

St James' Church of England Aided Infant School

Leonard Street, Derby, DE23 8EG

Inspection dates 17–18 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is well led by the executive headteacher. She has worked closely with senior leaders to tackle weaknesses identified for improvement by the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching, and consequently achievement, has improved across the school. Teaching is consistently good; it is outstanding in Year 2.
- Pupils' achievement is good. They reach standards at the end of Year 2 that are broadly average. This represents good progress from below average starting points. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage in their education.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils who do not speak English as a first language, make good progress. This is due to the carefully-designed support that they receive to help them in their learning.
- The most-able pupils are suitably challenged and they make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well during lessons and around the school. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds get on well with each other.
- Pupils are kept safe whilst they are in school. All adults ensure that pupils are well-cared for.
- Senior leaders have been effective in communicating the importance of regular attendance to families whose children's attendance has been irregular. Consequently, attendance rates have improved and are close to average.
- Children make a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal and social development, reading and writing.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are respectful of each other, irrespective of their background.
- The governing body keep a close eye on how well the school is doing. They ensure that the pupil premium is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding because not all teachers check on pupils' work often enough during lessons. As a result, pupils do not always progress as quickly as they could.
- Senior leaders and governors have not checked closely enough on the effectiveness of the school's use of the primary school sports funding.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not always have enough opportunities to undertake activities in expressive arts and design.
- The school's website is not up-to-date, and does not contain relevant information for parents and carers, including how they can be involved in their child's learning and how pupils are kept safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited eight parts of lessons taught by five teachers.
- The inspector looked at pupils' current workbooks across a range of subjects.
- The inspector heard a group of pupils from Years 2 read. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in the playground and around the school between lessons.
- The inspector held meetings with: the headteacher, other senior leaders and leaders of different subjects; a group of pupils from Year 2; a representative from the local authority; and members of the governing body.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation including: the school's own self-evaluation and plans for improvement; the school's evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning, including evaluations of teachers' performance; school policies; the school's most recent data on the attainment and progress of pupils; minutes of meetings of the governing body; information provided to families; information relating to the safeguarding of pupils; and the school's most recent data relating to the attendance and punctuality of pupils.
- The inspector considered the range of and quality of information provided on the school website.
- Consideration was given to the 32 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the school's own analysis from its own surveys. The inspector spoke informally with 15 parents at the end of the school day. He also considered the nine questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

