

Inspection of St Denys Church of England Infant School, Ibstock

Laud Close, Ibstock, Leicestershire LE67 6NL

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in this happy and welcoming school. All staff know each child individually well. Pupils show great confidence in a nurturing environment. They are well supported if they feel any worries or insecurity.

Pupils are encouraged to become wise, kind and caring members of society. The 'school code' helps them to live up to the high expectations for their behaviour. The school has a calm but productive atmosphere. Pupils join in enthusiastically with all the school has to offer.

The engaging curriculum enthuses pupils and prepares them well for their next stage. Their learning is enhanced by many trips and visitors. Visiting a local colliery helped pupils to learn about George Stephenson's impact on coal mining. Visitors of different faiths enhance pupils' knowledge of different religious practices. Older pupils develop character and independence through experiences such as a residential trip to Sherwood Forest. Pupils develop talents by singing in the choir or joining clubs. The school has inspired some talented runners through the cross-country club.

Events like 'Community Week' teach pupils about citizenship and responsibility. For example, pupils picked litter and sang in a local residential home. Older pupils are proud of their roles as play leaders or serving on the pupil or eco council. They say, 'We always work together.'

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

From children's first days of school, learning to read well is prioritised. All staff are experts in teaching phonics. The school successfully engages with parents and carers to ensure that pupils continue their practise with phonics and reading at home. Staff check pupils' knowledge regularly and provide swift and effective support when needed. Pupils quickly become fluent readers. They apply their knowledge of phonics confidently when they are writing. The school is increasing pupils' enjoyment of reading. Pupils relish visiting the school library, where their teacher reads inspiring texts from the 'story suitcase'. In class, pupils vote for story-time books and are inspired to make their own recommendations.

The curriculum has been revamped to ensure that it is ambitious and reflects pupils' needs and their locality. The important knowledge pupils need to learn is clearly identified and well sequenced. Teachers explain and model subject knowledge effectively. They ensure that pupils practise using important new words to explain their thinking. They ask effective questions to guide and check pupils' understanding. Teachers provide engaging learning activities for pupils. However, sometimes, learning activities do not match the intended learning precisely enough. Sometimes, activities do not allow for pupils to develop detailed knowledge. Additionally, pupils' completion of learning activities is sometimes not checked well enough. Therefore, misconceptions or insecurities in pupils' knowledge are sometimes not identified, which hinders their progress.

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils can flourish. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are swiftly identified. Skilled staff use a range of approaches to help pupils in the specialist resource base to access learning throughout the curriculum successfully. Across the school, many pupils with SEND are supported effectively. The help given is based on a sound knowledge of these pupils' needs. However, the support for some pupils with SEND is not always helpful. This is because learning activities are sometimes not adapted sufficiently so these pupils can complete them with some independence.

The school ensures that pupils develop positive attitudes to learning from starting school. In the Reception Year, children learn to follow routines that are helpful. Teachers use games to develop children's listening skills. Pupils of all ages mostly listen carefully to their teachers. They stay on task and engage with learning activities. They learn to work collaboratively. They discuss ideas and are receptive to suggestions from their peers.

The provision for pupils' personal development is considered carefully. There is a strong emphasis on learning to be mentally and physically healthy. Pupils learn strategies to manage their emotions and to let go of any worries. The school particularly ensures that pupils learn about life in modern Britain. Alongside the school's values, fundamental British values weave through the curriculum. Pupils say, 'These make our world a better and safer place.' Pupils understand equality and inclusion. They say that 'everyone is welcome here' and have a growing knowledge and respect of different faiths and beliefs.

Governance has improved since the last inspection. Effective training has provided governors with a secure understanding of their role. They have put robust processes in place to check the school's effectiveness. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel leaders are considerate of their well-being. They are well supported to implement changes in the curriculum. Staff workload is kept manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, learning activities do not match the ambitions or intentions of the curriculum. Additionally, learning is sometimes not checked well enough to identify and address any misconceptions or insecurities in pupils' knowledge. This means that pupils do not build knowledge as well or in as much depth as they could. The school should ensure that learning activities and the checks made on pupils' learning enable them to achieve consistently well.
- Learning activities are sometimes not adapted sufficiently well enough for some pupils with SEND to complete without considerable adult support. This means that these pupils cannot build knowledge successfully and learn with independence. The school

should ensure that teaching is adapted effectively so all pupils, including those with SEND, can achieve well.

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	120138
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10347411
Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nigel Roberts
Headteacher	Cheryl Sargeant
Website	www.stdenysinfantschool.org
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.
- St Denys is a Church of England voluntary controlled infant school within the Diocese of Leicester. The most recent section 48 inspection of this Church of England school took place in September 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within three school years.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 is 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.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders of the school and considered a range of documentation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, the 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 listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered evidence about some other curriculum subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during breaktime.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors spoke to parents and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff.

Inspection team

Claire Stylianides, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Halil Tamgumus	Ofsted Inspector
Kirk Hopkins	Ofsted Inspector

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