

# Inspection of a good school: St Giles' CofE Primary School

Blanche Lane, South Mimms, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 3PE

Inspection date: 10 June 2021

## **Outcome**

St Giles' CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

This is a welcoming and happy school. Pupils feel safe because they know that adults listen to them and care about them. Pupils respect their teachers who they say help them to learn and achieve their best.

Pupils are caring towards others. Inspectors visited the school during National Empathy Day. Pupils shared the 'special' books they were reading to help them 'step into someone else's shoes'. They explained that this is important to understand each other better.

Parents appreciate the many opportunities for families to engage in school life and to understand how to support their children's learning. Pupils take part in a range of physical and sporting activities, often achieving great success.

Around the school and at breaktimes, pupils are kind and considerate. Pupils understand and follow the school rules 'ready, respectful and safe'. They told us that these remind them 'how to behave and be kind to each other'. Pupils and parents confirm that bullying hardly ever happens. If it does, pupils are sure that staff will sort it out straight away.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have developed the school's curriculum from Reception through to Year 6. Leaders have put curriculum plans in place that identify the content to be taught in each subject and for every year group. These plans set out, in order, what teachers will teach and when, so that pupils can build on their knowledge and understanding over time.

Teachers make sure that pupils remember and can recall important knowledge from previous learning. Pupils in the Year 1 and Year 2 class told us that humans are warm-

blooded. They remembered, from their science lessons earlier in the year, that amphibians are cold-blooded and so can live in the water and on land. During a painting activity, a group of Reception children remembered that red and yellow make orange and blue and red make purple. Across subjects, teaching staff model how to speak and write subject-specific vocabulary correctly and in complete sentences. Pupils explained that this helps them to remember what different words mean. In a science lesson about muscles, pupils in the Year 3 and Year 4 class used vocabulary such as 'ligament' and 'tendon' in the correct context.

Leaders understand the importance of reading. Pupils also know that reading is vitally important. They told us that 'being able to read means you can learn lots of other things'. Pupils learn phonics well. Staff deliver a well-planned phonics programme that begins in the Reception class. Leaders keep a close check on pupils' learning. Extra support is provided so that pupils catch up quickly if they begin to fall behind. In all year groups, pupils practise their reading regularly and enjoy class story times. Older pupils speak confidently about their reading books and their favourite authors. Pupils told us that they enjoy 'book-browsing' in the new library. They recommend their favourite books to others through the 'book of the week' reviews posted on the school's website.

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision based on high aspirations for all pupils. Pupils are keen to learn and behave well at all times. Leaders provide many opportunities that support pupils to be responsible and active citizens. Teachers help pupils to organise their own charity fundraising events. Activities, such as a visit from a female airline pilot and a residential visit to Mersea Island, raise pupils' aspirations and confidence. Pupils take part in a range of local church and community events.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Teachers and teaching assistants adapt lessons and provide additional resources that help pupils with SEND to learn effectively and play a full part in school life.

Leaders have created a positive and united school community. Leaders take care of staff. Staff feel valued and are well supported. They are committed to the vision and values of the school. Staff appreciate the training they are given to improve their practice further.

Governors, some of whom are recently appointed, are keen to support and challenge leaders so that the school continues to improve. They challenge leaders appropriately about many aspects of the school's performance. Governors are developing an understanding of the curriculum and how pupils learn important knowledge and skills across subjects. This is at an early stage. Currently, governors are not holding senior leaders and subject leaders sufficiently to account for the curriculum that is planned and taught to pupils.

In discussion with the headteacher, inspectors agreed that the impact of the school's improved curriculum on pupils' achievement may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are clear that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. Staff are well trained. They know what to look out for and how to act on any concerns. Leaders make sure that vulnerable pupils, and those who are facing additional challenges, are supported so that they thrive in school. Leaders work with external agencies to make sure that pupils get the help and protection they need. The school's record-keeping system is effective. All appropriate checks are carried out on adults who work with pupils. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

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

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

- Governors do not have a sufficient understanding of how leaders' chosen curriculum intends to give all pupils the knowledge and skills to succeed in life. Consequently, they do not hold leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. Governors need to develop their understanding of how the curriculum is planned and taught so that they can check that it is both ambitious and enables pupils to achieve well in all subjects.

## **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 outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 7 and 8 June 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 [here](#).

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>	117564
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10197310
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	104
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sarah Boulter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Keith Smithard
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stgiles.herts.sch.uk">www.stgiles.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with the national average.
- There are currently no pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- The current headteacher is leaving the school at the end of the summer term. A newly appointed headteacher will join the school in September 2021.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began.

- As part of this inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding leader, the SENCo and school business manager. Inspectors met with a group of staff to discuss the impact of the support they receive from leaders.
- Inspectors held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. Additionally, inspectors met with a local authority adviser to discuss their work with the school.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, science and art. Inspectors met with curriculum leaders for these subjects, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including the school's own evaluation, improvement plans, curriculum plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records about safeguarding children.
- Inspectors considered the 22 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 22 free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. There were no responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil questionnaires.
- During the inspection, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils were off site attending a residential visit.

### **Inspection team**

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Allison

Ofsted Inspector

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