

Inspection of St Luke's School

Crouch Hall Lane, Redbourn, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 7ET

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St Luke's School is a place where pupils are looked after and safe. Adults support pupils who experienced disruption prior to joining the school to settle quickly into school life. Pupils embrace the differences between each other and value their own uniqueness. Pupils celebrate diversity, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance. Pupils' differing needs are well catered for.

Pupils make friends and are respectful to each other and the staff who look after them. Pupils recognise that a small number of their peers sometimes find regulating their behaviour and emotions tricky. They trust staff to deal with any issues so they can concentrate on their learning and school life.

Pupils experience an exceptional personal development programme. This programme draws together the many exciting aspects of school life effectively. Pupils, for example, access a range of animals at the school, or use their talents to design a garden for a national flower show. A huge range of well-planned trips and experiences support pupils really well to build on their learning and grow in confidence and independence.

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

The executive headteacher, supported by leaders, staff and governors, has improved the quality of education at the school. A thoughtful curriculum, taking on board pupils' varying and complex needs, is now in place. A range of appropriate additional therapies support pupils to access school life effectively. The curriculum is ambitious, so by the time pupils leave the school, they achieve a range of qualifications that set them up well for their next steps.

The curriculum builds on pupils' different starting points and individual special educational needs and/or disabilities. Each curriculum area is broken down into 'tiers'. In each tier, key knowledge is sorted into achievable steps that build pupils' knowledge as they move through the school.

Leaders provide staff with detailed information about pupils' needs. Staff use this information to adjust and adapt teaching around what works best for each pupil. Teachers regularly check pupils' learning in class and offer more support if needed. Pupils usually make strong progress from their starting points. Some teachers are still developing their subject knowledge and understanding of newer parts of the curriculum. In these instances, pupils do not learn as well as in most.

Reading is central to school life. Well-trained staff use the school's phonics scheme effectively to teach pupils to read. Teachers' careful checks of reading knowledge mean that pupils get the right help, at the right time. Pupils talk with animation about the books they read either individually, at home or with their class. Stories are shared regularly with pupils and made accessible where necessary. Pupils enjoy trips to the library or to buy books in local shops.

The curriculum supports pupils to build their communication and language skills effectively. This enables pupils to access the curriculum and develop their social and emotional knowledge. Adults support pupils to learn how to regulate and manage their emotions. Leaders ensure that staff deal with behaviour in a consistent and effective manner. Leaders track different behaviours across the school to help them spot patterns and ensure that pupils get the help and therapy they may need. Consequently, pupils behave well and focus on their learning.

Leaders' approach to personal development is exemplary and enriches pupils' lives. A meticulously planned relationships education programme teaches pupils about respect and consent. Pupils learn about different religions, cultures and countries. A thorough and well-considered careers programme enables pupils to learn about different jobs and the world of work. Pupils are incredibly well prepared for their next steps when leaving the school.

Governors challenge and support leaders effectively to evaluate and improve the school. Leaders work closely with staff, parents and carers to ensure that pupils get the best experience possible.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

High-quality safeguarding training ensures that staff are fully aware of how to spot if a pupil is at risk of harm or neglect. Any concern, no matter how small, is reported promptly to the safeguarding team. Records show that leaders take prompt and determined action in response to concerns. As a result, pupils and their families get targeted help and support from a range of appropriate agencies.

Clear systems and processes support school leaders to manage any potential allegations against adults.

The exceptional personal development programme supports pupils really well to learn about risks to themselves, whether in the community or online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have recently improved all curriculum areas. In some of the foundation areas, staff are getting to grips with the new documentation and curriculum approaches. This means that some staff do not always have the necessary knowledge to fulfil leaders' ambitious plans. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and support to ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently well in all areas.

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](#)' 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	117671
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255120
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Dignum
Headteacher	Stephen Hoult-Allen (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.stlukes.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with specific and moderate learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder and speech, language and communication needs. All pupils have an educational, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school is part of the Blue Tangerine Federation.
- The governing body and executive headteacher oversee both schools in the federation.
- The school uses part-time, unregistered, alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Due to the nature of the specialist curriculum, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following areas: communication, language and reading, personal development, understanding the world and mathematics. In each area, inspectors met with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at evidence of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered pupils' work and visited lessons in other curriculum areas, including expressive arts and physical development.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including EHC plans, pupil profiles, behaviour support plans and other behaviour information.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a range of school leaders over both days of inspection, including the school's special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with representatives of the governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the school's safeguarding leaders. He scrutinised training records and policies and looked closely at safeguarding systems and processes. Across both days of inspection, inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding.
- The lead inspector considered the 39 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 39 free-text responses. The lead inspector also considered 55 responses to Ofsted's survey of staff.

Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Fiona Webb	Ofsted Inspector
Cindy Impey	Ofsted Inspector

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