

Inspection of a good school: Devonshire Junior Academy

Auckland Road, Smethwick, West Midlands B67 7AT

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

Outcome

Devonshire Junior Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Devonshire Junior Academy is a happy place to be and all pupils are welcomed. Leaders aim for pupils to be 'Ready, Respectful and Safe'. They set high expectations, and pupils fulfil them. Pupils behave exceptionally well when moving around the school and in lessons. Pupils are helpful, kind and respectful towards others. They live by the school values and they love learning. Bullying happens rarely, but if it does happen, pupils know that staff will sort it out.

Pupils enjoy positive relationships with teachers. Pupils' successes in school or beyond are celebrated in weekly assemblies. Leaders ensure that all pupils can experience success in after-school activities such as debating, art and science clubs. The debating society competed impressively at Oxford University in the national schools debating competition. Pupils develop self-belief through these exciting experiences. They readily take on leadership roles such as librarians or young Police Community Support Officers. Pupils' education is enriched with trips such as a day at the seaside and visits to art galleries and places of worship.

The school is at the heart of the community. Parents appreciate the support the school provides for their children and families very much.

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

Pupils love learning and achieve well. Leaders have designed a curriculum that is fun, ambitious and well sequenced. Pupils undertake exciting learning challenges each term. They learn key subject knowledge by exploring interesting topics such as climate change. Pupils can choose how to demonstrate their learning. This might be a presentation to the class or making a model.

Subject leaders are passionate subject experts. They share their expertise with colleagues. Leaders make sure that subject leaders have the time to support teachers

with their planning. Teachers value the support they receive. In this school, there is an infectious excitement about the curriculum and learning.

Reading has a high priority in the school. Pupils experience a rich selection of high-quality literature. In focused reading lessons, pupils develop their reading skills well. In book club, pupils read for pleasure. Pupils who need to revise their phonics knowledge receive effective support. However, in some cases, their reading books do not match the sounds they are learning. This does not help them to catch up quickly enough.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. Teachers check pupils' work in lessons to spot misunderstandings. They adapt the curriculum well to meet pupils' needs and address their misconceptions. Pupils attending the specialist provision work well with support in mainstream classes.

Many pupils need support to develop their language skills. This is because they do not speak English as their home language. Pupils discuss their learning in pairs and teachers model language skills. However, some teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to explain their learning. This means that some pupils struggle to give well-constructed, extended responses to teachers' questions.

The school works with partners in the community to enrich the curriculum. Recently, pupils produced artwork for a display in a new local hospital. A female engineer working on the design and build of the Sandwell aquatics centre visited school. She talked to pupils about engineering careers. These exciting experiences help to raise pupils' aspirations for the future.

The curriculum extends beyond the classroom. Many pupils learn to play the ukulele and take part in the 'Young Voices' choir festival. They perform plays and songs to parents and pupils at the end of term. Pupils enjoy learning about different faiths and celebrating religious festivals. This helps them to respect and value other cultures in the community.

The local academy council and the trust board know the school and its community well. They provide effective support and challenge for leaders. Teachers love working here. They say that leaders consider their workload and do not introduce unnecessary initiatives. Leaders nurture staff, finding opportunities for teachers to develop in their careers. Teachers also have the opportunity to meet other teachers from schools across the trust to discuss their practice. There is an open culture of sharing good practice and working together.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant. They record concerns about pupils' well-being and act on them. Leaders pick up any patterns or trends and make sure that pupils at risk get the help they need.

Staff are well trained to spot any pupils who might be at risk. They receive regular training and updates. The safeguarding leader tests their knowledge with short quizzes and reminders.

Leaders ensure that the necessary checks are carried out before new staff start work at the school. The safeguarding policy has recently been revised to reflect the latest government guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to explain their learning in detail. This means that pupils struggle to articulate their thinking. Teachers need to create more opportunities for pupils to respond at length to their questions, allowing time for pupils to discuss and formulate high-quality verbal responses, justify their answers and challenge others.
- Teachers do not match reading books well enough to the letters and sounds weaker readers are learning. This means that pupils cannot easily practise the letters and sounds they need to help them learn to read. Leaders should ensure that teachers match reading books more precisely to the correct phonics phase for these pupils.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2013.

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](#)' 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	141292
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10240488
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	356
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Gurinder Singh Josan
Headteacher	Elise Waldron
Website	www.devonshirejunioracademy.org
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2017

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher, at the time of the previous inspection, is now the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Victoria Academies Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, all members of the senior leadership team have changed. The headteacher took up the substantive post in September 2020, having served as head of school since September 2018. The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2019 and the assistant headteacher, who is also the SEND leader, joined the school in April 2022. The head of teaching and learning was appointed in September 2021.
- The school has specialist provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. There are 10 places available, with eight pupils currently on roll in the provision.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Before the inspection, the inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, including safeguarding, behaviour and SEND policies. The headteacher shared the school development plan with the inspector.
- The inspector met with leaders to discuss safeguarding, SEND and the wider curriculum.
- The inspector carried out three deep dives into reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school and at break and lunchtimes. She spoke to pupils about their learning, behaviour, bullying and how they learn to keep themselves safe.
- The inspector met with the CEO of the Victoria Academies Trust, the chair of the trust board and a member of the academy council. She spoke to the chair of the academy council on the telephone.
- The inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority SEND team.
- The inspector evaluated a range of documents, including minutes of academy council meetings and trust board meetings, curriculum documents, records of safeguarding incidents, and pupils' work.
- The inspector took account of responses to the staff and pupil surveys, as well as responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022