

Saint Peter's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Normanby Road, South Bank, Middlesbrough TS6 6SP

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged and most-able, do not make consistently good progress across a range of subjects, including in science, mathematics and English.
- There is variability in the quality of teaching across a range of subjects.
- Too many pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not attend school regularly. This has a negative impact on their progress.
- Exclusions are higher than is typically found in an average secondary school.
- Some middle leaders do not ensure that teaching is consistently good in their subject areas. Consequently, some pupils are not sufficiently stretched and challenged, and as a result do not make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- As a result of appropriate training, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- The progress of current pupils, especially in lower year groups, is significantly better than it was two years ago. This is leading to better outcomes, especially in mathematics and English.
- Pupils take pride in their work and have become more confident in themselves as learners. They care for and support each other.
- There is a clear and effective leadership structure led by a determined and focused headteacher and two vice-principals.
- The new governors on the interim academy board of the trust have a secure knowledge of the school, its priorities and its needs.
- Pupils benefit from good-quality curriculum provision that extends beyond the normal subjects in school. This includes good advice about future careers.
- The support for pupils, particularly those in Year 7 who find school difficult, is strong.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - further reducing the persistent absence rates, especially for pupils who are disadvantaged
 - increasing the attendance of all pupils so that it reaches the levels expected of secondary schools nationally
 - further reducing the number of exclusions.
- Continue to improve pupils' outcomes, by ensuring that all pupils, and in particular disadvantaged pupils, and the most able pupils, make at least good progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their academic ability, are challenged in lessons
 - ensuring that middle leaders reduce the variability that exists in the quality of teaching within their subjects
 - sharing good practice in the quality of teaching so that it permeates across the whole school
 - continuing to offer relevant, good-quality training to all staff.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers, at all levels, have a focused and determined will to improve all aspects of the school. Senior leaders have high expectations of both the pupils and staff. Since arriving at the school in September 2016, the headteacher has restructured all levels of leadership to ensure that she has the personnel required to achieve her goal of taking the school out of special measures and then improving the school further.
- Both vice-principals, and the small group of directors of progress, form a highly capable network of knowledgeable leaders. They know the school and are not afraid to tackle underperformance where it exists. This group has been pivotal in improving the progress pupils make.
- Leaders and managers have put in place an appropriate training programme focused on improving the quality of teaching, and the progress pupils make. As a result, teaching is more focused on the needs of pupils, and all pupils across the school are making better progress.
- The leader in charge of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and attendance has focused on increasing the attendance rates of pupils. Attendance is rising as a result of the strategies in place. However, some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not attend school regularly enough. This has a negative impact on the progress they make. Exclusions, although high, are reducing also. Support for pupils with particular needs is helping them to make good progress.
- The curriculum, including extra-curricular opportunities, meets the needs of pupils more appropriately than in the past. The legacy curriculum followed by the older pupils resulted in their weaker progress. This is because it did not meet their needs effectively enough.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding wisely. Both the attendance and progress made by disadvantaged pupils and/or those pupils who start school with attainment below that of their peers are improving.
- Leaders have high expectations of their staff, but have been mindful of their well-being. Teachers talked to inspectors about how well they feel supported by their managers.
- Middle leaders have improved their effectiveness since the last inspection and have high expectations of themselves. Some are new to the school, but all are determined to ensure that the quality of teaching in their subjects is consistently good so that progress improves.

Governance of the school

- While the transfer from a previous trust arrangement to the newly formed Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust in September 2018 introduced unintended delay to school improvement, the new trust quickly stepped in with a highly skilled team forming an interim academy board (IAB). This new team has the sharp and relevant

skills needed to support and challenge the school effectively.

