

Saint Peter's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Normanby Road, South Bank, Middlesbrough TS6 6SP

Inspection dates

21–22 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders, governors and the board of the Saint Oswald's Catholic Academy Trust have allowed standards to decline since the school became an academy.
- Outcomes for pupils are inadequate. In 2016 pupils made significantly less progress across a broad range of subjects than seen nationally. The school's overall progress rate was in the bottom 10% of schools nationally.
- Leaders believed the quality of education was better than it was and did not act to address weaknesses in the quality of teaching. The new headteacher has correctly evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses and is skilfully guiding other leaders to take the necessary actions to improve the school.
- The quality of teaching remains weak. Lessons lack challenge and fail to make pupils think deeply. Too many topics are only covered superficially.
- Teachers have received insufficient training and development for some time. The recent support of external consultants has begun to raise some teachers' expectations.
- Assessment information has not been gathered effectively or used wisely. Recent efforts to develop an effective assessment system mean underachieving pupils are beginning to be identified and targeted for additional support.
- Although pupils conduct themselves well, many lack confidence to take part fully in lessons.
- Governors have been too accepting of the information they receive and have failed to provide effective scrutiny of the school's performance. Weaknesses within the trust's governance structure mean there is a lack of effective support and challenge for the headteacher.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is providing effective leadership and empowering other leaders to contribute more effectively. Her accurate analysis and detailed planning has begun to address the school's deep-seated weaknesses.
- The school's pastoral system and strong Catholic ethos supports pupils' spiritual and moral development effectively. Pupils feel safe and are respectful of one another. They conduct themselves well in lessons and at social times.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, in order to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - raising the expectations of all members of staff
 - ensuring that teachers make effective use of assessment information to inform their planning
 - improving planning so that topics are explored in more depth and detail
 - employing strategies that engage and motivate pupils more consistently
 - ensuring teachers provide more effective support for lower-attaining pupils across key stage 3, so that they make rapid progress and secure basic skills in literacy and numeracy
 - consistently correcting errors in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management by:
 - establishing appropriate structures that provide effective line management and clear lines of accountability
 - holding middle leaders accountable for delivering rates of progress in line with the school's targets
 - using assessment information smartly to identify pupils making slower progress and providing them with additional support that helps them to catch up
 - checking the quality of teaching more assiduously and providing teachers with precise feedback on how to improve their practice
 - strengthening the curriculum for teaching fundamental British values, so that pupils are more fully prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Improve pupils' attitudes to learning and their confidence to participate in lessons.
- Implement a strategy to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, particularly those who miss school more regularly.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since the school converted to become an academy in 2014, weak leadership allowed a decline in standards and a deterioration in the quality of teaching and learning. A comfortable, low-challenge culture developed which allowed low expectations and poor performance to go unchallenged.
- Until the recent appointment of the current headteacher, leaders had an unrealistic and overly generous picture of the quality of education being provided. Governors were too accepting of the information provided by senior leaders and failed to question or interrogate the reasons behind the decline in standards. Although the headteacher is now fostering an open and transparent working relationship with governors, the scheme of delegation means neither the local governing body or the Saint Oswald's Academy Trust board are holding leaders effectively to account or driving the urgent improvements that need to be made.
- The headteacher has quickly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and put in place a detailed plan to rapidly improve the school. Sensible decisions have been taken to draw on external support from beyond the trust. Key changes have been prioritised well and expectations are beginning to rise as staff across the school increasingly recognise what needs to be done.
- A more robust policy to manage the performance of teachers has been introduced. Teachers have been set more demanding and measurable objectives for the progress of their pupils. Checks on the progress teachers are making towards achieving their objectives are imminent.
- Some teachers are responding positively to the training and guidance they are now receiving. In the past, teachers did not receive enough guidance and only minimal checks were made on the quality of teaching.
- Middle leaders have had too few opportunities to network with other colleagues across the local authority or in other schools. As a result, they spent too long working in isolation. Their schemes of work and assessment systems were slow to change in the light of the raised curriculum expectations nationally. Middle leaders told inspectors their role had 'stagnated' as they were given little guidance and few opportunities to lead their areas of responsibility effectively. More recently, some middle and senior leaders have begun to feel empowered and now work more collaboratively to deliver the improvements identified by the headteacher.
- The curriculum is currently under review with the intention of introducing a number of changes from September 2017. A re-structure of staffing, including the senior leadership team, is also currently being considered alongside the planned curriculum changes. The revised plans will place a greater focus on English and mathematics in key stage 3 and provide more challenge for the most able pupils in key stage 4 through the introduction of separate science courses. It is too early to judge the impact of these proposed changes. The existing curriculum has sufficient breadth and balance, but schemes of work within subjects are underdeveloped and lack the necessary challenge to support rapid progress and success in GCSE qualifications.

