

Inspection of St Aidan's Church of England Academy

Smithy Close, Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD8 9DQ

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 January 2025

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

The headteacher of this school is Alison Walshe. This school is part of Learning Accord 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, Elaine Watson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gillian Hamer.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this school. They form positive relationships and care for each other, demonstrating the school's vision to 'love, laugh, learn and live'. The school has high expectations of pupils who demonstrate excellent behaviour. Parents and carers value the school and say the school 'helps pupils to be the best version of themselves'.

At St Aidan's, all pupils benefit from a well-considered, enriching personal development offer. The school has carefully planned opportunities for pupils to learn knowledge such as about equality, diversity and difference. This prepares them exceptionally well for their next steps. Pupils show respect, consideration and kindness towards others and say they want to make a real difference to the world.

The school's offer for extra-curricular activities allows pupils to enjoy new activities, for example the wide range of sports clubs. It provides alternative opportunities for pupils who cannot attend these after the school day. This means all pupils benefit from this offer.

Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. A well-planned curriculum across the range of subjects means that pupils are increasingly prepared to move to their next phase of education. Teachers deliver this in interesting and engaging ways and have high expectations of pupils' work.

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

The school is clear that it wants all pupils to be able to read well by the end of Year 2. Pupils learn to read as soon as they start at the school. This includes many opportunities to build their knowledge of letter sounds to help pupils develop confidence and fluency. Additional help is given to pupils who need extra support. As a result, pupils achieve well. Teachers use their expert knowledge to teach pupils well and follow the phonics programme carefully. Pupils enjoy reading and share many examples of their favourite books that they read with teachers and peers.

The school's mathematics curriculum ensures that pupils learn number facts and practise what they know in tricky problems. Teachers provide extra effective support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), such as by using practical resources or different questions where needed. Children in the early years learn the basic skills that they need in mathematics quickly. For instance, they grasp a good understanding of the meaning of numbers.

Mostly, the rest of the curriculum is well designed. The school helps teachers to deliver the curriculum intelligently. However, in a few subjects, the knowledge that pupils need is not identified clearly. This means that pupils' learning occasionally is less focused on the specific knowledge that they need to know.

The school quickly identifies and supports pupils with SEND. Most teachers know how to support pupils' learning effectively, and they check what pupils know and remember well. As a result, pupils with SEND learn the ambitious curriculum alongside their peers.

The school has recently revised its behaviour policy to further recognise pupils' positive behaviour. Pupils follow these expectations well. For pupils who need support to manage their feelings and behaviour, staff take a skilful, nurturing approach. Consequently, school is a calm and orderly place where learning proceeds without disruption. Children in the early years follow planned routines and show respect to each other. As a result, they play happily with their peers.

The school's personal development offer ensures that pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils know how to care for their mental and physical health. The school's excellent work to develop pupils' cultural knowledge enables them to respect differences between people.

The school has established first-rate opportunities for pupils' wider development at the heart of its work. Pupils with leadership roles speak confidently about what it means to be a great leader. For example, the eco committee used recycled materials to create a 'light up the woods' event for the community. They have won awards for their achievements.

Parents and carers speak positively about the school's work. Parents of pupils in the early years say that children settle happily into school life. Relationships between staff and parents support this significantly.

Staff are proud to work at the school. The changes that the school has made to its curriculum is supporting staff's workload. Governors hold leaders to account and invest their time thoughtfully.

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 few subjects, the school does not identify the smaller steps of knowledge that staff should teach. As a result, pupils sometimes miss steps in their learning. The school should ensure that the key knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember is identified across all subjects and phases.

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	143228
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10370374
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gillian Hamer
CEO of the trust	Elaine Watson
Headteacher	Alison Walshe
Website	www.saintaidans.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Learning Accord Academy Trust.
- The school is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- This Church of England school is part of the diocese of Leeds. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2023.
- The school does not use any 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 and/or sixth form provision). 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 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 held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. An inspector also met with the trust CEO, chair of the board and local governing board.
- 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils with leadership responsibilities.
- 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 that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the surveys for staff.

Inspection team

Katie Hall, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lindsay Lomas

Ofsted Inspector

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