

St Giles Church of England Academy

Skinner Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 1HG

Inspection dates	30 September – 1 October 2015
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- St Giles Academy is a good and improving school. The dedicated headteacher has led improvements in the quality of teaching, behaviour, pupils' outcomes and checks on pupils' progress.
- Governors and staff are highly motivated, share a clear vision about the school's future and have effectively supported the headteacher in bringing about positive changes.
- Children in early years make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress, in all subjects, in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Outcomes at the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- School leaders and teachers know how well all pupils are learning and effectively support those who need to catch up if their learning slows down.
- Teaching is good with well-planned activities that capture pupils' interest.
- Highly effective teaching assistants support the learning that pupils make and increase their progress in well-targeted sessions in and out of the classroom.
- Expectations for learning and behaviour are consistently high and pupils rise to and exemplify these expectations. Pupils love learning and behave extremely well.
- Pupils say they are happy and feel safe. They are well mannered, friendly and show care and consideration towards each other.
- The highly positive culture of the school and the broad curriculum make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development and help to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils are aware of, or confident in using the vocabulary specific to each subject to fully explain their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Attendance is below that seen nationally and a minority of pupils have high levels of absence.
- Across the school teachers do not consistently give pupils the opportunity to respond to comments on their work that would enable them to make even better progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the progress that pupils make by:
 - continuing to develop the vocabulary pupils need in each subject so they can confidently express the breadth and depth of their knowledge, understanding and skills
 - ensuring that pupils are consistently given the opportunity to respond to the helpful feedback that teachers give them and so move their learning forward
 - developing the importance with which all pupils and parents view daily attendance to reduce the number of learning days that are lost to absence, particularly persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, school leaders and governors are highly ambitious for the school and have brought about significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, behaviour and outcomes since the school became an academy.
- Highly motivated staff share the headteacher's clear vision of how successful the school can be; all staff strive to improve. They eagerly take part in the school's well-structured drive to improve teaching and learning and enjoy the regular opportunities to share good practice.
- Middle leaders successfully support the teaching of their subject and increase pupils' progress. They accurately and consistently check progress across all subjects and for all pupils. There is a clear picture of strengths and areas for improvement in each subject.
- The school's systems to check on the progress that pupils make are very effective. Teachers know how well all pupils are learning. If the progress of any pupil begins to slow, then their personalised learning programme is adjusted promptly. Groups of pupils are closely checked to ensure that, from their individual starting point, all pupils now make good progress.
- Leaders carefully support the development of the quality of teaching and this has led to pupils' learning being good, with some that is outstanding. Leaders regularly watch teachers and check the work that pupils' complete over time. Teachers are held accountable for the progress their pupils make. Staff performance management targets reflect the school's high expectations for all.
- The well-attended breakfast club, the regular luncheon club for local residents, the good progress that all pupils make, the school's work with parents and the range of trips and activities for all pupils reflect the school's determination to promote equality of opportunity, tackle all forms of discrimination and foster good relations.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is excellent. Pupils enjoy taking part in daily acts of collective worship and exploring the teachings of the Church of England and other faiths. For example, in Year 4, pupils discussed the concept of compassion and showed maturity when reflecting on the impact that an act of compassion may have on the feelings of the recipient.
- Throughout the school pupils are helped to prepare for life in modern Britain. The democratically elected school council showed their understanding of the rule of law by completing its own review of behaviour and presenting the findings to the governing body. British values underpin all areas of the school and pupils show a well-developed understanding of tolerance, the rule of law and democracy.
- Broad and balanced sums up the newly introduced curriculum. Pupils enjoy learning the same topic across year groups as they can share their experiences and be excited by hearing what they will be learning as they move through the school. Each subject offers opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, in Year 3, the pupils were exploring what effect materials have on sound travel. This means that later in the topic they will be able to apply their knowledge and understanding when creating a musical instrument. A wide range of trips and visitors to school increase pupils' enthusiasm for learning and help them make progress.
- Physical education teaching has improved as a result of the primary school sports funding. Pupils are taught many different sporting activities and enjoy the wider range of after-school activities, including dance and gymnastics. Pupils talk confidently about the link between physical activity and healthy lifestyles.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively so that disadvantaged pupils make increasingly similar progress to non-disadvantaged pupils. Inspection evidence shows that the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school are narrowing.
- Safeguarding procedures are given high priority and are effective. The headteacher and the safeguarding and pastoral care manager ensure that staff are confident to deal with all issues relating to safeguarding. Staff training is kept up to date. Parents and carers know who they can turn to for support on safeguarding issues. The school, when required, works well with external agencies to support children's needs.
- Partnership with the Pontefract Education Trust benefits the school. The schools share expertise to develop and check specific areas of teaching and learning which help pupils to increase the progress they make.