David Carter, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The early years provision comprises a Nursery class for three-year-old children who attend part time, and one Reception class for four-year-olds, who all attend full time. Nursery and Reception children are taught and cared for together for part of each day.
- Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The large majority of pupils do not speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils entering and leaving the school other than at the normal times of entry and exit are above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is above average. This is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and for children in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of girls compared to boys is below average.
- The school is part of a federation of three schools. This also includes: St. James' Church of England Aided Junior School; and Rosehill Infant and Nursery School. The three schools are managed by one governing body. The headteacher undertakes the role of executive headteacher of the junior school and this infant school.
- The governing body run a breakfast club that is held at the federated St. James' Church of England Junior School.
- A new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage took up her position in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children have more opportunities to develop their skills in expressive arts and design.
- Improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in the rest of the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers always keep a close check on pupils' progress during lessons so they can identify more quickly where additional challenge should be provided to help them make faster progress.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors and senior leaders check more closely on the impact of the primary school sport funding on developing pupils' well-being and their skills in sport
 - ensuring that parents have access to up-to-date information, through the school website, that informs them of the ways in which the school keeps their children safe and helps them to become more involved in their child's education.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led and managed by the executive headteacher, who is ably supported by a range of leaders including: those responsible for subjects; the leader responsible for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs; and the new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Leaders have worked well together to secure improvements to teaching, pupils' achievements and their attendance since the last inspection. Leaders have ensured that the pupils' behaviour and the impact this has on their achievement have remained at a good standard, and that pupils are safe in school
- Senior leaders have revised the way in which they track pupils' progress. This is undertaken regularly and leaders use their analysis to determine the next steps for improving the achievement of those pupils who are falling behind, and to narrow any gaps between the attainment of different groups of pupils. They maintain a close check on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, and governors and senior leaders regularly check that their use of the pupil premium is having the desired impact on pupils' achievement. This close scrutiny is indicative of the school's approach to ensuring that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. Any hint of discrimination is tackled immediately.
- The executive headteacher has put in place a robust system to manage their performance of staff. All members of staff have clear targets aimed at improving their practice. They are supported by a programme of professional development activities which has proved effective in securing improvements in teaching. All staff are fully behind the executive headteacher in her drive to raise standards.
- Leaders of English and mathematics have a clear view of the strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects. They make regular checks on teaching and monitor the extent to which this is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. They have improved the way in which basic skills in reading and mathematics are taught. This is helping pupils to make faster rates of progress. Leadership in the early years is also good; the leader of this setting has quickly made the early years an attractive and stimulating environment into which children settle quickly and confidently.
- The leader responsible for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that support is tailored to meet the learning and development needs of identified pupils. This is helping them to achieve well.
- Senior leaders have organised the curriculum around well-designed themes and topics that capture pupils' interest. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and pupils have many opportunities to apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in a wide range of subjects. In particular, the curriculum ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils whose first language is not English, and the most-able pupils, all achieve well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils can talk readily about faiths which are different to their own and about their own beliefs and customs. The school's core values are strongly promoted through assemblies; these affirm the school's expectations that everyone, irrespective of their background or circumstance, will be respectful of each other and will behave courteously and with consideration.
- Senior leaders undertake a detailed analysis of each child's background and experiences prior to starting school. They have used this information to plan educational visits, so that they can assure themselves that all pupils have experiences to acquaint themselves with British traditions and history. In this way they prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Senior leaders have used the primary sports funding to enable pupils to access a range of sports both within and beyond the normal times of the school day. The funding is being used effectively. It has enabled leaders to buy additional resources and to provide training for staff on how to teach physical education more effectively. However, senior leaders do not check precisely enough whether this expenditure is improving pupils' skills in sports or their levels of well-being.

- Senior leaders have kept a check on the views of parents and carers through the use of an annual questionnaire. The school's analysis shows that most parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. While all of the parents that the inspector interviewed were equally positive about the school, this was not always corroborated by the responses on the online questionnaire (Parent View), which showed that a small minority of parents are dissatisfied by aspects of the school's work. Leaders acknowledge the need to investigate this further to get to the root cause of this dissatisfaction and to address any emerging issues. Senior leaders have not ensured that all the relevant information is kept up-to-date on the school's website to inform parents of how they can be more involved in their child's learning as well as information about how well the school keeps pupils safe.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school. The local authority adviser undertakes termly visits and has brokered support with other schools across the city. This has helped to improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage as well as the teaching of phonics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has altered the way in which it governs the federation. Key governors have been assigned to keep a close-eye on the work of this school. Governors undertake regular visits to the school to check on the rate of improvement to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. As a result, they have a good understanding of how well the school is doing. Governors provide good levels of support and challenge to senior leaders in order to help the school improve further.
 - Governors manage the school's finances well. They are very aware of how they are spending the pupil premium and check how well this is benefiting eligible pupils. Systems for rewarding staff performance are securely in place, including that of senior leaders. Teachers are not rewarded financially unless they meet their targets. Nevertheless, governors acknowledge that a sharper evaluation needs to be made on the extent to which the sports premium is benefiting pupils' health and well-being and their level of development in physical education and sport.
 - Systems for safeguarding meet requirements and are effective. The designated person for child protection oversees the system for safeguarding at this school and the federated junior school. All staff have been suitably trained. Senior leaders have systems in place to quickly identify pupils who may be at the risk of harm and have clear procedures for acting on any concerns.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well around the school. Pupils of all ethnic backgrounds play well together during breaktimes and they are courteous and considerate to each other. Positive relationships exist between adults and pupils; for example, teaching assistants support and encourage pupils to play games at breaktimes. This is making a positive contribution towards pupils' social and cultural development.
- Pupils agree that behaviour is good. They are aware of the values that lie at the heart of the school and know they are expected to behave well. They are very aware of how they will be rewarded if they choose to behave well and what the consequences are otherwise.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are usually positive. Pupils are keen to get on with their work. Pupils in Year 2 in particular, are able to sustain their concentration for long periods while working on their own. Occasionally, a few potentially vulnerable pupils in Year 1 need support from teaching assistants to ensure that they are wholly focused on their learning throughout the lesson. Nevertheless, this does not disrupt the learning of others in the class.
- Pupils take pride in their work. Standards of presentation are good. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should present their work and support them effectively to develop their skills in handwriting.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get on well with each other. They are enthusiastic about their learning and they are developing good social skills. They readily share equipment and take turns while undertaking their chosen activities.

