

Southbroom St James Academy

Nursteed Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 3AH

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have taken too long to take the necessary steps to improve the school since it became an academy in December 2013.
- Over time, the board members have not provided sufficient challenge to secure improvement. Until recently, members have been presented with overgenerous information of the school's performance.
- Until very recently, the leadership of English and mathematics has had too little impact. Teachers' subject knowledge is not well developed to support pupils' learning in these subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics, reading and writing is weak. As a result, pupils do not consistently acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding expected of them.
- Teaching does not consistently meet the needs of particular groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school's assessment information on pupils' progress and attainment is often inaccurate. As a result, teachers do not know their pupils' academic needs well enough. Consequently, pupils fail to make good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In lessons where the work is either too hard or too easy for them, some pupils become distracted. Too often, they do not take pride in their work.

The school has the following strengths

- The very recent actions taken by the trust and executive headteacher have had an immediate impact in some areas, for example in improving pupils' behaviour and their conduct around the school.
- The newly formed local governing board has quickly grasped what needs to be done to improve the school.
- The newly appointed executive headteacher has gained a strong understanding of the needs of the school and has accurately identified the precise actions required to improve teaching and learning.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning across the school by ensuring that:
 - tasks and activities in reading, writing and mathematics are matched well to pupils' prior attainment, in particular for the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - teachers have a clear understanding of what the pupils need to learn next to be able to succeed in the full range of subjects
 - teachers check pupils' learning in lessons and take effective action to accelerate their rates of progress
 - assessment information is accurate and used to shape learning for groups and individuals
 - teachers' subject knowledge enables pupils to make strong progress, in particular in mathematics by developing pupils' basic calculation and computation skills, and enabling pupils to apply these through opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning
 - phonics skills are well taught and built upon so pupils can read, write and spell accurately
 - planned activities enable pupils to write more extensively and with greater depth across the curriculum.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - those responsible for checking the work of the school, including those on the board of trustees and local governing board, hold school leaders to account stringently, especially in their evaluations of teaching and learning, in order to improve outcomes for pupils
 - the quality of teaching improves rapidly, in particular to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ongoing self-evaluation is accurate and leads to a very clear identification of priorities for improvement.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Over time, leaders in the trust and the local governing board have not tackled weaknesses in the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils continue to make slow progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Over time, leaders have not been rigorous or sufficiently probing in their evaluation of the school's performance. Improvements to teaching and leadership have only recently started to take place with the appointment of the new executive headteacher.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers' assessments are accurate, so they have not been in a position to identify weaknesses in the progress of different groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This has contributed to the underachievement of key groups of pupils.
- The school's plans and actions have not been appropriately targeted or precise enough to bring about improvements to teaching and learning over recent years. As a result, pupils across the school have not achieved well enough.
- The management of performance of staff has been weak, failing to support and develop high-quality teaching or to tackle underperformance quickly enough.
- Before this academic year, leaders did not hold teachers closely enough to account for pupils' outcomes. As a result, teaching has not been strong enough to maintain acceptable standards across the school.
- The leadership of mathematics, English and science remains underdeveloped because leaders do not yet have the full skills and competence needed to improve provision and outcomes in these subjects.
- Over the last year, following the appointment of a new chief executive officer, the trust has managed the performance of senior leaders with greater clarity and rigour. This resulted in the appointment of the new executive headteacher, who is already having a positive impact on improving the work of the school. In particular, he has quickly formed a detailed and accurate view of the school and has focused the school development plan on the priority areas.
- The new executive headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. He has quickly implemented a rigorous round of appraisals for teachers and teaching assistants which strongly reflects the priorities for the school. Resources and support are now being directed to where they are most needed, including through targeted 'support plans'. Challenging conversations are beginning to raise teachers' awareness of the new expectations being set. However, tangible improvements to pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching are not yet evident.
- Leaders are now drawing on the support of the DSAT multi-academy trust and the recent leadership arrangement with a partner school. This is enabling the school to begin to develop the roles of staff, including the special educational needs coordinator. Additionally, joint monitoring activities involving the executive headteacher and the subject leaders of English and mathematics have started to improve their

understanding. Further professional development and training for these subject leaders have been planned. However, these arrangements are very recent and have not yet had the desired impact on teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes.

