

Southbroom St James Academy

Nursteed Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 3AH

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership, high-quality teaching and pupils committed to improving their own learning are at the heart of this rapidly improving school.
- The executive headteacher, head of school and assistant headteacher form a formidable team. They have not shied away from difficult decisions. They have demonstrated determination and single-mindedness in eliminating inadequate teaching and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- School leaders are suitably supported and challenged by a skilled governing body. Additionally, officers of the academy trust provide the necessary rigour, as well as high levels of accountability.
- Middle leaders demonstrate effective leadership skills. They have a secure understanding of their subjects and have proved instrumental in improving teaching and raising standards.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, know their school well. However, while school evaluation and improvement planning is accurate and proving effective, it lacks a precise focus on the impact of leaders' actions. Additionally, there are variances in the quality of the minutes of governors' meeting. The recording of the challenge that governors are providing is inconsistent.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers have an in-depth understanding of their pupils' needs and plan learning that addresses these needs with precision. As a result, pupils currently in the school are making strong progress from their starting points at the end of key stage 1.
- The teaching of reading, including early phonics, is particularly effective. Teachers build pupils' reading skills and systematically develop their ability to infer, deduce and evaluate. Leaders recognise, however, that more work is needed in developing pupils' reading stamina and levels of resilience.
- In mathematics, teachers ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of basic skills. Pupils are developing their abilities to apply their understanding and think deeply about their mathematics.
- Pupils are a delight. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are consistently good. Their conduct around the school, and in lessons, demonstrates respect both for themselves and for others.
- Leaders have established a broad and engaging curriculum. Pupils talk positively about their learning. Leaders' vision for future curriculum design is ambitious and rooted in proven academic research.
- Pupils are safe and happy in school. The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective and in line with statutory requirements.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen outcomes of all pupils, especially those capable of working at the higher standards, by:
 - ensuring that, across the school, teachers' use of reasoning and application activities in mathematics, lead to pupils of all abilities deepening their conceptual understanding
 - providing pupils with greater opportunities to develop their reading stamina and levels of resilience.
- Further strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the minutes of governors' meetings accurately reflect the level of challenge that governors are providing to school leaders
 - ensuring that self-evaluation and school development planning is evaluative, precise, and focused on the impact of actions upon pupils' outcomes
 - continuing to develop a school curriculum which realises leaders' high ambitions for pupils' learning and personal development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Following the previous inspection, which judged that the school required serious improvement, trust leaders wasted no time in strengthening the quality of leadership and management. The appointment of a new head of school, along with a new assistant headteacher, have proved to be key factors in securing this school's rapid improvement. As a result of strong leadership at all levels, this is now a good school.
- The executive headteacher, head of school and assistant headteacher lead the school with unwavering determination. From the start of the school's improvement journey, these leaders have remained resolute in their belief that all pupils deserve a high-quality education that enables them to reach their full potential. This is often from low starting points at the beginning of Year 3.
- Having identified where teaching was, in the past, inadequate, leaders have tackled staff underperformance swiftly and decisively. They have not shied away from difficult conversations, where this has proved necessary. As a result of this uncompromising approach and leaders' significantly higher expectations, there has been a considerable change in staffing since the previous inspection. Several teaching staff were new to the school in September 2017. While, initially, this instability slowed the pace of improvement, leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now consistently good across the school.
- Leaders' systems for the continued monitoring of staff performance remain robust. Staff appraisal is rooted in accountability, while also playing a significant part in informing further development opportunities. Leaders hold teachers and teaching assistants to account for the impact they have on pupils' outcomes. Targets are linked to whole-school development priorities. This holistic approach ensures that staff at all levels have ownership of school improvement.
- Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are able to articulate clearly where provision is most effective, as well as where further improvement is required. However, leaders have not ensured that self-evaluation and improvement planning links precisely to the impact of leaders' actions. For example, self-evaluation describes the range of initiatives that leaders have put in place, but not the impact these have had. Similarly, the criteria for measuring the success of leaders' actions do not outline how success will be measured in relation to the impact they have on pupils' outcomes.
- Senior leaders have used effective coaching and mentoring strategies to develop the expertise and confidence of middle leaders. These leaders now demonstrate a secure understanding of their subjects and have played a key part in the school's improvement journey. Subject leaders, and in particular those of English and mathematics, display strong subject knowledge. They are proactive in collecting evidence from a range of monitoring activities. Consequently, they can describe accurately the quality of teaching in their subjects and the impact this is having on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders at all levels use their in-depth knowledge of the school to be judicious in their selection of school priorities and prospective new initiatives. One of the key drivers in

the improvement of the school has been leaders' ability to 'do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason'.