- Pupils' attendance has been below average since the previous inspection. However, the school's leaders have worked tirelessly to stress the importance of regular attendance to families where this has been a cause for concern. Leaders follow up any unexplained absences immediately by undertaking home visits; they work closely with families whose children are persistently absent. Consequently, current figures show that attendance continues to improve and is close to being average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school premises have secure fencing and gateways. Systems for checking visitors the school are robust. As a result, pupils are kept completely safe in school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Pupils are supervised closely at breakfast club, breaktimes and during lessons. Senior leaders have established effective links with other agencies to ensure pupils, whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, are looked after well.
- Pupils know how to keep safe. They have a good understanding of the potential dangers of using the internet, citing what they would do if they went on an inappropriate website. Pupils are aware of the risks associated with crossing the road.
- Pupils say that bullying rarely happens. This is confirmed by the very few recorded incidents of bullying, racial incidents, or fixed-term exclusions. Nevertheless, any incidents of poor behaviour are followed up immediately to ensure that they do not recur.
- Parents' views from the school's own survey are overwhelming complimentary about pupils' behaviour and the extent to which their children feel safe in school. All of the parents that the inspector spoke to confirmed this view. However, a majority of parents who completed Parent View disagree. Nevertheless, there is compelling evidence that pupils' behaviour is good and that they are completely safe in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has improved since the previous inspection and is now typically good. Teaching is also at least good across the school as a whole; it is outstanding in Year 2. Teaching ensures that pupils make good progress, from their starting points in the Nursery until they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They plan lessons carefully so that pupils find the learning interesting and meaningful for their stage of development. Teachers capture pupils' interest through effective use of resources and follow this up with clear explanations about the intended learning.
- Good teaching means that the overwhelming majority of pupils respond positively to the work that they have been set in all subjects and particularly mathematics. Teachers provide them with a good range of appropriate resources to support them while they undertake their tasks. This ensures most pupils are motivated to do well and sustain concentration until they have finished their work.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely to provide activities that help pupils develop their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) systematically. As a result, pupils are able to apply their new found skills confidently and accurately to improve their reading and writing.
- Teaching in Year 2 is outstanding. Adults are highly skilled at keeping a close eye on how well pupils are doing. They use questioning to very good effect to quickly identify pupils' understanding of their work. Hence, they can redirect learning as necessary to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress during lessons.
- Occasionally, in other classes, adults do not check as well as they should how well pupils' are learning

during the lesson itself. Pupils who are doing well are not always provided with more challenging work quickly enough; pupils who find the work challenging are not always given extra support early enough. As a result, teachers do not always make the best use of time available to maximise pupils' progress.

- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is consistently good across all subjects. All teachers provide pupils with guidance that they can understand and that shows them how to improve their work. Teachers ensure that pupils respond to marking and show how they have improved the quality of their writing, or undertaken corrections in mathematics. Teachers keep a check on how well pupils are acting on the advice they have been given.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to ensure that all pupils, but especially disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are provided with effective support to help them learn well.
- The new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has addressed the relative weaknesses in the quality of provision that were identified at the previous inspection. Children now receive carefully-planned and imaginative activities to support their development in most areas of learning. Adult use time better to ensure that children are more engaged in their learning. A sharper focus upon developing children's communication and language skills, including reading and writing, has resulted in them developing more quickly in these areas.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school in Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below what is typical for their age in communication, language and literacy. These are particularly weak, usually where English is not the children's first language. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is effective in meeting their needs.
- Despite this good start to their education, due to their low starting points, the proportion of pupils entering Year 1 who have secured a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage was below average in 2014. Due to the good teaching they receive, by the end of Year 1, pupils have narrowed the gap in attainment with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils' skills develop quickly in Year 2 and they make strong progress. This has resulted in standards of attainment rising markedly in 2014 to a point where they were broadly average. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Although pupils in the current Year 2 class have slightly weaker attainment, they make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' knowledge and skills in phonics are developing strongly. Teachers have focussed very effectively on helping pupils to apply their knowledge of phonics and improve their ability to read and write. The proportion of pupils who attain the required standard in the Year 1 screening test for phonics, however, was below average in 2014. Nevertheless, nearly all the pupils who re-took the test in Year 2 attained the required standard.
- Pupils are given many opportunities in which to apply their skills in writing in a wide range of subjects. As a result, they are fully engaged in their learning and are keen to record their learning neatly in their workbooks. This is a key factor in pupils' good progress in writing.
- Pupils are provided with frequent opportunities to develop their knowledge of number and their skills in solving problems. Pupils in Year 2 were highly engaged in a lesson that required them to calculate mentally and to find multiples as part of their daily basic skills session. Pupils enjoy mathematics, and are making good progress in this subject.
- The most-able pupils are suitably challenged and they make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 in 2014 was above average in reading and mathematics, but slightly below average in writing.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress, with the majority making strong progress. This is due to the well-designed support that they receive both during lessons and within small group interventions.
- Disadvantaged pupils in 2014 attained standards that were lower than those of other pupils in the school and nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they left. Nevertheless, from starting points that were generally lower than their classmates, they made good progress.
- Senior leaders closely track the progress made by boys and girls. In 2014, girls' attainment was higher than that of boys as well as other girls nationally in reading and mathematics. Conversely, the attainment of boys is higher than that of girls in the current Year 2 class; attainment in Year 1 is similar for both boys and girls. Both groups are making good gains in their learning during their time in the school.
- Pupils who speak English as a second language progress well due to the effective support they receive. In 2014, this group of pupils attained the same standards as similar pupils nationally. Pupils whose first language is not English attained higher overall standards than similar pupils, and indeed all pupils, nationally.
- The achievement of pupils from the large number of different ethnic groups represented in the school is tracked closely by senior leaders. In 2014, the large majority of groups attained standards higher than similar pupils nationally; a minority attained standards higher than all pupils nationally. Current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

The early years provision

is good

- The new leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage has set up an attractive and purposeful learning environment to support children's learning and development and to ensure they are safe. Well-established routines have resulted in children readily choosing activities and resources that interest them. Children behave well; they are able to take turns and share resources. They can sustain their concentration, both when working on their own or in small groups. The very positive ethos of the setting is helping to promote children's personal, social and emotional development effectively.
- Teaching is good. Staff have benefited from visiting other settings and have ensured that the learning environment provides purposeful activities that capture children's interest and engage them in their learning. Adults are using their ongoing assessments increasingly well to plan the next stages in children's learning.
- Adults ensure that parents are involved in supporting their child's education. The school has set up a playgroup for young children to attend prior to starting the Nursery class. This is slowly but surely ensuring that children are supported in their early language development more effectively. Consequently, their skills are improving in communication, language and literacy. In addition, from the moment children start school, parents are encouraged to contribute to children's learning journals so that they can see how well their child is doing. Parents are welcomed into the school each morning so that they can support their child's first tasks of the day. The school provides parents with regular updates on how well their child is doing.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The leader has addressed the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Adults now use activity time more effectively to engage children in their learning and to accelerate their progress. The activities presented to children provide more support for their skills in reading and writing and the children respond well to the stimulation they receive. For example, children readily went to the writing table outside following a directed activity where they were planting seeds and were motivated to record their thoughts on paper. Children were very excited by their work about the chicks that had just been born and had pride of place in the classroom.

- Children in the current Reception class have made good progress since the time they joined the school and are generally well prepared for the next phase of their learning in Key Stage 1. A greater proportion is on track to attain a good level of development at the end of 2015 than was the case in the previous year. Children in the Nursery class are also making good progress from their starting points. However, they sometimes make less progress in expressive arts and design than they should or than they do in other subjects.

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	112915
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	462023

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Viv Lawrence
Headteacher	Tamara Rolfs
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2013
Telephone number	01332 229229
Fax number	The school does not have a fax number
Email address	head@stjames.derby.sch.uk

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