- In the light of the findings of a recent review of pupil premium spending, leaders are now increasing the support for disadvantaged pupils. Whereas the funding was used in the past to enable pupils to attend visits and the breakfast club, for example, leaders are now developing a strategy to support disadvantaged pupils academically.
- Recent improvements include interventions following the first round of 'pupil progress' meetings. These involve leaders in formal discussions with teachers about pupils' progress and agreeing milestones and benchmarks. In addition, pupils who need additional support to catch up have also been identified for intervention, which includes disadvantaged pupils. However, there has been insufficient time for these actions to have had a discernible impact.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is varied to include the full range of subjects. In addition, leaders promote extra-curricular activities and opportunities such as 'Rio 2016' and enter local sports events.
- Leaders promote fundamental British values so that children understand what these mean in their lives. For example, pupils have taken part in democratic elections and have responsibilities through the school council. Currently a project to raise money for the 'lighthouse' room has raised £600. Pupils feel valued and are keen to make a positive contribution to the school.
- Sports funding contributes to high-quality physical education teaching and a range of sporting activities such as tag rugby and football. This appropriately supports pupils' fitness, enjoyment and participation through a variety of sports. The sports leader actively monitors pupils' participation in sports, which has seen a significant rise within the past year.
- Leaders, including governors, promote a strong, caring ethos through the school's Christian foundation. This is acknowledged and respected by the pupils. School leaders also actively promote equalities in the life and work of the school, for example, having girls' football competitions. As a result, pupils feel valued as individuals and are showing more courtesy and respect for each other than previously.
- Pupils strongly affirm the impact of the new executive headteacher. Since his appointment, pupils recognise the improved behaviour and conduct at play. One pupil, whose view was typical, said the school previously was 'chaotic'. Even so, at the time of the inspection, nearly half of the parents who responded to the online Parent View survey said that they would not recommend the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not challenged overgenerous assessments from leaders about the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, they have not held leaders properly to account for the key priority of improving teaching.
- The governing board of Southbroom St James was amalgamated with that of a partner school in July 2016. This has widened the pool of expertise and skills but there has not yet been sufficient time for the actions taken to have demonstrable impact on the quality of teaching, learning and outcomes.

- Visits from trust representatives to check the progress of the school have lacked the precision and depth to challenge leaders effectively, for example in raising attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- Over time, governance had focused insufficiently on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The trust commissioned a pupil premium review in November 2016. As a result, it has taken affirmative action to find out more about the pupils and track them more robustly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are highly aware and take a stringent approach to safeguarding. As a result, risk assessments and all mandatory checks or vetting procedures for staff are well managed and orderly. For example, the single central record and child protection training are fully compliant with 'Keeping children safe in education' (2016).
- Leaders ensure that the child protection training delivered is effective. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are knowledgeable about what to do in the event of a disclosure from a pupil and how to record these. Staff are aware who the designated safeguarding lead officers are in the school and how to log concerns on the school's monitoring system.
- The school has four designated trained safeguarding lead officers who are appropriately trained. This is part of the school's strategy to ensure that there is always at least one specifically trained safeguarding leader on site who can respond quickly and effectively to daily concerns.
- Pupils confirm that they feel safe and a significant part of this is due to the recent behaviour management strategy introduced by the executive headteacher. One pupil, whose view was typical, said, 'There has been bullying but it has stopped. We are safe in school. The teachers usually listen. Now the new headteacher is here, he will take action.' Pupils also know how to recognise their own behaviours to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they can refer themselves to the Ark or Lighthouse room for adult support and intervention if needed.
- Taking into account the online parental survey and other letters from parents during the inspection, a majority of parents still remain concerned about some bullying in the school. However, recent improvements have also been acknowledged and 90% of parents say that they feel their child is safe at school.
- Pupils enjoy the planned visits of professionals and volunteers to talk to them about safety during assembly. Fire safety and police officers inform pupils about how to stay safe, including on social media. As a result, pupils are knowledgeable and can manage risks for themselves.
- The trust completed a safeguarding audit in November 2016 through an independent and external provider. In response to this, there have been revisions to the safeguarding plan so that the school continues to be well focused on priorities for improvement.
- School leaders are diligent and responsive in working with other agencies and professional organisations to keep children safe. For example, checks on files for pupils with child protection plans show that these are well maintained and take full account of

external advice and recommendations. In fact, school leaders have been proactive in instigating or escalating concern to the appropriate authorities to protect the most vulnerable pupils.

