

Inspection of St Lawrence's Church of England Primary School

Heslington Road, York, North Yorkshire YO10 5BW

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Helen Coles. This school is part of Pathfinder Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Andrew Daly, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Hattam.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Lawrence's Church of England Primary is an extremely welcoming and inclusive school. It is characterised by warm relationships between staff and pupils. This is evident in the excellent behaviour and conduct of the pupils. Pupils are unfailingly polite and well mannered. They are highly considerate of others. The values of the school encourage pupils and staff to be 'caring, considerate and courageous'. These values are very well understood and expressed by all members of the school community. They underpin the strong programme of personal development and pupils' excellent behaviour.

The school has high expectations of the pupils, and the pupils rise to meet them. The differences that are reflected in the pupils' range of cultural heritage are celebrated. The flags that adorn the assembly hall represent the diversity in school. Pupils can name these flags. They share aspects of their culture with one another. Pupils enjoy teaching each other words and phrases from the languages that they speak.

Pupils have a strong 'voice' in the life of the school. They undertake a variety of leadership roles. They have influenced decisions, such as adapting the physical education kit. Pupils learn an ambitious curriculum that is effective in preparing them for the next steps in their education.

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

Leaders understand the importance of reading. They have made this a high priority. This is especially important for the pupils who speak English as an additional language. This is the case for one third of the pupils in school. Phonics and early reading are taught effectively. The reading programme is successfully adapted to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those pupils new to English. Staff ensure that there is quick and effective support for any pupil who may need to catch up with their reading. All staff have been well trained to deliver the reading programme.

The love of reading is promoted throughout the school. Books appear in 'reading nooks' around the school as well as in the well-stocked library. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading. They can explain the plots and characters from the books that they have read.

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Pupils use mathematical knowledge and operations effectively. The curriculum encourages pupils to be curious and ask pertinent questions. For example, in art and design, pupils connect their knowledge of different artists to ideas in their own work. In history, the curriculum takes full advantage of the rich national heritage in York, within walking distance of the school. In a minority of curriculum subjects, the selection of teaching materials and some activity choices do not support pupils' learning to gain specific knowledge as well as they do in other subjects.

Children in the early years make an excellent start to their education. Adults know their different individual starting points. They support children in very precise ways to develop their communication and language. Leaders ensure that the foundations of the curriculum are established in the Nursery Year. Children are highly engaged in the rich curriculum across Nursery and Reception classes. They are exceptionally well prepared for learning in Year 1. Children with SEND achieve particularly well.

The school's curriculum for personal development is thoroughly planned to teach pupils how to engage with society and understand their place in it. Leaders have a very precise understanding of what pupils need to know to be healthy and safe. Pupils throughout the school have an age-appropriate grasp of all aspects of safety, from railways and rivers to online scams and exploitation. The school is rightly proud of the way in which pupils develop their character. Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of fundamental British values, such as mutual respect and tolerance. Pupils speak with great clarity about how the school develops their self-esteem and confidence.

Governors and trustees have an in-depth understanding of the school. Trust leaders and governors are very clear about their separate responsibilities. They work effectively with school leaders. The trust has had a significant impact in ensuring that staff are supported to access high-quality training and further professional qualifications. This expertise is used in St Lawrence's and more widely across the trust.

Staff are highly complimentary about how their workload is considered and the support for their well-being. Parents are extremely positive about all aspects of the school's work. In particular, parents comment on the excellent pastoral care and support provided by the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of curriculum subjects the activity choices and resources are not matched specifically to the crucial knowledge that pupils need to learn. This contributes to pupils not being sufficiently supported to develop their subject knowledge. Leaders should ensure that they continue to develop the curriculum to focus precisely on the most important subject knowledge that pupils need to know and understand and that learning activities are matched appropriately.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143863
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10290319
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Hattam
CEO of the trust	Andrew Daly
Headteacher	Helen Coles
Website	https://stlawrencesschool.org
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Pathfinder Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with governors and trust leaders. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the Diocese of York.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector studied a variety of documents. These included the school's development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance information and safeguarding records.
- The views of parents and carers, staff and pupils were gathered through Ofsted's surveys and face-to-face discussions.

Inspection team

Carl Sugden, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alison Ashworth

Ofsted Inspector

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