

St Peter's Church of England Aided School

Quarry Lane, Heavitree, Exeter, Devon EX2 5AP

Inspection dates 30 September – 1 October 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, in a very short time, has transformed the quality of education at the school. Expectations of what students are able to achieve have risen significantly.
- Students' make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in all year groups and across most subjects. The outcomes for disadvantaged students, disabled students and those with special educational needs have improved.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers benefit from effective training and the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- Teachers create classrooms where students want to learn and feel comfortable to ask questions and to offer their thoughts and ideas. Working relationships between teachers and students are excellent.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school site is outstanding. They are highly proud of their school, wear their uniform with pride and respect the school environment.
- Students' personal development and welfare are well developed through a carefully planned curriculum.
- Leaders have worked determinedly to successfully improve the quality of teaching and to raise students' outcomes; the school continues to improve.
- Leaders who are relatively new in post have quickly established effective systems and processes to ensure each student, whatever his or her need, is well cared for and taught well.
- Governors operate effectively. They understand the school's strengths and areas in need of further development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Outcomes for students are not yet outstanding across the school and in all subjects.
- Teachers do not routinely ensure students act upon the feedback they have provided. As a result, students are not always clear on how to improve their learning further.
- Not all teachers consider what students can and cannot do when planning learning; this limits the progress students make.
- Teachers do not communicate effectively with parents; too many parents feel unable to fully support their child's learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' outcomes to be outstanding by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use information on what students can and cannot do to plan learning which fully challenges them
 - ensure that students act upon the feedback they receive to understand how they can improve their learning
 - communicate effectively with parents to enable them to fully support their child's learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership at the school. She is passionate and determined and has significantly raised expectations of the quality of teaching and what students can achieve. The school has been transformed since her arrival and she is relentless in her pursuit of excellence. Almost all staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said that they are proud to be a member of staff at the school.
- Senior leaders operate at a very effective level. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas needing further development. High-quality plans are in place to bring about further improvements; senior leaders effectively monitor and evaluate key aspects of the school's work.
- Senior leaders have, rightly, focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Through high-quality, personalised training, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now good. Senior leaders astutely identify key strengths and developmental points in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as evidenced through written records and joint observations during this inspection.
- The headteacher has implemented demanding processes to manage the performance of staff. Teachers are firmly held to account for the impact their teaching has on students' outcomes. Where teachers do not perform at an acceptable level, leaders provide thorough support; if performance fails to improve, however, the headteacher takes decisive action.
- Other leaders, many of whom are new in post, lead their areas of responsibility more effectively than at the time of the previous inspection. Leaders feel inspired and empowered by the headteacher; they share her passion and dedication to provide a high-quality standard of education at the school. These leaders have put in place effective policies and processes to bring about further improvements, which require more time to fully embed and show greater impact. Leaders acknowledge, rightly, that more needs to be done to ensure all teachers consistently deliver high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- Extra funding for disadvantaged students is being used effectively to raise outcomes for eligible students. Leaders ensure high-quality, personalised support is provided for these students to meet their individual educational, social and emotional needs.
- The school's curriculum provides students with a broad and balanced range of subjects and extensive opportunities to participate in activities outside of lesson time. Students are highly appreciative of the range of activities available. Leaders effectively adapt curriculum arrangements in response to each cohort's differing needs. Each student, whatever his or her need, interest or talent, has access to helpful support and enriching activities.
- Students are proud of their charity work and support for students in other countries. Effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, supported well through the school's Christian ethos and assemblies, enables students to develop a good understanding and appreciation of people from different backgrounds and cultures. Recent curriculum initiatives have developed students' understanding of British values and, through high-quality careers guidance, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and life.
- Leaders ensure all staff fully understand the school's safeguarding policies and practice; the school is a safe place where staff are vigilant and alert to any potential risk to students. Staff act swiftly to pass on any concerns they may have; record-keeping and the timeliness of actions are appropriate.
- The local authority provided extensive support to the school following the previous inspection. Through regular visits, local authority officers accurately recognised the school's strengths and set clear targets for improvement. Once leaders demonstrated the capacity to bring about further improvement, the local authority rightly allowed leaders more freedom to work independently.
- While many parents who responded to the Parent View survey acknowledge clear improvements at the school, a significant number feel the school does not communicate effectively with them. Parents are eager to support their children's learning but do not feel that communication from the school is timely enough or provides them with adequate information.
- **The governance of the school**
 - effectively provides leaders with an appropriate level of challenge and support. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas in need of further improvement. Arrangements to hold staff to account for their performance are robust and are effective in bringing about improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Governors conduct regular visits to the school