- Pupil premium funding has not been spent exclusively on supporting disadvantaged pupils. The school has only recently begun to identify and provide effective additional support for disadvantaged pupils who fall behind. For example, a small class of underachieving most-able disadvantaged pupils has been created to provide them with sharper teaching to address gaps in their knowledge. In 2016, the progress of disadvantaged pupils was in the bottom 10% of schools nationally and tracking information shows that disadvantaged pupils continue to make poor progress in most subjects.
- Lower-attaining pupils do receive some additional teaching of English and mathematics in key stage 3 which has a positive impact. However, the headteacher has recognised the need to make better use of the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding to narrow gaps in attainment. Similarly, funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities does not result in successful academic outcomes.
- The school engenders a caring Catholic ethos in which pupils are respectful and tolerant of one another. They conduct themselves well and behave responsibly. Members of the school council provide thoughtful leadership that helps to improve the ethos of the school. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development, although work to develop pupils' social and cultural development is less well planned. For example, there are relatively few extra-curricular activities and many pupils reported not attending any after-school activities. Furthermore, the development of fundamental British values has not been planned carefully across the curriculum and is overly dependent on teaching within religious education. There are few opportunities for pupils to learn about or experience other faiths or explore the principles of democracy or the British legal system.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's survey were appreciative of the care and guidance the school provides.

Governance of the school

- Both the local governing body and the trust board have failed to hold leaders to account for the decline in standards over recent years. An unhealthy culture, which prohibited effective challenge, is now being replaced with more open and transparent governance.
- Following a number of resignations, the local governing body is currently under-strength and lacks the knowledge, experience or capacity to provide effective support and challenge to the headteacher.
- The lines of accountability between the trust board and the local governing body are not clear and, as a result, effective support and challenge is not in place. Although governors are aware of the significant challenges the school faces, no effective steering group has emerged to monitor the delivery and impact of the school's rapid improvement plan.
- Some sensible strategic steps have begun to be taken, such as the introduction of a more robust performance management policy.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school makes all necessary checks on adults and visitors who work in the school and provides teachers with suitable training so that they fully understand the duty upon them to act if they have a concern about a child's safety or welfare. The designated safeguarding leader audits safeguarding arrangements with the help of an external specialist and works effectively with external agencies to ensure that children at risk receive appropriate care and support. The school itself provides a secure environment for all and a 'safe haven' for more vulnerable pupils at social times. A member of staff provides effective counselling and trains older pupils who act as 'buddies' for younger pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Over time, the quality of teaching in a broad range of subjects including English and mathematics has not supported strong enough learning and progress.
- Teachers have not been provided with sufficient training or feedback on their performance. In addition, systems to manage their performance have until recently been ineffective and tokenistic. As a result, a culture of low expectations was allowed to develop. Typically, teachers provide tasks that do not challenge pupils sufficiently and are too keen to praise and reward mediocre work from their classes. Currently, work to improve teaching is heavily dependent on external support.
- Some teachers do not check pupils' level of understanding during lessons and move on when there is confusion or uncertainty. In mathematics, for example, pupils left some lessons with misconceptions not addressed and their confidence as learners undermined.
- Although some teachers use discussion and debate effectively, many fail to probe or extend pupils' understanding through their questioning. All too often the content of lessons is underdeveloped and teachers only provide basic knowledge and information. Many topics are covered very superficially. For example, pupils showed a limited understanding of the reasons that led to the Holocaust and had no concept of the date or key figures involved when studying the Gunpowder Plot in history.
- Too many tasks provided fail to challenge or extend pupils effectively. Tasks tend to be too carefully structured and simplistic, such as completing basic worksheets or copying information from the board. Inspectors observed few examples of pupils being required to apply their knowledge, justify opinions, explain their thinking or draw conclusions.
- Aspects of pupils' literacy are not consistently addressed or challenged by teachers across the curriculum. There is limited provision in place to support those pupils who enter the school with lower attainment in English or mathematics. Reading programmes have little impact and the library is underdeveloped and lacks the necessary texts to interest and engage weaker readers.
- The headteacher has prioritised the need to improve training and development for teachers. Some effective work by external consultants has begun to have a positive impact and teachers are beginning to employ new strategies to structure their lessons

