

# St Peter's Catholic Comprehensive School

St Catherine's Road, Bournemouth, BH6 4AH

**Inspection dates** 13–14 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There is some good and outstanding teaching in the academy, but it requires improvement because it is too inconsistent to have a strong enough impact on achievement.
- Students' progress is not good or outstanding because in too many lessons students are not required to question the quality of their learning sufficiently rigorously, or tackle problems for themselves often enough.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The profile of teaching quality in the sixth form is better than in Years 7 to 11 but is not yet driving good levels of achievement.
- There are strengths in leadership and management but a lack of coherence diminishes their impact. This is evident in the variety of approaches to the management of performance and professional development, and a lack of accountability of middle leaders for specific outcomes.
- There is no coherent approach to developing high levels of literacy and oracy skills throughout Years 7 to 11.
- The governing body provides insufficient challenge to the senior staff in driving up achievement and the quality of teaching.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students are very proud of their academy and value its strong Christian ethos; they have the capacity to make a strong contribution to its improvement.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good, and aspects are outstanding.
- Students' achievements in English, and in applied AS and A levels and BTEC in the sixth form, are good.
- The new headteacher has already established a clear vision for improvement based on the quality of classroom practice. Staff have welcomed this.
- The successful maintenance of many of the academy's strengths by the acting headteacher last year contributes to its capacity to improve.
- Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is a strength.

## Information about this inspection

- Fifty-two lessons were observed, including several jointly with senior staff. There was a scrutiny of the quality of marking undertaken jointly with senior staff.
- Meetings took place with staff, representatives of the governing body, and students.
- The academy's self-evaluation and development planning documents, policies and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- There were 27 responses to Parent View by the end of the inspection visit. The views of parents were also obtained by an analysis of the academy's parental surveys.
- The views of 130 staff who returned questionnaires were also taken into account.

