

St Peter's Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre

Stroud Road, Tuffley, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL4 0DD

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires Improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement, in some subjects, by the time they leave the school has been too low for the last two years. This is because teachers' expectations of pupils have been too low and pupils' needs have not been sufficiently met.
- Leaders and governors have not prevented a decline in standards over the last two years. Furthermore, external support has not resulted in improving outcomes for pupils.
- Until recently, the school's assessment system did not enable staff to monitor pupil progress accurately and help pupils who fell behind to catch up.
- Outcomes and provision for students in the sixth form are not yet good. Until recently, leaders did not ensure that students were following appropriate courses, making good progress and attending fully.
- Leaders do not have enough strategic oversight of some areas of the school's work. This includes the provision for disadvantaged pupils through additional funding and monitoring of their progress.
- Pupils do not consistently act on the advice they are given by teachers to improve their work.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher leads the school with integrity and determination. She cares deeply about this school and has raised expectations of staff and pupils. As a result, the school is improving.
- The school's Catholic ethos is a strength of the school. This is an inclusive school where all pupils are encouraged to live the school's values, regardless of faith or background.
- Attendance is improving for different groups of pupils because of leaders' decisive actions.
- Teaching is improving. Staff are enthusiastic, and committed. Greater accountability, higher expectations of pupils and sharing of best practice are making a positive difference.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are considerate and respectful. Pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, are looked after well. Consequently, they feel safe and valued.
- The varied curriculum is tailored effectively to pupils' different needs and interests.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders develop appropriate strategic oversight of different areas of the school’s work, including the sixth form and use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils
 - governors hold leaders to greater account for the quality of teaching, progress and attendance of pupils
 - leaders and governors take greater advantage of external support in order to increase accountability for pupils’ progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement throughout the school, including the sixth form, by ensuring that:
 - leaders and teachers fully understand the close link between teaching and progress, and measure the impact of their work accordingly
 - staff continue to develop their understanding and mastery of the new assessment system so that they can tackle pupil underperformance quickly
 - all staff in all subject areas, particularly mathematics, have the same high expectations of pupils, monitor their ongoing progress closely and plan activities that meet their needs
 - pupils act on the advice they receive from teachers in different subject areas to identify their mistakes and improve their work.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership, including two changes of headteacher. The current headteacher has only been in post for 10 months. These changes follow a long period of stability. Consequently, the school community has been through a difficult time adjusting to a change in culture and uncertainty about the future. During this time, standards of achievement have slipped, and it is only recently that concerted efforts have been made to arrest the decline.
- Since the headteacher's appointment, a number of promising initiatives have been introduced to improve various aspects of the school's work, such as a more robust assessment system. However, these initiatives are fairly new and untested so that their impact is not yet evident.
- Leaders do not have sufficient strategic oversight of certain aspects of the school's work, including new initiatives. There is a lack of coherence and understanding of how different features of work relate to each other. For example, a number of initiatives have been introduced to improve the quality of teaching. These include the new appraisal process and the recently formed teaching and learning team that develops and shares aspects of best practice throughout the staff. Both of these strategies are helping to improve teaching. However, as yet, there is no explicit, overarching understanding of how they should complement and support each other to maximise impact.
- The new headteacher has made a positive difference in a short space of time. She has risen to the challenge of taking the school forward with determination and conviction. This is because she passionately believes in the school and wants the best for the pupils. Consequently, she leads with integrity and is not interested in quick, easy fixes. She is galvanising staff and working through other leaders to establish sustainable improvements that are in the best interests of pupils.
- Leaders take an objective, honest and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are fully aware of what needs to improve. This clarity and willingness to face up to the challenges have enabled them to make rapid improvements in a short space of time.
- Middle leaders are now working more collaboratively to improve teaching in their different subject areas. They are in tune with the headteacher's vision and understand the need for higher expectations. Alongside increased accountability, middle leaders feel trusted to innovate and share their ideas. As a result, they are taking greater ownership of their work. They feel optimistic and enthusiastic about the future.
- The curriculum serves pupils well. The range of courses enables pupils to study subjects that interest them and meet their needs. Leaders have considered the curriculum carefully, and have made principled decisions about how it may best suit pupils who have different needs. Consequently, these decisions, to a degree, penalise the school in terms of certain league table measures. Nevertheless, they are undoubtedly the right curriculum choices for pupils.

- Leaders do not have a sufficiently robust, coherent and whole-school approach to raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Although leaders are able to point to individual successes and describe interventions for individuals and small groups, there is too little strategic oversight. Leaders and governors do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of which strategies afforded by additional funding have been the most successful in raising achievement.
- Over the last couple of years, when the school has been more vulnerable because of changes to leadership, support from external providers has not enabled leaders to prevent the decline in standards. More recently, the headteacher has received effective mentoring support since she took up post. This support has helped her to make rapid improvements.
- The large majority of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, are satisfied with the work of the school. As one parent wrote, 'St. Peter's is like a family. There is a strong feeling and sense of belonging and looking out for each other.' Nevertheless, there is a minority of parents who raise concerns about certain aspects of the school's work.
- A variety of different professional development opportunities are provided to staff. These are helping them to improve their practice. For example, middle leaders have accessed training courses from external providers to prepare them for their roles. The overwhelming majority of staff who responded to the staff survey issued during the inspection reported that training opportunities have helped their development.

