

Ian Ramsey Church of England Academy

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

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2017

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and head of school provide strong leadership. Their high expectations ensure that pupils achieve increasingly well from their starting points.
- Senior and middle leaders work hard for the benefit of all pupils. Staff are proud members of the school.
- Members of the board of trustees know the school well. They provide strong support and challenge for the school's leaders.
- The school receives high-quality advice from staff within the Dayspring Trust, the Diocese of Durham and the local authority.
- Pupils are well looked after. They say that they feel safe, and that there is little bullying. Inspectors agree. Safeguarding arrangements are very strong.
- Pupils attend regularly and behave well. They show positive attitudes to their learning, and are keen to succeed.
- Teaching is good. The most effective teaching motivates pupils to learn and develop secure understanding.
- The school's last published Year 11 results show above-average outcomes, including in English and mathematics, with particularly high outcomes in religious education. These outcomes represented good overall progress.
- The 2017 Year 11 results are likely to sustain overall good progress, although less so in science. Across the school, pupils continue to achieve well because of the good teaching.
- A minority of disadvantaged pupils, and a minority of the most able pupils, do not reach the outcomes of which they are capable.
- A small proportion of teaching is not challenging enough. On occasions, in some lessons, teachers do not check pupils' learning carefully enough, and do not sufficiently adapt work to meet pupils' changing needs.
- Not all leaders share the same confidence in accurately checking on the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum is well planned to provide a range of subjects and extra-curricular visits and experiences. These equip pupils well for the next stage in their lives. They help to promote pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's well-planned programme of personal, social and health education, and strong Christian ethos, underpin pupils' good understanding of British values.
- The vast majority of parents would recommend the school. Parents say how strong communication is between the school and families. They appreciate the way staff take on board their views, and involve them in the life of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good or better in the school, and result in at least good progress in all subjects, especially in science, by:
 - meeting better the needs of some of the most able pupils with more challenging work
 - checking regularly on the learning and progress of all pupils in lessons, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and revising work and the timing of activities so that they learn well.
- Ensure that all leaders, especially those with subject responsibilities, are equally confident and accurate in regularly checking on the quality of teaching across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- High aspirations and committed leadership from the executive headteacher and head of school have significantly improved teaching and pupils' outcomes over time. As a result, overall teaching is now good and the vast majority of pupils make good progress.
- Staff morale is high. The executive headteacher and head of school have developed a culture of high expectations, alongside a school climate that values all adults equally. Staff indicate how much they enjoy working in the school.
- Parents' and pupils' responses to the Ofsted online questionnaires are very supportive of the work of the school. Parents believe that their children are well looked after and achieve well. They appreciate the positive relationships between school staff and families. Pupils say how much the school has changed for the better in recent years, and how much they enjoy their lessons. A high proportion of parents and pupils indicate that they would recommend the school.
- Senior leaders know the school well. The new leadership team, under the skilful direction of the executive headteacher, has established a strong culture of accountability. Expectations of all staff are constantly high.
- Systems for managing the performance of staff are well organised. These systems ensure that all teachers are held to account for developing the quality of their teaching, and for making sure that the pupils they teach make good progress.
- Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching, and ensure that additional support is given to those teachers who do not meet the school's expectations. Staff at the school, including those who are newly qualified, appreciate the range of advice and support they receive for their professional development.
- School leaders are keen to source the considerable expertise within the Dayspring Trust, the Diocese of Durham and the local authority. Leaders are ambitious to improve further key aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders have put in place arrangements, for example, to enhance teaching and learning in science. They are persevering in key stage 4 with the successful work that is helping to diminish rapidly the differences in learning and progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in Years 7 to 9. Leaders continue to demand higher levels of challenge for the most able learners in some subjects, throughout the school.
- Middle leaders are fully committed in helping to move the school forward. They make systematic checks on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching in their teams. A number of middle leaders are relatively new to post. Not all yet share the same confidence in accurately checking and reporting on the effectiveness of teaching over time.

