils who require extra support with their emotional health and well-being.
- Pupils overwhelmingly say that they feel happy, safe and enjoy school. They are adamant that bullying is rare and they have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber bullying. Pupils are knowledgeable regarding e-safety and are clear, for example, that some individuals who are online are not always who they claim to be.
- Pupils have a good understanding of faiths and cultures different to their own. One pupil remarked, 'We are a very diverse school, so it is easy for us to learn about different cultures.' Pupils are knowledgeable regarding faiths and their relevant places of worship. Pupils have also experienced different foods from other countries, including Italy and Mexico.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values and talk readily about, for example, tolerance, respect and democracy. The elected school council are active, recently raising money through bake sales and raffles to put towards new playground equipment, and liaising with the parents' and teachers' association to buy new books for the school library.
- Pupils regularly attend the well-organised and popular breakfast club. There are appropriate activities both inside and outside that are provided in a safe environment. The behaviour of pupils is good and this provision helps pupils start the day in a healthy and productive way.
- Pupils look smart in their school uniform and are punctual at the start of the day.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are unanimous in their view that behaviour is good. They told inspectors that adults deal with any rare incidents of poor behaviour swiftly and fairly. Staff have high

expectations of pupil conduct and have ensured that a positive culture exists around the school. Pupils follow adults' instructions quickly, therefore allowing lessons to flow smoothly and without interruption.

- Pupils' behaviour is also good at breaktime and lunchtime. They socialise with each other well in the dining hall and have a wide range of activities to keep them active when outside on the playgrounds. There are specific areas for playing football, team games and specialised climbing frames.
- The head of school keeps comprehensive records of any behaviour incidents and analyses them closely for any patterns that may occur. Consequently, any potential repeats of misbehaviour are quickly identified and eradicated.
- Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to visitors. They greet adults cheerfully, hold doors open for them and wait in doorways, allowing them to pass. Pupils spoke with inspectors maturely about their work and were keen to share their successes with other staff and senior leaders.
- The good work the school is undertaking to improve pupils' attendance is starting to have a positive impact. At the time of the inspection, attendance rates were just below national figures; however, they are rising quickly. Leaders understand the need to ensure that they continue to work effectively with all pupils and families to drive up attendance rates so they are at least in line with national figures.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not always make the progress of which they are capable from their various starting points by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils do not make good progress in writing. This is because spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are not transferred successfully into extended pieces of writing and work across the curriculum consistently well enough. In 2016, the progress made by pupils was well below national averages in writing. Attainment in reading and mathematics was in line with national averages.
- Information provided by the school and work seen in pupils' books indicate that current pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not making good progress in writing and mathematics. However, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in Years 5 and 6 are making accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards in the spelling, punctuation and grammar test were broadly in line with national figures last year. However, pupils, achieved standards below national figures at the higher level.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points. This is because leaders regularly check whether the extra support being received is having the necessary impact.
- Work seen in books indicates that pupils are making strong progress in a wide range of subjects, including science, history, geography and religious education.

## School details

Unique reference number	112922
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10031291

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Mrs Ann Cruickshank
Interim Executive Headteacher	Mrs Sandie Holmes
Head of School	Vicky Brown
Telephone number	01332 854985
Website	<a href="http://www.stjamesfederation.co.uk">www.stjamesfederation.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@stjames.derby.sch.uk">head@stjames.derby.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those pupils who speak English as an additional language are much higher than the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics



by the end of Year 6.

- The current head of school and deputy headteacher started their respective roles in September 2016. The new executive headteacher started her role during the week of the inspection. The previous executive headteacher had been absent since February 2017 and has now left the federation.
- The school is federated with St James' Church of England Infant School.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes and examined a wide variety of pupils' books from a range of subjects. The head of school and deputy headteacher accompanied the inspectors on a range of inspection activities, including observing lessons.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings with the interim executive headteacher, the head of school, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs leader, subject leaders in English and mathematics, a group of governors, including the chair, the director of education from the Diocese of Derby and a representative from the local authority. They spoke with pupils in groups, in lessons and around the school, and listened to them read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, current assessment information provided by the school, the school development plan, plans written by English and mathematics subject leaders and records relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors talked with parents before school and took into account 206 responses to Parent View and nine responses to the parent free-text service. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire and 27 to the staff questionnaire that were considered by inspectors.

## Inspection team

Peter Stonier, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Karen Slack	Ofsted Inspector
Dorothy Martin	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Lyn-Cook	Ofsted Inspector
John Savage, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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