

# St Giles' School

Hampshire Road, Derby, DE21 6BT

**Inspection dates** 2–3 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher shows strong and decisive leadership based on a thorough knowledge of what is needed to raise standards.
- The vast majority of the staff fully support her forward thinking and play a major part in helping her put her plans in place.
- Teaching is mostly good and sometimes outstanding, enabling pupils to make at least good progress over time.
- Pupils enjoy an exciting range of opportunities so that they are keen to learn and do well.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and nearly all parents agree. They usually behave well in lessons, sometimes exceptionally so.
- There are good systems in place to keep pupils safe and staff work very well together to spot potential problems.
- The school gives useful and effective support to other schools.
- Governors have a good first-hand knowledge about the school so they know what to do to help the headteacher make it even better.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is consistently outstanding and a small amount requires improvement.
- Recent changes in the school's staffing structure, including the appointment of new senior leaders, have yet to make a full impact on the school's priorities for development.
- Teachers do not compare the way they check pupils' progress with other schools often enough to make sure that this is as accurate as possible.
- Newly introduced methods of teaching reading are not yet adjusted to the needs of each individual pupil.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 17 lessons, all of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. They also joined pupils at lunch and break times, and watched them arrive at school and go home.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and other staff with specific responsibilities, as well as governors, the school nurse and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also spoke with a group of pupils.
- There were 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and inspectors also looked at the school's own questionnaires for parents and pupils. Inspectors also spoke with parents in person and by telephone.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents and records about attendance, safeguarding, behaviour, health and safety as well as pupils' progress and staff performance.

## Inspection team

Debra McCarthy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Barnfield	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St. Giles' is the only primary special school in the City of Derby and is a popular, over-subscribed school with growing numbers. The local authority plans to increase the number of places to 120 for the next academic year.
- Most pupils are brought in by local authority transport from all over the City.
- All pupils have a statement of special needs, which includes autistic spectrum disorders and severe or moderate learning difficulties. Many have transferred from mainstream schools, including some who have complex needs in addition to their moderate learning difficulties.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds with English as their main language, but a significant number come from ethnic minority backgrounds, some of whom have English as a second language.
- About half of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (extra funding for certain groups such as pupils entitled to free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority).
- The school operates an outreach service to mainstream schools in the City who have pupils with special needs, particularly those with autistic spectrum disorders or behaviour difficulties.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching consistently good and outstanding by ensuring that:
  - there is a regular and rigorous system for new or inexperienced teachers to receive the help they need to improve their teaching when they first start in the school
  - the role of new senior leaders is fully developed so that their best practice is used as a model for other teachers
  - early reading skills are taught in the most appropriate way for each individual
  - the way teachers check how well pupils are doing is made even more accurate by comparing teachers' marking with a wider range of other similar schools.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The schools' records show that over time pupils make good and often outstanding progress from their starting points. This is so for nearly every pupil, whether they have severe or moderate learning difficulties or autism spectrum disorders.
- In lessons, achievement is good or better when activities are sufficiently well planned to help pupils build effectively on their previous learning.
- Pupils make good progress in writing but do even better in reading and listening skills. The emphasis on additional help with speech and language therapy plays a large part in this.
- Extra support for pupils for whom English is not their first language makes sure that they are helped to make the same progress as their classmates.
- The school carefully checks how well everyone is doing and is quickly able to help pupils catch up, where necessary. Work in pupils' books quite clearly shows how well they are doing because tasks are broken up into small steps and teachers are good at planning what they should learn next.
- The school's regular checks showed that some pupils with autistic spectrum disorder were not doing quite as well as they could in some subjects and changes were made to improve this. They now benefit from a much wider range of approaches to help them learn in the most appropriate way for them.
- The checks also make sure all pupils do equally well in all subjects, including mathematics and English. The hard work teachers did last year on improving achievement in science means that pupils are now doing much better.
- The introduction of termly pupil progress meetings has already begun to make a real difference to helping teachers make sure that pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Teachers compare pupils' work with some other schools to make sure that they are marking it accurately, but this is not done often enough or with a wider range of similar schools so that they can be sure it is accurate as it can be.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start in school because of the changes that have been made to the way the two classes work together. Children quickly learn the skills and routines that will help them learn for themselves and think things through as they get older.
- The school places a lot of emphasis on helping pupils at an early stage of learning to communicate to use signs, symbols and pictures to help them. This enables those pupils to make more sense of the world around them and do more things for themselves, both in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils eligible for funding from the pupil premium make the same progress as everyone else in all subjects, including English and mathematics. Some do even better than their classmates. A number of pupils benefit from extra help with their communication skills, while others have been able to take part in drama, music tuition or Tai Chi to help boost their confidence and help them

do better in their lessons.

