

Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Academy

Aigburth Road, Liverpool, Merseyside L17 6AB

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The executive headteacher of this school is Jeniffer Sing. The school is part of the Liverpool Joint Catholic and Church of England Academies Trust (the trust also has an operating name: All Saints 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), Heather Duggan and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Matthew Elliott.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are proud to be part of St Margaret's Church of England Academy. They enjoy strong relationships with their teachers and other staff. Pupils feel safe when they are in school. They know who to speak to if they are worried or upset.

The school is ambitious for pupils to succeed. Pupils are increasingly benefiting from the improvements that the school has made to the quality of education that it provides. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), progress well through the curriculum in most subjects.

Pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and when moving between lessons is generally calm. In lessons pupils listen respectfully to their teachers and to each other.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to be increasingly independent as learners. They are helped to understand the wider world. Many pupils benefit from a wide range of sporting, music and other enrichment activities. Students in the sixth form are excellent role models for younger pupils.

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

Recently, the school, with the support of the trust, has taken steps to make its curriculum more ambitious. All pupils, including those with SEND, study a broad range of subjects at key stage 3. At key stage 4, the school has raised pupils' aspirations. This means that the proportion of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is increasing. In the sixth form students can choose from a wide range of subjects to pursue their particular interests and future career choices.

The school has designed subject curriculums that allow pupils to build their knowledge in a logical way. Each subject curriculum sets out clearly for staff the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn. Across all key stages, most pupils achieve well.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. This helps them to deliver subject curriculums well. Most teachers explain topics clearly to pupils. They make sure that important learning is revisited. However, in a small number of subjects, at key stages 3 and 4, some teachers do not choose the most appropriate methods to help pupils to understand key knowledge. Occasionally, teachers do not check carefully enough that pupils have understood what they have learned before moving on to a new topic. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their learning. They struggle to recall what has been taught. This prevents them from progressing as well as they should through these curriculums. In the sixth form, students are conscientious in correcting any mistakes that are identified by their teachers and adding extra detail to their work.

The school and the trust have taken action to improve the identification of the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils are identified quickly and accurately. The school has recently provided teachers with suitable information and training on how to support pupils with SEND more effectively in the classroom. As a result, pupils with SEND progress well through the same ambitious subject curriculums as their peers.

Reading has a high profile across the school. Gaps in pupils' reading knowledge are identified quickly. Those pupils who find reading difficult receive effective support from trained staff. This helps them become accurate and fluent readers who can access the curriculum with greater confidence.

Pupils behave well. They enjoy socialising with each other at breaks and lunchtimes. However, a small number of pupils in each year group present challenging patterns of behaviour and cause disruption in some lessons and around the school. This is because the strategies that the school uses to manage pupils' behaviour are not effective in modifying the conduct of this small minority of pupils.

The school has appropriate processes in place for tackling any concerns about pupils' attendance. The school seeks to understand the underlying causes of a pupil's absence. It then works thoughtfully with the pupil and their family to improve their attendance rates.

The school shows a strong commitment to ensure that pupils, and students in the sixth form, build the knowledge that they need to be well prepared for life beyond school. The well designed 'learning for life' lessons allow pupils time to discuss and reflect on more sensitive issues including relationships, sex and health matters.

All pupils receive age-appropriate careers education, including independent advice about future careers and further education opportunities. The school's ambition for its pupils is reflected in the priority it gives to providing all pupils with opportunities to visit higher education institutions and to learn about apprenticeships. All pupils in key stage 4 and students in the sixth form have the opportunity to attend a work experience placement.

Recently, with the support of the trust, the pace of school improvement has quickened. Considerable and positive change has been achieved with the support of the vast majority of staff. Leaders at all levels have been considerate of staff's workload and well-being. The trust has supported the school by appointing new, experienced staff in various positions. This has strengthened the school's capacity for improvement. Members of the local governing body support school leaders through their expertise in educational matters.

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 small number of subjects, in key stages 3 and 4, some teachers do not choose the most suitable techniques to help pupils understand subject content. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This hinders how well they progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, teachers are fully equipped to deliver curriculum content consistently well so that pupils know and remember important knowledge.
- In a small number of subjects, in key stages 3 and 4, teachers do not check pupils' understanding well enough. This means that pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and misconceptions which go unchecked. The school should ensure that in all subjects, teachers identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge so that they can build on what they know when new learning is introduced.
- A small minority of pupils in each year group, across key stages 3 and 4, present challenging behaviour and cause disruption in some lessons and around the school. This is because the school's strategies for behaviour management are not effective in modifying the conduct of this small minority of pupils. The school should ensure that it reviews its behaviour policy and strategies for managing behaviour so that learning is not disrupted.

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	138850
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10294372
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	998
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	149
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Matthew Elliott
CEO of the trust	Heather Duggan
Headteacher	Jeniffer Sing (executive headteacher)
Website	www.stmargaretsacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 November 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Saint Margaret's Church of England Academy joined the Liverpool joint Catholic and Church of England Academies Trust in October 2023.
- This is a faith school. It is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in July 2017. The school is awaiting confirmation from the diocese about its next section 48 inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at two registered alternative

providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued 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, staff and members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- An inspector met with the CEO of the trust and trustees.
- An inspector spoke to representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's improvement plans, records of governing body meetings and analysis of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took into account 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and visited some lessons in those subjects.
- Inspectors also visited a number of other lessons in other subjects in the sixth form.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Katy Robinson

Ofsted Inspector

Dawn Farrent

Ofsted Inspector

Neil Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024