

Inspection of an outstanding school: St Silas Church of England Primary School

High Park Street, Toxteth, Liverpool, Merseyside L8 3TP

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 June 2024

Outcome

St Silas Church of England Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

The headteacher of this school is Richard Morris. This school is part of Rainbow Education Multi-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), Gina Donaldson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dave Cadwallader.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school from the time they enter the building to the point at which they leave at the end of the day. Pupils and their families benefit from an incredibly strong sense of belonging to the school community. Everyone is made to feel welcome, especially those who have arrived from different countries from around the world.

Pupils' conduct is exemplary. They follow the school rules and make sure that everyone is well cared for and safe. Pupils' manners are particularly notable. They greet adults, visitors and other pupils with great courtesy and high levels of respect.

The school has exceptionally high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils respond to these aspirations with enthusiasm and a real desire to learn. They come to lessons eager to build on what they have learned before. Pupils ask insightful questions and benefit from the skilful way in which staff help them to remember what they have learned. As a result, pupils are very well prepared to move to secondary school when they leave Year 6.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of clubs that are on offer. These activities enhance their talents and nurture their interests. They make a valuable contribution to school life. For example, the school council was pivotal in the changes that have been made to lunchtime routines. Pupils also play a role within their community, by visiting residential homes and packing bags at the local supermarket.

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

The curriculum has been carefully crafted to meet pupils' interests, to capture the diverse nature of the school and to help pupils succeed. Subject curriculums are ambitious. They

set out the most important knowledge that pupils will learn in each unit of work and over time. This means that staff have all of the information that they need to build pupils' knowledge securely.

Staff are suitably trained and highly skilled in their delivery of the curriculum. They explain new learning clearly and adapt activities well to meet the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables pupils to excel in their learning. Pupils achieve highly across the curriculum.

The school has a well-established approach to check on pupils' learning. This allows staff to intervene swiftly when they spot that pupils have made errors or developed misconceptions. This approach also means that the additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly so that these pupils get the support that they need.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading a broad range of texts by different authors. Children in the early years, including those who access the provision for two-year-olds, are immersed in language. This sets them up well to recognise sounds and the letters that they represent when they begin the phonics programme in the Reception Year. The phonics programme is taught consistently well. Pupils who find reading difficult receive the support that they need to keep pace with their classmates. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils are confident and fluent readers.

From the start of the early years, children, including those who access the provision for two-year-olds, develop positive attitudes to learning. This continues as pupils move through each year group. Their desire to learn means that they concentrate fully and aim to do their very best. These attitudes ensure that learning time is unhindered by any disruption.

The school prioritises pupils' attendance. It takes effective action to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and on time. As a result, pupils' rates of attendance are high.

Pupils flourish as well-rounded youngsters. This is due to the high-quality provision that the school has in place to support pupils' personal development. Pupils take part in activities that enrich their life experience, for example going to the theatre, museums and galleries. The school takes every opportunity to ensure that pupils recognise and celebrate the many nationalities represented across the school. Pupils are highly respectful of one another. They take great pride in their language and culture and that of their friends.

Trustees and members of the local academy committee body know the school very well. This enables those responsible for governance to provide appropriate support and challenge. The school is especially mindful of staff's workload. For example, the school ensures that staff have the opportunity to work with colleagues in other trust schools to share their ideas and learn from the expertise of others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in November 2017.

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	141582
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10314043
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dave Cadwallader
CEO of the trust	Gina Donaldson
Headteacher	Richard Morris
Website	www.stsilasprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, took place in June 2017. The next inspection is scheduled to take place in the 2024/25 academic year.
- The school is part of the Rainbow Education Multi-Academy Trust.
- A new headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school has a class for two-year-old children.
- The school offers before- and after-school provision.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- 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 carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a sample of pupils' work, spoke with teachers and talked with pupils about their learning.
- The inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also considered the curriculum in other areas. This included talking with pupils and scrutinising curriculum documentation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and other leaders. She also met with the chair of the trust and members of the local academy council, including the chair.
- The inspector met with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour as they arrived at school and during lessons and breaktimes. She also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. In addition, she also spoke to a number of parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- The inspector considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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