- Leaders have ensured that pupil premium funding is being used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. The high expectations of leaders and teaching staff are raising aspiration for pupils and their families. A holistic approach to meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils is proving effective at reducing any barriers pupils may face, for example low attendance or high levels of anxiety. A key success is the work of the pastoral support team in the 'Ark'. Pupils feel safe and well supported.
- The leadership for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is a strength of the school. The SEN coordinator (SENCo) has high expectations for pupils and a vision which she articulates clearly. Pupils' needs, whether academic, pastoral or medical are identified swiftly and accurately. Provision is matched appropriately to ensure that barriers are reduced, and pupils are better equipped to access their learning. As a result of strong leadership and the effective support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive, they make strong progress and, in the majority of cases, are catching up with their peers.
- Leaders have ensured that effective use is being made of sports premium funding. The leader for physical education (PE) has focused spending on raising pupils' participation in PE and sport both inside and outside of school. Pupils welcome this approach and are enjoying the success that increased participation in external competition is bringing to the school. Additionally, spending is being used to raise staff confidence and expertise in the teaching of PE. The impact of this targeted support was evident during observations of PE carried out during the inspection.
- The school's curriculum is proving effective in developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across a broad range of subjects. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to make connections between different subjects, for example in computing and music. Leaders articulate a clear vision for how they are developing the school's curriculum so that it better reflects the high ambitions and aspirations they have for pupils in the school.
- Leaders have put in place an effective programme to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of British values. Older pupils can describe these in terms of their own lives, as well as how they relate to British society.
- Parents recognise the improvements made in the school and talk positively about current leaders. Typical views shared with inspectors included, 'My child has come on leaps and bounds', 'School staff are very supportive to both parents and children and the school, as a whole, feels a happy and parent-friendly place' and 'Very impressed with the direction of the school'. Where parents do still express concerns, these mostly relate to worries about historical weaknesses in the school and the legacy this has left on pupils' outcomes.

Governance of the school

- The Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust (DSAT) and the local governing board provide strong governance.

- Since the previous inspection, trustees and governors have strengthened school leadership by appointing high-calibre leaders and holding them to account for the impact they are having on pupils' outcomes. These robust lines of accountability are evident from the chief executive officer downwards.
- Governors and trustees have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Where other commitments permit, governors work alongside school leaders. This provides governors with the skills and knowledge they require to fulfil their role, as well as enabling them to gather first-hand evidence about the school's work. This knowledge is supporting governors in providing high levels of challenge for school leaders. However, the recording of this challenge in the minutes of governors' meetings has, in recent months, become less detailed.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and set leaders challenging targets for pupil performance. For example, they have recognised that historical weaknesses in the quality of teaching has left some pupils with gaps in their attainment. To address this, governors have requested that leaders increase further their measures for what the school considers to be 'expected' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The head of school, assistant headteacher and parent support advisor work closely together to ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding permeates the school. They know their pupils and their families extremely well and expect all staff to do the same. As a result, safeguarding in the school is built on a premise of prevention and maintaining a holistic view of pupils' well-being. Staff understand the role they play in this and the importance of remaining vigilant. As one member of staff told an inspector, 'These are not common issues, but we cannot assume they won't happen here.'
- Leaders have ensured that all training is up to date and in line with statutory guidance. This includes training on child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty. Checks to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers are thorough. Governors keep a watchful eye on these to assure themselves that records are being maintained in line with school policy.
- Leaders work closely with other local providers. They liaise regularly with a variety of pre-schools, as well as the infant and secondary schools, to ensure that there is a collective oversight of their most vulnerable families. Leaders have also established strong links with a range of external agencies, including social care and local charities. This is assisting them in providing bespoke care, guidance and support to the families and individuals who need this most.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know their pupils well. They have a detailed understanding of the school's assessment system and use this to provide work that is matched appropriately to pupils' needs. Teachers plan sequences of learning which are designed to address gaps

in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Since the previous inspection, this has enabled pupils to make strong progress towards their individual targets.

