



St Peter's RC High School and Sixth Form Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115729
LEA Gloucestershire
Inspection number 279665
Inspection dates 22 March 2006 to 23 March 2006
Reporting inspector Russell Jordan HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Type of school | Comprehensive | School address | Stroud Road |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Gloucester |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 | | Gloucestershire GL4 0DE |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01452 520594 |
| Number on roll | 1535 | Fax number | 01452 509209 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr Peter Baker |
| Date of previous inspection | 13 November 2002 | Headteacher | Mr Lawrence Montagu |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one HMI and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Peter's Roman Catholic High School is a large, mixed comprehensive school and has a large and growing sixth form centre. The majority of students are White British with one in five from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. In 2003, St Peter's was designated a mathematics and computing specialist school and, as a training school, leads the teacher education programme in Gloucestershire. The attainment of students on entry to the school is around the national average. There is a growing proportion of students with special educational needs, but this level is still below the national average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is low.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Peter's is an outstanding school and offers very good value for money. The school knows itself well and through careful consultation with parents, students and other partners has a clear idea of its strengths and what it needs to do to improve. The school's leadership is outstanding and is successfully devolved to subject level. Leaders have secured significant improvements since the last inspection. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

Standards are well above average by the end of Key Stage 4. Students' progress is very good in the main school and good in the sixth form. The quality of teaching is good in the sixth form and outstanding in the main school, but as the school recognises, not all aspects of good practice are as yet fully embedded; this includes the quality of marking of students' work and the feedback to them on how to make better progress.

The curriculum offered by the school matches the needs of students extremely well and is improving in the sixth form. The school's status as a specialist mathematics and computing college has led to the development of the curriculum which has clearly added to the experience of all students.

Students enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They take responsibility and work together for the benefit of the school and wider community. They are well prepared for their future lives. St Peter's is a harmonious and inclusive school characterised by the outstanding attitudes of students and the respect they have both for adults and for each other in this diverse community. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities receive excellent additional support. The care of students is a strength of the school and is firmly underpinned by the school's Catholic, Christian values.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Provision for the very large sixth form is good. The improving curriculum offers an increasingly wide range of options in the General Certificate of Education (GCE) advanced level, and better opportunities for vocational courses and qualifications are now being developed. Standards and achievement vary widely across subjects, and the underachievement of girls is a concern, but the progress made by students overall is good. The school is rightly proud of its inclusive approach to sixth form entry and encourages students to have high expectations. They are being well prepared for life and work after school and the majority go on to further and higher education. However, the school recognises that teaching and learning styles are not always being sufficiently adapted to sixth form work. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well, but students are not required to take a sufficiently active part in lessons, by initiating, presenting and arguing for example. Students enjoy their life in the sixth form and speak appreciatively of the many extra-curricular opportunities offered and the guidance and care they receive from staff. They work with younger students and with primary schools, take part in community projects and activities and are pleased to be part of the many successful fund-raising activities which are important to the school.

The sixth form leadership is aware of the strengths and the areas for development. By working with department heads, it can tackle the issues in teaching, learning and achievement which still prevent the sixth form from matching the outstanding record of the main school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency in the marking of students' work and feedback on how to make better progress to the level of the best they currently receive
- Continue to raise achievement in the sixth form and, in particular, to close the gap in achievement between girls and boys
- Develop teaching and learning styles in the sixth form to encourage more active participation from students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 3 are above the national average and around the national average in science. Students' progress to Key Stage 3 was outstanding in English in 2005, good in mathematics and satisfactory in science. At Key Stage 4 standards are significantly above the national average. Students do relatively better in subjects such as art and design, English language and literature and mathematics than they do in science, design and technology, physical education or religious studies. The number of students achieving five or more A*-C grades in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), including English and mathematics is well above the national average. The school sets challenging targets and all students make very good progress by the end of Key Stage 4 compared to their starting points on entry to the school, especially in English and mathematics where the progress made is outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding, firmly underpinned by the school's Catholic, Christian values. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively through a well planned programme of opportunities in tutorial time, assemblies, religious education lessons and development days. This programme encourages students to take responsibility and work together for the benefit of the school and the wider community. Students raise huge sums of money for charity each year as a result of activities which they plan collaboratively, developing skills which contribute to their future economic well-being. The school council has developed a highly-valued student voice in recent years, and gives all students an opportunity to be involved in a democratic process. Pupils throughout the school understand the importance of a healthy and safe lifestyle, although not all take up the healthy options available within school.