- The curriculum ensures that pupils access a good range of courses to meet their needs and interests. In addition, pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities in sports, music, performing arts and various pastimes that enable them to develop their skills and talents. A very small minority of pupils are provided with bespoke, off-site provision that successfully meets their individual needs.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is well promoted through the study of religious education, personal, social and health education, and arrangements for daily worship. Pupils value the range of educational visits, both local and abroad, that strongly enhance their social and cultural development. Links with a school in Lesotho, southern Africa, deepen pupils' awareness of the importance of qualities such as respect and tolerance, and values of equality of opportunity, freedom of speech and equal rights.
- Careful arrangements are in place to check on the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, as well as those who enter the school with below-average attainment. Consequently, leaders and governors are clear about which funded actions make a real difference, and whether overall gains are sufficient. Year 7 pupils particularly benefit from additional support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, as a result of well-targeted catch-up funding.
- The support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who join the school who speak English as an additional language, is of a good quality. The impact of this support is checked systematically to ensure that individual pupils make good progress, and that targeted funding is used to good effect.
- Leaders' strong focus on the care and support of all pupils makes a strong contribution to the school's Christian values and welcoming climate. Adults and pupils interact harmoniously. Visitors are warmly received.
- Careers guidance is effective. Pupils spoke positively about the support received during their options process. A range of visitors from universities, local training establishments and companies impartially advise pupils about the opportunities that are available when they leave the school. As a result, the vast majority of Year 11 pupils continue into education, training and/or employment.

Governance of the school

- Members of the board of trustees are ambitious for pupils and their families. They show an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and priorities for continued improvement.
- Members of the board of trustees have worked successfully with the executive headteacher and head of school to tackle historic weaknesses in leadership and teaching, and to establish a culture of high expectations.
- Members of the board of trustees have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They are equally well apprised of the progress of different groups of pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, and those from high-prior-attainment starting points. They are confident in asking questions of key leaders.

- Members of the board of trustees thoroughly understand the link between performance and pay progression. They have supported the executive headteacher in having difficult conversations, and in taking assertive action in cases where performance has not been good enough.
- Members of the board of trustees place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. They ensure that staff training is up to date, and that arrangements to recruit staff are strictly adhered to.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are very strong.
- Leaders liaise regularly with the relevant external organisations, including the local safeguarding children board.
- Staff training is constantly updated, including 'Prevent' duty training.
- Staff have a thorough understanding of the implications of the latest version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. They use the advice and information to guide constantly their work.
- Leaders ensure a safe environment for pupils through detailed risk assessments. The school site is secure and staff are vigilant in keeping pupils safe.
- Senior leaders and members of the board of directors and the academy council regularly undertake audits for safeguarding, to ensure that the school's practice is of a constantly high quality.
- The school's knowledge and links with individual families, where pupils live in particularly vulnerable circumstances, are of a high order. Staff are dedicated to minimising the degree of risk associated with these situations. They make themselves readily available throughout the school day, and beyond, to ensure that all pupils and families receive the required support.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The school's records show how teaching has improved over time. Inspectors agree that it is now good or better. The quality of teaching is consistently strong in religious education and art. There is much good practice in most subjects, including English and mathematics. This means that the vast majority of pupils are currently learning well and are making good progress.
- In general, teachers show a good understanding of pupils' different needs and learning styles, and plan effectively to ensure that learning is enjoyable and thought provoking. Skilful questioning, on the part of teachers and teaching assistants, encourages pupils to persevere with their work, especially when it becomes hard. More and more pupils show a readiness to find things out for themselves, and justify the conclusions they reach.

