

# St George's School A Church of England Academy

Cherry Tree Road, Marton, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 4PH

## Inspection dates

13–14 March 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Requires improvement</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Senior leaders, including those of the Cidari multi-academy trust, have provided strong and effective leadership to overcome the weaknesses seen in the last inspection.
- Senior leaders, including governors, recognised that greater emphasis on pupils' progress was required to secure a good standard of education at the school. The actions which they have taken have achieved this.
- Leaders, including governors, know the school well. They recognise its strengths, but are not complacent. They are determined and well equipped to improve pupils' education further.
- Leaders promote positive values clearly and consistently. They support a culture where pupils are confident, considerate of others and hard-working. Pupils enjoy school, are punctual to lessons and learn well.
- Senior leaders have secured effective teaching since the last inspection. Teaching is typically good, including in art, drama, English, mathematics and modern foreign languages.
- Subject leadership is good. These leaders play a full role in securing effective teaching and pupils' good progress in their departments.
- Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to develop their literacy. As a result, they read, speak and write with confidence and accuracy.
- Leaders' work to strengthen the curriculum has had a positive impact in both key stages. Most teachers provide pupils with opportunities to think about and deepen what they understand. Leaders are taking action to refine the curriculum in geography, history and science, so that the most able pupils are provided with more regular opportunities to think deeply and apply their learning more creatively.
- Pupils' outcomes are good. They benefit from effective teaching to make good progress.
- The management of the additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and challenged effectively in their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Their conduct around school and attitudes to learning are positive.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and would recommend it to others. As a result, they attend regularly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils understand and value differences and say that they feel confident to be who they want to be.
- An effective culture of safeguarding exists throughout the school. Staff know pupils well and care about their well-being.

## Full report

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

- Continue to strengthen the curriculum, especially in geography, history and science, so that the most able pupils have more regular opportunities to think deeply and apply their learning creatively.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The actions of senior leaders to overcome the weaknesses in teaching, pupils' progress and leadership identified at the last inspection have been effective. Senior leaders, including those of the Cidari multi-academy trust, have been resilient and relentless in their efforts to overcome the barriers which previously hindered pupils' success. As a result, pupils now receive a good standard of education.
- Senior leaders say that they have never accepted second-best for the pupils and that they never will. There have been numerous new appointments of teachers and leaders since the last inspection. These changes have been managed adeptly by senior leaders, so as to minimise any disruption to pupils' learning. As a result, the appointments, which have been supported by a carefully planned staff training programme, have been effective in positively transforming the quality of leadership, teaching and pupils' outcomes. Consequently, teaching across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics, is effective, and pupils make good progress.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and any areas needing further attention, which helps them to plan improvements effectively. For example, when senior leaders spotted the previously high number of fixed-term exclusions for disadvantaged pupils, which contributed to these pupils' weak progress, they took swift action. This has made a significant difference to these pupils' success at the school. They are now supported to behave well and make good progress. The actions of senior leaders to refine the curriculum further, so as to secure even stronger progress for the most able pupils, especially in geography, history and science, are having a positive impact.
- Senior leaders have secured a culture where teachers reflect upon and improve their teaching. Leaders accurately understand the strengths and weaker aspects of each teacher and, through the training programme which they have introduced and manage, offer support when it is required. Training is well planned and implemented. It supports effectively the many newly and recently qualified staff at the school and has also resulted in stronger teaching from established staff. As a result, senior leaders have secured typically good-quality teaching.
- The quality of subject leadership across the school is effective. A significant proportion of heads of department are relatively new to their posts. They are being supported in their roles by the more experienced senior leaders in the school. Subject leaders have a clear understanding of their department's strengths and areas for improvement. They monitor and evaluate the progress which pupils make and, where action is required to support pupils' better progress, leaders spot this quickly and take action, which typically helps these pupils catch up.
- Senior leaders have instilled a sharper focus on securing pupils' good progress since the last inspection. Their actions to secure good teaching and subject leadership have led to pupils' improved learning and good progress across a wide range of subjects, including in English and mathematics. Where pupils have had gaps in their knowledge and skills as a result of a legacy of previously weak teaching and leadership, leaders

have put actions in place to resolve this situation. Typically, this has been effective in supporting pupils to catch up and work at the standards of which they are capable. Overall, pupils make good progress. In the few remaining cases where the progress of the most able pupils does not consistently match the strong standard seen elsewhere, for example in geography, history and science, leaders are taking effective action to remedy this.