## Inspection team

Alan Taylor-Bennett, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Angela Westington	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joanna Pike	Additional inspector
Ann Short	Additional inspector
Trevor Woods	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Since its previous inspection, the school has become an academy. The last inspection undertaken of the predecessor school was 10–11 March 2009, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- The academy is much larger than the average-sized secondary school. It operates on two sites about two miles apart. Years 7 and 8 are based in Iford, and Years 9 to 11 and the sixth form in Southbourne.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is just over half that seen nationally; the proportions who are supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are all below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is about half that seen nationally.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard which sets minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The current headteacher took up post on 1 September 2012 after a year in which the deputy headteacher was the interim headteacher.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that at least 80% of teaching is good or better, and at least 20% is outstanding, by December 2013, by:
  - coordinating the management of performance across the academy so that it is systematic and rapid in its response to the need for improvement
  - ensuring professional development is linked to the need to bring about specific improvements in teaching, and that it is promptly implemented and its impact rigorously monitored by middle and senior leaders
  - improving the use of assessment, including high-quality and probing questioning, so that all teachers have a clear understanding of the quality of students' learning at key points, and can respond appropriately
  - capitalising on the willingness and positive attitudes of students by piloting new teaching and learning techniques
  - involving students in the implementation and evaluation of developments.
- Improve the achievement of students at the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form by:
  - raising expectations of the progress that all groups of students can make
  - coordinating improvements in literacy and oracy across all subjects in Years 7 to 11.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that all strategies to drive improvement are driven by an accurate analysis of need and have precise and well-understood desired outcomes
  - securing higher levels of accountability of middle leaders for specific improvements in students' achievements and in the quality of teaching
  - undertaking a review of governance in order to strengthen its capacity to provide good levels of challenge and support for senior staff.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students' attainment by the end of Year 11 is broadly similar to their peers' nationally. The proportion who obtained five or more GCSEs at grade C or better, including English and mathematics, was above the national average in 2011 but other measures of examination outcomes were lower because fewer GCSE examinations on average were taken by students. The attainment of students by the end of Year 11 in 2012 was broadly similar to 2011 outcomes. Because students arrive at the academy with attainment above the national average, this represents a standard of achievement that requires improvement. An important exception was the good progress by students in English in 2012. Some Year 11 students told inspectors that more could be expected of them in many subjects.
- Achievement in the sixth form has also been stable over recent years and requires improvement in order to be judged good. Students attain AS and A-level grades broadly in line with expectations in many subjects, but there is too much variation. Students' rates of progress in applied AS and A levels, in BTEC subjects and in art and design (photography) are good, due to the challenge and stimulus presented by the good teaching.
- Lessons in which students make rapid and secure progress are too infrequent. This is because students are passive participants too often; too little of the teaching stimulates them to be critical of the extent to which they have grasped ideas, and to probe their own and their peers' understanding. In the good and outstanding lessons observed, students demonstrated a capacity to rise to the challenges presented and the learning became exciting and pacy. For example, in a Year 9 citizenship lesson about employment regulations, students were taken aback when they realised that they had initially responded with descriptions of working men and women that were stereotypical and were animated and reflective about the experience.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium benefit from its use to reduce some teaching group sizes, improve the range of curriculum options and to develop better means of monitoring those who may be at risk of underachieving. They make progress, but benefits are limited because these resources are not closely focused on the students concerned. Students supported at school action are making better progress now than they have in recent years. The progress made in literacy skills by some of the lowest attaining students is hindered by a lack of skill in the teaching of early reading and writing. Despite the good progress made by many students in English, including the very good progress made by some with English as an additional language, there is little opportunity to develop high levels of literacy skills in all subjects and reading is regarded as uninteresting by some students.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- While there is good and outstanding teaching in the academy, too much fails to capitalise on students' willingness to be enthusiastic and active learners. There are pockets of very good practice and relatively little that is inadequate, but too much variation.
- In lessons where the quality of learning requires improvement, there is still the application of good subject knowledge, clear and well-structured, if occasionally wordy, explanations, and high expectations of behaviour. However, students' progress is not good enough because students do not usually get to grapple with problems for themselves and apply their previous learning and their skills in arriving at their own solutions. For example, in one mathematics lesson observed, the teacher explained with admirable clarity the process whereby a conjecture could be proved, and successfully supported students to produce similar proofs, but in doing so prevented them from obtaining important insights into the all-important first few steps for themselves.
- Where learning is outstanding, teachers often use creative and imaginative approaches which enthuse students and require them to take significant responsibility for their own learning. In the words of one member of staff, 'You know the lesson is a good one when the students work harder than the teacher!' These good and outstanding lessons also involve frequent high-quality questioning which enables students to identify their own misconceptions and move

forward confidently. This is often associated with the provision of work at different levels of challenge for different groups and, as a consequence, all groups of students, including those with disabilities and/or special educational needs, make good or better progress and enjoy their learning.

