



St Peter's Catholic College of Mathematics and Computing

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111762
Local Authority Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number 289045
Inspection dates 1–2 March 2007
Reporting inspector Margaret Farrow HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	South Bank
School category	Voluntary aided		Normanby Road, South Bank
Age range of pupils	11–16		Middlesbrough, TS6 6SP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 453462
Number on roll (school)	479	Fax number	01642 455010
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Barbara Hewitt
		Headteacher	Mr Gavin Salvesen-Sawh
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2001		

Age group 11–16	Inspection dates 1–2 March 2007	Inspection number 289045
---------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Peter's Catholic College of Mathematics and Computing is much smaller in size than the average secondary school, although the number on roll has risen steadily since its last inspection. It is situated in a significantly disadvantaged area of east Middlesbrough, which is currently undergoing regeneration. The percentage of students who are eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average and rising. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is also much higher than that found nationally; although the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is lower than the national average. The majority of students have English as their first language and come from White British backgrounds. Five per cent of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small and growing number of refugee/asylum seeker students attend the school. There are proportionately more girls than boys. A new headteacher was appointed mid way between this and the previous inspection. The school achieved Investors in People status in July 2005 and became a mathematics and computing specialist college in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Peter's provides a satisfactory education under challenging circumstances. It is an improving school, emerging from a period when students underachieved. It is building on improvements in the quality of leadership and management, self-evaluation, teaching and learning, and the use of assessment. It has some significant strengths, despite weaknesses in standards attained by students. The school is located in an area of high deprivation. Its Catholic culture is embedded in all that it does and it provides hope within the community. Students are respectful, caring towards each other, staff and visitors. The headteacher, along with his reorganised senior management team and middle managers, staff and governors is working effectively to secure improvement.

The fabric of the building and the culture of the school have been improved to make it an inviting place for learning. As a result, students say how proud they are of the school and treat it with respect. The headteacher acted decisively to secure improvement in the quality of teachers and effect significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in order to tackle underachievement. In 2006, standards attained by students at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9) rose significantly in mathematics and science and there was significant improvement in the number of students achieving five good GCSEs including English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11). However, standards in English remained well below the national average in both Key Stages. School tracking information indicates that the progress students make in lessons and tests is improving: particularly boys, vulnerable students, those from ethnic minorities and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and some of it is good. However, teaching and learning are not yet consistently good enough across all subjects to ensure that all students achieve the best they can. Lesson planning and target setting for students have been developed well in some departments to meet students' individual needs. Effective monitoring strategies by management have been introduced to check students' progress. In these departments, students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. This good practice is not fully embedded in all departments. Although the school has a good range of information to track students' progress and plan for their next steps, the school does not always make best use of it to direct help where it is most needed.

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. It is improving and has some strengths. It provides an appropriate range of opportunities that increasingly meets students' individual needs and aspirations. Religious education is one of the school's strengths and a high proportion of students achieve good GCSE results in this subject. The school's recent designation as a specialist college for mathematics and computing has provided an additional impetus for improving the basic skills of students and is enabling them to make better progress in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) particularly. It is also supporting the school's drive to improve the skills of the local community, by providing access to the school's ICT facilities. There are many opportunities for students to take part in after school or lunch time activities that enhance the curriculum, build students' confidence, skills, self-esteem and

celebrate their cultural diversity. Their art and design work is celebrated in good quality displays around the school.

Good relationships are a strength of the school. These extend to outside agencies that support the school well, such as the local diocese, local authority consultants, school nurses, Middlesbrough Football Club, colleges and workplace providers. Students' personal development and well-being are good because of the good care and support and improved guidance provided by staff. Students are well supported by the pastoral and mentor teams and they say they feel very safe at school and know who to turn to in times of need. Weekly pastoral meetings are at the hub of the care and support process. These are effective multi-agency meetings involving school staff, education welfare officers, the police and other professional agencies where appropriate. They are well focused and ensure that up to date information on students needing support facilitates rapid intervention where necessary.

Students say they enjoy school and now attend regularly. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and it is now broadly average. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and value the quality of education, care and leadership of the school highly. A significant minority however consider the behaviour of students to be an area of concern. Whilst there are some students whose behaviour can be challenging, behaviour is generally managed effectively. The behaviour of the great majority of students during the inspection was good. This is an inclusive school. The very low numbers of students excluded testifies that it makes every effort to support those vulnerable students most at risk. Students with a history of challenging behaviour from other schools are successfully integrated into St Peter's. One such young student told inspectors proudly of his achievements since joining the school.

The school's leadership has looked outside its perimeters and secured the support of a high achieving school, a school in similar circumstances and the local authority to learn from the best, challenge weaknesses and improve practice. It knows its areas of strength and areas for development and is fully aware of the challenges it faces to continue to raise students' aspirations and achievement. The improvements made by the school, together with the passionate commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to continue that improvement suggest that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve despite the challenges it faces.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement across the school, particularly in English
- Ensure the good practice in planning, target setting and review are embedded across the school
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, taking account of existing good practice
- Ensure that lessons provide sufficient differentiation so that all students can achieve the best they can
- Ensure the wide range of information on students' progress is used to evaluate the impact of the work of the school more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards attained by 14 year old students in mathematics and science have improved significantly since 2005 and the gap between school and national results is narrowing. However, students' attainment in English tests was disappointing with results remaining in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. This was mainly as a result of significant staff absence in the department, which has now been resolved. Standards in Key Stage 4 have historically been well below average but are now improving. The number of 16 year old students who attained 5 GCSEs grade A* to C including English and mathematics rose by over 50% since 2003; making the school one of the most improved schools nationally. The number leaving school with at least one GCSE is similar to the national average. School information from student tracking, mock examination and test results indicate that students are well placed to achieve their challenging targets for 2007 in both Key Stages.

