

Inspection of St Peter's Catholic School

Horseshoe Lane East, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey GU1 2TN

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected

The headteacher of this school is Toby Miller. This school is part of Xavier Catholic Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), James Kibble, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter O'Brien.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Peter's Catholic School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Peter's Catholic School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Peter's provides exceptional education, care and guidance from the time pupils start at the school to the end of the sixth form for the many who stay on. Pupils are very happy at the school, which lives out its stated values of 'love, service, reflection, justice and courage'. Staff are caring and committed. They have very high ambitions for all pupils' academic success. These are evident in day-to-day lessons and reflected in very high achievement in examinations.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning are very positive among pupils. They attend very well, arrive on time to lessons and are ready to learn, so teachers can get on with their teaching. Teachers are passionate and expert in their subjects. Sixth-form students are a strength of the school. Much is expected of them and the students rise to the challenge, working hard and setting an example for others.

The school succeeds in educating pupils beyond the subject curriculum to enhance their preparation for later life. Pupils are exceptionally well taught about being respectful of each other and in contributing to the school community. They are guided skilfully when making the key decisions about which subjects to study at GCSE and beyond.

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

The curriculum builds pupils' learning very securely in key stage 3, picking up on their learning in primary school and providing pupils with a mastery of the curriculum to support later study. A rich range of subjects at GCSE and A level enable pupils and students to develop essential learning and explore their areas of interest. Teachers sequence learning carefully and revisit material over time to ensure it is embedded securely in pupils' knowledge.

Teachers ensure lessons are engaging and purposeful. They are very confident in teaching new ideas. Staff put much effort into providing effective resources and ensuring lessons are inspiring. They are adept at picking up on how well pupils have understood new learning, often anticipating the trickier elements for pupils and tackling them well.

Teachers and support staff work very hard to help all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are disadvantaged in other ways. Teachers receive much precise, useful information about pupils' additional needs or vulnerabilities. They typically use this extremely well to plan their teaching and to support pupils highly effectively. The school is focusing closely on this area, having seen a significant rise in levels of need after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pupils' excellent behaviour makes a significant contribution to their learning. They can sustain focus where needed, take responsibility for completing work and show resilience when study is hard. The school identifies accurately any pupils who need support in key areas like reading, and they are enabled to catch up. Pupils are keen

to get into school each day, meaning that attendance is very high. The school is very successful at ensuring improved attendance for any pupils who struggle to attend well, working closely with families.

Pupils are very well supported in growing the wider knowledge and skills that they need. Personal, social, health and economic education is planned skilfully. This, alongside high-quality relationships and sex education, sees pupils develop as kind people who respect and value each other's differences. Pupils are able to discuss sensitive issues maturely. They understand healthy relationships, know the difference between right and wrong and socialise really well together. Sixth-form students are an example to others in modelling strong social skills. They speak very warmly about the way they are cared for and supported, and very much value their separate sixth-form centre.

Teachers strive to develop pupils' wider knowledge through subjects, for example setting up visits and bringing in visitors. They ensure that all pupils benefit, including the less advantaged. This is equally true of the rich range of clubs and activities offered, where the school supports disadvantaged pupils to attend. An excellent programme of guidance and work experience helps pupils make informed choices when thinking about subjects to study at GCSE or post-16. Sixth-form students receive high-quality support when planning their next steps after school.

The school reflects carefully on how well it performs, striking a careful balance between providing staff with the training they need and holding them to account for their impact on pupils' learning. The school's close focus on the quality of teaching is handsomely repaid in the results which pupils achieve. Staff are very positive about the school and feel extremely well supported. The school engages well with parents, whose views about the school are very positive indeed, for example as seen in the response to the Ofsted Parent View survey. The great majority of parents feel communication is good and that they are listened to if they have any issues to raise. Governors are vigilant and effective in their oversight of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147430
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10322036
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led Voluntary aided
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	1,348
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	295
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter O'Brien
CEO of the trust	James Kibble
Headteacher	Toby Miller
Website	www.st-petersschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2014.
- St Peter's Catholic School converted to become an academy in October 2019. When its predecessor school, St Peter's Catholic School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged outstanding.
- The school is part of the Xavier Catholic Education Trust.
- The school makes use of two registered and four unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- St Peter's Catholic School has a religious character within the Christian Catholic tradition.

- The last inspection of the school’s religious education and worship under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 took place in 2018, and the next inspection is due by 2026.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, the inspectors took account of the views of leaders, spoke with staff, pupils and students, reviewed the single central record and considered how well the school has established an open and positive culture within which to put pupils’ and students’ interests first.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior staff. They also spoke with trustees, including the chair of the trust, the chair and other members of the school’s local governing committee, and the trust CEO. They carried out a range of other meetings, documentary analysis, and spoke with pupils and students and with groups of staff. They observed the life of the school at breaktimes and lesson changes.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and geography. In each subject, inspectors met the subject leader and other staff, teachers of the subject, pupils and students studying the subject with their work, and visited a range of lessons. Inspectors visited a range of classrooms to see other subjects being taught.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christie Ransom	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Fearon	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Platt	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Ellison	His Majesty’s Inspector

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