

Inspection of Ian Ramsey Church of England Academy

Fairfield Road, Fairfield, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 7AJ

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff have positive relationships. There is an inclusive culture built on a Christian ethos. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils and have high expectations for what they would like pupils to achieve. Subject leaders have improved their curriculum planning and are clear on what they want pupils to know and remember.

Many pupils respond well to the expectations that staff have, and behave well in school. Sometimes there is low-level disruption in lessons and pupils report that this can interrupt learning occasionally. Teachers do follow and apply the behaviour policy. This ensures that pupils get back on track quickly. If bullying happens, the majority of pupils report that it is dealt with effectively by staff.

There is a wide ranging extra-curricular offer and many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), attend clubs. A culture week is also part of experiences beyond the classroom and is popular with pupils. Collective worship brings pupils together and pupils speak positively about their enjoyment of this. Pupils are very proud to be prefects and value this leadership opportunity.

There is a broad and balanced curriculum in place. Forty per cent of pupils study the English Baccalaureate subjects. Some pupils with SEND are taught in a nurture group. This allows them to access the full curriculum, while being given additional support.

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

Curriculum plans are clear. Staff have received training on the use of effective recall and retrieval strategies. Teachers revisit content often to help pupils remember what they have learned before they move to the next stage. However, this does not happen all of the time. At times, pupils have to be questioned further to check what knowledge and skills they can remember. Some teachers do not always take opportunities to question pupils further and challenge them sufficiently. Leaders know that the way in which the curriculum is taught by all staff is an area for development.

The teaching methods and resources that teachers use to help pupils learn are effective. Teachers model examples of work to support pupils to develop their responses independently. Pupils with SEND benefit from learning spaces within school that allow them to feel safe and meet their sensory needs. The emotional, social and mental health needs of pupils with SEND are particularly well met. Leaders are continuing to further strengthen aspects of SEND provision.

Leaders have prioritised improving pupils' literacy and enhancing pupils' love of reading. Support is given to pupils where needed and all teachers have been trained in reading strategies. Pupils complete reading tests in all year groups. This helps teachers understand how well pupils are learning to read. A phonics programme is in

place for pupils with SEND who need support with decoding words. Several activities promote a love of reading, such as the reading newsletter, displays and 'little libraries' on corridors. There is also the Bishop of Durham reading award, which is unique to the school, and all of Year 7 are currently working towards their bronze level for this.

Leaders plan for all pupils to be responsible, respectful and active citizens. The Ian Ramsey award ensures that pupils concentrate on many aspects of their development beyond the academic curriculum. The personal development curriculum covers protected characteristics, health and well-being and life in the wider world. These are taught and revisited in an age-appropriate way so that pupils remember what they have been taught. Pupils have a good awareness of different faiths. Pupils are less sure of fundamental British values. While they understand the meaning of respect and tolerance, they are less sure about other aspects such as democracy and the rule of law.

Pupils receive appropriate careers advice and there are links between careers and the curriculum. With the reintroduction of work experience the requirements of the Baker Clause are met. The Baker Clause requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Directors hold leaders to account through effective governance. They understand the strengths of the school well, as well as the areas for further development. Leaders are accurate in their evaluations of the school.

Parents were mixed in their responses to the inspection survey. Some would like to see an improvement in direct lines of communication from staff in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are trained effectively in safeguarding. Staff understand their responsibilities and the procedures for reporting concerns. Fortnightly meetings help leaders to identify any safeguarding concerns and act promptly to help keep pupils safe. Leaders work with external agencies when appropriate. Leaders' knowledge of local risks helps them to keep pupils safe. Pupils know that they can speak to an adult if they have a concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The vast majority of pupils feel, if it happens, that bullying is dealt with effectively by staff. There are some pupils whose perceptions of bullying are not as well understood by leaders. This means that the perceptions of pupils and leaders do

not always match. Leaders should ensure they have a full understanding of pupils' perceptions regarding bullying and behaviour. This will enable them to meet the needs of the minority of pupils whose perceptions of bullying need to be more fully understood.

- Leaders need to ensure that all teachers are effectively teaching the intended curriculum. Not all teachers use effective pedagogy to help pupils to know more and remember more. Leaders need to be more forensic in terms of their understanding of the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation. This will support teachers so that they consistently and effectively implement the curriculum across all subjects.
- Some parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed concern relating to communication from and between the school. This means that some parents are not satisfied that the school communicates with them effectively. Leaders should consider ways to engage with more parents over time so that lines of communication are improved.

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	141369
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10242002
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,178
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Williams
Headteacher	Brian Janes
Website	http://www.ianramsey.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	26–27 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Dayspring Trust.
- The school has a Church of England denomination.
- The trustees who are responsible for the governance of the school are referred to as 'directors' within the school and trust.
- The school uses five registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in design and technology, English, history, modern foreign languages and science. Inspectors 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.

- A member of the inspection team telephoned the alternative providers the school uses to educate some pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to other leaders, including the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator and the senior leader for curriculum.
- The lead inspector met with the board of directors, a representative from the diocese and the chief executive officer of The Dayspring Trust.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school's own self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received on Ofsted Parent View and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and met with the designated lead for safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Jessica McKay, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alexandra Hook	Ofsted Inspector
Joanne Owens	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Morris	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector

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