



## Ofsted find that The Academy of St Nicholas has been “transformed”

The Academy of St Nicholas in Garston has been praised by Ofsted for a series of rapid improvements that have transformed the education of its pupils.

During a two day inspection, inspectors found that every aspect of the school had improved. The Sixth Form was also judged as being ‘Good’ – the best single Ofsted outcome in the school’s history.

Ofsted praised the quality of teaching, saying it had “improved considerably under the school’s new leadership” and that “teaching ensures that pupils make good progress, particularly in Years 7 and 8.”

The Inspectors noted that the work of all in the Academy had “transformed the culture of the school.”

As part of their evaluations, inspectors also found that the school is “an orderly and purposeful community.” The report continued “*The morale of staff, students and parents is high... one teacher’s comments typified the views ‘now pupils are at the centre of everything I am asked to do.’*”

An important element of the transformation has been attributed to the clear vision that has been adopted by the entire school community. Inspectors reported that “pupils are frequently reminded by staff of the ‘Academy Promise’ that staff, pupils and parents make to each other, **‘We always try our personal best and accept no excuses’**. This simply put promise has successfully guided pupils through raised expectations.”

Dave Lancaster, Headteacher, said: “*Whilst there is so much in the report that we are proud to read, we are delighted that Ofsted recognised that our ‘Academy Promise’ has been central in transforming the quality of education at the Academy.*”

“*We have the highest expectations of each other as staff and the same high expectations of our pupils who always rise to the challenge. We are all totally committed to trying our personal best in everything that we do. This will ensure that we all have the knowledge, skills and most importantly the character values that are needed in order to have a successful life.*”

Among the many areas of progress, inspectors also highlighted that:

- “Pupils, staff and parents told inspectors that behaviour in lessons and at social times has been transformed... This matches the respectful relationships and calm orderly environment which inspectors witnessed during the inspection.”
- “Leaders have sought external review of many aspects of the school from the local authority, specialist leaders in education and external consultants... This knowledge has enabled them to develop a long-term vision for substantial improvements which can be sustained.”
- “During the inspection, in lessons and in discussions with inspectors, pupils spoke and acted with confidence. Pupils spoke with pride of the improvements they have seen since the arrival of the current Headteacher.”
- “The cross-trust leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong.”
- “The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good.”
- “Leaders have created a culture of respect and tolerance. They have put in place good strategies for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.”

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- “The pupil premium funding is well used to enable pastoral and teaching staff to dedicate time to this group and to provide these pupils with resources and enrichment activities.”
- “Pupils benefit from an impressive range of extra-curricular activities including study support, sport, performing and visual arts, debating and visits to cultural centres and higher-education establishments. These activities allow pupils to take part in national competitions and to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations.”
- “Pupils speak of those who are different from themselves with sensitivity and empathy. Leaders have made sure that the school prepares pupils for life in a modern and diverse country.”
- “All pupils are helped to make educational and career choices ... The proportion of pupils who progress to and stay in education, employment or training after leaving Year 11 has risen considerably over the last three years and is now above the national average.”
- “Trustees and governors bring a wide range of educational, business, personnel and finance skills to their roles and have used them well to recruit highly effective leaders and secure the long-term stability of the school.”

All Saints Sixth Form College was rated “good” by the inspection team, who noted that “leaders of the sixth form have a clear vision for its development” and that “students in the sixth form benefit from strong teaching.”

They continued: “When talking to inspectors, students had only good things to say about their Sixth Form. They are very proud of it and very appreciative of the help and guidance which staff give them especially in terms of support for applications for university, employment and apprenticeships.”

The Academy of St Nicholas is part of the All Saints Multi Academy Trust, of which David Clayton is the CEO. He said: *“This report is testament to the strength of our community and the exceptional partnership work that has become a proud feature of the All Saints Multi Academy Trust. Students within our Trust are supported by the most committed and dedicated team of staff, who are absolutely determined to support our young people in achieving their aspirations. Our staff are united behind this mission, and the opportunities for our people to collaborate and share expertise is at the heart of our strategy for supporting improvements within our Academies. I am delighted that this has been recognised by the inspectors and I have every confidence that the Academy will continue to grow from strength to strength.”*