- Teaching in the sixth form has a stronger profile because there is nothing that is inadequate, but there is the need to improve the relatively large amount of teaching that is not yet good or better.
- There are good examples of marking in English, languages and geography, but feedback by this means is not frequent enough or of high enough quality in other subjects.
- The teaching makes very good contributions to students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. There are many opportunities to take part in trips and visits that are closely aligned to the curriculum, competitions, including the annual Bar National Mock Trial Competition, and Developing Nicely, the young photographers' creativity conference organised by the academy in 2012. There are also many opportunities for students to understand and show value for different cultures through, for example, the links to a school in the KwaZulu Natal area of South Africa, and to prepare themselves for life in modern multicultural Britain.
- The teaching of literacy across the curriculum is underdeveloped; teachers have not received sufficient guidance on how to promote these skills in the context of their own subject.
- About three quarters of the parents who contributed to Parent View felt that the teaching is good. Inspection evidence points to it requiring improvement.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students spoke to inspectors about their academy with pride. They value the excellent quality of relationships. Behaviour around the site is very good and disruption to learning due to poor behaviour in lessons is uncommon. In some lessons, however, students do not take enough responsibility for their own learning and are too passive. Movement between lessons is calm and orderly. Students show courtesy to each other, staff and visitors.
- Students feel very safe and there is little bullying. Students are confident that staff will support them if the need arises. Tutors and year heads are caring and attentive, and the chaplaincy support is a particularly strong and effective source of succour.
- Students demonstrate a very mature attitude to differences in backgrounds, beliefs and cultures. They spoke confidently to inspectors about differences in sexual orientation or preferences being tolerated and respected. All of this makes the academy a harmonious and positive community. During the significant changes in the leadership over recent years, these values have been successfully maintained.
- Many students arrive in the sixth form from other schools; they nearly always settle in very quickly and happily because of the friendliness of their peers, the positive ethos and the quality of the induction processes.
- Rates of exclusion for poor behaviour are below national averages and have been in decline for several years. The academy's monitoring and analysis of the reasons for exclusion, and students' responses to this sanction, are exemplary.
- Students' attendance is above average and students arrive in the morning and to lessons punctually and ready to learn.
- Parents regard students' behaviour positively. The very large majority of responses to Parent View indicated that parents feel that their child is looked after well, feels safe and is happy at the academy. Inspection evidence agrees with these views.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leaders and managers successfully promote a strong ethos. They have been less successful at promoting consistently good and outstanding achievement and rapidly improving the quality of teaching over recent years. This is not because of any lack of good quality leadership in the academy; there are several examples of good practice in important aspects of the academy's work. It is because there is insufficient coherence in leadership practice and inconsistent

application of policies. For example, the management of performance has had some impact on teaching in many departments. However, its nature and quality vary significantly. As a consequence, middle leaders cannot easily share good practice and work together on initiatives.

- Teaching is evaluated regularly but its impact on learning is analysed with insufficient rigour and precision. This means that the outcomes of monitoring cannot drive professional development at various levels strongly enough, and middle leaders cannot take responsibility for contributing to it as closely as they should. Many senior leaders judge the quality of teaching accurately but some judgements are over-generous.
- Systems to monitor students' progress are valued by middle leaders. They play an important part in the successful promotion of equality of opportunity, but data for different groups are sometimes conflated and it is not always easy to gauge the progress of some potentially vulnerable groups.
- Recent changes to the curriculum in Key Stage 4 allow for students to make progress at a rate more suited to their individual needs and circumstances. More students now follow the separate sciences and some enter early for subjects for which they have a special aptitude. The sixth form curriculum involves a broad range of courses and meets the needs of students well.
- Self-evaluation is effective and it contributes to identifying areas for improvement. For example, strategies to decrease the number of subjects underperforming at AS and A level in recent years have been successful, and there are several examples of subjects improving GCSE outcomes in 2012. However, it is not always rigorous. This means that some resources are not deployed with high levels of efficiency.
- Middle leaders want a stronger and clearer lead from senior staff. Their readiness to take on more accountability for improving outcomes against specific targets is an important aspect of the academy's capacity to improve. For example, many were enthusiastic about the new headteacher's resolve to focus on pedagogy and begin by issuing 'ten commandments' for good and outstanding classroom practice. Staff morale is high.
- The academy's systems to ensure the safety and welfare of students are sound. All of its safeguarding systems, policies and procedures are maintained and operated thoroughly.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - meets all statutory requirements, for example with regard to safeguarding, financial monitoring and supporting the school in its successful work in tackling discrimination
  - does not probe and question analyses of the achievement of students closely enough to be able to provide senior staff with a high level of support and challenge
  - does not act as a critical friend with sufficient rigour in, for example, satisfying itself that judgements of the quality of teaching match the quality of outcomes for students at GCSE and in the sixth form.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137349
<b>Local authority</b>	n/a
<b>Inspection number</b>	395607

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1586
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	392
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jan Wyatt
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Todd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10–11 March 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 421141
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