- Teachers make accurate assessments of what pupils can and cannot do. They check the validity of these assessments by comparing examples of pupils' work with that of pupils in other schools, both from within and outside of the trust.
- Leaders have established a detailed system for monitoring the progress that pupils make. Due to the accurate assessments being generated by teachers, this is a rigorous and robust system. Leaders and teachers engage regularly in professional dialogue about any pupils at risk of falling behind. These discussions pinpoint the potential barriers to pupils' outcomes and enable the school to react swiftly to ensure that pupils receive the support and intervention they require. This is proving particularly effective for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Teachers and teaching assistants display secure subject knowledge and use subject-specific vocabulary when talking to pupils. Staff make effective use of a range of strategies to secure pupils' knowledge and skills. For example, they use questioning well to explore and deepen pupils' understanding.
- The teaching of reading is a strength across the school. When pupils enter the school in Year 3, those pupils still requiring additional support with their acquisition of phonics are given high-quality teaching to enable them to catch up with their peers. This teaching is supported by reading materials which are carefully matched to pupils' phonic ability. This enable pupils to practise and embed their phonics.
- Across the school, teachers focus on developing pupils' higher-order reading skills. Leaders' investment in high-quality class texts, at an age-appropriate level, has raised expectations. In studying these texts, pupils are gaining a rich vocabulary which is feeding into their writing. Additionally, teachers are developing pupils' ability to infer meaning from texts and to justify their responses both verbally and in writing. Pupils of all prior abilities are making strong gains in their reading skills. However, the school's focus on short passages is not developing sufficiently the stamina or resilience that pupils require when faced with longer, more complex, reading materials.
- The school's focus on basic skills is proving highly effective in raising the quality of pupils' writing. Work from across the curriculum demonstrates that pupils are routinely applying previously taught skills in their independent writing. Additionally, exposure to high-quality reading texts is developing pupils' understanding of how to manipulate sentence structure and maximise the impact that their writing has on the reader. For example, a Year 6 girl told an inspector how she had started her writing with a variety of long and short sentences in order to 'quickly grab the reader's attention'.
- In mathematics, historical weaknesses in the quality of teaching have resulted in gaps in pupils' conceptual understanding. However, effective teaching which is matched accurately to these gaps is ensuring that pupils make strong progress. As a result, a large majority of pupils are now working within the national curriculum expectations for their age. Teachers give pupils the opportunity to choose their level of challenge, based on their level of proficiency and confidence. Conversations with pupils, and the work in books, demonstrate that pupils invariably make the appropriate choice. As one pupil observed, 'If we choose work that is too easy, we won't learn anything.' Pupils of all abilities are provided with tasks that deepen their understanding and require them to

apply their mathematical skills in different contexts. However, there remain some variations in the level of confidence and expertise that staff display in this area.

- Teachers and teaching assistants provide high levels of support for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This aids pupils in accessing the curriculum and making strong progress towards their targets.
- The high expectations of staff are evident in subjects across the curriculum. For example, the quality of pupils' writing is of an equal standard in science, geography and history. In other subjects, such as PE, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and an understanding of how children learn. Pupils talk positively about their learning and, especially, the opportunities that teachers give them to investigate and engage in practical activities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and staff know their pupils well. They work together proactively to support pupils and their families as soon as is possible. Leaders' rigorous records and wide breadth of knowledge enable them to identify areas of potential risk. These are then dealt with swiftly.
- Pupils across the school understand the need to take responsibility for their own learning. This is exemplified in the positive choices that pupils make when self-selecting the level of challenge in mathematics lessons. Pupils understand that they need to work hard to achieve success. Leaders have used real-life figures to raise aspiration. For example, one Year 6 pupil told an inspector that 'Nelson Mandela reminds us that we can achieve anything we want to, however hard it may seem.'
- Pupils are proud of their school, as well as the contributions they make to school life. The school council is proactive in gathering pupils' views and then suggesting to leaders how things could be improved. For example, additional 'door monitors' at lunchtime were put in place as a result of a suggestion from the council.
- Pupils say that bullying now hardly ever happens. They recognise that there are incidents where pupils have fallings-out and disagreements but believe that staff deal with these effectively and efficiently. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using digital technology.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's pupils are a delight. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They conduct themselves well throughout the day, for example in lessons, assemblies and break and lunchtimes.
- In lessons, pupils listen attentively to adults. They respond quickly to instructions and are eager to please. Pupils say that behaviour has improved significantly since the

