

Inspection of St Peter's CofE Academy

Fenton Manor, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 2RR

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 June 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Michael Astley. This school is part of Woodard Academies Trust and Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mike Pettifer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sally Pelham.

What is it like to attend this school?

The St Peters CofE Academy vision of 'every life enriched' is brought to life through the strong pastoral support that pupils receive. Pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff. Pupils know that staff care about them and that they are safe in school. This has resulted in a strong sense of community in the school. Pupils are polite and respectful.

The school's high expectations for achievement are reflected in the ambitious curriculum that meets the pupils' aspirations. Pupils have positive attitudes in lessons. Pupils understand the importance of their education and work in calm and orderly lessons. This allows them to learn without distractions. Most pupils meet the school's high behaviour expectations. However, for those pupils that fail to meet these expectations, the school provides individualised support to address these behaviours.

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive programme of opportunities that support their personal development. Pupils' engagement in school life is celebrated through activities such as 'Wacadays', the school's reward days. The school's 'student union' ensures that pupil voice is heard. Pupils can demonstrate their leadership through programmes such as young translators. Pupils are well prepared to deal with the challenges and opportunities they may face in the future.

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

The school has designed a broad, coherent curriculum that helps to develop pupils' knowledge and skills. The number of pupils completing the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate is low, but the school has plans in place to increase this. In addition, historical outcomes in public examinations, including in 2024, are low compared to national averages. However, improvements to the curriculum and how it is delivered mean that current pupils are achieving much more positively.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and choose teaching strategies that engage pupils. Teachers recap learning well. As a result, most pupils in key stage 3 are able to explain how their previous learning links to what they are currently studying in lessons. Teachers check what most pupils know and understand, but there is variation in how well this is done. This means that misconceptions and gaps in some pupils' learning sometimes go unchecked. Where this happens, these pupils cannot build on prior knowledge and develop a secure understanding.

Reading is a bedrock of the school. Staff quickly identify pupils who cannot read at an age-appropriate level. These pupils benefit from a range of individualised interventions which help them to catch up. Pupils value reading as an important part of their education. The impact of the school's work on developing pupils' speech and writing skills is seen in lessons and in pupils' books. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified. Staff know pupils with SEND well, and adapt teaching strategies appropriately to ensure that their needs are met.

The school has set out clear expectations regarding behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. For those pupils who fail to meet these expectations, sanctions are used so pupils reflect upon their behaviour. The number of suspensions is reducing. Leaders have introduced measures to support specific groups of pupils to improve their behaviour.

The school has an in-depth understanding of the barriers that affect pupils attending regularly. It has put in place several initiatives to address these barriers. This has resulted in a significant increase in attendance to school.

The school has thoughtfully created a personal development curriculum. Through form time and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons, pupils have a clear knowledge of the protected characteristics and fundamental British values. Pupils' individual interests and talents are supported through clubs, including those for boxing and mythology. The school promotes positive mental health through activities such as 'well-being buddies'. Through the comprehensive careers programme, the school prepares pupils well for the world of education, employment and training.

The trust and governors take a hands-on approach to working with the school. They understand well the quality of the provision, and offer support and challenge to leaders. Staff receive quality training and external support that allow improvements to be implemented across the school. The school prioritises the well-being of staff so they can work together to build the inclusive culture of the school for the benefit of all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, checks on what pupils know and understand are not used effectively to spot and address misconceptions. When this happens, pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and do not secure new ideas as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that staff have the expertise to act upon guidance and support to adapt their teaching and enable pupils to achieve well.
- A minority of pupils find it hard to meet the school's revised high expectations for their behaviour. This means that they are more likely to be suspended from school. The school should ensure that there is ongoing support and review for those pupils who find it hardest to meet the school's high expectations for their behaviour such that the number of suspensions falls.

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	136824
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10378252
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,054
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sally Pelham
CEO of the trust	Mike Pettifer
Principal	Michael Astley
Website	www.spa.woodard.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 December 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The academy is part of the Trust and Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.
- 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement. Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, vice principals and other leaders. The lead inspector held meetings with the CEO and trust leaders, as well as the academy council. Inspectors also met with a range of curriculum leaders and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, art and design, English and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons and at break and lunchtimes and spoke to pupils during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff surveys.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the minutes of trust meetings, the academy improvement plan, and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Andrew Washbourne, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gail Peyton	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Bourdon-Pierre	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector

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