Students take great enjoyment from school and the many opportunities it offers, consequently their attendance is good. The outstanding attitudes of students are characterised by respect for adults and each other. Relationships between members of the school community are excellent and there is a high level of harmony amongst members of this diverse community. Students behave very well both in lessons and around school, responding well to the high expectations of their teachers and their encouragement to exercise self-discipline. Students have confidence in the school to resolve any difficulties which they have. They feel that bullying and racial harassment happen infrequently but that such incidents, if they do occur, are dealt with swiftly and effectively by the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are outstanding and, as a result, students are making very good progress and achieving well. Students have a positive attitude to learning and behaviour is excellent. Teachers have an excellent knowledge of their subjects and prepare lessons very thoroughly. Learning goals are clear and usually shared with students at the beginning of the lessons.

The specialist status of the school has enhanced teaching and learning through, for example, the use of interactive whiteboards, which allows teachers to make presentations more interesting. Expectations of students are very high and teachers use questioning well to challenge students and extend their understanding. Teachers are aware of students' individual needs and the very effective teaching ensures that these needs are very well met.

Teachers use assessment information effectively to monitor the students' progress and set them targets. Students know what progress they are making and what they need to do to improve. There are examples of very good marking but this high quality feedback is not yet fully embedded across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. Changes made recently were well researched and based on clear analysis of students' needs. As a result, the curriculum plays a major role in enabling the school to raise standards for all students. The needs for students with learning difficulties are fully met, enabling them to make outstanding progress.

The curriculum is flexible enough to allow groups of students to focus on areas of learning that are restricting their progress. This has led to improvements in students'

learning in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum has developed so that students have opportunities to select from a range of vocational courses. A few students, who are not fully engaged with their learning, take part in an alternative curriculum, which includes developing their work related learning skills.

The school has developed good provision for Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and citizenship and recognises the need to monitor delivery in order to avoid any inconsistency in the experiences of students.

The contribution of the specialist mathematics and computing college status to the development of the curriculum has been outstanding. The additional courses available to students and additional links with the community have been creative and have added to the experience of all students. Students make very good use of a wide range of extra-curricular provision.

The sixth form has an improving curriculum with a better balance of academic and vocational opportunities being made available to students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding because a strong system is in place to support students' progress in school. This system contributes significantly to the excellent standards achieved by students because they receive individual guidance and are able to keep track of their progress. Where underachievement is identified, additional support is put in place swiftly. Parents value the regular feedback that they receive on their child's progress and comment on the high quality of advice and guidance that they receive at times of transition, such as when they first join the school or when making course choices. Careers education and guidance are very good and are well supported by the school's partnership with Connexions. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities receive excellent additional support both in class and in the support base. They make outstanding progress in the school as a result. The arrangements to support students who are at an early stage of learning English are exceptional and highly valued by them. They make excellent progress in learning English and in examination courses. Very effective systems are in place to identify and support vulnerable children. Child protection arrangements are good and careful attention is paid to health and safety within the school environment and on educational visits.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school achieves outstanding outcomes and rightly judges its leadership and management to be outstanding. The senior leadership team has addressed all issues from the last inspection effectively and leaders at all levels have good capacity to secure further improvements. The school's self-evaluation process includes extensive

consultation with both parents and students and enables the school to know itself very well. As a result, the leaders at all levels have identified the next steps to be taken. The school development plan is robust and focused on clearly prioritised areas for improvement. Managers use data well to drive further improvement in standards and the progress made by students. There is a clear and accurate overview of the strengths and areas for development in teaching and learning. Better practice in teaching and learning is being spread successfully through the school.

The governing body supports the school well. Governors have a clear vision for the school and are making logical steps to achieving these goals. They hold the school to account effectively with regard to standards and the progress made by students.

St Peter's rightly prides itself on being an inclusive school in harmony with its Catholic, Christian values.

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Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

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|--|-----|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 | 1 |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | NA | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | Yes |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | Yes |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 1 | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 1 | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 | |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 | |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 | |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 | |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | 1 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 | |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 1 | |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 | |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 | |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 | |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | Yes |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | Yes |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form | Yes |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | Yes |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Students

I am writing to share with you the main judgements that we made when we came to inspect your school in March. Many of you spoke to us and told us about what you are learning and about the school in general. We want to thank you for welcoming us so well and for sharing with us your views and experiences so openly. Your attendance is good and your attitudes are very good in class. You told us that you enjoy school. Your behaviour is excellent in lessons and generally around the school. You told us you generally feel safe and are well supported by a team of tutors who know you well. You respect each other and the adults in the school and you all get on well together. We were very impressed by the work you do for charity.

Your results are very strong overall, but we think you can do even better and make better progress. The leadership team is already aware of this and is working on things to help, but we have asked them to make sure that:

- All the marking of your work and the feedback you get on how to do better is as good as the best you currently receive
- Lessons in the sixth form allow you more of an opportunity to take an active part
- Your results and progress in the sixth form continue to improve and that girls do as well as boys in all subjects.

We enjoyed the time we spent at your school and thank you, once again for your warm welcome. We look forward to following the progress of the school.

With best wishes

Russell Jordan Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools