

Inspection of a good school: St Giles School

Pampisford Road, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 6DF

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 April 2023

Outcome

St Giles School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this happy and welcoming school. They arrive in the morning with smiles for the staff who greet them, eager to get on with the rest of the day. They like spending time with their friends and they feel safe.

Leaders and the school staff expect all pupils to do their best in lessons and to behave well. They want all pupils to have fun at school and to develop their independence. School staff, including members of the medical and therapeutic teams, are very attentive to pupils. They are committed to giving the high levels of support and care that pupils need throughout the day to achieve their best. Staff check that pupils are comfortable, safe and ready to learn. Pupils have the time and space to think and respond for themselves.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are interested in visitors to the school and respectful towards adults. Pupils are kind to each other and like laughing and working together. For example, during the inspection, a group of pupils were remembering the fun they had on a residential trip. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem but that they feel sure that leaders would sort it out if it were to happen.

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

Leaders have ensured that there is an ambitious curriculum in place that meets the very particular needs of pupils who attend the school. All pupils who attend the school have complex needs, but these needs are all very different. Leaders have thought carefully about how to construct the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all pupils. Leaders' curriculum thinking is secure, and they are now considering how to streamline some of their systems to consider teachers' workload and to focus on what it is most important for pupils to learn and remember.

The assessment system that leaders have developed since the previous inspection tracks each pupil's journey through the curriculum. Teachers use these assessments to spot any

gaps in pupils' understanding and to set up a series of lessons. The long-term goals set out in pupils' education, health and care plans are woven through the curriculum.

Leaders continually review the curriculum and improve it. Recently, they decided that they wanted to strengthen subject leadership and check that the curriculum was being put in place in the way that they want. They want subject leaders to spend time in classes working with teachers. This plan is at an early stage of implementation.

Leaders have ensured that literacy and reading are a priority at the school. Some pupils develop a love of reading through a sensory exploration of texts and stories. For example, during the inspection, one class was exploring a story about the beach as part of a topic on 'The Great British Summer'. Other pupils are learning to read using phonics, and leaders have ensured that there is a well-organised system for this.

School staff are well trained and supported. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach, and staff understand the needs of the pupils very well. Pupils and staff are also supported by a team of therapists, specialist teachers and medical staff. These adults all work in a coordinated and friendly way. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, following the advice of specialists, a teacher worked with a pupil with impaired vision, using a dark background and toys that lit up.

Pupils achieve well at the school. Opportunities to support pupils' personal development are threaded through the curriculum and through the school day. Leaders organise a wide range of trips and visits, including a summer residential trip. Pupils have opportunities to learn sports that are adapted to their needs, such as boccia, table cricket and an adapted version of table tennis. Pupils also have the chance to take part in sporting events beyond the school.

Staff are very positive about working at the school. They say that it is a busy job, but that they feel supported by leaders and feel valued. Staff like the support that they get from one another and they demonstrate a high level of commitment to the pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Systems for checking on the suitability of staff who work at the school are meticulous.

Leaders and the governors with responsibility for safeguarding have ensured that there are clear and thorough systems in place to protect pupils from harm. Staff are trained promptly on joining the school and they receive regular updates. Staff know and understand their safeguarding responsibilities and they know why pupils at the school might be at extra risk because of their complex needs.

Leaders work well with the wide range of external agencies involved in pupils' lives.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that leaders of subjects routinely have time to check that the curriculum is being implemented effectively. This means that leaders cannot assure themselves and governors that classroom staff are delivering the curriculum as it is set out. Leaders should follow through with their plans to give subject leaders time to check that the curriculum is fully delivered in the classroom.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2013.

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.

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	101852
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10255530
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	4
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Thirkettle
Headteacher	Kathy Lewis
Website	www.st-gilesschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Giles School caters for pupils with physical, sensory and complex medical needs. Pupils also have additional needs in other areas including cognition and learning needs and communication and interaction needs.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff at different times during the inspection. They also considered the views expressed by staff in Ofsted’s survey.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority. He also met with a group of governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, religious education and physical education. Deep dives included visiting a range of lessons, looking at pupils’ work, and talking with leaders, teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, including communication and literacy, personal, social and health education, and history.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in the classrooms, during the lunchbreak and at other times during the school day.
- The views of parents and carers were gathered through a range of sources, including Ofsted Parent View and informal discussions at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors assessed the school’s culture of safeguarding throughout the inspection. They met with leaders responsible for safeguarding, including the safeguarding governor. They checked the single central record and reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documents and records.

Inspection team

Gary Pocock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Martyn Patterson

Ofsted Inspector

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