- School leaders have completed investigations in line with the school's own safeguarding policy that are timely, appropriate and proportionate.
- Through their deeds and actions, staff show a strong commitment to safeguarding so that pupils are aware of their own safety and how to manage risks at home and in school. This includes, for example, their physical safety during playtimes while building works are being carried out on the school site.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers do not set work which is well matched to pupils' prior attainment, in part because they have little accurate assessment information as a basis for their planning. As a consequence, pupils make slow progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve are low, and are reflected, for example, in pupils' low spelling standards and the limited quality of their writing across the curriculum. The pupil survey confirms there is often a lack of challenge in lessons.
- Teachers do not routinely check pupils' work and their progress in lessons. As a result, they are not quick enough to intervene to provide support where pupils find work difficult, or more challenging work where they find it too easy. Furthermore, mistakes are often repeated or not identified quickly enough, as seen in the too-frequent repetition of simple spelling errors. In some cases, pupils' workbooks show regression in fluency of their writing and in their handwriting skills.
- The teaching of reading is weak, as is the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) for those pupils who need it. This is particularly the case for lower-attaining pupils when they enter the school in Year 3. As a result, pupils' application of phonics when reading and writing is not consistent and pupils' general reading ability is underdeveloped. Pupils lose interest in guided reading tasks which do not hold their attention, as seen, for example, in word dictionary tasks for Year 3 pupils.
- Teachers' fragile subject knowledge in mathematics results in activities that fail to provide pupils with the 'building blocks' required to support their mathematical understanding, skills and reasoning. For example, pupils in Year 5 used inefficient methods for simple multiplication. Pupils' calculation and computation skills are not well developed so they are unable to reason and apply mathematical knowledge efficiently.
- The support offered by teaching assistants is too variable. Although examples were seen of good-quality support, for example in questioning pupils and correcting misconceptions, all too often they overcompensate for pupils, directing pupils to the answers rather than encouraging them to think for themselves.
- Teachers are using the school's new assessment policy when feeding back to pupils. As a result, pupils are encouraged to respond and think about their learning. However, the consistency of implementation is still too variable, often failing to improve the quality of pupils' work, particularly in workbooks in subjects other than English and mathematics.

- Teachers are now using national benchmarks and other information so that they are aware of the relevant age-related expectations and standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, teaching is not yet ensuring that enough pupils of different abilities are reaching the expected standards. Too few pupils are making enough progress, including the most able, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and other pupils who need to catch up.
- Teachers typically promote a calm learning environment and relationships between pupils and staff are positive. As a result, pupils want to learn and are willing to work together on tasks and share their learning with others.
- In response to training, teachers are establishing displays in classrooms which are proving helpful in supporting learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are being encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own behaviour and to make the right decisions. Staff are using the agreed behaviour system consistently and pupils are increasingly successful in managing their own behaviour. There are times, however, when pupils still need direction and encouragement to avoid distracting those around them.
- The school's more inclusive ethos is reflected in pupils' personal development and their improving attitudes towards each other. Pupils are also supported through additional activities, such as the breakfast club, which provides a nurturing environment where pupils interact and socialise with each other and adults.
- Pupils enjoy any roles and responsibilities they are given. They recognise the importance of these to the running of the school. This is seen, for example, in the work of school councillors and their contribution to fundraising for improvements to the Lighthouse room.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although pupils typically behave well in lessons, some low-level disruption and poor behaviour still occur when the teaching does not sustain pupils' attention.
- Pupils' presentation in their workbooks, especially in topic and science books, is variable. Pupils do not consistently take pride in their work.
- Overall, since the appointment of the new executive headteacher, there has been an improvement in pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' attendance is improving well and is broadly average. Leaders have worked effectively with parents and other organisations to secure improved attendance, including for the most vulnerable pupils. However, attendance for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than for other groups of pupils.
- Pupils feel safe in school. In discussions with the inspectors, pupils said that they feel

safer and more supported in the recent term because of the introduction of clear expectations from school leaders.