which enables them to observe, first-hand, how the school operates. Governors ensure that extra government funding, and the school's budget, are carefully allocated and have a positive impact on students' outcomes.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers create classrooms which are conducive to high-quality learning. Students speak fondly of their teachers' enthusiasm and support. Teachers encourage students to contribute their thoughts and ideas, which successfully develops their interest and curiosity in each subject. Students are not put off by giving incorrect answers; they understand that they can use mistakes to improve their own learning.
- Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to question students well to determine their understanding of key concepts and ideas. They further probe students' contributions to challenge them to think more deeply about their learning.
- Teaching, learning and assessment across most subjects are now at least good, with some that are outstanding. Historically, teaching in modern foreign languages and religious education has not been at this standard but improvements are evident in both of these subjects.
- Students enjoy lessons. Working relationships between teachers and students are of a very high quality. Students follow instructions quickly which allows lessons to flow at a good pace; learning time is maximised.
- Students make excellent progress when teachers provide learning which is highly challenging. They respond positively to this and show a great determination to succeed. For example, in an English lesson, students were debating their views of the benefits and negatives of reality television. As a result of the teacher stimulating interest, students debated each other's viewpoints with language of a very high quality, demonstrating a deep understanding of their subject.
- Learning support assistants provide strong support to students. They are proactive and question students appropriately to help them to understand key learning points. Students respond positively to learning support assistants' help and guidance.
- Most teachers use information on what students can and cannot do to plan learning which sufficiently challenges them. Occasionally, however, some teachers do not take into account what students already know. Work planned does not then provide students with sufficient challenge; this limits the progress students make.
- Teachers consistently provide students with feedback in line with the school's policy. Some teachers, however, fail to allow opportunities for students to act upon this feedback. This results in students not having a clear understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do to further improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote students' personal development and welfare is good.
- Students are confident learners and fully appreciate the importance of their education. They work hard, are eager to succeed and fully understand their role and responsibility in achieving their potential.
- Students say that they feel safe at school and that bullying is extremely uncommon. The vast majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey feel that their child is happy and safe at school; inspectors agree with this.
- Through tutorial sessions, visiting speakers, assemblies and specific days, students understand different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe; all students spoken to during the inspection said that they had many adults they could approach if they had any concerns.
- Students understand that they should not divulge personal information when using the internet. More recent curriculum developments have further raised students' awareness of other potential risks when using technology; the school acknowledges that there is more to do on this.
- Teachers are vigilant and a culture of keeping students safe exists across the school. Pastoral care is of a high quality. Students can access a range of extra support, if needed, to support their social and emotional well-being. The transition process into Year 7 is well led; students are confident when they join

the school.

- The very wide range of sporting activities provide students with extensive opportunities to develop their physical health and fitness; the high level of take-up shows how much students value these opportunities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- Students are extremely polite and welcoming. They speak passionately about their school and are, rightly, proud of it. Students wear their uniform well and take great care of their school and its environment.
- In lessons, students are determined and resilient; they are desperate to succeed. When teachers provide them with high levels of challenge, they respond with exceptional attitudes to their learning and the classroom is awash with discussion and excitement about their learning. Even when teachers fail to fully challenge students enough, they exhibit positive and respectful behaviour.
- At break and lunchtimes, students show high levels of respect for each other and interact positively. Behaviour in the dining hall and spaces where students congregate is superb.
- Lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour; inspectors saw no poor behaviour during this inspection and students indicate that this is typical.
- Students attend regularly, are punctual and are fully prepared for learning. Very few students are persistently absent from school. The proportion of students being excluded from school has reduced and is very low.
- The very small number of students who attend alternative provision are closely monitored. Leaders ensure they attend and behave well and are safe.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for students in Year 11 have improved significantly over the last two years. The proportion of students attaining five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, in 2015 was well above the national average. Students are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment; extremely high numbers of students progress to higher-level courses at post-16.
- Students attain highly in many subjects but particularly in English, mathematics, humanities, art and music. Outcomes in religious education and modern foreign languages have not been high enough. For students currently in the school, they are making better progress in these subjects.
- More-able students thrive on being challenged to think deeply about their learning. As a result of improved teaching, more students attain the highest grades of A*/A.
- Targets set for students are challenging and demanding. From their start points, students make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in English and mathematics. Across most subjects and year groups, students make consistently good progress. Work in students' books is generally well presented and shows that they are progressing well.
- Disadvantaged students are well known by all staff. Teachers monitor their progress very closely and are swift to intervene should any underachievement be apparent. A wide range of effective personalised support is accessible for these students to develop their academic, social and emotional well-being, including breakfast and homework clubs. These students make good progress; the gap between their progress and their peers' nationally and within the school has narrowed and is very small.
- The special educational needs department was not well organised at the time of the last inspection or the subsequent monitoring visit. Recent changes enable leaders and staff to have a clearer understanding of each student's individual needs; appropriate support and strategies are now in place. The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is much improved.
- Students talk fondly of their love of reading. Year 7 students told inspectors of the requirement to bring a reading book to school each day and how they enjoy reading at the start of each English lesson.
- Those students entering the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy skills receive helpful support from teachers and learning support assistants. This support enables them to effectively improve their reading, writing and numeracy quickly, to provide them with the skills necessary to be a successful learner.

School details

Unique reference number	113553
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10002440

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Church of England aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Heather Morgan
Headteacher	Rachel Hutchinson
Telephone number	01392 204764
Website	www.spexe.org
Email address	school@spexe.org
Date of previous inspection	23–24 October 2013

Information about this school

- St Peter’s Church of England Aided School is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- The current headteacher took up post at Easter 2014. There have been many changes in the governing body since the previous full Ofsted inspection.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for the pupil premium funding is lower than average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students’ attainment and progress.
- A very small number of students access some of their education at Exeter College.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons. Most of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also made short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of students, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on students' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of meetings, records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour and the safeguarding of students.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' work in lessons and observed their conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of 153 responses to the online Parent View survey and 53 staff questionnaire returns.

Inspection team

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