

Inspection of Ss Peter and Paul's Catholic Primary Academy

Northumbrian Road, Cramlington, Northumberland NE23 6DB

Inspection dates: 6–7 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Ss Peter and Paul's Catholic Primary Academy is a warm, caring school where pupils are happy and feel safe. Visitors feel welcomed and pupils say that the school is 'like a family'.

Pupils are happy to work and play together most of the time. They say that teachers are good at sorting out any bullying. Pupils who are new to the school make friends and settle in well.

There are lots of clubs where pupils learn new skills and make new friends. Pupils take part in various church activities. For example, Friday Mass and the pilgrimage to Holy Island. Such activities give pupils confidence and makes them feel part of a community.

Teachers encourage pupils to work hard in lessons and try their best. Pupils enjoy most of their learning. Sometimes their work is too hard or too easy. When this happens some pupils lose concentration and distract others from learning.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the last inspection, there has been significant turbulence in leadership, at both the school and the trust. This has put significant demands on the new headteacher. She has strengthened relationships with parents and the wider community. She has also ensured that pupils learn how to be confident, tolerant and caring. Work to improve the curriculum is in the earliest stages of development. Subject leaders are new to post. They have not received the training and support they need to fulfil their roles well.

Pupils study a wide range of subjects. They like doing experiments in science and fieldwork in geography. Despite this, the curriculum in these subjects is not well planned. Teachers are not always sure what pupils have already learned or what they need to learn. At times, pupils complete work that they have done in previous classes. Pupils do not always have the knowledge they need when they move to the next year group.

Leaders have improved the teaching of early reading. Children start learning phonics from the beginning of the Reception class. Teachers make sure that pupils get the help they need, when they need it. By the time pupils leave Year 2, most have reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check. The approach to the teaching of reading in key stage 2 varies from class to class. Older pupils who struggle with reading receive extra support. This is less successful, and some pupils do not catch up well.

The teaching of mathematics is better in some year groups than others. Older pupils enjoy tackling tricky problems and developing their skills. Teachers have not had the

opportunity to learn from what works well in the school. They use different teaching approaches and resources in different classes. This confuses some pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) struggle the most.

The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is an experienced leader. She ensures that pupils with SEND have appropriate support plans in place. These pupils receive extra teaching in small groups. This is effective. The teaching they get in lessons does not always meet their needs.

Children make a strong start to their learning in the Reception class. The early years leader works well with staff in the private nursery. This makes sure that children get the support they need straight away. Children soon settle into school, and grow in confidence. They enjoy a broad curriculum that helps them learn the skills they need for Year 1.

Staff teach pupils a thorough curriculum for personal development. Pupils learn about respect and equality. They learn how to maintain good physical and mental health. For example, pupils in several year groups took part in workshops about resilience and anxiety.

The headteacher engages with parents and carers to improve individual pupils' attendance. Despite this, whole-school absence rates remain too high. They are above the national average and are not improving.

Many governors are new to the school and new to their roles. They meet their statutory obligations and have specific areas of responsibility. This is improving their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant about pupils' safety. They receive regular safeguarding training and updates. They know the local risks and are clear about what to do if they have a concern. Any concerns are reported swiftly. They are followed up well.

Leaders make sure all staff undergo detailed employment checks. These checks are recorded appropriately in a single central register.

Pupils learn how to stay safe as part of the curriculum. This includes learning about how to stay safe online. A programme of assemblies supports the school's work in this area.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers plan activities that pupils will enjoy. However, they do not plan activities that build on what pupils already know and can do consistently. Leaders need to make sure that schemes of work identify the key subject-specific knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn step by step.
- The checks that subject leaders make are not sufficiently focused on how well the curriculum is building pupils' knowledge and skills in a range of subjects. This is hampering their efforts to raise standards. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders have the expertise to fulfil their roles. They need to make sure that strong practice is shared, and weaknesses are tackled promptly.
- The teaching of early reading in the Reception class and in key stage 1 has strengthened. However, the teaching of reading in key stage 2 is variable. Leaders need to make sure that staff in key stage 2 receive the training and support they need, so they can support older pupils to become more competent and confident readers. They need to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading beyond phonics.
- Pupils with SEND receive extra support sessions, which match their individual plans. However, in daily lessons their learning is not always well matched to their needs. Leaders need to iron out these inconsistencies, so that all teachers take the needs and prior learning of pupils with SEND into account when they plan learning.
- There is a legacy of poor attendance. The number of pupils who are persistently absent remains stubbornly high. Leaders need to intensify the support and challenge for the families of pupils who do not attend school regularly.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	141832
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10110636
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Kevin Dawson
Headteacher	Louise Myerscough
Website	www.ss-peterandpauls.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils in receipt of special needs support is below the national average.
- The school was formed after the closure of the St Peter's RC Middle School and the expansion of St Paul's RC First School in 2017. These schools converted to academy status in March 2015 as part of the Pax Christi Catholic Partnership.
- When the school had a short inspection in January 2018, the current headteacher was the deputy headteacher.
- This was the first full inspection of the school since its academisation.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, curriculum leaders and SENCo. We held meetings with the chief executive officer of the trust and members of the local governing body, including the chair. We spoke with a representative of the diocese.
- The subjects considered as part of the inspection were: mathematics, reading science and geography. We visited lessons in those subjects when they were taught. We talked to pupils and teachers from the lessons we visited. We looked at pupils' work in their books. We heard pupils read. We talked to curriculum leaders and governors about their ambitions for the curriculum.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were reviewed. We examined safeguarding policies and procedures along with training records. We talked to staff about their role in keeping pupils safe. We reviewed referrals made to the local authority children and young people's services.
- We checked attendance and exclusion records, and reviewed any behaviour incidents. We reviewed leaders' actions to resolve such incidents.
- We talked to pupils about what it is like to be a pupil at the school. We observed pupils at playtime and lunchtime. We talked with parents at the start of the school day.
- We talked to staff about their workload and the training and support they receive.
- We took account of 23 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 23 free-text responses. We also took account of 14 responses to the staff survey and 19 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Ian Dawson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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