

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Giles School

Babworth Road, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 7NJ

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Inspection dates:

17 and 18 June 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.

## What is it like to attend this school?

St Giles provides pupils with an exceptional standard of education and care. Pupils love coming to school each day and cannot wait to start learning. Positive relationships, built on trust, ensure that pupils feel safe and are very well looked after by staff.

The school is highly ambitious for its pupils, including students in the sixth form. It works in close partnership with parents and carers to ensure that pupils' diverse needs are well known and closely met. Thanks to the school's strong culture of high expectations, pupils experience considerable success. They flourish academically and develop important life skills that prepare them well for their next steps.

The school environment is calm and conducive to learning. Soft music in the corridors helps pupils with visual impairments and sensory processing needs, in particular. Pupils appreciate the high-quality support from well-trained staff. The school's positive atmosphere encourages pupils to grow in confidence and become increasingly independent.

Pupils value the rich wealth of opportunities beyond the curriculum. Trips to London, sporting events, completing The Duke of Edinburgh's and King's Trust Awards, and serving the public in the school's café are just a few examples of how the school promotes pupils' talents and interests.

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

The school's strong curriculum is crafted meticulously to ensure that all pupils, including students in the sixth form, can excel. Staff are skilled at delivering this curriculum very

effectively so that pupils deepen their knowledge across a range of subjects. Throughout the curriculum, there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn important life skills and understand how these will help them in the future. The school makes sure that pupils are immersed fully in their learning and fulfil their potential.

Reading is a cornerstone of the curriculum in every year group. Children in early years start reading early and do remarkably well. The teaching of phonics is adapted appropriately to suit pupils' particular needs. For instance, pupils with severe learning difficulties learn to track lights from left to right, before moving on to text and phonics. Links to reading across all subjects give pupils plenty of opportunities to practise their skills. Daily story times further enrich their love of reading. Over time, pupils read with confidence and enjoy the wide range of books available.

Expert staff are very skilled at tailoring the curriculum and responding to pupils' changing needs. They consider carefully how best to achieve the targets on pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. Children in the early years are exposed to sensory experiences that provide excellent support for their development in all areas of learning. Across the school, staff consistently make sure that tasks and activities are suitably engaging, meaning that pupils are very keen to learn. Every opportunity is taken to enhance pupils' understanding, for example through targeted questions. There is also a keen focus on developing pupils' speech and language. Staff pay close attention to choosing suitable communication methods, for example eye gaze technology, symbols and signing. Pupils enjoy the varied curriculum and respond very positively to the experiences that the school offers.

From the early years through to the sixth form, pupils' behaviour is excellent. Well-established routines mean that pupils know what to expect and why. This creates a nurturing environment, with a strong culture of mutual respect and responsibility. Pupils respond positively to staff praise. They take part in their learning with curiosity and enthusiasm and are highly motivated to do well. They often demonstrate the school's values, such as respect and consideration. This friendly atmosphere also enhances pupils' social and emotional well-being.

During social times, the interactions that pupils have with their peers and the whole school community are superb. Pupils make the most of the school's excellent facilities, both indoors and outside, some of which they have helped to design. For example, pupils explore friendship through science activities in the sensory quad, and they enjoy spending time in nature. Pupils are encouraged to build their resilience and believe in their own abilities to succeed.

The school's enrichment activities are plentiful and varied. They are chosen very carefully to expand pupils' horizons. In school, pupil presidents share the views of their peers with school leaders. Through the comprehensive personal development programme, pupils discuss important topics such as democracy and diversity. Pupils understand what it means to be a responsible citizen and the meaningful role they can play in society. They become well-rounded individuals who are very well prepared to move on to their next steps.

Leaders at all levels are highly responsive in their approach to school improvement. They stay very well informed about the latest developments in education. As part of this, they host a showcase for other schools to share best practice. Staff appreciate the excellent training that they receive and how well they are supported in their roles.

The governing body is integral to creating the school's positive educational climate. Governors use their extensive experience and knowledge to add valuable insights that support the school's work. Everyone in this school is completely committed to supporting pupils and ensuring that they are successful.

## **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 December 2012.

## **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

|                                                   |                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 122955                                                                   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Nottinghamshire County Council                                           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10379557                                                                 |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | All-through special                                                      |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Community special                                                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 3 to 18                                                                  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Mixed                                                                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed                                                                    |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 200                                                                      |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 20                                                                       |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | The governing body                                                       |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>                    | William Iliffe                                                           |
| <b>Principal</b>                                  | Matthew Rooney (Executive Principal)                                     |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.st-giles.notts.sch.uk">www.st-giles.notts.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | 21 November 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005              |

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternate provision.
- All pupils in the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All of them have an EHC plan.
- The school caters for pupils who may have visual impairment, speech, language and communication needs, autism, and hearing impairment.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive principal and senior leaders, and spoke to staff.
- Inspectors also met with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also spoke to some subject leaders.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff. They also reviewed the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors also considered pupils' views about the school during formal meetings and informal conversations.

### **Inspection team**

Richard Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz Moore

Ofsted Inspector

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