- The IAB knows the school, its challenges and its staff well. It meets regularly and has access to real-time information on school data for progress and attendance through cloud technology. This ensures that the IAB does not always have to wait for information and can be more responsive to need.
- The IAB holds senior leaders closely to account for improvements across all areas. Its members have a strong vision for improvement and are aware of the continuing needs of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Processes to check on the suitability of staff are robustly maintained and there are detailed records of any safeguarding concerns.
- Any safeguarding concerns are swiftly referred to relevant outside agencies where necessary.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that all staff are aware of their responsibilities towards safeguarding, for the 'Prevent' duty and in support of British values. Thorough, relevant training means that they can spot issues should they arise.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although the legacy of weaker teaching has been addressed effectively, there remains variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teaching does not always support pupils, and in particular the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils, to make good progress.
- The teaching of literacy effectively develops the pupils' ability to spell, punctuate their work and use grammar correctly. However, there are still some occasions where opportunities are missed to develop pupils' literacy skills.
- Observations in mathematics, alongside evidence seen in books, show that teaching in this subject is now leading to a better understanding of the application of mathematics.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress due to the better support for these pupils now in place. The use of support staff is variable, but noticeably strong, with nurture groups in Years 7 and 8.
- Teachers ask searching questions of pupils to accurately determine pupils' learning, and to introduce some further challenge.
- Teachers are increasingly planning learning more effectively so that pupils' progress is improving overall. However, they do not always use information gathered through the school's data to sharply focus interventions where they are needed.
- Teachers have developed strong relationships with their pupils, which is leading to more engagement in lessons and as a result pupils' progress is improving. This is particularly strong in mathematics and English.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident individuals and are happy to read aloud or demonstrate their learning to their peers.
- Pupils feel safe, and agree that they are safe. They add that they know whom to go to if they feel unsafe. They say that bullying is rare and quickly dealt with by teachers and school leaders.
- Pupils care for themselves, their peers and their teachers. There is an obvious calm around the school, and inspectors witnessed valuable support by pupils towards their peers on numerous occasions. Pupils were extremely polite to their peers, school staff and to the inspection team.
- The school's 'family dining' system in Years 7 and 8, where pupils sit in classes with their teacher to eat lunch, talk about issues and celebrate each other's achievement, is providing a safe place for pupils to explore issues and promote mutual respect.
- Leaders ensure that the personal development and welfare of pupils who attend alternative provision are checked, and their progress is monitored. Thorough procedures are in place to check on these pupils' attendance.
- Leaders ensure that the school guidance for careers is strengthening so that more pupils are aware of the opportunities that exist for their future education or careers.
- The school supports British values well. Pupils develop their understanding of these values, for example through their own elections. The work to develop British values is often threaded throughout school life. For example, inspectors witnessed pupils in technology lessons developing products that support those who have disabilities, which demonstrated strong respect for others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Attendance, although improving, remains low.
- The proportion of permanent exclusions in the academic year 2017/18 was high. Strategies are in place to reduce this proportion and these are having a positive impact. However, the level of exclusions is still worryingly high.
- Most pupils, particularly in key stage 3, demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, both in the way they look after and present their work in books and in the way they contribute to each other in paired or group work.
- Pupils' behaviour in classes and around school is usually calm, purposeful and orderly. During break- and lunchtimes, pupils interact with each other in a meaningful and collaborative manner.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Current pupils make considerably more progress than historical information indicates. This is because of a concerted and well-thought-through plan to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, pupils' progress now requires improvement rather than being inadequate.
- Differences in the progress made by groups of pupils are now much smaller. In Year 7 and Year 8, for example, all groups of pupils, regardless of their academic ability, make equal progress.
- The most able pupils are now making better progress as a result of improved teaching and high-quality interventions, particularly in mathematics and English.
- The work done to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics and English is enabling pupils to make much better progress in these two subjects than previously. Of particular note is the improvement in progress made by disadvantaged pupils. However, there are still differences in the progress of disadvantaged pupils when compared with that of their peers nationally.
- In both key stages 3 and 4, the progress current pupils are making is improving compared with previous years. Improvements in key stage 3 are stronger than in key stage 4, where there remains a legacy of weaker progress resulting from less effective teaching over time.
- The special educational needs coordinator ensures that teachers are equipped to better support those pupils with SEND. These pupils learn well.
- Owing to improving outcomes overall, pupils are now more prepared to move on to future careers or education. All pupils who left the school in 2018 went on to further education, training or employment. Leaders now ensure that pupils across all year groups are targeted for intervention support when they start to slip behind. This helps pupils to catch up quickly. As a result, pupils' progress is stronger.

School details

Unique reference number	140751
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10087474

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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	525
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Nicky Jamalizadeh
Headteacher	Zahida Hammond
Telephone number	01642 453462
Website	https://stpeters.npcat.org.uk
Email address	office@stpeters-sch.com
Date of previous inspection	21–22 February 2017

Information about this school

- Saint Peter’s Catholic Voluntary Academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It became part of the newly formed Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust on 1 September 2018.
- An IAB was set up by the trust in December 2018 to offer greater challenge by governors for more rapid improvement.
- There is a high proportion of pupils with SEND. The number of pupils with an education, health and care plan is average.
- A small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language or come from a minority ethnic group.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is double that seen nationally.
- The school appropriately uses the support of alternative providers including Keys,

Redcar and Cleveland Tug Centre, and Learning Curve for a few of its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across all year groups and in a range of subjects, including nurture groups. A number of these were joint observations with senior school leaders.
- Work in pupils' books was scrutinised as part of the lesson observation process as well as a discrete exercise to ascertain the progress pupils are making and the overall quality of their work.
- Observations of pupils' behaviour were carried out during social times and around all areas of the school.
- Various meetings were held with leaders at all levels and a group of newly qualified teachers, as well as with the chief executive officer of the trust and the IAB. Meetings with pupils from both key stages and a group of parents and carers were also held to gain their views of the school and its development since the last inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school, including governors' and trust board minutes of meetings, policies, assessment information and attendance records.
- Inspectors also took into account the 21 responses to the online pupil survey and six free-text responses by parents. There were no responses to the staff online survey and there were not enough responses to the online survey, Parent View, to evaluate.

Inspection team

Colin Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Durand	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	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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