

Inspection of St James Infant School

90 St James Street, Daventry, Northamptonshire NN11 4AG

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The co-headteachers of this school are Gail Gynn and Sarah O'Shea. This school is part of the INMAT multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Helen Williams, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Linda Brooks.

What is it like to attend this school?

St James is a happy school. Pupils enjoy attending. This is because everyone is welcome. Pupils learn to be tolerant and respectful. They behave well towards each other. 'Friendship pals' check on pupils and make sure that they are happy. They know not to leave anyone out. As one pupil typically stated: 'We take care of people here and make sure no one is lonely.'

Central to all the school does are the school's values of teamwork, fairness, honesty, caring, creativity and independence. Pupils learn to identify with these values because of the 'values bears' Timmy, Florence, Orla, Christopher, Bramble and Isaac. Pupils learn about the importance of understanding their own emotions. Regular 'kaleidoscope' sessions enable pupils to explore their own feelings and express them too. As a consequence, pupils settle really quickly in the school. 'Bertie Butterfly' helps them to let their worries out.

The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. It is especially ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. The school does all it can to help pupils and their families to overcome barriers. As a consequence, pupils do well here.

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

Pupils say that they enjoy reading. The school ensures that books are of high quality and wide-ranging. Books link to the curriculum subjects and explore tricky topics such as race and gender. Pupils become excited by the stories they listen to in story time. This is because staff make story time fun. Staff take it in turns to film their favourite bedtime story and upload it to the school's website for families to enjoy together. Book and biscuit sessions make sure that parents know how to support their child to read at home.

The school places a high priority on pupils learning to read. The school ensures that there is a consistent approach to teaching pupils to read. Should pupils fall behind they are swiftly identified. They receive the support they need to catch up. Books match the needs of pupils.

The curriculum is well planned. It identifies the key knowledge pupils need to know. It builds learning up over time. There are opportunities for pupils to revisit learning from the past. This helps them to remember what they have been taught. However, in a few subjects, not all pupils are recalling all they have learned, and teachers are not checking closely enough when it is appropriate to move pupils' learning on. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They present information clearly. Carefully selected resources make sure that pupils have the tools to explore their learning. The lesson structure of 'I do, we do, you do' enables teachers to model concepts and explore learning together. Pupils learn to apply their knowledge in different contexts.

Provision in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) is exceptional. Detailed planning enables all staff to understand the purpose of each activity. These activities ensure that children's learning is not limited. All staff know children well. Their needs are skilfully identified, shared across the setting and catered for. 'Busy blocks' ensure that staff fill any gaps in knowledge. Children demonstrate sustained periods of concentration and high levels of independence and work really collaboratively together. Adults model language well. Timely questioning develops curiosity and deepens thinking. Pupils explain their work with great pride. Well-established routines set high expectations for children. Learning behaviours are incredibly positive. Pupils do really well in EYFS.

Support for pupils with SEND is of high quality. Individual plans provide the details needed to ensure that these pupils receive appropriate support in lessons. The school meets these pupils' needs well and they make strong progress.

Pupils say that their teachers are kind and helpful. They enjoy their school and their lessons. Pupils feel safe and know that staff will sort their worries out. Pupils behave well in and around school. Pastoral support is of high quality. All pupils' well-being is carefully tracked. If pupils and their families need help, they receive it.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils learn about wider safety, such as how to cross roads, the clothing they need for different weathers and fire safety. They know the importance of physical and mental well-being. They know that eating the right food helps them become healthy and fit. There are a range of clubs for pupils to participate in.

Governors understand their roles and responsibilities. They undertake them diligently. They ensure that staff's well-being is a priority. Staff feel supported and cared for.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Recently, a number of new strategies have been introduced to help pupils remember what they have been taught. However, in a few subjects, not all pupils are recalling all they have been taught, and teachers are not checking closely enough when it is appropriate to move pupils' learning on. This is because the school has not checked precisely whether these new strategies have been implemented fully and effectively. The school should check that strategies introduced have the desired impact on pupils' learning and that all pupils recall what they have learned.

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	144178
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10288357
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Linda Brooks
CEO of the trust	Helen Williams
Headteacher	Gail Gynn and Sarah O'Shea (Co-Headteachers)
Website	www.stjamesinfant.com
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St James Infant School joined the INMAT multi-academy trust on 1 February 2018.
- The school has two co-headteachers.
- The school has a federated local academy committee that works over two schools.
- The school uses no alternative provisions.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and

have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, design and technology and geography. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with teachers and pupils. They also looked at curriculum documentation for computing, reading and personal, social, health and economic education.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors, chair of trustees and two trustees.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive of the trust and the school improvement lead.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses, and Ofsted's survey for school staff. Inspectors spoke informally to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors considered records of attendance, behaviour and safeguarding, including the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders to discuss the safeguarding of pupils. They took account of the views of staff and pupils. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Sadler

Ofsted Inspector

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