

Inspection of Devonshire Infant Academy

Auckland Road, Smethwick, West Midlands B67 7AT

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Elise Waldron. This school is part of Victoria Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sharron Philpot, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gurinder Josan.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Devonshire Infant Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Devonshire Infant School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Devonshire Infant Academy as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be a part of this inclusive school, which is rooted in the heart of a culturally diverse community. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about the different cultures and religions that exist throughout the school. They visit places of worship such as the mosque, gurdwara and church. Pupils from all backgrounds come together to celebrate festivals on 'celebration days' such as Eid, Diwali and the 'picnic with Father Christmas'. The school supports local food banks and raises money for charity. These experiences help pupils to become active, respectful and responsible citizens.

The school's value of 'unity' permeates in all aspects of school life. Strong relationships between staff and pupils create a caring environment where pupils feel happy and valued. This is reflected in their positive attendance. Pupils are well-mannered, kind and consistently demonstrate excellent behaviour. In lessons they have a real thirst for learning and live up to the high expectations that staff have of them. They achieve well and are committed to their learning. During social times, pupils engage in friendly play together and are considerate of one another. This creates lasting friendships built on trust and integrity.

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

The curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils. Learning is carefully sequenced to follow a logical progression and regularly revisited to embed understanding. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use a variety of activities to engage pupils. In the early years, rhyme and stories are used to capture children's interests. Staff model expectations and check pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils develop a secure understanding and they can effectively recall prior learning, helping them to see how new concepts fit into the bigger picture.

Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding. The school identifies the needs of pupils and provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This ensures that all pupils progress well. However, pupils who grasp concepts and learning quickly are not always given further opportunities to enhance their learning.

The 'sunshine class' is a specialist SEND provision for pupils with complex needs who follow a bespoke curriculum tailored to their individual requirements. Their learning focuses on early reading and mathematics, building concepts and forest school activities, with carefully tailored activities to support their development. Staff receive additional training in autism spectrum disorder to maximise support. Pupils develop communication skills using sounds and images. Staff provide care and guidance to foster increasing independence.

The school prioritises teaching pupils to read. In Nursery, children are introduced to basic sounds, effectively preparing them for formal phonics in Reception. Vocabulary development is a key focus, evident in lessons where children confidently use newly-acquired words. Pupils learn to read through activities such as 'group read' sessions and 'tiny teachers' where fluent readers support their peers. This helps pupils to become

confident readers. As a result, all pupils, including those who struggle to read, can access the learning in all subjects. The school has made recent developments to encourage pupils to read for pleasure. However, this is still in the early stages of implementation.

Pupils are rewarded for their exemplary behaviour. A highlight of the week is 'praise assembly' where the school celebrates pupils' efforts and dedication. Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-control and respect for one another. In lessons, they have positive attitudes to learning and actively engage in discussions.

Personal, social and health education is integral to school life, with key concepts introduced from an early age. Pupils learn the importance of staying safe, who to speak to if they have any worries, and understanding happy and healthy relationships. Expert staff offer bespoke support such as counselling to meet individual needs. As a result, pupils feel happy, confident and well supported at school.

Pupils take part in meaningful enrichment activities that enhance their learning. Children in the early years attend theatre productions linked to the vocabulary development, while older pupils visit farms or zoos when learning about animals. Museum visits and local walks bring history lessons to life. Additionally, the school offers an array of clubs including gardening, sports and crafts. The school ensures that all pupils benefit from these experiences.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Staff feel well supported and take pride in being part of the community. A key strength is the collaboration between leaders across the school and within the trust, working together to keep each child at the heart of everything they do.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not always give opportunities to enhance learning when pupils grasp concepts and learn quickly. This means that pupils do not engage in meaningful tasks once they finish their work. The school should develop staff expertise by providing strategies to enhance the learning and deepen the understanding for these pupils.
- The school has provided limited opportunities for pupils to read widely for pleasure. As a result, pupils are yet to fully develop their enjoyment of reading. The school should integrate reading for pleasure into all aspects of school life to foster greater enjoyment and engagement.

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	141293
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10322865
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	338
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gurinder Josan
CEO of the trust	Sharron Philpot
Headteacher	Elise Waldron
Website	www.devonshireacademies.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school offers a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for nine pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school shares its site with a junior school.

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 was 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, music and history. For each deep dive, 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 held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, the ECT tutor, the SENCO, the chair of the governing body and other governors, the chair of trustees and other trustees, and the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors visited the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors spoke to parents before school and after school.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally at break and lunch times.
- Inspectors reviewed and analysed responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- 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 took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Sultanat Yunus, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Razia Ali	Ofsted Inspector
Christian Hamilton	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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