Inspection of a good school: St Giles Church of England Primary School

Starkholmes Road, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3DD

Inspection date: 16 July 2024

Outcome

St Giles Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Ben O'Connell. This school is part of Derby Diocesan 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), Dr Sarah Clark, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Charles.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small and inclusive school, with a strong determination for all pupils to do well. Following a period of instability, the school has settled since joining a local partnership of schools. The strengthened leadership has developed an ambitious curriculum and is driving improvements.

The school has increased its expectations of pupils' behaviour. In 'circle time', when pupils sit and talk, they discuss how to be 'calm, kind and mindful'. They encourage each other to follow these expectations throughout the school day. Pupils listen to each other and try their best in lessons. They play kindly in the sporting activities at lunchtimes. Children in the Reception Year take turns when playing board games. They work together to tidy up for lessons.

There are opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school, as a school councillor, librarian or sports leader for example. Pupils enjoy attending sports clubs, gardening club and the choir. Younger pupils excitedly take part in sporting events, alongside pupils from the partnership schools.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Staff know them individually well. Pupils can talk to them about any worry they may have. Most parents are happy with the school. They value the care and commitment of staff.

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

The school has made sure that pupils receive a broad and engaging curriculum. Starting from the early years, they have identified the important knowledge they want pupils to

learn. There is a clear sequence for teaching this. Pupils find lessons interesting, and their achievement is improving. As many changes are recent, some curriculum plans are being taught for the first time. Therefore, the impact on pupils' published outcomes is not fully evident yet. Nevertheless, current pupils are benefiting from the implementation of the new curriculum. Children in the Reception Year talk knowledgeably about number bonds and odd and even numbers. Older pupils show increasing fluency with number and calculation. Pupils enjoy learning about the range of art media and artistic styles. Individual subject plans are ambitious and cover a lot of content. Occasionally, there is little time for pupils to gain more in-depth knowledge. This makes it harder for pupils to explain important mathematical vocabulary or hone their drawing skills, for example.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They explain and model learning clearly. They emphasise important vocabulary and revisit content from previous lessons. Teachers select appropriate activities and helpful resources. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access all activities. Through talking with these pupils, staff gain a clear understanding of their difficulties and their needs. They provide tailored support to enable pupils with SEND to achieve well. Parents speak highly of this support.

Reading is a priority. The new phonics programme and more consistent implementation of the curriculum has brought significant improvements. Well trained staff deliver it effectively and keep a sharp eye on pupils' progress. Pupils confidently use their phonics knowledge when reading and spelling words. Pupils who struggle are expertly supported to become fluent readers. Throughout school, staff carefully use assessment to make sure pupils practise with books of appropriate difficulty. All pupils regularly read to their teacher. Teachers read to pupils every day too. They carefully select texts that pupils enjoy and that also provide pupils with a broader view of life. Sometimes, pupils are treated to a story from a 'secret parent reader'.

The school emphasises the importance of regular attendance. Extra support and encouragement are provided through supporting families and offering free clubs. Absence is followed up robustly. Making attendance a priority has led to improvements. While pupils' behaviour has also improved, there is a very small number of pupils who sometimes do not make good choices. This can worry a few pupils. Very occasionally the extra support and encouragement staff provide is not swift enough.

The curriculum for pupils' broader development has been redesigned and continues to be refined. The school has selected a considered range of activities, such as trips to the theatre and putting on a musical instrument performance. In the forest school, pupils build resilience making shelters and building obstacle courses. Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They learn about healthy relationships and managing their emotions. Through class assemblies, the school has introduced values that are important in Britain today. Pupils respect difference and understand that people should be treated fairly. However, not all pupils have an age-appropriate knowledge of fundamental British values yet.

Staff are proud and happy to work at the school. Leaders are considerate of their well-being. Staff appreciate the support of subject leaders from the local partnership of schools

to help develop their subjects. With many subjects and few staff, this makes the workload more manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Much of the curriculum is new and in the early stages of implementation. Some subject plans cover a lot in too little time for pupils to develop sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding. Pupils have not acquired all the knowledge intended yet and they occasionally find it hard to recall recently taught content. The school should continue to refine the curriculum plans as they are fully implemented, to enable pupils to develop a deeper understanding of what is being taught.
- Older pupils welcome the changes in the new behaviour policy but say a very small number of pupils do not consistently follow the school's high expectations, and on a few occasions staff do not remedy their poor behaviour swiftly enough. When this happens, it upsets a few pupils and can take their attention away from their learning. The school should ensure that pupils are consistently challenged and supported to maintain the school's high expectations.
- The school's approach for teaching pupils about British values is not fully developed. As a result, some pupils do not have an age-appropriate depth of understanding of these. The school should ensure that all pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of the key values that will prepare them for life in modern Britain.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2018.

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	141674
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10313293
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Charles
CEO of the trust	Dr Sarah Clark
Headteacher	Ben O'Connell
Website	www.stgilesceprimarymatlock.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust.
- The school is also a part of the Matlock & Dales Primary Partnership. The headteacher is the executive headteacher of the other three schools in the partnership. The leadership of the school is being restructured and a head of school role has been appointed for September 2024. The current headteacher will then take the role of executive headteacher of the school.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Derby. The most recent section 48 inspection of this Church of England and Methodist school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in November 2017.
- The school does not make use of alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trust and some school governors. She also met with the CEO and other trust leaders. The inspectors met with senior leaders of the school, and of the partnership schools, and considered a range of documentation provided.
- The inspectors conducted deep dives into the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art and design. 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. The lead inspector listened as pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during playtime.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils, staff and some parents. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, as well as the staff and the pupil surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.

Inspection team

Claire Stylianides, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Anderson	Ofsted Inspector

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