- In most subjects, resources and activities are well chosen to promote good levels of interest from pupils. Time is generally used effectively for pupils to work independently, and grow in self-confidence.
- Staff are keen to share the effective practice in the school. They are positive about the regular opportunities to visit other schools within the Dayspring Trust, the Diocese of Durham and beyond, to learn from colleagues with specialist expertise. They are equally receptive of advice and support from local authority personnel. This is resulting in a tangible sense of enthusiasm for developing further teaching and learning in all subjects. Teachers new to the school particularly appreciate the high quality of professional development on offer.
- Good relationships exist between adults and pupils. This fosters a positive learning climate where low-level disruption is rare.
- In most subjects, there is a growing focus on developing and reinforcing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers are increasingly aware of the need to check and correct pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar, and provide opportunities for pupils to practise key mathematical skills. Leaders and managers recognise that these approaches are still not uniform across the school.
- Many teachers encourage pupils to read aloud, check their understanding, and help them to pronounce correctly specialist words and terminology. As a consequence, most pupils are confident and fluent readers.
- Homework promotes increasingly good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills, as well as undertake activities which reinforce and deepen subject-specific understanding.
- Teaching assistants provide pupils with effective support, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The teaching of this group of pupils, in general, is strong across the school.
- On occasions, some teaching does not stretch the most able pupils as well as it might, or ensure sufficient progress for some disadvantaged pupils. This is because some teachers do not check carefully enough how effectively all pupils are progressing in lessons. As a result, some teachers do not adjust the activities early enough to sustain levels of challenge, and deepen pupils' thinking.
- Teaching in science is not always consistent in promoting effectively the key scientific skills of hypothesis, interpretation and evaluation.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Lessons and the good range of educational visits and experiences promote thought-provoking experiences that develop pupils' curiosity about the world around them. As a result, pupils have a good appreciation of the beliefs and viewpoints of people from different backgrounds, faiths and cultures.

- Daily worship and weekly personal, social and health education lessons develop pupils' good understanding of Christian and British values. Pupils are proud of the contributions they make to school life, for example in their roles as prayer leaders and anti-bullying ambassadors.
- The school has a harmonious atmosphere. Pupils from different countries and backgrounds mix happily with each other. They are well mannered and welcoming to visitors. They move from lesson to lesson in a calm and orderly fashion, arriving on time and well equipped.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and well cared for. They have confidence in staff to help them with any problems that may arise.
- Pupils understand about different types of bullying, and show a genuine desire to prevent it from happening in, and beyond, the school. Pupils and parents indicate that when rare incidents of bullying occur, they are dealt with quickly and successfully by staff.
- Pupils are confident in their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are clear about the importance of keeping safe online and the precautions to take when using social media and a mobile phone.
- Pupils also understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They benefit from good advice and guidance, in a range of lessons, about the value of regular exercise, a balanced diet and attention to hygiene.
- Pupils receive effective careers information, advice and guidance. They feel well supported during the options process, and there are well-planned opportunities for pupils to learn about careers and life beyond the school.
- The school's work with vulnerable pupils, including its use of alternative provision, has reduced the number of pupils at risk of not being in education, employment or training. The very small minority of pupils who attend alternative provision are well supported to make good progress on the courses they are studying. Leaders are vigilant in monitoring pupils' attendance and behaviour when they attend alternative provision.
- The school site is very well kept. It is secure and effectively supervised. Pupils respect the learning environment, and ensure that it is free from graffiti and litter.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons. They listen attentively and, for the most part, persevere and concentrate with their learning.
- The school is calm and orderly. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly between lessons and at social times. There is a high presence of staff on duty, so on the rare occasions when behaviour is not so good, it is dealt with swiftly and successfully.
- Pupils wear their school uniforms with pride. They show respect for adults and each other, both in and out of lessons.

