

Inspection of Audlem St James' CofE Primary School

Heathfield Road, Audlem, Crewe, Cheshire CW3 0HH

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Andy Perry. This school is part of the Cornovii Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Richard Middlebrook, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Janet Furber.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Audlem St James' and rarely miss a day of school. Children in the early years settle into school life well. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils also follow the school rules carefully. Pupils across the school meet the high expectations of behaviour that are set for them. They are happy and feel safe.

Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and towards adults in school. They are elected to many leadership roles, such as safeguarding ambassadors and playleaders and they sit on various parliamentary committees. This supports pupils' understanding of democracy and helps to prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Pupils enjoy the range of opportunities on offer to them. For example, they attend after-school clubs such as karate, sewing and drama. They enjoy performing as part of the school choir for the local community and church. Pupils also relish competing in sporting tournaments, such as tag rugby and athletics.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in most subjects. They are proud of their learning. This is reflected in the high standard of work that they produce in their books. Pupils are keen to share this learning with each other, with staff and with visitors to school. They work collaboratively so that everyone's 'light' shines.

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

The school has carefully considered the needs and interests of pupils in its curriculum design. The school has created a well-ordered curriculum that begins in the early years. In the Reception class, the essential knowledge and skills that children require are well thought out. The early years' curriculum prepares children well for the demands of Year 1. Across key stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to build their knowledge in a logical order. Pupils, including those with SEND, learn well in most subjects.

Staff receive effective, ongoing training to deliver the curriculum increasingly well. They successfully collaborate with other schools across the trust. For example, staff across the trust have debated how to ensure that pupils know and remember more subject content. In the main, pupils at St James' have plentiful opportunities, in many subjects, to revisit earlier learning so that they do not forget it. Typically, pupils build their new knowledge on firm foundations.

The school skilfully discusses and debates approaches to checking on how well pupils are learning. In many subjects, teachers successfully use their expertise to identify and to address pupils' misconceptions. However, in a small number of subjects, the school has recently revised the curriculum content and its approach to checking what pupils know and can do. In these subjects, some teachers are not as confident in how to deliver elements of these revised curriculums. Added to this, on

occasion, teachers do not identify and address the gaps in aspects of some pupils' knowledge. This prevents a few pupils from achieving all that they could in these subjects.

Reading is at the centre of the curriculum. The school has thought carefully about the range of books available to pupils. This includes texts which appropriately link to pupils' learning in the wider curriculum. Pupils enjoy relaxing and listening to class novels, which are skilfully shared by staff. It is one of pupils' favourite times in the school day.

Staff deliver the phonics programme consistently well. They successfully share this knowledge with parents and carers, who attend school workshops regularly. This enables parents to support their children to develop greater fluency and confidence in reading. Children enjoy learning about letters and the sounds that they make as soon as they join the Reception class. Staff provide prompt help for any pupils who fall behind with the reading curriculum. This enables them to catch up quickly.

The school identifies and supports pupils with SEND extremely well. Strong relationships are built between the school, home and external agencies. This ensures that no stone is left unturned in order to meet the additional needs of these pupils.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development effectively. It ensures that the pupils are well prepared to become active citizens. Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and they know what contributes to a healthy relationship. This helps them to form positive friendships and results in happy and fun playtimes.

The school provides a rich variety of opportunities to prepare pupils for life beyond Audlem St James'. For example, pupils think carefully about their future careers. Pupils listen attentively to visiting speakers who inspire and motivate them. For example, they enjoy finding out about occupations, such as veterinary nurses, bankers and pilots.

Members of the local governing body know the school well. There are effective systems in place to ensure a smooth working relationship between the local governing body and the trust. Governors check that staff have the training and resources that they need to do their jobs well. Governors and trustees monitor the impact of new policies on staff's workload. For example, staff appreciate leaders' ongoing adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum, including the time required to prepare resources. Parents are equally positive about how well staff work with their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff are unclear about how to deliver aspects of the revised subject curriculums. Occasionally, this hinders how well some pupils learn new knowledge in these subjects. The school should ensure that staff receive the support that they require to deliver new subject curriculums consistently well.
- In a few subjects, teachers' checks on pupils' learning do not fully identify where some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. In these subjects, this prevents some pupils from achieving as highly as they could. The school should ensure that teachers address any deficits in pupils' subject knowledge in these remaining curriculum areas.

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	148489
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10240587
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Janet Furber
Chief executive officer	Richard Middlebrook
Headteacher	Andy Perry
Website	www.audlemstjames.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Audlem St James' CofE Primary Academy converted to become an academy school in December 2021. When its predecessor school, Audlem St James' CofE Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Cornovii Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Chester. Its last section 48 inspection took place in February 2016. The next inspection will be scheduled to take place prior to February 2024.
- The school do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are at a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any ongoing impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. They spoke with pupils and reviewed samples of work in these curriculum areas.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read with a trusted adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese. She also met with the chief executive officer, the chair of the trustees and members of the local governing body, including the chair.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the view 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 school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including that relating to behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also examined the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and for staff.

Inspection team

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Suzanne Blay

Ofsted Inspector

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