

Inspection of Whitchurch CofE Junior Academy

Salisbury Road, Whitchurch SY13 1RX

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

In the relatively short time that the new principal has been working at the school, he has made changes that have significantly improved all aspects of the school. Leaders have focused on the right things in the right order. They have high expectations of pupils. Because of this, pupils are learning a well-planned curriculum.

Leaders' highest priority is improving reading. Pupils have access to high-quality books and often read and are read to. Pupils are excited about the new book vending machine that they have raised money to buy.

Leaders have established new ways of helping pupils to improve their behaviour, which all staff follow consistently. Pupils value the new rewards and house systems. Staff quickly deal with any poor behaviour, including any incidents of bullying. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good.

Pupils love coming to school and they attend often. Pupils are excited to tell visitors all about the positive changes that are happening at their school. They especially loved the mobile swimming pool that was brought to school.

Leaders seek and act on pupils' opinions about how to improve the school. Pupils value the fact that they are listened to. They frequently talk about becoming the 'very best version of themselves'.

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

Leaders have a clear vision and relentless drive to ensure all pupils experience the very best education. They are clear about what is needed to make this a reality. Staff have confidence in leaders' vision and fully support the recent changes. They say that leaders are conscious of their workload and help them to manage it.

Leaders have taken rapid action to ensure pupils at the earliest stages of reading get the help that they need. Texts are carefully chosen to make sure the books that pupils read are carefully matched to the sounds they already know. Teachers use these stories well to help improve pupils' writing. As a result, those pupils who struggle to read are quickly becoming fluent readers and better writers.

Leaders have established systems so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified and assessed. Leaders and staff ensure pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum with increasing confidence, because of the effective training they have received.

Leaders have made sure that the curriculum is well planned across all subjects. This helps teachers deliver lessons that build pupils' knowledge of the subject. Where pupils have gaps in their prior learning, teachers provide helpful opportunities in the

curriculum for these to be closed. This is helping pupils to make sense of their learning.

In most lessons, teachers have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum well. However, this is not always the case. Where subject knowledge is not as secure, pupils are not always taught the important things they need to succeed. Leaders regularly check how well teachers are implementing the new curriculum and provide appropriate support to staff, when needed.

Teachers usually check carefully that pupils have understood the things they have been taught. They spot gaps in knowledge quickly and make sure these are closed before moving on. However, too often, teachers' use of assessment is inconsistent. Misconceptions are not always identified and gaps in knowledge are not closed quickly enough. This is a barrier to pupils' learning. Leaders have identified this and begun to take appropriate action to support those staff who need it.

Pupils and staff are unanimous that behaviour has greatly improved recently. Pupils are kind to each other and play well during playtime. In lessons pupils focus on their learning. Leaders have worked hard to ensure all staff share their high expectations regarding pupils' behaviour.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of appropriate experiences, through school clubs and trips, that help to nurture their personal development. Pupils especially enjoy the residential trip in Year 6. They value the new roles and responsibilities that they have, for example, peer chaplains and head boy and girl. Pupils also enjoy having time to discuss and debate issues. They understand other cultures and the importance of respecting one another.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a priority for all staff. Leaders review their practices regularly and make any improvements identified. They ensure staff have the training they need to identify potential concerns and how to report these to leaders. Leaders follow up concerns quickly and escalate when needed.

Leaders understand the context of the school community and what pupils need to learn to keep themselves safe. A well-planned curriculum ensures pupils learn about important things, including water safety, as there are many canals and rivers nearby. Pupils speak confidently about what they must do to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new curriculum is not consistently put into practice by teachers due to their subject knowledge not always being secure. As a result, some pupils do less well

than they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the required subject knowledge and expertise to implement the curriculum effectively.

- Teachers are not yet using assessment well enough in classrooms to identify and rectify pupils' misconceptions. As a result, some pupils have gaps in learning and are not making the progress they could. Leaders should make sure that all staff understand how to use assessment strategies effectively to check how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum.

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	146432
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10267813
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	313
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Johnny Anderson
Principal	Christopher Brislen
Website	www.thewhitchurchcofefederation.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school became part of the St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) in February 2019.
- The school is federated with Whitchurch Nursery and Infant School.
- A new principal was appointed to the school in April 2023.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with representatives from the multi-academy trust, the local governing committee, the principal, senior leaders, curriculum leaders, a representative from the local authority and the leader of SEND.

- Inspectors reviewed documents on the school’s website and additional documents provided by leaders during the inspection.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors also reviewed the art curriculum.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader. Pupils’ case files were reviewed.
- The inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- The inspectors observed pupils at other times of the day to evaluate their behaviour.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Amanda Green, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Justine Lomas	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Johnstone	Ofsted Inspector

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