

Inspection of a good school: St Peter's School

St Peter's Road, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 7DD

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September and 21 October 2022

Outcome

St Peter's School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are confident and happy at school. They are polite to visitors. Pupils say that they feel safe and enjoy positive relationships with their teachers. They say that staff have high expectations of their behaviour and want them to be successful. Leaders have worked hard to improve behaviour across the school, and most pupils behave well. When bullying does occur, pupils say that staff resolve issues fully. Pupils say that staff would check to ensure any bullying issues had not resurfaced.

The curriculum pupils access considers their interests and needs. It is well taught by skilled staff. Typically, pupils access relevant lessons and experiences that help them to develop the secure knowledge they need for future study and long-term success. Pupils understand the value of accepting others and are taught to respect differences. There is a welcoming culture in lessons to include pupils who have complex learning needs.

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, are enthusiastic about the wide range of clubs and after-school activities. They benefit highly from their participation in weekly activities such as cadets, science clubs and a variety of sports. Learning outside the classroom and developing character through a bespoke programme are part of the school experience for all.

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

Leaders have a clear, shared vision to provide every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the opportunity to achieve well. Leaders make sure that pupils starting the school with additional learning needs are well supported through a tailored curriculum programme. This provision includes access to effective nurture and emotional support. Leaders know that having expert staff is a crucial feature of a successful school. This has led to a culture where all staff can access impactful training and coaching support to help them do their work as well as possible.

The content of the curriculum matches leaders' ambitions and has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Leaders monitor and evaluate the curriculum robustly and make changes where this will benefit pupils. This includes a focus on pupils building secure knowledge, and the ongoing development of teachers' expertise.

Leaders have established reliable assessment routines that check what pupils know. As a result, pupils get extra support if they have gaps in their core knowledge. Teachers adapt lessons and provide interventions that help pupils keep up. In a small number of subjects, teachers are not always effective at helping pupils to remember what they are learning. Leaders recognise this and have taken direct action to ensure pupils succeed in all areas of the curriculum.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They encourage pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary effectively. Pupils in the sixth form especially benefit from this. Teachers are skilled at helping pupils learn broad and sometimes highly complex concepts in key stage 5.

Leaders identify pupils who need additional support with their reading. Targeted intervention helps pupils in Year 7 with gaps in their knowledge to progress well with their reading. The English curriculum exposes pupils to an ambitious range of quality texts. This helps pupils to engage in reading activity. Across all subject areas, staff enhance this by providing meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop further confidence with reading.

Leaders accurately identify pupils with SEND and provide training for staff on how best to support the specific needs pupils have. As a result, these pupils work towards the same goals as their peers. Recently the languages curriculum has been made accessible to all pupils, including those with some of the greatest barriers to learning.

Behaviour across the school is good. This means poor conduct is managed well and leads to minimal disruption to lessons. The number of suspensions and referrals for poor behaviour has dramatically reduced over the past four years. Pupils said that school is calmer and they trust staff to deal with poor behaviour effectively.

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, can access a range of opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider world. Pupils learn important communication and social skills by participating in the National Citizenship Service and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Younger pupils also benefit from a dedicated cultural programme, that includes travel and tourism.

Staff are positive about leaders' efforts to support their well-being and ensure they have a reasonable workload.

Governors provide expert support for leaders and hold them accountable for all aspects of school development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure staff are trained and kept up to date about the risks pupils may face. Staff know how to spot the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm and report their concerns quickly. Leaders ensure that pupils receive timely and appropriate help, including from outside agencies when needed.

The system of record-keeping supports a team of key staff to take shared responsibility for keeping the most vulnerable pupils safe. Staff within the safeguarding team are tenacious in ensuring that pupils get the help they need.

The curriculum provides pupils with important knowledge to help them make safe choices outside school, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of curriculum areas, there is some minor variability in how effectively teachers support pupils to know and remember more. This means that pupils sometimes struggle to recall the key knowledge they have learned. Leaders must continue with their actions to develop the expertise of staff in this area. This is to ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to retrieve and practise applying the most important knowledge, to support them to be ready for future learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	137248
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10211535
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1330
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Simon Newman
Head teacher	Christopher Bennet
Website	www.stpetershuntingdon.org
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 March 2017

Information about this school

- Leaders use two registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Very occasionally, Ofsted's quality assurance process may suggest gaps in the inspection evidence base, which will cause Ofsted to conclude that the inspection is incomplete. This happened at St Peter's School. One of His Majesty's Inspectors returned to the school on 21 October 2022, to gather additional information to secure the evidence base. In such cases, the inspection report is not published until Ofsted is satisfied that the inspection judgement is secure.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding. The lead inspector met with members of the governing board and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, history and English. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed the school's safeguarding records.
- A range of documentation was reviewed. This included minutes from governing board meetings, curriculum plans and behaviour records.
- Inspectors considered the views given in Ofsted's online surveys from 65 pupils and 69 members of staff. Inspectors also considered the views of 195 parents in the Ofsted Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Diana Osagie, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Victoria Colgate	Ofsted Inspector
Shan Oswald	Ofsted Inspector

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