and engage pupils more actively. Assessment information is beginning to inform the planning of some teachers, who are appreciative of the support that is now available.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning hinder their progress. Too many pupils do not display a thirst for knowledge and few show a genuine curiosity in the subjects they learn. Too many pupils do not engage fully in lessons and choose not to answer questions or participate in discussions. Their lack of confidence and self-assurance has a negative impact on the progress they make.
- The personal, social, health and economic education programme is delivered through five themed days across the year and makes use of external speakers to enrich the content. On these days suitable topics are covered which support pupils' personal development effectively.
- The spiritual dimension is woven throughout the life of the school. Pupils receive support and guidance on their spiritual growth through assemblies, the chaplaincy and through the nurturing support of pastoral leaders. As a result, pupils demonstrate caring attitudes towards one another and a clear sense of moral responsibility.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is carefully organised. Much is done to identify and support the personal and social development of such pupils, although this has not translated into effective academic progress.
- The school provides a broad programme of careers guidance which helps pupils to take their next steps when they leave the school. The most able pupils are not always motivated to aspire for future academic study in further and higher education.
- Leaders make regular checks on the attitudes, behaviour and attendance of pupils that attend alternative provision on a part-time basis. These show that the use of alternative provision is effective and complements the education they receive in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The school is calm and orderly at social times and during lessons. Disruptions to learning are rare, as pupils are happy to comply with the school's rules and show respect for members of staff. Most pupils apply themselves diligently. However, a minority fail to complete homework or are untidy in their presentation of work.
- Pupils look smart and take care of their appearance. Their conduct around the school is good. Recent efforts to improve movement around the school have had a positive impact and pupils report that lessons now start more promptly and with more purpose as a result.

- Levels of overall attendance are close to the national average. The attendance leader uses a range of effective approaches to promote and enforce good attendance. This year, pastoral leaders are playing a more significant role in checking attendance and following up on pupils who miss school regularly. However, a proportion of disadvantaged pupils still do not attend well and the school has not developed an effective strategy to address this.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes at the end of key stage 4 have declined since the academy opened.
- Most cohorts enter the school with levels of attainment in English and mathematics that are broadly in line with those seen nationally. Some year groups have weaker levels of attainment on entry to the school. Outcomes in recent years have varied somewhat, but in most subjects pupils have made significantly less progress than seen nationally. In 2016, outcomes were particularly weak. The progress pupils made across a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics, placed the school in the bottom 10% of schools nationally.
- Around 80% of pupils enter the school having attained the expected standard in English and mathematics at the end of their primary school education. However, only half of pupils go on to attain a GCSE grade C or better in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in other subjects has also been weak. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who attained a good GCSE grade in science, Spanish, history, geography or religious education was significantly below the national average.
- All key groups, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able pupils, made significantly weaker progress across a broad range of subjects than seen nationally.
- Despite the best efforts of the new headteacher, the progress of pupils currently in the school is not improving fast enough. The school's own assessment information shows that increasing proportions of pupils fall below their targets as they progress through the school. By Year 10, more than half of pupils are working below their target in most subjects. Similarly, the picture for pupils currently in Year 11 is not one of improvement.
- The work in pupils' books shows that pupils do not study topics in sufficient detail and are not challenged to extend their understanding sufficiently. As a result, their knowledge and understanding remain too superficial.
- A recent focus on the quality of presentation has begun to have an impact and most pupils now take pride in their work. However, scrutiny of books reveals that not all work is completed and many pupils do not make use of the marking and feedback they receive to improve their work. While some teachers correct spelling and punctuation errors, the practice is not consistent – allowing some pupils to continue making basic mistakes.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision make sound progress and attend well.
- Too many pupils finish key stage 4 without a good GCSE qualification in English and

mathematics. Although helpful careers guidance and good pastoral support helps all pupils to secure a place in further education, employment or training, the proportion of pupils that go on to further academic study is disappointingly low, as a result of their failure to secure the necessary qualifications.

School details

Unique reference number	140751
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10023849

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	510
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Edmends
Headteacher	Zahida Hammond
Telephone number	01642 453462
Website	www.stpeters-sch.com
Email address	office@stpeters-sch.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website or comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish. A number of policies are out of date and there is no information on the use and impact of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding for literacy and numeracy for 2015–16.
- St Peter’s Catholic Voluntary Academy is much smaller than the average secondary school. The school converted to an academy in 2014 as a member of the Saint Oswald’s Catholic Academy Trust.
- A small proportion of pupils belong to minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is around twice that seen nationally.

- There is a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above average.
- Six pupils in Year 11 currently attend alternative provision at The Junction Foundation. All six pupils attend on a part-time basis.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress at key stage 4.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2016 following the retirement of the previous headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across all year groups. A number of observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. During observations, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils in order to evaluate the quality of their current work. In addition, inspectors scrutinised in detail a sample of work from some of the most able pupils in Years 7, 9 and 11.
- Inspectors also observed the general climate around the school at social times.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, a group of teachers, a group of subject leaders and groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4. Further meetings were held with the chair of the local governing body and the chair of the Saint Oswald's Catholic Academy Trust board and a representative of the Catholic diocese.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation and rapid improvement plan, policies, assessment information and records of checks on the quality of teaching. Inspectors looked at records of attendance, behaviour, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 responses to the online survey, Parent View, the 27 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 18 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Downs	Ofsted Inspector
Jill Bowe	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Cook	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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