- The local authority has an effective working relationship with the school and offers support when requested. The school particularly benefits from its analysis of information about pupil outcomes.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors and the headteacher have a shared vision of excellence for all pupils. Governors know the school well and have actively challenged yet supported the headteacher to improve the school.
 - Governors fully understand how the school's outcomes have improved since it became an academy and how its performance compares to other schools. They receive regular information about the quality of teaching and behaviour from the headteacher which they check by frequent visits to school; these include discussions with staff and pupils.
 - Governors and the school leaders have reviewed the strategies used to encourage attendance and are actively working to reduce absence as it remains lower than the national average.
 - Governors have increased the rigour with which they carry out the management of the headteacher's and all staff's performance. They know what is done to reward good teaching and have successfully tackled all underperformance.
 - Financial management is effective. The governors have taken steps to ensure the school website can be fully managed by the school so that it is always up to date and meets all statutory requirements. Safeguarding is effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high. Teachers use aspirational language to promote and encourage high standards. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils were taught how to use known number facts to double two-digit numbers. They were inspired to apply this learning to double three- and four-digit numbers and made good progress in learning.
- Questioning is insightful and effectively used to dispel misconceptions. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson a misconception on how to calculate with a zero in column subtraction was noticed by the teacher, who skilfully used questions to allow other pupils to explain what was not correct. This approach allowed pupils to use their mathematical language to review the steps for this calculation, and the teacher to check these pupils' understanding too.
- Well-planned activities capture pupils' interests. In a Year 5 English lesson, pupils took the role of detectives investigating the disappearance of a young lady. Pupils were fully engaged with writing a factual newspaper report. They expressed their enjoyment and confidence in completing the task independently as they fully understood their personal steps to success and could draw on the right resources to enable them to learn without interruption.
- Pupils learn well in a wide range of subjects. In a Year 4 music lesson pupils had been learning to sing a fast-paced, unaccompanied song confidently. After listening to and discussing an example and with some trepidation, they applied their learning and successfully performed the song in a four-part round.
- Demands of the new national curriculum – deepening knowledge and embedding skills – have been carefully planned in all subjects. Pupils do not always have the language skills or vocabulary needed to fully express their knowledge, skills and understanding. The school is fully aware of this and is developing opportunities for pupils to broaden their vocabulary. These include displaying key terms on the 'working wall' of each classroom and by pupils exploring and using these words in their homework.
- Highly effective teaching assistants are fully aware of the learning expected in each lesson and skilfully work with teachers to help children make progress. They successfully lead support sessions in and out of the classroom, for example, daily 'early bird' reading.
- The teaching of reading is good. Current children in early years and Key Stage 1 benefit from a specialist checking the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make); inspection evidence shows that this is having a positive impact on children's and pupils' learning of early reading skills. Teachers ensure that pupils read widely and develop the skills to read for pleasure as they move through the school.
- Personalised learning sessions for all pupils in Key Stage 2 in writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling, although recently introduced, are increasing pupils' progress, confidence and enjoyment of learning. Inspection evidence shows a consistently high standard of writing across all subjects studied.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. Pupils are highly motivated learners as their teachers bring learning to life. In Year 3, pupils call on 'Zero Hero' and 'Dozy Decimal' to help them work out how to multiply by ten. Practical investigation and problem solving activities allow pupils to explore and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills while thoroughly enjoying themselves.

- Teachers give helpful advice on how to move learning forward during lessons and when marking books. Pupils say they enjoy using a 'progress pen' to respond to these comments as it helps them to learn from their mistakes and to make better progress. However, inspection evidence shows that not all pupils have regular opportunities to respond.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Clear expectations enable pupils to become responsible for how well they learn and organise themselves. Pupils from across the school agree that the saying used in Year 2 reflects this: 'It is OK not to know, it is not OK not to try.'
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities to have responsibilities in school from the active school council to being the head boy and girl, helping at the luncheon club or being a playground buddy. Pupils talk about their responsibility within the local community and their work to help the local foodbank provide 'lunch for all'.
- All pupils said that they feel safe at school. This sense of security within the school community enables pupils to take an active part in school life, for example, speaking aloud during regular class-led, whole-school assemblies. Pupils are taught how to be safe outside of school, for example, on the roads or near water.
- 'Bullying does not happen' is a view shared by pupils. They can explain what bullying is and the different forms it takes, such as cyber bullying, and well understand types of inappropriate use of mobile phones. The values of the school make tolerance of diversity a high priority and so intolerant language is rarely heard and never accepted.
- Attendance, although improving, is below the national level and the minority of pupils with persistent absence is higher than that found nationally. The governors and leaders of the school are actively working to further improve attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- All staff, throughout the day, consistently model and inspire a 'can-do' attitude for the highest levels of behaviour. These high expectations are met by pupils. Pupils display excellent behaviour.
- Pupils develop a love of learning and show this in their eagerness to take part in all activities. They work well on their own and in groups, listen and take turns sensibly and accept and act on advice from their peers or teacher.
- The work in pupil's books is always well presented, neat and complete. This reflects the pride that they take in their learning.
- Pupils show care for each other in the playground and different ages of pupils play well together. They know that there is always someone to help them sort out any problems, like falling out, and issues are always quickly resolved.
- Disruption in class is rare. Pupils who have difficulty managing their own behaviour are given support through personalised plans which help them to settle into the school's routines and achieve well.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride and say they are proud to belong to the caring community of St Giles.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Outcomes for pupils are good and have improved, particularly in writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling, as a result of improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Children make good progress in early years. Good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 pupils attain in line with the standards typically expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2015 was in line with the national average for reading, writing, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Inspection evidence shows that since the school became an academy pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has increased to this good level of attainment.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions of pupils making expected, and more than expected, progress in Key Stage 2 is now higher than that found nationally in writing and mathematics and similar in reading.

