

St Peter's Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre

Stroud Road, Gloucester, GL4 0DD

Inspection dates 15–16 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' achievement is good. The percentage of students achieving five or more grade A*-C GCSEs including English and mathematics has been consistently just above national averages over the past few years
- Leadership and management are good. The school is effectively led by the Principal who, in conjunction with other leaders and an effective governing body, has high ambitions for students and a clear understanding of where improvement is needed.
- The sixth form is good as a result of very effective leadership. It offers a wide range of courses to students of all abilities and is structured into four smaller 'colleges' to offer appropriate support and guidance.
- An atmosphere of respect and courtesy is evident throughout the school community and behaviour is exemplary. Students feel safe and are highly positive about the support they receive from school staff. Attendance is consistently higher than national figures.
- Teaching is good with examples of outstanding practice. Work is well matched to the ability levels of each student, teachers have high expectations, assessment is accurate and students have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although the school has started to take steps to close the gaps in achievement between different groups of students, progress for a small number, particularly those eligible for support through pupil premium funding, is not consistently rapid across the school.
- Teachers do not always make consistent and systematic use of assessment data when setting targets for students and planning lessons. As a result, occasionally expectations are too low for a few students and this limits their progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 53 lessons. They also carried out a series of shorter visits to lessons across the school.
- Inspectors took account of 57 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed questionnaires from 119 members of staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and students' assessment information, as well as examples of students' work.
- They held discussions with members of the governing body, staff, groups of students and student leaders.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ian Bryant	Additional Inspector
David Howe	Additional Inspector
Helen Prince	Additional Inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Peter's Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre is a larger-than-average secondary school.
- The school converted to academy status in September 2011.
- Two thirds of students are of White British heritage, with a third coming from a range of minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium (additional funding given to schools by the government) is significantly below that found nationally.
- The proportion of students with disabilities and special educational needs supported by school action is just below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to close gaps in achievement between different groups of students, so that all make rapid progress, by:
 - developing a consistent whole-school approach to setting challenging targets for students based on available data
 - rigorously tracking and monitoring the progress of all students and particular groups of learners, especially those eligible for the pupil premium, and provide extra support where required
- Improve the quality of teaching at all key stages by:
 - ensuring that marking and assessments clearly show students exactly what they need to do to improve their work
 - ensuring a high level of challenge in all lessons by matching tasks closely to students' ability levels
 - providing opportunities in all lessons for students to develop their independent learning skills
 - ensuring that homework is used successfully across the school to extend students' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students' attainment on entry in Year 7 is similar to the national average. By the time students leave school, at the end of Year 11, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is just above the national average.
- The proportions of students making at least typically expected progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in English are in line with the national average. Analysis of current performance data and students' work indicates that progress is accelerating.
- In mathematics, the proportion of students making at least the expected progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 is much higher than the national average.
- Attainment in the majority of subjects at GCSE grades A* to C is much higher than average and the same is true for many subjects at grade A* and A.
- Historically, there have been gaps between the attainment and progress of a number of small groups of learners, including those eligible for support through pupil premium funding, those supported at school action and several minority ethnic groups, compared with similar students nationally and with other students at the school. The school has begun to successfully address the situation; for example, in 2012, Black Caribbean and Black African students met or exceeded challenging targets and there was an increase in the percentage of students attaining A* to C grades at GCSE.
- Pupil premium funding is being used to provide additional staffing and extra-curricular activities, such as music lessons. There are early signs that achievement is improving for this group, but the full impact of the actions taken is not yet clear.
- Strong leadership of the sixth form has encouraged large numbers of Year 11 students, both from the school and other neighbouring schools, to continue their education in the sixth form. Attainment is in line with the national averages at AS and A level. The school operates an open-access policy into the sixth form and, as a consequence, takes students from a range of abilities. The creation of four smaller 'colleges', within the larger sixth form, enables sixth form leaders to support students well on a range of learning pathways. Retention for those on two- year courses is good.
- A recently appointed literacy coordinator is ensuring that high priority is given to developing students' literacy skills through a range of different subjects. Students across the key stages are confident and articulate communicators. They read widely, use the well-resourced library and take pride in their written work.
- The majority of parents and carers are pleased with the progress made by their children.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching overall is good, with some outstanding teaching. These findings are endorsed by positive parental and student views.
- Mutual respect and support between teachers and students help to create positive attitudes to learning throughout the school.
- In the best lessons seen during the inspection, teachers used their subject expertise to plan and deliver lively and engaging lessons, matched to students' prior knowledge. Teachers skilfully challenged students, using effective questioning to ensure that students made good progress, and adapted the pace and their expectations in order to meet all students' needs. For instance, following a recent fieldtrip, Year 12 students worked in pairs to analyse collected data using previously taught skills, whilst the teacher probed and questioned their understanding, ensuring that progress was rapid. During a music lesson, students evaluated the assessment mark scheme and were able to explain their ideas using subject-specific vocabulary. Equally, during Year 7 Spanish lessons, students new to the language were encouraged to listen and respond in

Spanish, using engaging activities to help them become confident speakers.