- Pupils understand what bullying is and are adamant that this is now much reduced. One pupil, whose views were typical of many, said, 'Behaviour has improved a lot this year. There are fewer falling-outs.' However, a significant proportion of parents expressed some concerns about bullying when giving their views for the inspection survey.
- The number of exclusions has reduced, which is due to a stronger focus on intervention and prevention to support vulnerable pupils or those at risk of exclusion. The records of pupils meeting the higher thresholds of the school's behaviour log are reducing significantly in the current term.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Key stage 2 results in the 2016 national tests show that outcomes are low in reading, mathematics and science, as well as lower than the national average in writing. Information held by the school and work in pupils' books confirm that current standards are also similarly low in all year groups across the school in these subjects.
- Pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar, by the time they leave the school, are also lower than expected when compared to the national average.
- Current rates of progress across all year groups are still too slow. Pupils are not yet making enough progress to catch up from a legacy of weaker teaching over time and to reach the expected national standards at the end of key stage 2. Information held by the school indicates some improvement but at an early stage of development.
- Workbooks show that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is typically low. Despite some most recent improvements, these pupils are still not making the progress needed to catch up. The relatively few most able disadvantaged pupils are not working securely towards the greater depth of which they should be capable.
- The most able pupils do not consistently reach the highest standards expected of them. This is reflected in the outcomes seen in pupils' current workbooks, as well in both 2015 and 2016 national test results. The most able pupils are not challenged consistently to apply their deeper skills and understanding across the curriculum, for example to evaluate, edit and improve their own work, or to problem-solve and reason effectively in a range of different situations.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make slow progress, as seen in their workbooks across the curriculum. Teachers do not consistently use individual plans based on available national assessment information to inform their practice for pupils with the most complex needs. As a result, they are not sufficiently challenged to make good progress.
- Pupils' reading skills are not sufficiently developed, including their ability to identify and use phonics to sound words out. In the younger classes, they make mistakes and show misunderstanding with common sounds. Similarly, in Year 6, lower-attaining readers are not supported with enough precision to be able to read with fluency, expression or understanding.

- Pupils' understanding of number and related facts is weak. Pupils also lack confidence in applying their mathematical skills and knowledge in a range of situations because activities do not challenge them to reason, explain or hypothesise to deepen their understanding. As a result, pupils across the school show limited awareness and understanding of mathematics. In particular, the most able pupils are not well supported to meet the higher standards expected of them.
- Recent improvements to behaviour are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Pupils are making links across the curriculum which are helping to support them when writing for different purposes or in other subjects, such as religious education and science.

School details

Unique reference number	140352
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10019942

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

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	223
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Keith Clover
Executive Headteacher	Andrew Wilson
Telephone number	01380 723232
Website	www.southbroomstjames.dsat.org.uk
Email address	admin@southbroomstjames.dsat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a broadly average-sized junior school.
- It has eight classes where pupils are taught in single-age year groups, apart from one mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class.
- The school became an academy in December 2013 and is part of the Diocese of Salisbury multi-academy trust. This is a group of seven schools.
- There is one executive headteacher for Southbroom St James and a partner primary school in the multi-academy trust.
- There is one local governing board for Southbroom St James and a partner school in the multi-academy trust.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- The school complies with DfE guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school met the current government floor standards in 2015 which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classes and were accompanied by either the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher or the assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the range of leaders to evaluate their work. These included: the executive headteacher; deputy headteacher; assistant headteacher and special educational needs coordinator; the chief executive officer of the trust; the academy improvement director; the mathematics, English and science subject leaders; the chair of the local governing board as well as other representatives of the local governing board and trustees.
- The inspectors scrutinised a number of documents including local governing board meeting minutes, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation, trust monitoring reports, the school's development plan, teaching support plans, anonymised performance management records and subject leaders' plans.
- The inspectors carried out one lesson observation in physical education and further learning walks and visits to every class on both days of the inspection.
- The inspectors undertook an extensive joint scrutiny of pupils' books with the senior leaders to evaluate the quality of work and check the accuracy of assessment information.
- The inspectors spoke to children through various activities during the inspection; and one inspector met with a group of children and heard some pupils read in Years 3, 4 and 6.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtime, lunch and in the breakfast club.
- The 50 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors considered comments provided alternatively, such as meeting directly or via letters. The online responses of 11 staff were also taken into account. The inspector also met with a group of teaching assistants.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Mirams

Ofsted Inspector

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