- Across all year groups pupils are making consistently good progress in a wide range of subjects. This is a result of the improvement in the quality of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress since the school became an academy. Year 6 pupils in science are now attaining expected and exceeding expected levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in the same proportions as found nationally.
- Grouping pupils flexibly ensures that all of them are challenged and supported to make progress. A Year 4 pupil, well supported to complete the work confidently, did say that the challenge of using a number line to find the difference between two numbers had 'made my brain whirr!' Most-able pupils can develop and master their skills, for example in mathematics, with a higher year group. Those pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs benefit from acquiring knowledge and skills with the most appropriate year group to meet their individual needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making the same good progress as other pupils. There was a significant historical gap in the progress made between disadvantaged and other pupils in Key Stage 2 which could not be fully closed in 2015. In 2015 disadvantaged pupils were half a year behind in reading and writing and two terms behind in mathematics. Compared to other pupils nationally, the gap was two terms in reading and writing and two and a half terms in mathematics.

Early years provision

is good

- The majority of children enter nursery with knowledge and skills that are well below that typical for their age, especially in speaking and understanding. They make good progress and by the end of Reception half of them have knowledge and skills that are typical for their age in all key areas of learning. Reading and writing are the areas in which fewer children reach the typically expected knowledge and skills.
- An increasing proportion of children reach a good level of development and are well prepared for learning in Year 1. Those children who are not yet ready for Year 1 are supported to catch-up and attain a standard typical for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Leadership is good as the early years leader has a clear understanding of how children learn. The curriculum captures children's interest. Within the 'Once upon a time' topic the children have been visited by Cinderella and are eager to plan and make their costumes for the forthcoming 'ball' to which they and their parents have been invited.
- Frequent assessment ensures that activities are very well planned to meet the individual learning needs of all children including disadvantaged children, the disabled and those with special educational needs. For example, in nursery, there is an emphasis on early speaking and understanding. The teacher was observed encouraging children to name everyday and unfamiliar objects. They carefully asked children questions which explored and developed their understanding of the language of comparison, for example, 'Which is bigger – the teddy bear or the toy car?'
- Behaviour is often exemplary as staff model and expect high standards. Children can be seen taking turns, playing safely and problem-solving, both indoors and outdoors. When children requested that an adult help them to continue building Rapunzel's tower, which was too high for them to add any more blocks, many of them suggested ways how to continue building it safely.
- Children's understanding of British values and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well developed. Playing a 'hoopla' game in Reception, one child took more hoops than the other. An adult skilfully helped the children to count the hoops and consider if they should have the same to enable 'fair play'.
- Parents are highly positive about the early years and enjoy regular opportunities to 'stay and play', share their children's successes from out of school and to attend workshops about how they can support their children's learning.

School details

Unique reference number	140453
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10002030

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ben Groves
Headteacher	Mary Gibbons
Telephone number	01977722880
Website	www.st-giles.org.uk
Email address	admin@stgilesce.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Giles Church of England Academy is an average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is similar to the national average. These pupils are eligible for support through the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- St Giles Church of England Academy converted to become an academy on 1 December 2013. When its predecessor school, Pontefract St Giles Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior and Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement.
- The pre-school breakfast club was included as part of this inspection.
- There have been significant changes to teaching staff since the school became an academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes and two observations were undertaken jointly with a senior leader. Small-group sessions led by teaching assistants were also observed.
- The inspectors met with four governors, with senior and middle leaders and other staff. They held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils met with the inspectors to discuss their views of reading, learning, behaviour and safety. Inspectors spoke informally to many pupils during lessons, breaktime and lunchtime.
- The inspectors scrutinised the school's review of its own performance and development, arrangements for safeguarding, systems for checking the quality of teaching and those for tracking pupils' progress.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and, with a senior leader, reviewed samples of the work they have completed over time.
- Inspectors analysed the 30 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also looked at parents' responses to five recent school questionnaires. In addition, an inspector spoke informally with parents when they were attending a coffee afternoon.
- The views of staff were gained from meetings and from a review of the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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