

Inspection of St James' Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Hallfield Lane, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS22 6JS

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming and caring school. They value their education and appreciate their teachers. Relationships are warm and supportive. This helps pupils feel happy and safe.

Pupils respond positively to the high expectations the school has for them. The school ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school has introduced an ambitious curriculum that supports pupils' personal and academic development considerably.

Pupils generally behave well in lessons and at less structured times. They are polite and curious. They greet visitors cheerfully with smiles on their faces. At playtimes, they play together positively. They access a range of engaging play equipment such as hoops, stilts, footballs and construction materials. Pupil play leaders facilitate games usefully and help to organise resources diligently. Happy relationships are evident throughout the school.

The school provides a range of extra-curricular clubs that spark pupils' interests and develop their talents effectively. Pupils can access an array of sports clubs or engage in arts and creative pursuits. The school uses the on-site woodland area well as a space for pupils to learn in an outdoor context. Members of the 'Junior Leadership Team' prepare speeches for their class. They are democratically elected and contribute considered ideas for how the school might be improved.

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

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils learning to read. The school ensures that pupils 'learn to read so that they can read to learn'. Pupils at the early stages of reading benefit from phonics lessons that are taught consistently well. If pupils slip behind with their reading, they are supported adeptly to keep up by expert adults.

The school has developed and introduced an ambitious curriculum. There is a very clear sequence of learning that runs from Nursery to Year 6. Wherever possible, there is a meaningful context for pupils' learning. For example, in the early years, children record scores from a catching game by writing numbers on the playground with chalk. This is just one example of many where children in the early years practise mathematics and writing meaningfully.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. The school accurately identifies the additional needs of pupils. While some pupils with SEND have targets that reflect their needs, there are others whose targets do not precisely meet their specific needs. When this is the case, the impact of the planned provision for these pupils cannot be checked, and it is harder to adapt the curriculum for them. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not learn the curriculum as well as they should.

In most lessons, pupils are attentive, engaged and enthusiastic. They respond positively to teachers who explain concepts clearly. Teachers use questions skilfully to check on pupils' learning. Teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects they teach. The school uses expertly designed systems to make precise checks on pupils' learning. Gaps in learning are identified and addressed. On some occasions, the school's behaviour policy is not implemented consistently by staff to ensure pupils are attentive and engaged.

Children get off to a flying start in the school's exceptional early years provision. Children develop high levels of independence while also playing and learning cooperatively. They respond very carefully to consistently high expectations and well-established routines. Adults provide excellent support for children with SEND. Adults also interact positively and purposefully with children. These interactions have a strong focus on broadening the words children know and the development of communication and language. Children in early years thrive socially and emotionally and achieve exceptionally well.

The school places a high priority on attendance. The school analyses attendance data and works diligently to address pupils' absence. It works closely with families where attendance is too low. This work has contributed to improved attendance.

Through the school's curriculum for 'Living and Learning', pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They learn about healthy relationships. Pupils celebrate diversity. They reject discrimination, such as racism. Pupils state that relationships are based on mutual respect. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss and debate important topics such as 'Are equal and fair the same thing?' or 'Is it ever acceptable to break the law?'. Through daily collective worship, important themes and issues are explored such as the importance of fundamental British values and discussion of protected characteristics.

The school ensures that staff receive regular, high-quality training and development. This contributes to staff having excellent subject knowledge across a range of subjects. Membership of the federation brings considerable strengths. Staff benefit from leadership development opportunities that arise from their work across different schools. Governors are skilled and knowledgeable and fulfil their responsibilities well. They make regular visits to school. They use these visits to evaluate the impact of leaders' decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils with SEND have targets that do not precisely represent specific needs. This means that the impact of the planned provision for these pupils cannot be checked and it is harder to adapt the curriculum for them. For these pupils, the school should

more carefully assess pupils' specific needs and adapt provision so they learn more and remember more of the curriculum.

- The behaviour policy is not applied consistently by all staff. Therefore, a small minority of pupils do not live up to the school's high expectations for behaviour. The school should ensure that all staff have the same high expectations for pupils' behaviour and apply the school's behaviour policy consistently.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	107995
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10346218
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rachel Cooper
Headteacher	David Roundtree
Website	www.stjameswetherby.leeds.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is a member of Sphere Federation, a federation of three schools with a single governing body. Some leaders from the federation schools lead subjects at this school.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. It is part of the Diocese of Leeds. It was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in June 2022. The school's next section 48 inspection is due within eight years of its previous section 48 inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. They also met with members of the governing body, and representatives of the local authority and diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, the pupils' survey and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Dughall McCormick, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

John Davie

Ofsted Inspector

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