- Leaders at all levels have a sharp focus on strengthening the curriculum. In both key stage 3 and key stage 4, pupils are typically provided with a range of courses and learning experiences, which maintain their interest and enable them to succeed. In Year 7, the curriculum builds upon the pupils' primary school experience. Leaders have developed meaningful contacts with primary-based colleagues to ensure that the work pupils are set in key stage 3 builds on prior learning.
- In some cases, leaders take the time to listen to pupils to further strengthen the curriculum and ensure that it meets their needs and interests, such as in art, English and mathematics. This has been effective in English, for example, by enhancing boys' engagement and appreciation of the texts and plays which they study and improving their progress. Occasionally, the curriculum does not provide for pupils to work at the highest standards, particularly in geography, history and science. However, overall, leaders focus on providing pupils with a suitable range of opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding and apply this learning.
- Leaders plan an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and clubs for pupils. These comprehensively cater for pupils' wider academic, cultural, artistic and sporting interests. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), participate equally in the activities provided.
- The careers guidance programme is good. Pupils receive information throughout key stages 3 and 4, which meets their requirements. This includes independent advice. As a result, almost all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, move on to aspirational next steps in education or employment.
- The actions taken to support those with lower than the national average levels of literacy and numeracy to catch up by the end of Year 7 are effective.
- Leaders have used the additional funds provided by the pupil premium effectively. Leaders clearly understand the varied barriers to learning which these pupils experience and take effective action to ensure that they routinely benefit from high-quality teaching. Many disadvantaged pupils attend school more regularly than previously and cases of exclusion have significantly reduced. They benefit from their positive engagement in learning and good conduct around school. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- The management of the funding provided for pupils with SEND is good. The leadership of the support for these pupils has strengthened since the last inspection. Pupils requiring support are now identified quickly and accurately, including those who require an education, health and care plan (EHCP). Leaders take effective steps to make sure that teachers know pupils with SEND well, including those who join Year 7. As a result, the well-being, health and progress of pupils with SEND are catered for effectively.

## Governance of the school

- Governance is good. The chief executive officer and trustees have a consistent and sharp insight into the school's strengths and a clear rationale for the next aspects which they wish to develop. The actions which they have taken, since the last inspection, have secured a good standard of education for pupils.
- Governors set and promote the school's key values. They are based in the school's Christian ethos, with a focus on care, respect and the value and potential of each person. These values underpin the actions that are taken by leaders and staff at the school. As a result, they work together and share a commitment to the pupils.
- Governors take their responsibilities very seriously. Their training and areas of expertise ensure that they are capable when supporting and challenging senior leaders. Governors' experience of financial management is used effectively to support senior leaders' plans to further strengthen the quality of education.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are aware of the risks which pupils face, including outside school. Staff are trained in identifying potential risks to pupils. This includes risks of drug- and gang-related crime, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. Staff take the time to know pupils well, so provide for their safety and well-being effectively.
- Leaders maintain effective safeguarding records. They have systematic procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- School leaders' work with external agencies and parents and carers is good. Leaders have secured effective relationships with a range of agencies in order to meet the requirements of pupils. They act swiftly, when required, to secure pupils' safety and well-being. Checks made by inspectors demonstrate that referrals are made to and followed up with external agencies as appropriate.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the risks which might affect them and how to keep safe, including when online and using mobile devices. They know to whom they should report concerns and how to do this.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The actions of leaders since the last inspection have significantly improved the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils now benefit from good teaching overall and across a range of subjects and year groups, including in art, drama, French, Spanish, English and mathematics. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to engage pupils in challenging and interesting activities. This means that pupils make good progress.
- Leaders are aware that the quality of teaching in geography, history and science is not as routinely strong as in other subjects. Senior leaders have strengthened subject leadership in order to secure more consistency in these areas. Teacher recruitment,

creative deployment of staff and a personalised professional development programme for teachers mean that the quality of teaching in geography, history and science is improving and the weaker aspects previously seen have been reduced. However, there are more times in these subjects than elsewhere when pupils are set tasks which do not challenge and inspire them.

- The focus of leaders on improving the teaching of literacy has been effective. Teachers consistently recognise the need to give attention to pupils' literacy skills in all subjects. As a result, pupils speak, read and write with growing accuracy, confidence and fluency. This strength has underpinned the improvements in pupils' learning and progress since the last inspection. It has supported pupils, especially boys, to learn at a higher level across their curriculum.
- Teachers usually use the assessment information available about pupils' learning well, to set work which matches their needs. As a result, current pupils of all abilities learn effectively. Training has improved the attention teachers give to those who start school with high starting points. As a result, teachers more regularly provide these pupils with opportunities to grapple with complex ideas, think deeply and respond with detail and fluency. The most able pupils welcome and benefit from these activities, including in English, mathematics and modern foreign languages. In science, history and geography, further strengthening of this aspect is under way and the most able pupils are learning at a greater depth than previously.
- Senior leaders support teachers' high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning effectively. As a result, pupils typically learn with high levels of enthusiasm, take care to complete the activities that they are set and do so with care and precision. This supports their good progress. Only occasionally, where pupils are set work which does not challenge them sufficiently, do they sometimes lose concentration. In this minority of cases, some pupils' work is untidy and lacks accuracy.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident, polite and wear their uniform with pride. They demonstrate positive and aspirational attitudes and have high expectations of their futures.
- Pupils enjoy and benefit from their positive interactions with one another and adults. Pupils say that they are happy at school. This is evident at break and lunchtimes, where pupils mix, play and pursue their own interests. The positive relationships extend to lessons, where pupils ask questions, express views and are confident to read aloud. They listen to others politely. Only on rare occasions is this not the case because pupils' concentration wavers. However, the good relationships between staff and pupils are effective in quickly restoring pupils' positive habits.
- The pupils who spoke to inspectors say that bullying is rare, and that staff deal with it effectively. This includes racist and homophobic bullying. In fact, pupils are adamant that these forms of bullying would not be tolerated at the school. The pupils who spoke to inspectors made it clear that they value people's differences, other faiths and

cultures. They say that they and other pupils are confident to be who they want to be. Inspectors checked bullying records, which show that incidents of bullying are followed up and resolved effectively. Pupils are supported effectively in school to keep themselves safe from the risks of bullying and exploitation when using social media.

