

# Inspection of a good school: Saint Aidan's Church of England High School

Cartgate, Preesall, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire FY6 0NP

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Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2023

## Outcome

Saint Aidan's Church of England High School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe because they are confident that they can ask staff for help if they need to. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), said that staff will listen to and act on their concerns.

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils. Pupils are eager to do their best. They benefit from a well-taught curriculum and a wealth of wider opportunities that prepare them well for their next steps. Pupils achieve well.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave sensibly, and they have respectful and friendly relationships with staff. If bullying occurs, staff deal with these incidents quickly and appropriately.

Pupils experience a well-rounded education. They enjoy the wide range of subjects and activities available to them, such as astronomy club. Added to this, some pupils have recently visited Barcelona and Germany, and others have enjoyed a ski trip to Austria.

Pupils are encouraged to work towards an awards scheme which leaders encourage pupils to participate in to enhance their personal development. For instance, pupils enjoy taking part in sponsored events and leading clubs for the benefit of younger pupils. Others are eager to take up positions of responsibility.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is appropriately ambitious and that pupils learn the content outlined in the national curriculum. Leaders have identified the key knowledge that pupils need to know, and they ensure that staff are clear about the order in which this content should be delivered. In the main, this helps pupils to gain a deep body of subject knowledge over time.

Leaders provide appropriate support, guidance and training for staff to deliver curriculums with confidence. Teachers, including staff teaching outside their subject specialisms, are equipped well to design suitable learning for pupils. Staff have strong knowledge of their subjects.

In most subjects, staff select activities to enable pupils to revisit and recap what they have learned previously. This helps to secure pupils' earlier learning and means that they are in a strong position to apply prior knowledge to more complex tasks. However, in a small number of subjects, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to consolidate what they already know. From time to time, this hinders some pupils when they move on to new learning.

For the most part, teachers use assessment strategies well to identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge. They use this information to adapt learning to ensure that pupils quickly catch up with what they may have missed or forgotten.

Leaders have appropriate systems in place to quickly identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders ensure that teachers are informed well about the needs of this group of pupils. This helps staff to successfully adapt how they deliver the curriculum for pupils with SEND. Leaders also ensure that pupils who find reading difficult receive appropriate help to support them to catch up quickly.

Leaders have ensured that staff and pupils are clear about the systems to manage pupils' behaviour. Staff use these systems consistently well. As a result, pupils' behaviour during lessons is calm, purposeful and rarely disrupted by their peers.

Leaders place a high priority on pupils' personal development. Pupils benefit from a carefully designed programme of learning to enhance their wider development. Leaders have given much thought to the important content that pupils need to know to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Pupils develop their understanding of important concepts over time. For example, pupils learn in an age-appropriate way about the characteristics of healthy relationships.

Leaders have designed a comprehensive careers programme for pupils. Through this programme, pupils acquire the knowledge that they need to confidently choose the next steps in their education, training or employment.

Governors support and challenge leaders in equal measure to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are trained well to identify safeguarding concerns, which they pass on to the safeguarding team in a timely manner. The safeguarding team is adept in following up concerns appropriately so that vulnerable pupils and their families receive timely support.

Leaders ensure that pupils are given the support that they need, both within school and through links with external agencies.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes when working online and when using social media apps.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a small number of subjects, pupils do not have enough opportunities to consolidate earlier learning. On occasion, this hinders some pupils from learning as deeply as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers in these subjects afford pupils regular opportunities to revisit and build on what they already know.

## **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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2013.

## **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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119789
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10286261
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	848
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ian Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Smith
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk">www.st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school makes use of two registered alternative providers to provide full-time education for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Saint Aidan's is a Church of England voluntary-aided high school in the Diocese of Blackburn. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in March 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. Inspectors spoke with governors, including the vice-chair of governors, along with a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors checked on leaders' safeguarding procedures, including the checks made when new staff are appointed. Inspectors met with those responsible for governance, leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography and modern foreign languages. Inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, spoke with teachers and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments received via Ofsted's free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour at social times and as they moved around the school site.

### **Inspection team**

Phill Walmsley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Wright

Ofsted Inspector

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