

Inspection of St Edward's Church of England Academy

Westwood Road, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 8DN

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud ambassadors of St Edward's Church of England Academy. They strive to meet the school's vision '10:10 to have life in all its fullness' and say that teachers help them to be the best they can be. Pupils thrive in what they describe as the 'family atmosphere' of the school. They take advantage of the wide number of clubs run at lunchtime and after school. These include sports, Lego, board games, wildlife explorers and book clubs. Pupils take on leadership roles such as prefects, travel ambassadors, anti-bullying ambassadors and an LGBT+ group. They are pleased to contribute positively to the life of the school. Pupils know that leaders take bullying seriously and that adults support them when they need help. As a result, they feel safe at school.

Leaders have started to develop the curriculum. However, there is still more to do. The curriculum is not sequenced well enough in most subjects. This means that pupils do not always know the important information that they need to learn. Pupils, especially in Years 7 and 8, do not study some subjects, such as art and design and technology in enough detail. This limits their ability to do as well as they could.

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

In subjects where the curriculum is coherent and well-structured, pupils achieve well. However, leaders have not made sure that the curriculum in all subjects helps pupils to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. Some subjects are not given enough time to cover the content that is needed, and this stops pupils building on what they have learned. Leaders provide useful information for teachers about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), but the experience that pupils with SEND have in lessons is variable. Leaders have not monitored this well enough.

Leaders have prioritised reading. There is a structured and effective reading programme for those at the early stages of reading. The 'read to succeed' initiative in lessons provides pupils with useful strategies to support their reading, spelling and vocabulary. Pupils throughout the school read for pleasure. They use the well-stocked library and are enthusiastic about the books they are reading. Pupils in Year 8 are reading monitors, and they listen to Year 5 pupils read once a week.

The pastoral system is strong. All pupils speak highly about the pastoral leaders and know that they can get help if they need it. Attendance is monitored well. Leaders work well with external agencies so that families are given the support that they need.

Pupils behave with care and respect towards each other. Lessons are calm and pupils are attentive. Behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes is sometimes exuberant; this is well managed by staff. Some pupils report that they have experienced poor behaviour from other pupils. They say that staff deal with this, and

incidents usually stop. However, sometimes leaders do not check again with pupils that the situation has improved. This means that leaders are not always aware whether the incident has been resolved.

Leaders promote an ethos of respect and equality in the school. Pupils speak about different values and beliefs with confidence. Personal, social and health education is planned well, and pupils understand the idea of diversity. Pupils remember important information that helps to keep them safe. All pupils benefit from a well-considered careers education. Leaders work with local employers and businesses to promote pupils' aspirations and to provide them with information about the world of work.

The trustees are knowledgeable. They have developed an effective risk framework to evaluate the school's effectiveness and use this to make important decisions to support the school. Trustees have received information about the school's curriculum. They have arranged training to help them build their curriculum knowledge. This training is helping them to understand how to monitor leaders' work. However, there is more work to do to ensure that trustees have a sufficiently accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable about the risks that pupils face. They identify concerns quickly and make sure that pupils and their families receive the help that they need. Teachers receive frequent training on all aspects of safeguarding. This helps make sure that any concerns about pupils are picked up quickly. Pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves safe. They are clear about what they would do if they were at risk of any harm. Leaders conduct all necessary checks to make sure that staff they appoint are cleared to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not monitor all aspects of their work sufficiently well. This means that they do not have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and so they are unable to take effective action to address areas needing development. For example, leaders are not clear enough about incidents of poor behaviour or the progress of pupils with SEND. Leaders should make sure that they develop effective processes to enable them to monitor their work and identify appropriate next steps.
- Some subject leaders have not identified the important information that pupils need to know. This means that pupils are not able to build on key knowledge over time. Leaders should make sure that all curriculum planning identifies the key

knowledge pupils need to learn in the right sequence so that pupils know more and remember more.

- Leaders have not made sure that the school's curriculum is of sufficient breadth and depth in Years 7 and 8. Some subjects, such as creative arts, are not allocated sufficient time to deliver their curriculum. This means that pupils are not able to develop the knowledge and skills they need to progress to their next stage of education. Leaders should make sure that the school's curriculum is of similar depth, breadth and ambition to the national curriculum in Years 7 and 8.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139171
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10201045
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	721
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Cynthia Simmonds
Principal	Thomas Hutchinson
Website	http://stedwards.academy
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single academy trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is a Church of England academy. The last section 48 academy took place in 2015. Section 48 inspections have currently been halted due to the pandemic.

Information about this inspection

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

This is the first routine inspection 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.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the principal and other senior and middle leaders, including curriculum and pastoral leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors held discussions with teachers and representatives of the academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and geography. For each of these subjects, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups and spoke to pupils at various points during the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to pupils' and staff's surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

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