- Pupils' attendance is at the national average. The effectiveness of the school's systems to help pupils enjoy school and to want to attend well is demonstrated by the reducing numbers of pupils who have longer term absences. School leaders are working particularly hard, and with success, to continue to reduce the absence rates of a minority of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The vast majority of pupils make good progress and attainment is rising. This is due to increasingly good teaching in most subjects.
- Since the inception of the academy, Year 11 outcomes have rapidly risen. The most recent 2016 published GCSE results in many subjects, including English and mathematics, were above national averages. They were well above national averages in history, religious education, modern foreign languages and business studies. Overall, end-of-Year 11 outcomes represented positive added value and good achievement.
- At the time of the inspection, the school's 2017 GCSE results had not yet been finalised. A large number of pupils' examination papers were still subject to re-marking by awarding bodies. Emerging outcomes indicated sustained overall good performance from the previous year, including in English and mathematics.
- The 2017 Year 11 outcomes in science, however, notably dipped. Inspection evidence, and information provided by the school, confirmed inconsistencies in achievement in some science classes. These inconsistencies are largely due to significant and recent changes in teaching. Senior leaders are already working successfully with departmental staff to improve the effectiveness of daily teaching, so that present pupils' learning is not adversely affected.
- Visits to lessons, sampling of pupils' work and other inspection evidence confirm that pupils make good progress in the vast majority of subjects. This is particularly the case in English, mathematics, humanities subjects, Spanish and German, religious education, art, computer science, business studies and physical education.
- The school's own assessment information shows rapidly improving good progress for different groups of pupils from their starting points. This information is frequently checked for accuracy by 'expert' practitioners within the Dayspring Trust, and from other local schools.
- Leaders are ensuring that the use of the pupil premium funding diminishes successfully the difference in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. The biggest impact to date is in Years 7 to 9, where outcomes of disadvantaged pupils are rapidly rising, largely as a result of regular attendance, increased levels of confidence, and heightened basic literacy and numeracy skills. Since the inception of the academy, differences have also diminished by the end of key stage 4. Nonetheless, leaders recognise that differences have not yet diminished sufficiently in some subjects.
- In English, pupils develop competent skills to write at length, and in detail, for a range of different audiences and purposes, both formally and informally. They can analyse literary texts and evaluate the impact of a writer's language for themselves. Pupils are confident readers. They can articulate fluently their views, and confidently justify their opinions.

- In mathematics, pupils develop a good grounding in basic mathematical skills, and are competent in completing a range of calculations. Increasingly, pupils apply mathematical skills and knowledge to investigate and solve problems. Pupils' analytical and reasoning skills, and willingness to consider different approaches to finding solutions for themselves, are improving strongly.
- The vast majority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who join the school from other countries, and who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. Similarly, most pupils who arrive in Year 7 with literacy and numeracy skills below those expected for their age catch up quickly. Staff are well trained in assessing the needs of these pupils and in providing appropriate support.
- School leaders have prioritised higher outcomes, in general, for the most able pupils. While inspection evidence indicates increasing levels of challenge for these pupils, in many subjects, in most years, the achievement of some high-prior-attainers still requires improvement.

School details

Unique reference number	141369
Local authority	Stockton
Inspection number	10036387

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,179
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of Board of Trustees	Venerable Stuart Bain
Headteacher	Gill Booth (Executive Headteacher)
Head of School	Brian Janes
Telephone number	01642 585205
Website	www.ianramsey.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@ianramsey.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses two alternative providers for a very small minority of pupils in Years 9 and 10. These are Bishopton Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) (a local authority PRU) and The Skills Academy at Stockton Riverside College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school became an academy in December 2014, and a member of the Dayspring Trust. Since it became an academy, there have been significant changes in staffing, including new senior and middle leaders, and new arrangements for governance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a wide range of lessons across the school, looking at pupils' work in lessons. Visits to lessons were made with three senior leaders.
- Alongside senior leaders, inspectors reviewed pupil progress data and pupils' work in books, information about the performance of teachers, documents pertaining to safety and behaviour, and information pertaining to safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and at breaktimes and met with groups of pupils separately.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior and middle leaders, and members of the board of trustees. A discussion was also held with the director of education for the Diocese of Durham, and a telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 178 replies from parents, 238 replies from pupils and the 52 replies from staff to Ofsted's questionnaires. Inspectors also considered a variety of recent school surveys of the views of parents and pupils on the work of the school.

Inspection team

Andy Swallow, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector
Malcolm Kirtley	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dan Murray	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Senior	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016