

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Giles C of E Academy

St Giles C of E Academy, Skinner Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 1HG

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 January 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Richard Grace. This school is part of Enhance 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), Mark Randall, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Janet Milne.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's Christian ethos is central to all that it has to offer. There is a strong culture of kindness and respect, where positive relationships flourish. Pupils live out the school's values from an early age, demonstrating exceptional manners and a mature approach to treating others with respect. They understand equality and recognise that discrimination is wrong, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone.

Outcomes for pupils are consistently strong. From their starting points, pupils achieve high standards across the curriculum. The school's high aspirations and inclusive opportunities help pupils thrive academically, socially and personally. This prepares them well for the future.

Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. They feel safe, supported and confident to express themselves. This supports pupils' health and well-being. In lessons, they are eager to learn, listen carefully and respond respectfully to teachers. High expectations for behaviour, along with clear routines, ensure a calm and productive learning environment.

Ambassador roles, tailored to pupils' strengths and interests, help develop leadership and responsibility. These roles inspire other pupils, who look up to their peers, to take on similar responsibilities. The school ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are included and valued.

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

The school has designed a highly ambitious curriculum. It starts from the early years, taking into account pupils' individual starting points. Opportunities to develop oracy and vocabulary are prioritised. Progression of knowledge is exceptionally well sequenced and clearly mapped out. This is evident in pupils' learning, as they confidently recall and discuss past knowledge and how it links with current learning. Teachers check the precise knowledge that pupils remember over time. Misconceptions are quickly addressed. This information is used effectively to adapt the curriculum so that gaps in learning are addressed successfully. The learning shown in pupils' books shows how pupils' knowledge builds over time.

Lessons are skilfully adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Staff quickly and accurately identify pupils with SEND and put support in place to meet any additional needs. Expert staff use carefully selected resources to ensure that all pupils have the support they need to achieve well. The small number of pupils in 'The Ark' provision are supported effectively in a nurturing, calm and ambitious environment.

Phonics and reading are taught consistently by highly skilled adults. Books are precisely matched to pupils' phonics ability. Clear routines and engaging strategies build fluency, accuracy and comprehension. Meticulous checks identify pupils who need support, ensuring that they catch up quickly through targeted interventions. Carefully chosen texts provide appropriate challenge, helping pupils become confident readers. In writing, grammar and punctuation are taught systematically. Pupils apply this knowledge to write at length and to a high standard.

In the early years, a carefully structured approach ensures children build a strong foundation to their learning. Communication and language are a high priority. Children's knowledge builds progressively from Nursery to Reception. Adults model speaking in full sentences and introduce key vocabulary. Targeted activities boost children's confidence in speaking. Mathematical development is seamlessly woven into daily play, with children exploring counting and matching in engaging ways. Physical development is enhanced through activities that build coordination and strength, such as handling small objects and using play dough. Outside, children engage in active play and physical activities, including physical education lessons.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They consistently remain focused and engaged. They show genuine interest in lessons, responding thoughtfully to teachers. Well-established routines and reward systems create a motivating environment. Outside the classroom, pupils are calm and confident. They handle minor conflicts maturely, resolve issues independently or seek support when needed.

The personal development curriculum is expertly tailored to the local context, covering issues like water and railway safety as well as online safety. This is meaningfully enriched with educational visits and visitors to school. The Christian ethos complements the personal development programme by embedding an understanding of global awareness.

Pupils contribute to the community through charity work and partnerships, including the local community kitchen and hospice.

Leaders at all levels are proud of the school. They continuously drive high standards. The support from the trust has had a significant positive impact on the development of the school. Regular professional development opportunities and a collaborative culture promote continuous improvement. Governors are well informed and understand the school's priorities for improvement. Staff feel valued in a supportive community that prioritises their well-being. There is a strong team approach. Parents and carers are extremely positive. They appreciate the school's warm atmosphere, strong values and excellent communication. They say their children are safe and thrive at St Giles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in September 2015.

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	140453
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10370372
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Janet Milne
CEO of the trust	Mark Randall
Headteacher	Richard Grace
Website	www.st-giles.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Enhance Academy Trust.
- The school is a Church of England primary school within the Anglican Diocese of Leeds. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in January 2024. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.
- The school runs a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND who attend the school. The provision mainly supports pupils with speech, language and communication needs.
- The school runs a breakfast club on site.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with a number of leaders including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector met with leaders from the trust, including the CEO. They met with the trustees, including the chair of the trust and members of the local governing body. They also met with a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, met with subject leaders, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They held discussions about the curriculum and spoke to staff. The inspector heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, at playtime and at lunchtime. The inspector spoke with pupils about their views of the school, their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils. They also took into account the views of parents and carers using Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View. These included comments received via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

Nicola Beaumont, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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