- Pupils say that staff are approachable and considerate of pupils' emotional and physical well-being. The support services provided by leaders are wide ranging and meet pupils' requirements.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a positive feature of the school's curriculum. Their learning, including in assembly time, tackles and explores a range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects and helps secure pupils' mature approach to relationships, their responsibilities and role in modern Britain. Pupils understand and uphold the rights of all.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They respect their teachers and one another. Pupils take pride in their work and are keen to learn well. There are rare occasions when pupils lose concentration or produce work which does not match the good standard of care seen elsewhere.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They move around the school in an orderly manner at breaktime, lunchtime and at the change of lessons. The actions which leaders have taken to support pupils' punctuality to lessons have been effective. Most pupils treat the school environment with respect and do not leave litter lying around.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and they would recommend it to others. As a result, they attend school regularly. The sharpened focus of leaders to support the better attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND since the last inspection has been effective.
- Leaders manage effectively the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of pupils who attend alternative provision.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Recent examination results demonstrate the upward trajectory of the progress which pupils have made since the last inspection. In 2018, for example, pupils' progress was in line with national averages in English and mathematics and across a range of other subjects. This is due to pupils' improved behaviour, good teaching and leaders' enhanced focus on the progress which pupils make.
- Evidence in pupils' books and the school's current assessment information identifies that pupils make good progress across subjects and year groups. The previous strengths are being sustained and, in some cases, improved. For example, pupils make strong progress in English and mathematics across all year groups. They also progress well in art, drama, French and Spanish and a range of other subjects. Some aspects which have been weaker previously, such as the progress of boys in some subjects,

have been securely strengthened. Boys now make good progress in these subjects.

- Recent examination results in science have been weaker than in other subjects. This was due to shortcomings in subject leadership, teaching and weaknesses of the curriculum. Senior leaders have acted to address this issue effectively. The department is fully staffed with specialist teachers, subject leadership is good and the actions being taken to strengthen the curriculum are having a positive impact. As a result, pupils now make better progress in science.
- The most able pupils' work shows that they are making good progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that these pupils are routinely stretched and challenged to learn with greater depth than previously. However, more work needs to be done to further strengthen the curriculum in geography, history and science so that the progress of the most able pupils in these subjects consistently matches the strength seen elsewhere.
- Evidence from pupils' work and the assessment information of current pupils shared by leaders shows that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This is because leaders use the additional funding that they receive successfully to put targeted interventions in place to help these pupils to learn well.
- A new leader in charge of pupils with SEND since the last inspection brought a renewed focus on the academic progress of which these pupils are capable. The information provided for teachers about these pupils is detailed. It is routinely updated and supported by staff training. As a result, teachers know these pupils well and typically support their emotional, physical and academic needs effectively. Additional adults in some lessons provide valuable academic support and challenge to pupils. As a result, the progress of current pupils with SEND is good.
- Leaders monitor effectively the quality of education for pupils who attend alternative provision. Leaders ensure that these pupils benefit from an appropriate curriculum that prepares them effectively for the next stage of their education.
- A high proportion of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or with SEND, move on to the courses of their choice, which provide next steps in education and training after leaving the school.



## School details

Unique reference number	140759
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10057948

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	992
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Angus MacLeod
Headteacher	Graham Warnock
Telephone number	01253 316 725
Website	<a href="http://stgeorgesblackpool.com/">http://stgeorgesblackpool.com/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@stgeorgesblackpool.co.uk">enquiries@stgeorgesblackpool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	16–17 November 2016

## Information about this school

- St George's School is an average-sized Church of England school in Blackpool.
- The school is a member of the Cidari multi-academy trust, which is part of the Blackburn diocese.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an EHCP is significantly below the national average.
- There are more girls than boys at the school.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at 4Tech Training, Educational Diversity and The Alternative School Blackpool.

## Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, governors and trustees of the Cidari multi-academy trust.
- Discussions were held with pupils from all year groups to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school’s documentation, such as the self-evaluation and improvement plan, assessment information, the pupil premium plan, attendance, bullying and behaviour records and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of 74 staff survey responses, 65 responses to the pupils’ survey, 97 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 60 written responses from parents to Ofsted’s free-text facility.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school and scrutinised pupils’ work in a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these observations.

## Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Annette Patterson	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Shakos	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

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