

# Inspection of a good school: St Giles CofE Academy

Skinner Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 1HG

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Inspection dates:

4–5 March 2020

## **Outcome**

St Giles Church of England Academy continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils, parents and staff love their school and all feel proud to be part of it. Leaders have created a calm, caring atmosphere. A strong Christian ethos ensures that everyone is respected. Parents with whom I spoke were keen to praise the school. One commented: 'It's a fantastic school. Staff are always approachable and go above and beyond to support the children in all aspects of their learning.' This view was typical of the many comments left on Ofsted's Parent View survey.

Pupils behave very well. They are polite, kind and helpful. They show care and respect when working and playing together. They are not concerned about bullying but say that, if it did happen, teachers would deal with it immediately. Classroom 'worry boxes' ensure that if they have any worries, there is always an adult they can talk to.

Links with the local community are strong and the school works closely with Pontefract Civic Society, the War Graves Commission and Pontefract Library. Pupils also support local community charities such as The Prince of Wales Hospice and events like the local Parkrun. These links enhance the curriculum.

The junior leadership team, elected by their peers, focus on making their school and their local community a better place. They support younger pupils with their play equipment and carry out charity work.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and visits that enhance learning.

Leaders want all pupils to do as well as they can. They are well supported by very dedicated staff.

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

The school is well-led and managed. Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors and the trust know the school well and support leaders effectively.

The school has worked hard to improve early reading. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained in teaching phonics. From when children start in Nursery, there is a focus on the knowledge they need for early reading. Pupils are able to use their phonics skills to sound out words. Reading books match the sounds that they are learning. Pupils who do not reach the expected standard in the phonics screening checks are well supported. Those I heard read were able to use their phonics knowledge with increasing confidence.

Although pupils can read words, they sometimes do not know their meaning. Some pupils cannot always understand what they have read. They do not use the evidence from texts to justify their answers often enough. The leader for English has a clear knowledge of what needs to be done. She has started to improve the curriculum by implementing a reading programme that will help pupils develop the essential comprehension skills that they need.

The school has done much to foster a love of reading. Each classroom has a 'reading racetrack' and, because of this, pupils are encouraged to read more. My visit coincided with World Book Day and it was great to see so many pupils dressed up as their favourite book characters.

Overall, the curriculum in mathematics serves pupils well and pupils in key stage 2 make excellent progress. Year 6 pupils use their number skills to solve complex problems. One girl was able to explain to me how to find the areas of triangles and parallelograms whose sides have decimal measurements. Many pupils in key stage 2 were keen to tell me how much they enjoyed the challenge in this subject. Presently, some pupils do not reach the expected standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 1. The mathematics leader is working closely with staff in early years and key stage 1. She is making sure that curriculum plans show clearly what children need to learn at each stage to build up their mathematical skills and understanding. In Nursery, children are developing a good knowledge of basic number skills. They were able to explain how to make five in different ways. Teachers and teaching assistants in early years and key stage 1 are clear in their goals and have received training from the mathematics leader.

Pupils love their history work and were able to describe in some detail the history topics that they had covered. Frequently, the history topics are linked with local visits and this makes the subject more real and interesting for the pupils. Coverage of the history national curriculum is good and the pupils are developing skills appropriate to their age and to the topic being studied. Much of the history work is enquiry based and so the pupils are carrying out research for themselves. Pupils in key stage 2 described life in Roman Britain and the legacy the Romans left for people living in Britain today. The subject leader is passionate about her subject and told me about the whole school 'Victory in Europe Day' project.

Teachers are skilled in their support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They work well to ensure pupils' needs are met, and that pupils participate in all aspects of school life.

Staff morale is high. Staff told me that they feel privileged to work at the school and they support each other well. Staff are highly motivated and work hard for the benefit of the pupils. Staff told me that leaders are considerate of their workload, mental health and well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that improving reading comprehension, reviewing curriculum coverage and increasing opportunities for writing may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a high priority. Checks on new staff are carried out thoroughly. Through the school's information-sharing system, staff are kept aware of the needs of any vulnerable pupils. The headteacher and safeguarding and pastoral care manager work closely with external agencies to target support where it is most needed.

The safeguarding and pastoral care manager has worked hard to improve attendance. She works closely with families who need extra support. Parents appreciate this support. Her work has made a difference to pupils' attendance, well-being and outcomes.

Teachers have ensured that pupils have a strong awareness of how to stay safe. Pupils told me about the importance of having a healthy lifestyle and the dangers of smoking and alcohol. Pupils are aware of staying safe while using the internet and how to deal with cyberbullying.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In early years and key stage 1, pupils are developing strong phonics skills. They can use these skills to decode words but sometimes they do not know their meaning. Leaders need to continue to develop the reading curriculum with a particular focus on improving comprehension skills. This should result in a greater proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard and the higher standard in the reading tests at the end of both key stages.
- Further development of the broader curriculum is necessary. Using the example of history, subject leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans cover all areas and the development of skills and knowledge is carefully sequenced. Content should be relevant, interesting and meet the needs of the pupils.

- In English exercise books and writing portfolios, pupils' writing skills are developing well. Pupils need to have the opportunity to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that there are good opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills for different purposes in all areas of the curriculum.

## 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. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good 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/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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 30 September–1 October 2015.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140453
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	10088996
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	345
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust, Chair of governing body</b>	Mr Kevin Jones, Mr Ben Groves
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Richard Grace
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-giles.org.uk/">www.st-giles.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 September–1 October 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- St Giles is a larger than average-sized primary school. Pupil numbers at the school have grown rapidly over the past four years.
- St Giles is a Church of England Aided School. Its last section 48 inspection was in December 2016.
- Since the school's last inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.

## Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and leaders for English, mathematics and history. I discussed provision for pupils with SEND with the coordinator. I met with the safeguarding and pastoral care manager and senior administration team. I met with the chair of governors, vice chair, chief executive officer of the trust and school improvement partner.
- Subjects considered in depth as part of this inspection were early reading, mathematics and history. I talked to curriculum leaders and class teachers about these subjects. I

visited classes. I undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work in these subjects and talked with pupils about their learning. I talked to pupils from Years 2 and 6 about reading and I listened to them all read. I also listened to pupils from Years 2 and 3, who read to a teacher and teaching assistant.

- I checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. I met with leaders, staff, pupils and governors to check how effective safeguarding is in school.
- I examined a range of documents, including school improvement plans, self-evaluation information, curriculum planning and staff training records. Formal meetings were held with groups of pupils from key stage 2, where we discussed aspects of behaviour, personal development and the curriculum.
- I spoke with parents before school and I considered 68 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, including 36 free-text comments. In addition, 45 responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff were considered. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire. I also met with five staff to talk about their workload and well-being.

## **Inspection team**

Richard Knowles, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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