- The majority of marking and feedback is of good quality. Teachers include detailed comments, highlighting strengths and giving clear next steps for learning. Some students commented on the high level of support and feedback they received on their work, particularly in the sixth form. However, in a few cases, teachers' comments do not always provide enough guidance to students on how to improve. Some marking relies too heavily on negative or vague comments about effort and presentation, rather than showing how well students have met the lesson's objectives.
- Not all teachers make sufficient use of their assessments of students' progress from day to day to pitch the work accurately for all students and to set challenging individual targets. This was particularly true in some lower ability sets, where expectations were too low, the tasks set were not appropriately challenging and, therefore, progress was limited.
- A few lessons observed during the inspection did not allow enough opportunities for students to work independently, relying too heavily on teacher talk and an over emphasis on completing activities rather than acquiring knowledge and skills. These lessons lacked pace as all students completed the same task and often the work was unchallenging.
- The quality of homework varies across the school, with some students expressing concern that the setting of homework was not coordinated effectively, causing stressful 'log jams' in the week.
- Teaching assistants are deployed appropriately and students commented positively on the support they offer, both in and out of the classroom.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour, both in lessons and across the school, is consistently excellent. Students are respectful and courteous towards each other, particularly during break and lunchtimes. They listen carefully to the views of others, are considerate, polite and helpful.
- Students are proud of their school and this is reflected in their smart uniform and willingness to share their positive experience of school life during the inspection.
- Students feel safe and understand issues around their own safety.
- Responses from Parent View indicate that parents feel that their children enjoy school and feel safe.
- Any minor disruptive behaviour is handled quietly and firmly by the teacher, using the school's behaviour code.
- Students feel exceptionally well cared for, having confidence in the school staff to provide appropriate support when needed. As one student said, 'We are not just taught we are cared for.'
- Students are aware of different types of bullying and regularly explore the issues. During discussions with students, all felt confident that they would know what to do if they, or someone they knew, were being bullied, and that it would be swiftly dealt with.
- The second day of the inspection was a charity fundraising day for Children in Need. Students remained calm and happy, participating appropriately in the various charitable activities organised by the sixth form, showing their excellent behaviour and mature attitudes.
- Attendance is above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal is well regarded by staff, students, parents, carers and governors and effectively communicates his vision for the school.
 - The principal and other leaders in the school have worked hard to create extremely positive
-

relationships with parents, carers and external agencies. This was reflected in the very positive staff questionnaires and responses on Parent View.

- A new performance management structure, linked to the national Teachers' Standards and coordinated by a vice-principal, has been launched. Although in its very early stages, it attempts to set quantifiable targets in order to hold teachers to account for students' achievements. It also makes clear links between the management of teachers' performance and individually tailored opportunities for professional development. There are early indications that the system is enabling leaders to make fair judgements about staff performance and pay progression.
 - The school offers a range of courses across the curriculum to meet individual students' needs. There is a high take-up of extra-curricular activities and students are extremely positive about the wide range of opportunities available to them.
 - As a training school, St Peter's works closely with the GITEP partnership and with local universities, in the recruitment and training of new teachers. This has a positive impact on the school's work.
 - The school has excellent links with local primary schools and works hard to ease the transition from Year 6 to Year 7, particularly for students with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language.
 - The school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through assemblies, worship and lessons is very good. St Peter's is a learning community with a strong sense of moral purpose. It actively promotes tolerance, respect and understanding of cultural diversity. Students are taught to respect each other and the wider world through external links, charity events and a range of enrichment opportunities. There is a strong sense of community across year groups and students are extremely positive about opportunities for regular collective worship.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Communication between senior leaders and governors is good. The governing body is clear about its role in holding the school to account and its statutory duties and accountabilities, particularly relating to students' safety. Safeguarding requirements are met. The governing body has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. It supports the principal's vision and priorities for the future. An effective training programme is in place for those new to the role. All governors are encouraged to visit the school regularly and participate in lesson observations and learning walks. A recent report on the performance of particular student groups was compiled by the deputy chair, following a number of lesson observations. Governors are fully aware of the assessment data relating to particular student groups and the emerging impact of pupil premium funding on students' achievement. These are discussed both at the Tuesday briefings and in committee meetings. The governing body has been fully involved in the implementation of the new performance management system for teachers.
-

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

Unique reference number	136982
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	395657

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1678
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	488
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Stenson
Headteacher	Lawrence Montagu
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 February 2009
Telephone number	01452 520594
Fax number	
Email address	lmontagu@sphs.uk.com

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