Governance of the school

- Over the last couple of years, governors have not sufficiently held school leaders to account for pupils' outcomes. This lack of challenge has contributed to a decline in standards. However, recent changes to the make-up of the governing body have 'shaken things up', and governors are now providing a higher degree of challenge, as evidenced by recent minutes.
- Governors are now keenly aware of the key challenges facing the school, such as the need to improve outcomes and attendance. They are requesting, and receiving, more detailed information about leaders' strategies and actions to resolve these issues.
- Governors, both new and longstanding, are highly committed to their work. They understand the burden of responsibility that falls on them and take their work seriously. They feel a deep sense of duty towards the school and give freely of their time.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A large team of designated staff underpins a strong safeguarding culture and provides an effective network of support for vulnerable pupils. The team communicates on a frequent, regular basis to ensure that timely support is offered to those who need it. This team is well led by the designated safeguarding lead.
- All staff have received appropriate child protection training. Consequently, they know

the procedures to follow and whom to speak to should they have concerns about a child. Referrals are carefully recorded and stored. Records of the most vulnerable pupils document all necessary communication, actions and involvement with external agencies to track the support they receive. Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils are comprehensive and up to date.

- Pupils reported that they feel safe in school. This is because they feel able to go anywhere on the large school campus without feeling intimidated. It is also because pupils are happy to confide in staff should they have any worries, and there is little bullying in school. If bullying does occur, it is swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff. One pupil who spoke with the lead inspector said, 'There's no tolerance for bullying in this school.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Until recently, teaching in some subjects did not enable pupils to achieve the progress they are capable of. This is because teachers did not plan sufficiently challenging activities to meet their needs or inspire their interest. Current teaching is improving as a result of the various strategies and resources that have been introduced.
- Leaders and staff are now beginning to understand the cause-and-effect relationship between teaching and outcomes, but are not yet ensuring that this understanding fully informs the evaluation of their work.
- The assessment system that was in place until this academic year was not fit for purpose. It did not allow teachers to identify accurately those pupils who were falling behind so that extra support could be put in place. A new assessment system has now been introduced, which makes more coherent links between targets, ongoing progress assessments and predicted grades. However, this system is new and it is too early to judge its impact.
- The impact of teachers' advice and guidance to help pupils improve their work is variable. Sometimes, pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on their work, consider their mistakes and make improvements. However, this practice is not consistent across subjects.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. They are receptive to new ideas and demonstrate intellectual curiosity. Pupils are attentive, follow instructions with little fuss and work with purpose and concentration. During class discussion, pupils make articulate contributions and listen considerately to each other.
- Teachers are well trained and have a good command of their subject knowledge. This enables them to teach with confidence and enthusiasm. Recent efforts by leaders to place teaching and learning at the heart of what the school does are helping to bolster teachers' practice and confidence.
- Many teachers are using questioning effectively to sharpen pupils' understanding and engage their interest. They use their subject knowledge and pupils' willingness to rise to the intellectual challenge to pose thoughtful questions that assist their learning.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's religious character and the values it promotes thread through different aspects of the school's work. This is an inclusive school that embraces tolerance, respect and kindness, among other values. These values are lived by all members of the school community. As one inspector noted, the school's culture provides it with a 'beating heart'. Inspectors noted the harmonious way in which pupils of different ages and backgrounds mix as they move around school between lessons and during breaks. There is a strong sense of 'togetherness'. One younger pupil who spoke with an inspector said that the school was 'loving'.
- Pupils are self-assured. They demonstrate this in lessons when they make articulate contributions to class discussion and work with quiet self-sufficiency. Outside lessons, they greet visitors in a confident manner and with courtesy.
- An increasing number of pupils who have complex needs or face significant difficulties in their lives are joining the school. Staff have been proactive in ensuring that the right support is in place for these pupils. This is helping, firstly, to establish these pupils in school, many of whom do not speak English, before then encouraging them to thrive.
- Pupils know how to manage risk and keep themselves safe. They are taught how to keep themselves safe in various ways, for example through personal, social and health education sessions, assemblies and tutorial time. Pupils know how to behave appropriately online and how they should interact with social media.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are good ambassadors for their school. They are likeable, well-rounded young people who want to do well and care about their prospects. Pupils are polite and courteous, both to adults and to each other. They move around the school site in an orderly fashion and behave well in class.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride. This pride is also reflected in the well-presented work of most pupils.
- Many classrooms are welcoming and attractive. They encourage pupils to see learning as an interesting pursuit. This is because staff have invested in creating displays that both celebrate pupils' work and act as an additional, engaging learning resource.
- Attendance of different groups of pupils is improving because leaders have placed a much greater emphasis on its importance. For the last couple of years, attendance has been below average, prompting leaders to take action. The suite of measures and incentives introduced to tackle absence is having an increasingly successful impact on attendance. A sharper analysis of patterns of attendance would ensure that measures had even greater impact.

- The number of exclusions has risen. In large part, this is because the school has adopted a new behaviour policy. The policy sets high standards, is more robust and more explicitly states the consequences of poor behaviour. Adherence to the policy is resulting in a higher number of exclusions. However, leaders maintain that the policy needs time to become established and they are right to 'stick with it' in pursuit of higher standards and expectations.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, the progress of pupils who left the school at the end of Year 11, particularly in mathematics, was below average. Overall progress was also below average in 2016. Current pupils are now making better progress as teaching continues to improve, but they are not yet making the progress of which they are capable.
- The attainment of pupils of different abilities has been variable over time. Overall, pupils' attainment has been close to the national average. However, in 2017, higher-ability pupils underachieved in some areas, while middle-ability pupils underachieved in 2016.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has been below average over time in different subjects including English and mathematics. Current pupils are making better progress because staff are providing more tailored support. Nevertheless, these pupils are not yet making the progress of which they are capable. This is because measures to provide additional support are not fully evaluated for evidence of impact. Furthermore, until recently, the school's assessment system did not enable staff to monitor pupils' progress closely enough. This has hindered efforts to raise their achievement.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making strong progress in their reading in key stage 3. This is because literacy initiatives are being promoted effectively and have been well received by pupils.
- Work in pupils' books shows that staff now have higher expectations of the work that pupils produce. Pupils are taking greater pride in their work and progress is becoming more evident.
- In many respects, pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education once they finish Year 11. The school prepares them well to become good citizens who want to participate in society and make a contribution. They understand the importance of fundamental British values and their role in upholding them. Pupils also receive sound, impartial advice about next steps from the careers adviser. Nevertheless, pupils have not been achieving their academic potential by the time they finish Year 11.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leadership of the sixth form has not been strong or consistent. This meant that too many students were following study programmes that were not suited to their interests or prior attainment. Consequently, in the last academic year, too

many students who had embarked on A levels left their courses at the end of Year 12 because of underachievement.

- The progress of students following level 3 qualifications, including the most able, has been below average over time. This has also been the case for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders do not have the information to report with confidence on the progress of current students in the school.
- The quality of teaching is variable across different subjects. Where teaching is most effective, assessment is used to identify precisely misconceptions and gaps in students' knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers then plan activities that help to overcome these weaknesses so that students make more rapid progress. Inspectors noted that this practice is particularly evident in English and government and politics. Where teaching is less effective, learners do not form a secure understanding of what they need to do to make progress.
- The leadership of the acting sixth-form coordinator has provided greater stability. He is open and honest about what needs to improve. As a result, he has acted decisively, together with other staff, to ensure that the curriculum better suits students' needs. Consequently, students are now following courses that are right for them. He is also working closely with staff in underperforming subjects to identify and overcome barriers to success.
- Students are safe and feel safe. They are confident in seeking out help and appreciate the support and guidance they receive from staff as a result. Students who spoke with an inspector talked about the 'good communal values' that flourish in the school. They feel they owe staff respect because they are well supported, both in lessons and in pastoral matters.
- Students' social, personal and employability skills are well developed. The school was recently awarded the 'Skills for Stroud' employability charter, which recognises the development of employability skills across the curriculum. Students receive clear and helpful guidance that supports them in making the right choices when they leave school. Consequently, students go on to appropriate destinations, including higher education.
- Attendance has improved significantly because leaders now recognise the link between good attendance and improved progress, and made this a priority. They have taken robust action, including giving responsibility to a dedicated member of staff to monitor and improve key stage 5 attendance.

School details

Unique reference number	136982
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10025027

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 comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1555
Appropriate authority	The Board of trustees
Chair	Ian Cahill
Headteacher	Stephanie Layhe
Telephone number	01452 520594
Website	www.stpetershighschool.org.uk
Email address	head@sphs.uk.com
Date of previous inspection	15–16 November 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- St Peter's Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre is a larger than average-sized school.
- The school converted to become an academy in 2011.
- The headteacher took up post in January 2017.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English.
- The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average.

- The number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who receive support is below the national average. The number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who have a statement or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects and across year groups. Some observations were conducted jointly with school staff.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, middle leaders, groups of pupils, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and representatives of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with two external advisers and a parent.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, governing body minutes, records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour, attendance, exclusion and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 286 responses to the Parent View survey, 133 responses to the staff survey and eight responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct at break and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Thompson	Ofsted Inspector
Trudi Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Deirdre Fitzpatrick	Ofsted Inspector
Malcolm Willis	Ofsted Inspector
Duncan Millard	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Watson	Ofsted Inspector

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

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.

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.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2017