

Inspection of St Aidan's Church of England High School

Oatlands Drive, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 8JR

Inspection dates: 19, 24 and 25 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are rightly proud of this welcoming and friendly school. They are well supported by caring staff. This is a close-knit community built on warm relationships. The school's Christian ethos threads through all aspects of the school's work. This is a happy school with a positive and nurturing environment where pupils flourish.

Leaders have ensured that there is an ambitious curriculum in place. Pupils enjoy their lessons and value teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject. Leaders have established clear routines that result in calm lessons. This enables pupils to focus on their work. They are keen to succeed.

Pupils feel safe and happy. They enjoy both their lessons and socialising with their friends at break- and lunchtimes. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect towards adults and each other. Poor behaviour is rare. Bullying is not tolerated.

Pupils benefit from a diverse and wide range of extra-curricular activities. Trips, exchanges and community activities enable pupils to broaden their horizons. Students in the sixth form are valued role models for younger pupils. Some students have leadership responsibilities through the student senate. They speak eloquently of how the school has helped to prepare them for their next steps.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The important knowledge that leaders want pupils to know and remember is clearly identified. Subject leaders have considered carefully the order in which different topics are taught, so that they build on what pupils have learned before. In the majority of subjects, there are regular opportunities for pupils to revisit previous learning. Where this happens consistently, pupils can more easily make connections between topics and recall what they have learned before.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They bring their subject to life for pupils with the clarity of their explanations and richness of examples. Pupils are captivated in lessons and are keen to answer the questions that teachers ask. This includes in the sixth form, where students demonstrate a real love of learning.

There is a whole-school focus on developing pupils' knowledge and use of subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers skilfully promote these words. Pupils are increasingly confident in using them. Pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read are quickly identified when they start school. Trained adults ensure that these pupils receive the help that they need to quickly learn to read with confidence.

Pupils with SEND are well supported in lessons. Documentation, including support plans, has clear information about how to meet the needs of these pupils. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants ensure that these pupils are able to access

the curriculum alongside their peers. A few pupils with SEND receive a highly personalised curriculum within the learning support department. Leaders carefully identify the best courses for these pupils. Regular assessment ensures that these pupils make progress towards ambitious next steps. All pupils in the school, particularly those with SEND, benefit from the strong pastoral support that is available.

Pupils are polite and courteous. They listen attentively to teachers and other adults. Pupils are keen to do well and respond promptly to instructions. There are clear, well-embedded routines. On the rare occasions that pupils' behaviour or conduct falls short of the high expectations held across the school, leaders follow up quickly with individuals. There are very few occasions when a pupil repeatedly misbehaves.

Pupils benefit from the wider opportunities that the school offers. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, speak with maturity about a range of issues. Some students have worked with school leaders to develop the wider culture of the school. The cross-community partnership between staff and pupils is evident. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is delivered through a programme of tutorials, assemblies and other subjects. Although pupils consistently demonstrate high levels of respect towards others, some older pupils do not have sufficiently strong knowledge of different religions and non-faith world views. This is because there are not consistently planned opportunities for pupils to regularly revisit this aspect of the curriculum.

All pupils and students receive timely information and support about careers. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Many students go on to university.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have acted swiftly to address the concerns raised at the previous inspection. Leadership has been strengthened with new appointments, supplemented by training and support from external partners. Governors routinely challenge and support leaders to ensure that the right decisions are taken at the right time. Leaders are careful to consider the well-being and workload of their staff. Teachers, including those who are new to teaching, value the support that they receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are robust systems in place for safeguarding. All staff receive high-quality training, with regular updates on important safeguarding messages. Leaders check that all staff have the knowledge that they need to keep pupils safe. Staff know the signs that suggest a pupil may be at risk of harm. Adults promptly report any concerns they have. Leaders take swift action to ensure that pupils are safe. Where necessary, leaders refer concerns to appropriate external agencies.

Pupils, including sixth-form students, feel safe at school. They learn about the different risks they may face both when online and in the wider community. They know how to report concerns and are confident that these would be acted on by staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, there are not consistently planned opportunities for pupils to regularly return to important knowledge. This includes in PSHE education. As a result, pupils' knowledge and recall fade over time. Leaders should ensure that there are regular opportunities in all subjects for pupils to revisit important knowledge, so that this is secured in their long-term memory.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	137139
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10221424
Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,995
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	669
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alison Glover
Headteacher	Christopher Ives
Website	www.staidans.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 September 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Yorkshire Causeway Schools Trust. An interim chief executive officer (CEO) is currently in position.
- The headteacher took up post as acting headteacher from October 2021. Previously, he was associate headteacher. A second deputy headteacher has been seconded from another trust. He took up this position in February 2022.
- In the sixth form, the school works in association with another local school.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much lower than the national average.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider, Strive for Education.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- This inspection began on 19 May 2022 as a monitoring inspection. Having found evidence that the school had improved, a team of inspectors returned to the school on 24 and 25 May 2022 to gather further evidence and subsequently deemed the inspection to be a section 5 inspection, so that a full range of inspection judgements could be made.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, a number of curriculum leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with a group of governors and trustees, including the chair of governors and the chair of the trust. A meeting was also held with the interim CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, technology, geography and French. They met with subject leaders to discuss their curriculum planning. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work, visited lessons, talked with teachers and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors reviewed other curriculum documentation, such as plans for PSHE education, and other curriculum quality assurance documentation for a range of subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed the systems that the school has in place to keep pupils safe. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation related to safeguarding. This included a review of the single central record. Inspectors discussed safeguarding with a range of staff across the school, including senior staff from the trust. Inspectors spoke to several groups of pupils, including some single-gender groups, to understand their school experience.
- The views of staff were considered from meetings held with staff. An inspector held telephone conversations with some parents and carers of pupils to gather their views. Inspectors spoke to a number of pupils and students when they visited lessons, during meetings and during social times.

Inspection team

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