

Inspection of Sacriston Academy

Witton Road, Sacriston, Durham, DH7 6LQ

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending this school. They are happy and feel safe. Pupils are proud of their school. They think the staff are kind and helpful.

All involved in the school have the highest expectations for every child. Leaders have planned a curriculum to meet pupils' academic and personal development. This helps pupils to achieve successfully. Staff tailor lessons carefully to ensure that all pupils are learning well. This is particularly effective in the early years provision.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Children in the early years quickly learn the school's routines. Pupils listen very attentively in lessons. They move around school sensibly. Playtimes and lunchtimes are active and fun. Most pupils believe that bullying does not happen. Those who think it does believe that staff will help resolve this quickly. Parents are positive about the behaviour of pupils. Pupils' attendance is high and pupils arrive punctually. The early years setting is well organised and welcoming.

The school provides extensive development of pupils' citizenship qualities. There are wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to take leadership roles in school. Pupils appreciate the school's clubs which are available before and after school. Leaders carefully plan these clubs to ensure all pupils can access something of interest. Parents have great trust in the school's leaders and staff. They highly value what the school has to offer their children.

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

Leaders have planned a well-sequenced curriculum. There is clear ambition for all pupils. The school's plans start from Nursery and build through to Year 6. Teachers use suitable approaches to teach pupils the key knowledge they need. Teachers carefully check that pupils are gaining and keeping this knowledge. For example, in mathematics and history, pupils revisit prior learning at the start of lessons. This helps pupils to cement their learning effectively and achieve well. In the early years, staff utilise every opportunity to ensure activities are purposeful. The interactions they have with children help to introduce and embed important new words.

Teachers make suitable adaptations to the curriculum to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve the best they can. Staff create relevant plans where these pupils need additional support. This help is in place in lessons and during social times, such as lunchtimes. In the early years, staff ensure all pupils remember what they have been taught, regardless of their starting points and any additional needs they may have.

Recently, leaders have adjusted some of the school's curriculum plans. For example, in computing there have been adjustments to better sequence aspects such as coding. In geography, leaders have revisited aspects such as mapwork and field work. In computer science, pupils now start learning about coding in the early years.

Staff are implementing these revisions across the academic year. Leaders have planned relevant staff training to support these changes.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. They have ensured that all staff have the necessary training to develop their expertise. Teachers and teaching assistants deliver phonics lessons successfully. Pupils start learning to read promptly in the early years. Any pupils falling behind are identified promptly. They receive swift support to help them keep up. Staff accurately match pupils' reading books with their phonics knowledge. Pupils read regularly to adults in school. Older pupils develop a love of reading. They can speak articulately about the books they are reading. They value reading for how it can help them learn in other subjects. The school engages well with parents to guide them in how to support their children with reading at home.

Leaders have set up crystal-clear behaviour management systems in school. Pupils fully understand these. Staff apply the approaches consistently. Pupils behave very well in lessons. They listen carefully to teachers and cooperate well with their peers. Pupils' conduct around school is exemplary. A calm, purposeful learning atmosphere permeates the school. In the early years, pupils interact with each other, and with adults, respectfully and considerately.

The school has an extensive programme to promote pupils' personal development. Staff teach a detailed personal, social and health education curriculum and assembly programme. Pupils have a very wide range of roles and responsibilities in school; examples include digital leaders, reading buddies, eco ambassadors and play leaders. Pupils contribute to the life of the school exceedingly well.

There is wide-ranging provision to help support pupils' physical and mental health needs. The school supplies a daily breakfast offer. There are many after-school clubs. There is high take up of these by pupils across the school. Families can learn together. For example, it is planned that parents and their children will learn how to cook healthy meals.

Leaders, staff, trustees and the local academy council have a strong shared vision. All want the very best academic and personal development outcomes for pupils. The headteacher has steered the school to substantial improvement since her appointment. Senior leaders supply strong support in the improvement journey, not least in the early years where oversight of the provision is robust. Subject leaders are developing their leadership skills through a range of training. This includes modelling by senior leaders and working alongside other leaders within the trust. However, some subject leaders are relatively new to the role. Senior leaders have clear plans in place to further develop the skills of these leaders.

The local academy council supports and challenges senior leaders. Trustees fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They check improvements in the school through a range of mechanisms. Their strategic decisions have brought noteworthy improvements to the quality of the learning environment, staffing expertise and leadership. They have prioritised funding to transform the early years environment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff know that safeguarding is of paramount importance. Staff receive relevant training to keep them up to date. The school promptly identifies pupils who may be at risk. Where pupils need specific help, leaders act in a determined fashion to secure this. Safe recruitment procedures and documentation are secure. Leaders manage allegations or safeguarding concerns about staff appropriately. Pupils feel safe. They know that they have an adult to turn to if they have concerns. The curriculum teaches pupils about safety, including how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have recently revised the curriculum plans for some foundation subjects. These revised plans are currently being implemented and have not fully impacted on pupils' learning. Leaders should continue to implement the revised curriculum plans. They should check that these have the intended effect on pupils' learning.
- Some subject leaders are relatively new to their roles. They have not fully developed their subject leadership skills. Leaders should continue their plans to strengthen subject leadership in some foundation subjects.

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	144953
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10200751
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	184
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Margaret Saxton
Headteacher	Annalei Bartlett
Headteacher	Janice Gorlach (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.sacristonacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed September 2017.
- Since the school became an academy, all the teachers and the vast majority of staff have changed.
- The school is part of North East Learning Trust (NELT).
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the pre-inspection meeting and across the on-site inspection, the lead inspector met with the executive headteacher, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The lead inspector met with two members of the local academy

council (LAC), including the chair of the LAC, two members of the board of trustees, including the chief executive officer, and the chair of trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with a range of leaders, including the executive headteacher, headteacher and subject leaders; looked at curriculum plans; visited a sample of lessons; spoke to teachers; spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss how the school develops pupils' behaviour and supports their personal development.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding through discussions with a range of leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector scrutinised a range of safeguarding documentation alongside school leaders.

Inspection team

Michael Reeves, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Ashcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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