Standards remain below average; however, the school's tracking data indicates that the majority of students are now making satisfactory progress in their lessons. There has been a history of underachievement amongst girls, but strategies to build their self-esteem and aspirations are beginning to impact positively on their progress in lessons and in tests. The progress of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory and sometimes good. This is because of the effective support and guidance they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' spiritual moral social and cultural development is good. Groups of students representing the full range of backgrounds and abilities confidently held discussions with inspectors. They expressed their ideas about the school clearly, politely and with conviction. Students are very aware of the cultural diversity within the school; most clearly recognise the value of learning from each other's experience. They achieve wider understanding through the personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) curriculum, religious education and assemblies particularly. Students value the highly personal input from tutors, departmental staff and mentors. They make good contributions to the life of the school and describe how they are involved in the development of new initiatives; their views also secured through student surveys. Students' have a good understanding about living healthy lifestyles. The introduction of improved healthy eating options and new sports activities directly stem from student requests, through the work of a proactive school council. Students also make a good contribution to the community and local events. For example, students in Year 10 traditionally provide an annual party for the local community who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good relationships between staff and students and more effective teaching is helping students to develop good learning habits and this is seen in students' progress, in their application and positive attitudes in lessons. Where teaching is good, lessons are well planned and linked to the medium and long term planning of the subject area. Work is well matched to individual needs. Student learning is checked regularly to identify their progress and determine future learning needs. In such lessons, students are active in their own learning and are encouraged to collaborate and help assess their own and each other's work. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is because the methods and tasks are not always energising students to take a more active part in their learning. Sometimes planning is not well used or suitably matched to the individual needs of all students'. In such lessons, whilst most students make satisfactory progress, not all are stretched to do their best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

All students follow a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7-9 that meet statutory requirements. In Years 10-11 the curriculum is broadened effectively through the introduction of a range of new subjects, including vocational courses, and allows students some opportunities to specialise. The school has wisely moved some way in reorganising its curriculum to give greater emphasis on developing students' basic literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects. ICT, health, safety and citizenship are good and embedded across the curriculum. In particular, there is very good provision for enterprise, in raising the aspirations of girls. Students are satisfactorily prepared for future employment or further education through work experience and careers advice. These are enhanced by planned opportunities for students to learn how to write application forms and to meet representatives from a range of services including banking and the prison service, through the initiative "prison no way!"

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection and safeguarding procedures are robust and meet statutory requirements. Staff receive regular update training. Students feel safe and cared for well through the pastoral system especially. Curriculum opportunities include regular action to raise awareness of the dangers of solvent and drugs abuse as well as effective health and relationships education guidance. A student referring to the staff as "nice people to talk to, you are not alone here!" typifies the advice and support provided. Students also know the buddy system supports those in need of help and friendship effectively. The Herlingshaw Suite provides regular individualised learning programmes for vulnerable students. Good links are established with a wide range of specialist

support services reflecting the diversity of need evident at this school. Guidance to support students to achieve is now good. Students use their personal planners to plot their progress against national curriculum levels and to update the targets in each subject they have agreed with their teachers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation that leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The dynamic headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team and the increasingly effective governing body have set a good and clear direction for the school's improvement. As yet, the fruits of their labours have not had time to impact on improved standards in every subject across the school. There have been some significant improvements amongst the disappointments in 2006. Staff have been involved in and embraced the changes introduced over the past two years. They are now involved in the school's self-evaluation and planning processes. As a result, all know what is in need of improvement and have set about improving the quality of teaching by learning from the best that is already in some departments and securing support from outside. This is making a difference to the progress that students are making in lessons. Performance management processes are well embedded and middle managers and staff are now empowered to take responsibility for their subject or pastoral areas and held to account effectively. They are also well supported through professional development opportunities that are linked to the needs of the school's improvement. Effective financial management arrangements are in place and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

St Peter's Catholic College of Maths and Computing

Normanby Road

South Bank

Middlesbrough

TS6 6SP

1 March 2007

Dear Students,

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school. We spoke to a good number of you, saw you in lessons and around the school and were impressed to find that you are polite, courteous, friendly and caring towards each other, adults and visitors. Well done, you are a credit to your school. I was also grateful to all of you and your parents who let us know your views of the school. The vast majority of your parents are very supportive of the school. We believe the school is now providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. We also found that:

- the majority of you are working hard in lessons and are now making satisfactory progress. We think that some of you could do better;
- your behaviour in and around the school is good and teachers manage the more challenging behaviour effectively;
- you enjoy school, are proud to be here and say you feel very safe and well cared for through the Catholic ethos and the good pastoral support you receive. You also say there is always someone there to help you in times of need;
- you access a satisfactory and improving curriculum with lots of opportunities for extra enrichment through clubs and other activities, which you value highly;
- the quality of teaching in lessons is satisfactory and some of it is good. Where it is good you are fully involved in interesting well planned lessons. You know your targets, what you need to do to improve. Sometimes in more satisfactory lessons, you are not always stretched to do your best.

As a result of the inspection we have asked the school to improve the standards and progress you make in subjects and particularly in English. We also want the school to make sure the quality of teaching, planning and target setting and review of your work is of high quality; ensuring this and other information is used consistently to guide you to achieve the best you can. Once again, thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We are confident that you will work with your teachers to make better progress over the next year and wish you all the best in your future time at the school.

Best wishes

Margaret Farrow HMI