

Inspection of St Aidan's Church of England High School

Oatlands Drive, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 8JR

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Aidan's Church of England High School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Aidan's Church of England High School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have not put effective arrangements in place to safeguard pupils. Some staff do not understand the range of safeguarding risks that pupils may face, or their responsibilities to take action to protect pupils. Leaders have not taken timely action when pupils are vulnerable to harm. The school's curriculum does not support pupils to develop an appropriate understanding of the safeguarding risks they may face beyond the school. These shortcomings in the safeguarding culture at St Aidan's put pupils at risk of harm.

Most pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn. They achieve well. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic achievements. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They are passionate about the subjects that they teach.

Most pupils show positive attitudes towards learning. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils enjoy attending the broad range of enrichment activities that the school offers.

Sixth-form students act as role models for younger pupils. Students enjoy their sixth-form experience and the wide range of qualifications they study. They are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment and training.

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

Leaders, including governors and trustees, have an overgenerous view of the school's performance. Because of this, governors and trustees have not held leaders effectively to account for the impact of their work. Trustees and governors have not assured themselves accurately about the effectiveness of the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils.

Pupils access a broad curriculum, and many continue their study of subjects such as history, geography and modern foreign languages when they select option choices for Year 10 and beyond. Teachers' strong subject knowledge enables them to carefully plan sequences of lessons that build on what pupils already know. Teachers ensure that there are opportunities for pupils to revisit previous learning. Pupils remember what they have been taught. They take pride in their work. Most pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. In many subjects, leaders have ensured a well-planned curriculum. This helps teachers to be clear about what pupils should learn and remember. However, in some subjects, the curriculum has not been as precisely planned out. Because of this, there are some inconsistencies in what teachers intend for each year group to learn.

Teachers make effective use of the support and advice provided by the school's special educational needs team. Staff are ambitious for all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are well supported by teaching assistants.

The curriculum for reading is planned well to help confident readers to further develop their comprehension and inference skills. However, pupils who cannot read fluently are not supported well enough. Leaders have not ensured that staff use a consistent approach to enable pupils to quickly learn to read.

Many sixth-form students go on to study at university and in further education. A number of students in the sixth form study the extended project qualification. This helps them to expand their interests and provides further academic study.

The majority of pupils show positive attitudes towards learning. They attend well. There are positive relationships between pupils and staff. Those pupils who need to improve their behaviour feel well supported by staff. Teachers quickly deal with any low-level misbehaviour so that lessons are not disrupted.

All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that when bullying occurs, it is dealt with effectively by adults in school. This was also the view of most parents who responded to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire. However, a few parents and some pupils who responded to Ofsted's surveys do not feel that bullying is managed well. Pupils told inspectors that they hear homophobic language in school. Leaders have themselves identified this issue and are taking action to address it.

Pupils' spiritual and moral understanding is developed well through the school's Christian values and ethos. The extensive range of enrichment opportunities adds to pupils' rich experiences. While some of these opportunities have been affected by the pandemic, many are now up and running again. This includes the school's annual drama production. Leaders have developed a new relationships and sex education policy. Leaders have not consulted with parents on this policy.

A range of effective support is in place to help pupils to make choices about their next steps in employment, education and training. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. There are opportunities for external providers to come into school and talk to pupils about careers opportunities. The school holds an annual careers convention to provide information to pupils about the options open to them when they leave school. Pupils have access to dedicated careers advisers. Leaders use the Gatsby benchmarks to check the effectiveness of the school's careers programme. There was reduced careers provision during the pandemic. This is reflected in some pupils' responses to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire.

Leaders, governors and trustees carefully consider staff's workload. The vast majority of staff feel well supported by senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have not ensured that rigorous checks are made, as required by statutory guidance, on the suitability of adults to work with pupils. Inspectors identified gaps in the recruitment checks made on staff. Leaders do not undertake appropriate

checks on sixth-form work experience providers to ensure their suitability for students.

Leaders have not checked sufficiently well on staff's understanding of the safeguarding training they receive. Some leaders and staff do not have an up-to-date knowledge of statutory guidance or safeguarding risks to pupils. This leads to inconsistencies in their understanding of how to keep pupils safe.

Leaders do not consistently take the right action to protect pupils. For example, leaders do not ensure that they consistently follow statutory guidance when there are incidents of peer-on-peer abuse. Referrals to outside agencies are not always timely when there are concerns about pupils. Safeguarding records do not consistently reflect when actions have been taken or the follow-up action by staff.

Most pupils know how to keep safe online. However, the curriculum has not prepared pupils, including students in the sixth form, to understand the risks they may face outside school, such as those from county lines activity.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders and staff do not have a suitable understanding of statutory guidance and their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. This puts pupils at risk. Leaders and governors should take urgent action to ensure that the arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective. This should include ensuring that appropriate checks are conducted on the suitability of adults to work with pupils. Leaders should also ensure that timely action is taken where pupils are at risk of harm and that accurate records are maintained of the school's work to protect and support pupils. Leaders must also check that all staff have knowledge of the range of safeguarding risks that pupils face and understand their responsibilities to take action where pupils may be at risk of harm.
- Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are not aware of the safeguarding risks they may face in the local community and beyond. This reduces pupils' ability to take steps to keep themselves safe from harm. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to understand the range of risks they may face, both online and offline.
- In some subjects, such as history and physical education (PE), curriculum plans do not identify the important knowledge and skills that pupils should be taught. This means that some teachers do not share the same expectations about the content that pupils must learn and remember. Curriculum leaders should ensure that curriculum plans precisely identify the important knowledge and skills that pupils must learn and remember in each subject.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

Unique reference number	137139
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10199307
Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1995
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	669
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alison Glover
Headteacher	Christopher Burt
Website	www.staidans.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Yorkshire Causeway Schools Trust.
- The headteacher is also the executive leader of the trust.
- The school's sixth form is an associated sixth form with another local school.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much lower than the national average.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative education provider: Strive for Education.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in January 2018. Leaders anticipate that the next section 48 inspection will be due from September 2022.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and associate headteacher, senior leaders and a number of curriculum leaders and staff. Meetings were also held with leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance, safeguarding and special educational needs. The lead inspector met with a group of governors and trustees.
- An inspector visited the alternative education provider used by the school.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: PE, history, mathematics, English and science. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to teachers. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans in these subjects and others.
- An inspector listened to some Year 8 pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents relating to the school's work. This included the school's work to safeguard pupils. Inspectors looked at pupils' welfare records and the school's analysis of attendance, exclusions and bullying incidents, and explored the training staff receive to keep pupils safe. An inspector reviewed the school's single central record, which includes recruitment checks made on staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils when they visited lessons, during breaktimes and lunchtimes and at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspection team took into account the views of 340 pupils and 120 staff who responded to Ofsted's inspection questionnaires. Inspectors also considered the 339 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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