

# Inspection of St Nicholas' CofE Middle School

Main Street, Pinvin, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 2ER

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Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Despite recent improvements, the quality of education in the school is not yet acceptable. Pupils are not achieving as well as they could in many subjects, including English and mathematics. The new leadership team is aware of this. Leaders are taking appropriate action, but they still have more work to do.

Pupils are happy and cheerful. They are confident and enjoy helping others. Positive relationships, underpinned by the school's Christian values, exist between staff and pupils and among pupils. Pupils say they feel safe because the staff look after them.

In some lessons, pupils do not consistently display positive attitudes to their learning. They get bored and do not focus well on their work. This stops them from achieving as well as they could and, at times, affects the learning of others.

Pupils have a clear understanding of the different types of bullying. Bullying does not happen very often, but when it does, staff deal with it at once.

Parents and carers have mixed views of the school. They are positive about many areas. However, they have concerns about the levels of instability in staffing in recent years. Parents are tired of change.

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

Leaders have not made sure that pupils, including pupils who are disadvantaged, are achieving as well as they could. Pupils' writing and mathematics have not been good enough for some years now. Reading is a whole-school priority. There is a new structured approach to the teaching of reading. The quality of this, however, is inconsistent across classes. Too many pupils lose interest in these lessons. Many pupils are not enthusiastic about reading. Too many pupils leave the school without the literacy and numeracy skills they need for the next stage of their education.

In many subjects, leaders have introduced curriculum plans. The plans map out the knowledge and skills that pupils will know and do at different stages in their learning. In addition, the plans tell teachers what to teach and when to teach it. However, teachers are not following these plans in all subjects and in all classes. Where teachers follow the plans, pupils' knowledge and skills are being developed well. But this is not happening in all classes and in all subjects. Leaders are aware of this and are taking effective action to put this right.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in all aspects of school life. However, they do not achieve as well as they could in subjects and classes where the learning is not as well structured. In these instances, pupils with SEND struggle with the nature of the curriculum because it is not as well ordered.

In some areas of the curriculum, such as French, art and design and technology, teachers have very good subject knowledge. As a result, pupils achieve very well in these subjects. However, in some subjects, including English and mathematics, not all teachers have good subject knowledge. This means that they plan and deliver lessons that do not always help pupils to learn well.

The majority of curriculum leaders are very new to their role. They are keen and very enthusiastic. Currently, they do not have the necessary skills and the required subject knowledge to develop their subject areas. Other curriculum leaders are more skilled and experienced. Consequently, their subject areas are further developed.

Teaching assistants support groups of pupils or individuals in and out of lessons. Where this is effective, pupils are clear about what they are doing and get help when they are stuck. However, some teaching assistants do not intervene quickly enough when pupils need support.

Staff organise a range of interesting trips, after-school clubs and special events. Pupils are very excited about the annual trip to Normandy. These activities help to bring learning to life, especially for pupils who are disadvantaged. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. They are aware of the risks associated with being online.

Pupils speak confidently about the school's Christian values. They say that the values influence the way that they learn and behave in school. Pupils' knowledge of other faiths and cultures needs more work.

The new senior leaders and the local academy board have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Supported by the multi-academy trust, they are leading improvements across the school. These improvements are already making a noticeable difference. Teachers say that new leaders are supportive and considerate of their well-being. They say that workload is now manageable. Staff are pleased that leadership is now more settled.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is the school's top priority and it is the responsibility of everyone. Pupils are happy to talk to staff if they are worried or have a problem. All staff are clear about what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. This is because they have been well trained. Safeguarding threads through parts of the curriculum. Special guests, such as the local police community support officer, visit the school. As a result, pupils know how to keep themselves safe. When needed, the school works with external agencies to provide additional help for pupils.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While curriculum plans are now in place in most subjects, they are not being followed consistently in all classes. As a result, lessons are not routinely building on what pupils have learned in the past. Teachers have to plug gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. This slows down learning. Leaders need to make sure that curriculum plans build on what pupils know and can do and help them to apply their learning across different subjects and contexts. These plans need to be consistently delivered in all classes and in all subjects.
- Curriculum leaders, many who are new to their role, are keen to develop their subject areas. Currently, several curriculum leaders do not have the required subject knowledge, leadership skills and expertise to develop and deliver the curriculum in their subject effectively. Leaders recognise this. The school needs to support and train these leaders so that they can monitor and develop the curriculum in their respective subject areas.
- In many subjects, including English and mathematics, some teachers do not possess good subject knowledge. This means that they do not routinely plan well-structured lessons that help pupils to learn and deepen their knowledge and understanding. This limits pupils' progress. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have an appropriate level of subject knowledge, so they can plan and deliver lessons that support pupils' learning.
- Some pupils become bored and disengaged when learning does not meet their needs. This leads to low-level disruption that is not always dealt with effectively by staff. At times, this affects the learning of other pupils in the class. Leaders should ensure that all staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively so that pupils' learning is not interrupted.
- The contribution made by teaching assistants to support pupils' learning is variable. Some teaching assistants provide effective support, but others lack the skills to help pupils to learn. This means that some pupils are not receiving the level of support they need. Leaders need to ensure that teaching assistants have the necessary skills and knowledge to support pupils' learning.
- Pupils have a limited knowledge of other faiths and cultures. This means that pupils do not have a clear understanding of views, beliefs and lifestyles that are different to their own. Leaders need to make sure that pupils develop their understanding of other faiths and cultures to remedy this.

## 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 are the school and you are 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144257
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122502
<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9 to 12
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	298
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Hugh Richards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sandra Jennings
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.tpfos.co.uk">www.tpfos.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- A new senior leadership team has been in post since September 2019.
- St Nicholas' CofE Middle School became an academy on 1 April 2017. When its predecessor school, St Nicholas' CofE Middle School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Worcester Multi-Academy Trust.
- A SIAMS inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Nicholas' CofE Middle School as a Church of England school took place on 14 June 2016.
- The school has a breakfast club operating on the site. The school manages this provision.
- The school makes use of alternative provision provided by Aspire Academy. Ofsted separately inspects this provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- The lead inspector held regular meetings with the headteacher. He met with seven members of the local academy board, including the chair. The lead inspector met with two trustees and the chief executive officer for the multi-academy trust.
- We held meetings with the special educational needs coordinator and the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour, pupil premium expenditure and children looked after.
- As part of the inspection, we carried out deep dives in reading, English, mathematics, history and design and technology.
- We met with groups of pupils, curriculum leaders and teachers to talk about the quality of education at the school.
- We visited classrooms. Many of these visits were with curriculum leaders or senior leaders.
- An inspector listened to several groups of pupils read.
- We spoke with pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. We looked at pupils' work in a range of different subjects to see how well the curriculum is applied. Two groups of pupils accompanied an inspector on a walk around the school.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children prior to employment. We checked that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively across the school.
- We talked to parents after school. The lead inspector considered the 52 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 50 free-text responses received during the inspection.
- The lead inspector considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- We considered a range of documentation provided by the school. We looked at the school's self-evaluation, rapid improvement plans, school policies, curriculum documents, published information about pupils' performance, behaviour records, attendance information and minutes of meetings linked to governance.
- The lead inspector looked at published information on the school's website.

### **Inspection team**

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Tibbits

Ofsted Inspector

Dave Gilkerson

Ofsted Inspector

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