- Ambitious plans are firmly in place to use the new primary school sports funding to increase the range of sporting opportunities available to pupils, although it is too early to measure the impact of this.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Most teaching is good. Senior leaders regularly check to make sure that it is as good as it should be and often find it to be outstanding. The local authority adviser has also observed teaching in school and found this to be the case too.
- During the inspection visits to lessons by inspectors and senior leaders found that not as much teaching as usual was outstanding and that it was mostly good. This is partly due to staffing changes since the summer term, including the appointment of some new, less experienced staff.
- The school has just started a new way of teaching early reading skills and a few teachers have not quite managed to find exactly the right approach for each individual yet.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils so that pupils are keen to respond to teachers' usually skilful questioning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants mostly work very well together. In the best teaching everyone knows exactly what their role is, so that all staff are able to help pupils move onto the next steps in their learning. Very occasionally, staff spend a bit too much time recording what pupils are doing and not enough time helping them learn.
- In the best practice, whole-class introductions to lessons are clear and to the point, moving quickly and seamlessly into more individual or group work. Pupils are helped by skilful teaching assistants to learn as much as they can from activities carefully planned by the teacher to meet their particular needs.
- As they grow older pupils begin to learn to think more for themselves. For example, in one outstanding drama lesson about a visit to the airport, Year 6 pupils reconstructed the airport using everyday classroom equipment and had to think very carefully about how they were going to arrange everything.
- Mathematics and English are taught in an exciting way through a topic approach. In one class, pupils with autistic spectrum disorder practised counting fruits after reading the story 'Handa's Surprise', which they then experienced again using a computer programme in the sensory room. Others practised reading place names on their journey around the world.
- The topic approach also means pupils are able to make connections about what they learn in different subjects. This term's theme of 'Around the World in Eighty Days' has meant that pupils have been able to enjoy lessons about floating and sinking in science or building hot-air balloons out of carrier bags in design technology.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons when expectations are high and activities are designed that keep them fully involved. Sometimes they are so enthralled by the activities that their behaviour is

outstanding, such as in one lesson in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children were totally engrossed in the stimulating array of activities provided for them.

- Staff are very well trained in managing difficult behaviour which is mostly managed very effectively in lessons and around the school. Very occasionally, less experienced staff are not as confident in following through ways of managing difficult behaviour as their more experienced colleagues.
- Mostly staff make sure that pupils have lots of opportunities to do things for themselves, whether it is fetching the right equipment in art to make a collage of Antarctica or carrying their plate back from the serving hatch at lunch time. Very occasionally staff try and do a little bit too much for pupils, and opportunities to practise skills like pouring drinks at snack time are overlooked.
- A small number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and more complex needs join the school from mainstream, sometimes during the middle of the school year. They often show very difficult behaviours when they first come to the school but the carefully considered support they receive means that they make rapid gains in improving their behaviour.
- The school keeps careful records about pupils' behaviour and related incidents, and has a range of strategies and methods in place to help pupils' emotional development. Personal, social, health and emotional education has a high priority and this is successfully supported by additional therapies including 'intensive interaction,' a method of developing pupils' social and communication skills.
- The school has effective systems in place to help keep pupils safe. Staff know what to do if they are worried about pupils' welfare and well-trained senior staff, as well as the school nurse, are on hand to offer advice and support and to liaise with other agencies. The recently established Family Liaison Team is adding to the already good support the school gives to families.
- Accident reporting is thorough and school records show that any incidents are fully investigated and measures put into place to try and prevent them happening again. Pupils are very well supervised around the school and at lunch and break times.
- Pupils who were asked said they feel safe in school and know who to go to if they have a problem. They know that 'bullying is naughty' and the school's own questionnaire shows that pupils place a high value on the importance of friendship and getting along with each other.
- Pupils also know about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle, that fizzy drinks contain sugar that may damage their teeth, and that too many cakes and biscuits are bad for them.
- Pupils have many and regular opportunities for physical exercise through physical education lessons, outdoor play and lunchtime clubs, such as dance and football. These team games help pupils learn how to co-operate and take turns so that they are able to work together more effectively in lessons and around the school.
- The school checks pupils' attendance carefully and its work to discourage holidays in term times has played a major part in improving attendance figures so that it is now average when compared to mainstream primary schools.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The school has undergone some significant changes in the last year. Members of a well-established senior leadership team have had to be replaced and additional teaching appointments have been made to cater for the school's rising pupil numbers.
- The forward thinking and innovative headteacher has planned well for this and has used the situation as an opportunity to think carefully about all teachers' responsibilities, to make sure that they match the changing needs of a growing school.
- These very appropriate measures make sure that the right people are in post to do the jobs that need doing, for example the appointment of a co-ordinator to oversee provision for autism spectrum disorders. However, because some of these changes are still quite new, their full impact is yet to be seen.
- The quality of teaching is very carefully checked on a regular basis but systems to ensure that new staff are helped to very quickly acquire the skills they need to teach pupils with such complex learning difficulties are not rigorous enough.
- Effective support from the local authority has enabled the school to make significant progress in its journey of self-improvement and to support the leaders in planning appropriate next steps. The school has an excellent reputation in the City for offering useful support for pupils who have special educational needs to mainstream colleagues.
- School improvements are based on the headteacher's very secure knowledge of the strengths of her school. She is very well supported by the vast majority of staff.
- The performance management of staff is firmly established in the school and staff receive a good range of appropriate training opportunities.
- The school has very clear plans for the use of the new primary school sport funding together with fine-tuned targets to make sure it will be spent effectively.
- The school works hard at building good links with parents and carers, the vast majority of whom are very pleased with the difference the school has made to their children academically, behaviourally and socially.
- The curriculum is outstanding and when well taught enthral pupils. It provides an excellent range of activities and contributes strongly to the school's stunning provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. In a literacy lesson pupils were awe-struck when the teacher sprinkled magic dust on their flying carpet to begin their journey to India. Pupils pretending to be security guards at the airport had to think about the social implications of their role while others learn about cultures around the world through stories and rhymes.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school well because they have first-hand knowledge of its day-to-day running, including joining in some lesson observations. They are able to give informed support to the headteacher, while also knowing the right questions to ask to help her move the school forwards. They have a good understanding of how well pupils do at the school and of the impact the pupil premium funding has had on supporting those pupils that are eligible.
  - Governors also have a thorough understanding of the school's finances and the link between teachers' performance and their pay. They are well prepared for working closely with the

headteacher and local authority in the next stage of the school's development. Safeguarding has a high priority and all statutory responsibilities are met.



## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113045
<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	428945

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	94
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Katy Elliot
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pamela Thomas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 July 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 343039
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