previous inspection. This is evident in the school's behaviour logs, as well as in the considerable reduction in the number of exclusions.

- Staff now take greater responsibility for promoting the positive behaviour of pupils in their class. There is a whole-school focus on supporting pupils in modifying their own behaviour. Where it is necessary, staff provide individual pupils with strategies which enable them to self-regulate their behaviour. This is proving effective in minimising incidents of poor behaviour. On the rare occasions, where learning behaviours are not as strong, teachers deal with this effectively and proportionately. This ensures that learning time is maximised, and all pupils can achieve.
- At less structured times, for example at break and lunchtimes, pupils play cooperatively and collaboratively together. Older pupils engage younger pupils in their play. For example, during the inspection, pupils of different ages were playing a game of 'four-square'. This was being led by older pupils in a fair and supportive manner.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Leaders promote good attendance proactively and pupils want to be in school. As one parent described, 'They go in happy and come out happy.' Where the attendance of pupils is lower, leaders work collaboratively with pupils, parents and external agencies to identify and minimise any barriers.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes are good because, in all year groups, pupils currently in the school make strong progress from their starting points. This is the case for subjects across the curriculum, including English and mathematics.
- Due to historical weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, some pupils still have gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. However, precise teaching, accurately matched to pupils' needs, is ensuring that pupils' attainment is rising rapidly.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's assessment systems are rigorous and robust. Teachers' assessments are accurate and in line with the work in pupils' books. Consequently, leaders have a secure understanding of pupils' outcomes. Inspection evidence confirms that provisional results from the 2018 statutory assessments do not reflect teacher assessments, the work in pupils' books or outcomes for current pupils.
- The effective support provided by leaders and staff is increasing pupils' confidence and reducing the barriers they face in their learning. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are making progress which is at least in line with, and often above, that of their peers. This strong progress is enabling the majority of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities to catch up with their peers.

School details

Unique reference number	140352
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10048307

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	196
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Interim Chair	Anne Millin
Executive headteacher	Andrew Wilson
Head of school	Gareth Bailey
Telephone number	01380 723232
Website	www.southbroomstjames.dsat.org.uk
Email address	admin@southbroomstjames.dsat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 December 2016

Information about this school

- Southbroom St James Academy is an average-sized junior school. There are seven classes – two per year group in Years 3 and 4, and three mixed-aged classes in Years 5 and 6. Each morning, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in single-age classes for English and mathematics.
- Since becoming an academy in 2013, the school has been part of DSAT.
- Leadership is provided by an executive headteacher, who is also the executive headteacher of another school in the trust, and a head of school. The head of school joined the school following the previous inspection. Additionally, there have been a large number of staff changes since the previous inspection. This includes changes to the majority of the teaching staff, and the appointment of a new assistant headteacher, who also acts as the school's SENCo.

- The school shares a local governing board with another school within the trust. At the time of the inspection, there was an interim chair of the governing body in post.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- No pupils are currently receiving education in alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast club which runs each morning before school.
- The school is a designated Church of England school. Its next section 48 inspection is scheduled for April 2019.
- When Southbroom St James Academy was inspected in December 2016, it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Subsequently, the school was inspected on two occasions. At the last monitoring inspection, leaders and managers were judged to be taking effective action.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning. The majority of these visits were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher, head of school and assistant headteacher.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, staff, members of the local governing board, including the interim chair of governors and representatives of DSAT.
- Inspectors looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of meetings of the local governing board and academy improvement meetings. They also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views and listened to a selection of them read.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents during the inspection and took account of 43 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Walker

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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