

Inspection of a good school: St James' Church of England Academy

Dorchester Road, Bransholme, Hull HU7 6BD

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 September 2023

Outcome

St James' Church of England Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Miss Julia Strickland. This school is part of Hope Sentamu Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Helen Winn, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tony Myers.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a welcoming environment for pupils. As part of its Christian ethos, the school emphasises to pupils the importance of respect, kindness and perseverance. This work is seen in the positive relationships pupils have with each other and the adults in school.

Pupils' behaviour reflects adults' high expectations of them. Pupils recognise that poor behaviour is infrequent. Adults deal with these instances effectively. Pupils feel safe in school. Pupils share any worries with adults. The adults help them quickly and effectively.

Pupils benefit from several opportunities to explore their talents and interests. The majority of pupils participate in at least one extra-curricular club. The school has plans to add more variety to this offer. Most pupils attend a residential visit during their time at the school. For example, the school took Year 6 on an outdoor pursuits residential visit to develop pupils' resilience and independence.

The school has a strong focus on ensuring that pupils achieve well. Most pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. In lessons, pupils are attentive and contribute positively. Pupils develop secure knowledge and skills from across the curriculum.

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

Pupils study an ambitious curriculum. The school has considered the order in which pupils will learn new content. The curriculum is carefully organised to effectively build on pupils' knowledge from the early years. The school has recently strengthened the curriculum that pupils study in some subjects, such as history. Increasingly, these improvements include

enrichment opportunities linked to subjects. For example, pupils experience an extra-curricular visit to learn about Hull's maritime past during their local history unit.

In lessons, teachers prioritise the teaching of important vocabulary. Adults, including those working with children in the early years, consistently model the accurate use of vocabulary to pupils. Teachers use a consistent approach in lessons. They use this approach effectively to support pupils to develop their knowledge of the curriculum. Pupils regularly discuss their learning, which helps to deepen their understanding. In some lessons, teachers do not routinely check on what pupils know and remember from the curriculum. When this happens, opportunities to correct pupils' misconceptions can be missed.

Children in the early years make a positive start at school. Adults take opportunities to teach children how to behave appropriately. This is reflected in the consideration that children show to each other. Children sustain concentration during activities and enjoy their learning. Adults make use of well-chosen questions to strengthen children's knowledge. For example, by reinforcing children's understanding of counting while investigating insects as part of their learning about the natural world.

Staff are knowledgeable about the teaching of early reading. The school's phonics lessons are taught in a consistent way. Over time, pupils learn to read with expression when reading aloud. Most pupils achieve well in national phonics assessments. Pupils who struggle receive effective additional help to keep up with their peers. The school correctly identified that some pupils do not read fluently. The school has recently taken additional actions to provide further support to these pupils.

The school has effective systems for identifying the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school works effectively with external agencies, parents and carers to support pupils with SEND. Teachers make appropriate adaptations to their lessons to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

The school places importance on pupils' personal development as well as their academic progress. The school provides pupils with a range of support, including sessions to help pupils maintain positive mental health and teaching pupils mindfulness techniques. Pupils know broadly how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils' understanding of the personal, social and health education curriculum is strong. They talk confidently about the fundamental British values, such as tolerance and the rule of law, as well as other faiths and beliefs.

Pupils undertake a range of leadership roles, such as playtime buddies, library monitors and student council members. These roles allow pupils to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. Recently, the school council organised a charitable obstacle course event as part of their fundraising to help the local church make repairs.

Those with responsibility for governance have a clear vision for the school. They provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. The school has revised some subject curriculums and has introduced a number of other new initiatives, such as those to support pupils' reading fluency. In some cases, these are very recent and not securely

established. The multi-academy trust's central team is providing effective support to enable school leaders to embed these changes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, opportunities are missed to identify and correct pupils' misconceptions as quickly as possible. When this happens, pupils' progress through the intended curriculum slows. The school should ensure that teachers effectively check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching based on the information they gather.
- The school has recently made changes to some subject curriculums and launched other new initiatives. Some of these are led by new leaders or are not well established. The trust should ensure that effective support enables new leaders to be highly effective in their role and to successfully embed recent initiatives.

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 January 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	141387
Local authority	Kingston Upon Hull City Council
Inspection number	10255870
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tony Myers
Principal	Julia Strickland
Website	www.stj.hslt.academy
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Hope Sentamu Learning Trust multi-academy trust.
- The principal is new to their post since the previous inspection.
- A small number of leaders are new to the school or their current responsibilities since September 2023.
- The school is part of the Church of England Diocese of York. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with members of the trust board, the local governing body and the trust's chief executive officer.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the principal. He also met with other senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding and personal development.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation regarding the support pupils with SEND receive. He looked at the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND in lessons.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. He checked records of actions taken by leaders to keep pupils safe. The inspector scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks.
- A wide range of pupils and staff talked with the inspector, formally and informally, about the safeguarding culture in school over the course of the inspection.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes from governing board meetings as well as the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The inspector looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. He observed the behaviour of pupils at social times.
- The views of pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys were considered.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Thomas Wraith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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