

Inspection of St Aidan's Primary School - A Church of England Academy

Norfolk Street, Mill Hill, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 4EW

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Kelly Harrison. This school is part of the Cidari 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 (CEO), Peter Ashworth and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John McClelland.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to this warm and nurturing school. They are incredibly proud of their 'Always' badges. These represent the school's values that pupils display daily in their behaviour, like being accepting and accountable. Pupils are confident, kind and articulate individuals.

The school is ambitious for all. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), rise to meet these expectations. They work hard in lessons and try their best to succeed. Pupils typically learn without distraction from others. They trust staff to deal with any rare incidents of misbehaviour quickly. In the early years, children settle quickly into school routines and learn to interact with others. Most pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils are encouraged to apply for, and be democratically elected to, responsible roles in school. They carry out their duties keenly, for example as school councillors, who have recently introduced 'shine dine' lunchtimes. Community ambassadors look after their neighbours by bag packing in the local shop and litter picking to enhance their local environment.

Pupils enjoy being with their friends. They care deeply for each other and the wider world. They enjoy their time together on various school trips to museums, local nature reserves and residential centres.

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

This school is emerging from a period of change, with a new headteacher recently appointed and a new chair of governors elected. The school has designed broad and ambitious curriculums. It has clearly identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn from the beginning of the Reception Year to the end of Year 6.

The school's published data for 2024 shows that the proportion of Year 6 pupils who met the expected standard for writing in key stage 2, fell below the national average. In this year group, a significant number of pupils joined the school in Year 5 or 6. They did not have time to benefit fully from the school's strong curriculum. Currently, pupils achieve well across a range of subjects.

Staff benefit from high-quality curriculum training. As a result, they choose appropriate resources, activities and questions to help pupils to learn. In most subjects, pupils' work shows their understanding of the knowledge and skills that they have learned. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not routinely address misconceptions in pupils' learning. This hinders pupils' ability to build new learning on to current knowledge.

In the main, staff provide pupils with opportunities to recall and retrieve their learning. As a result, pupils can talk confidently about their prior learning. However, in a few subjects, pupils do not have the same opportunities to recap on prior learning. They sometimes

struggle to remember what they have been taught previously. This hampers their ability to build on their learning well enough in these subjects.

The school has successfully fostered a love of reading among pupils. Older pupils read from a wide range of literature, and they spoke excitedly about a poet who had visited recently. From the early years onwards, staff enthusiastically share stories and rhymes with children to develop their language skills. Staff are skilled at teaching phonics. Pupils quickly become accurate and fluent readers. If pupils need additional support, they are given prompt help to enable them to catch up quickly.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Staff adapt activities skilfully so that these pupils access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND are fully involved in all aspects of school life.

Pupils, including children in the Reception Year, consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They are friendly and well-mannered. The school prioritises pupils' regular attendance. It has recently implemented new systems to improve the attendance of pupils who are often absent from school. These have been effective, and the majority of pupils now attend school regularly.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities that are woven through the curriculum. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and how to stay physically and mentally healthy. They have a thorough understanding of fundamental British values and a mature approach to accepting people's differences. They say that everyone should be treated equally.

Pupils can choose to take part in an extensive array of extra-curricular activities. Staff listen to pupil voice and provide activities that fire pupils' interests. These include board games, karaoke and French clubs. In addition, the school offers regular chances to take part in various local competitions. These activities nurture pupils' talents and add considerable value to their wider development.

Trustees and members of the local governing body carry out their statutory duties with rigour. They provide effective support and challenge in equal measure. Staff are very positive about their own development, workload and well-being. They feel valued by leaders and are proud to be part of a successful team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, teachers do not address misconceptions fully in pupils' learning. This means that some pupils' errors go unchecked, and they do not have a secure body of knowledge to build new learning upon. The school should ensure that pupils' misconceptions are effectively dealt with.
- In a few subjects, pupils do not have enough meaningful opportunities to revisit their previous learning. This means that they struggle to remember what they have learned. The school should ensure that pupils are helped to remember their prior learning so that they can build on what they know as they move through the curriculum.

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	141350
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10348312
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair of trust	John McClelland
CEO of the trust	Peter Ashworth
Headteacher	Kelly Harrison
Website	www.staidansblackburn.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher took up post in September 2024.
- This school is part of the Cidari Multi-Academy Trust.
- This Church of England Primary school is in the Diocese of Blackburn. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in March 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the 2025-26 academic year.
- The school manages an on-site breakfast club.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. She also met with members of the trust, including the chair of trustees and the local governing board. She also spoke with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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 inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Barraclough

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025