

Inspection of a good school: St Aidan's Church of England Academy

Smithy Close, Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD8 9DQ

Inspection dates:

4–5 February 2020

Outcome

St Aidan's Church of England Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy coming to school as their lessons are varied and interesting. I saw pupils printing in art, working diligently on mathematics and English, and playing ukuleles in music. They like the extra clubs that the school puts on. At breaktimes, they enjoy using the equipment provided. Older pupils relish the responsibility they are given as play leaders or running the library bus.

Parents and carers are very positive about the school. The overwhelming majority of parents would recommend the school. One parent spoke for many, saying, 'My daughter loves coming to school. She receives a broad and balanced education which both challenges and excites her. The staff very successfully provide a warm and welcoming environment with a strong Christian ethos and are clearly very proud of all the children and their achievements. We are extremely happy!'

Most pupils behave very well all the time. I met pupils who were polite and friendly. Pupils understand the three key school rules: be kind, be respectful, be responsible. Pupils report that when there is misbehaviour and even occasionally bullying, it is dealt with well by their teachers.

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

All teachers are ambitious for the pupils. They devise lessons that are stimulating and interesting. In mathematics, the curriculum is well planned. Children in Reception learn their numbers and the concepts of addition, subtraction and measure. Pupils across year groups enjoy mathematics. Overall, they achieve well. However, some pupils are not as secure in their mathematical knowledge as they should be. For example, some pupils do not have the times-tables knowledge they need. This is because opportunities to practise are not frequent enough.

The school makes reading a priority. There is a focus on learning phonics from the start of Reception. The books for early readers are carefully matched to the sounds they know.

Pupils are encouraged to read at home. There are initiatives in Reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2 to engage parents in supporting their children with their reading. Pupils develop their reading skills effectively.

School leaders are reviewing how the school teaches the foundation subjects. In art, pupils gain experience in a wide range of techniques. In Year 3, pupils were making prints inspired by the Japanese artist Hokusai. Pupils spoke very positively about art lessons and the opportunities they have to be creative. However, pupils were less confident in explaining or remembering the techniques they have been taught.

The school does a great deal to develop pupils' character. Year 2 pupils came dressed as crayons for their assembly, linked to the story they were reading. Much of the work stems from the Christian ethos of the school. There are 22 clubs on offer. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have every opportunity to attend. However, this is not reported to governors statistically. The school has ambitious plans to develop its work in the area of pupils' personal development, and this will require careful coordination. Leaders will also need to make sure that all work in this area is of a high quality.

The school provides well for pupils with SEND. Teachers know the needs of their pupils. The SEND coordinator provides good leadership. When necessary, the curriculum is modified. Goals for pupils with SEND are appropriate and pupils are supported well. Outside agencies are used to provide further expertise where necessary.

The school is led and managed very well. Staff feel that their views are taken into consideration and that leaders help them manage their workload. There is a strong team approach. The trust and governing body provide effective oversight. Their confidence in the school's leadership has been shown by the secondment of the headteacher to support partner schools.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture of the school ensures that pupils are kept safe. All the correct employment checks are made. Governors have the knowledge to ensure that safeguarding is well led and managed. When there is a need to act, record keeping is thorough and leaders engage with outside agencies. Staff receive regular training and understand their responsibilities. There is a full programme in place to teach pupils about the risks they may face, including when online. All staff put the care of pupils as their highest priority and pupils are confident that they could share any problems with staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In mathematics, some pupils do not have secure knowledge of number facts. This means that they do not grasp new concepts as quickly as they should. Leaders need to

continue to develop the teaching of mathematics so that all pupils have suitable opportunities to practise and fully secure their mathematical knowledge.

- The school is currently reviewing its curriculum in relation to the foundation subjects. In some subjects, knowledge is not always well sequenced so that pupils are able to retain it. Leaders should ensure that all subjects are carefully sequenced to build pupils' knowledge systematically.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good/outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Aidan's Church of England School, to be good in January 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143228
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10121759
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gillian Hamer
Headteacher	Laura Willimott
Website	www.saintaidans.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is lower than in most schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.
- The school converted to an academy in March 2017, becoming part of the Learning Accord Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the substantive headteacher, all senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. I also met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I had a further meeting with the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of trustees and a trust officer. I took account of nine responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. I gathered pupils' views from both formal and informal discussions and from the 19 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

- I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and safeguarding documentation. I also evaluated information about pupils' behaviour and attendance at clubs.
- I met with parents and considered one letter from a parent. I also took into account 64 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View.
- I looked in depth at the following subjects: reading, mathematics and art. In doing so, I visited all classes in the school and reviewed pupils' work. I spoke to pupils about their work and listened to them read. I also met with teachers.

Inspection team

Andrew Cummings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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