

Inspection of St John's Church of England Middle School Academy

Watt Close, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 7DH

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school of this school is Alison Elwell. This school is part of The Spire Church of England Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Geraint Roberts, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rosemary Shorter. Geraint Roberts is also the executive headteacher and responsible for this school and three others.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and welcoming school where its values of forgiveness, love, integrity and perseverance are lived on a daily basis by pupils and adults. Staff know pupils well and support them to thrive thanks to the very strong culture of mutual respect. This is lived in interactions throughout the school, both between adults and pupils, but also between the pupils themselves.

Pupils are supported to achieve well both in their learning, and also in the extensive and high-quality offer of clubs, trips and wider opportunities. Leaders are rightly proud of these as an integral part of the school's offer to its pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these opportunities and relish the many leadership positions which the school provides for them. Pupils are very clear about the role they have in leading in the school and improving the provision.

Leaders' high expectations for all pupils is reflected in a high-quality curriculum which is subject to regular and incisive review and leaders are aware of where they need to continue to make improvements to the curriculum. Leaders and teachers work well together to ensure that the provision at St John's continues to improve.

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

Leaders regularly review the design of the curriculum across all subjects. They have clearly identified the key knowledge pupils need to learn, and considerable thought has gone into how pupils are assessed. This means that, nearly always, teachers identify and close gaps in pupils' understanding rapidly. There are a few occasions when the curriculum design could be improved in a small number of subjects, or where the selection of activities could be better suited to the pupils' learning. Leaders are aware of this and are continuing to work to improve the provision. Pupils with SEND sit at the heart of the curriculum. They have their needs identified accurately and appropriate adaptations and support are put in place to enable them to access the whole curriculum. These pupils, therefore, achieve well.

Reading is central to the curriculum, with a strong culture of reading embedded across the school. Pupils who the school identifies as having weaker reading ages are supported to catch up rapidly. As part of an ongoing review process, leaders have updated the school's catch-up reading programme and are training staff in this. Pupils who access the additional support make rapid progress in their reading.

Thanks to leaders' efforts, a calm and orderly environment with well-established routines is the norm across the school. This means pupils are able to learn well and, indeed, show significant motivation and resilience when faced with more challenging work. Staff care for pupils and ensure that any pupils who need support to meet the school's behaviour expectations receive this. This reinforces the universally positive and respectful culture. In this, pupils take a lead in establishing the high expectations for behaviour and attitudes across all aspects of school life across many leadership roles. For example, pupils worked with other schools to deliver an

assembly on 'stigma'. Pupils attend school well and, where they find this harder, leaders work extensively to ensure their attendance improves and draw especially on strong relationships they have established with parents and carers to achieve this.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is especially strong. The personal, social and health and economic education is well designed and comprehensive. There are extensive opportunities for pupil leadership responsibilities, including the school council, sport and arts council, mentoring, anti-bullying ambassadors and an eco-school group. This means that nearly half of all pupils hold a position of responsibility. There is a rich array of carefully planned extra-curricular activities with a large majority of all pupils taking part in these, including high numbers of pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Indeed, the school goes to considerable lengths to ensure that pupils who are disadvantaged access the many opportunities they provide. The school goes well beyond the statutory requirements for careers, including meaningful encounters with employees.

Leadership is another significant strength at the school. Staff at all levels are highly engaged in the process of school improvement, and benefit from significant bespoke professional development opportunities. Staff also reported very high levels of satisfaction about how leaders' work collaboratively with them to manage workload. Governors and trustees have clear oversight of their statutory duties and hold leaders to account effectively. The trust provides support and challenge to the school to ensure all aspects of provision continue to improve. The school uses its pupil premium funding in an intelligent and focused way to close learning gaps, and to extend the range of opportunities available to these pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum design and/or selection of learning activities are not as effective as others. This means that pupils do not securely build on their knowledge and skills as well as they might. The school should ensure that the curriculum in these subjects is coherently planned and delivered so that pupils deepen their learning over time in all subjects.

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 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	139286
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10267978
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	669
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rosemary Shorter
Head of School	Alison Elwell
Website	www.st-johns-bromsgrove.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became a single multi-academy trust in February 2013.
- The school formed The Spire Church of England Learning Trust in 2018.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- 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.

- As a part of this inspection, inspectors met with governors, the trust chief executive officer (CEO) and Deputy CEO, trust personnel, senior leaders, subject leaders, teaching staff as well as other employees in the school. They also scrutinised governor and trustee minutes.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in: English, mathematics, science, art and history. 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 visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities, enrichment programme and their careers and personal development programmes with leaders and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records with school leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, at various points in the inspection. They took account of responses to a staff survey and Ofsted Parent View, including a number of text responses.

Inspection team

Andrew Madden, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mark Feldman	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Considine	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Stevens	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Tustian	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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