

Saint Peter's Catholic College of Maths and Computing

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111762
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	337734
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	385
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Barbara Hewitt
Headteacher	Mrs Pamela Hanrahan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 26 lessons and 23 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of students, governors and staff. A telephone conversation was held with the school's National Challenge Adviser. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school's self-evaluation form, the raising achievement plan and policies relating to safeguarding and child protection. Questionnaires received from staff, students and 13 parents and/or carers were analysed.

- the achievement of students in English and mathematics, design and technology and the progress of more-able students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- whether the outstanding judgements for the extent to which students feel safe, adopt a health lifestyle, and have outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including students' understanding of the diversity of British society are justified
- the consistency of the challenge in lessons for average and more-able students across the school, especially in English, mathematics and design and technology
- whether the curriculum and care, guidance and support are outstanding in their impact on students' outcomes
- whether the school is maintaining the upward trend in achievement and the quality of provision.

Information about the school

St Peter's Catholic College is a smaller than average size secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities are well above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Most students are from White British backgrounds. A very small number of students are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. A very few students are looked after by adults other than their own parents. A new headteacher took up post in January 2010, who was previously the deputy headteacher. The school is due to close in July 2012.

The school has been designated with the specialism for mathematics and computing since September 2006. Awards the school has received include a local authority Anti-Bullying Charter Award and the Healthy Schools Status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Peter's is a good school that provides a highly caring and supportive environment based on strong Catholic values. All students, whatever their background or circumstances, receive excellent support personalised to their needs so that they feel extremely safe and secure in school and ready to gain the most from the wealth of experiences it offers. The Herlingshaw suite, an area of the school designated to provide care, support and learning for more vulnerable students, is highly effective. It plays a significant role in supporting these students, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other students in need of extra help and support. Leaders and managers, including governors, have been focused closely on the right priorities for improvement based on accurate self-evaluation of the school's work. They have set high aspirations for the school and have successfully inspired staff and students to bring about significant improvement. The effectiveness of teaching, the curriculum and other areas of the school's provision have all improved since the last inspection and, consequently, students' progress and achievement are now good. Attainment has risen and is average overall. Attainment is strong in many subjects, particularly in the school's specialist area of information and communication technology (ICT). However, although improving, attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics. Despite the planned closure of the school, staff morale is high and careful and determined planning is taking place to assure the quality of the school's provision. The school's track record of improvement together with the commitment and determination of leaders and staff demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

An outstanding curriculum is improving students' interest and enjoyment of their education and, as a result, attendance, although currently average, has improved significantly and attainment is rising rapidly. The excellent partnerships forged with nearby colleges, schools and other local providers have helped to develop high-quality courses that are particularly well matched to students' individual needs.

Students' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Respect for friends, staff and others different to themselves underpins the values of the school. Students are gently led by staff to develop their own set of personal values, which are exemplified in their kindness and support of others. Students' spiritual development is especially evident in assemblies and form tutorials when students respond to and reflect meaningfully on events and the circumstances of others in an ethos of sharing thoughts and feelings and serving others.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise attainment further, especially in English and mathematics, by:
 - increasing further the proportion of students reaching the highest grades in their qualifications
 - ensuring that the good planning for different ability groups is put into practice in all lessons to ensure that every student is fully challenged
 - increasing opportunities to share best practice in teaching and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Students enjoy lessons, have positive attitudes to learning and are developing into confident learners. They say that teachers make lessons interesting and fun and that staff are always willing to help. Most students concentrate well in lessons and apply themselves readily to tasks. They are well motivated and work well in groups and pairs. Students readily respond to questions and most willingly make contributions to class discussions, as was seen in a lively Year 7 lesson on the early chapters in the book of Genesis in the Bible about the creation. Students are considerate and supportive of one another while learning, for example, when reviewing each other's work.

The significant improvement in students' achievement is reflected in the school's high ranking in the 2009 national indicators for students' progress. The school's data for current Year 11 students, based mainly on accreditation already secured, show that students are on course to maintain good progress and exceed their challenging targets including in English, mathematics and design and technology. Closer targeting of more-able students in the teaching has led to an increase in the proportion of students on course to achieve A* and A grades in a number of subjects, including in mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. However, the school is aware of the need to ensure that more students reach the highest levels across a greater breadth of subjects.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, students deemed to be more vulnerable, and those with English as an additional language receive outstanding care, and support carefully tailored to their needs. As a result, all these groups of students make good progress.

Students overwhelmingly say they feel safe in school. Behaviour is good and they have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. Bullying is very rare and dealt with quickly. Students have a thorough understanding of how to ensure their own safety, for example, through e-safety measures when using ICT. The high take up of school lunches, good participation in physical education lessons and extra activities reflect a clear understanding on the part of most students of what constitutes physical, mental and emotional health. However, a small minority of students do not make regular healthy choices about food and exercise. Students willingly participate in the student council and as school governors. They have been consulted in important decisions, for example, regarding the future of the school. Students have a good awareness of their local and wider community and they raise funds for a variety of charities and causes

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with enthusiasm. Students develop a respect for people from cultures, religions and backgrounds different to their own, especially through the direct links established with students and schools in Uganda and the United States of America. The broadened curriculum has raised students' aspirations and provided good progression routes and take-up of further and higher education. Students demonstrate increasingly secure basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT which prepares them well for their futures. Students' attendance overall is broadly average and improving rapidly. Persistent absence has reduced significantly.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Most lessons observed were good and a few were outstanding. Students respond well to teachers' high expectations of learning. They behave well and most present their work carefully. Planning for different ability groups is detailed and usually takes account of secure assessment of students' progress. However, the level of detail in planning is not always taken fully into account in lessons so that not all students, including the more able, are fully challenged and more-able students are not aware of what more they must

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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do to reach the higher levels. In good lessons, the pace of learning is rapid and very good use is made of interactive electronic whiteboard technology to engage students. The range of tasks in lessons is varied ensuring that students are absorbed and challenged. As one student stated: 'Lessons are challenging but in a good way.' In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, students lose concentration because the pace of activities is slow, students listen to teachers talking for too long and sometimes there is repetition of concepts at the expense of moving on to new material. In these lessons there are few opportunities for students to work collaboratively. Students' progress is assessed and tracked rigorously and challenging individual targets help motivate students towards higher achievement. Regular marking of students' work gives them clear guidance on the next steps to achieve. Students are increasingly involved in assessing their own and each other's learning and their confidence in giving feedback to each other is growing.

The outstanding range of vocational and diploma qualifications together with the excellent impact of the schools' specialist status have provided high-quality, customised provision that has resulted in significantly improved achievement. Innovative projects such as the 'Galileo' project for Year 7 students, when learning is planned across subjects and around a theme, have helped to provide great interest in subjects and support the smooth transition from primary to secondary education. Excellent planning for tutorial periods and students' personal, social, health and citizenship education, contributes towards students' outstanding spiritual, moral and social development. A good range of extra-curricular activities in sport and cultural activities is well supported by students.

The school places the well-being of the students at the centre of all that they do and students have great confidence in the staff. The highly effective pastoral system monitors students' progress, attendance and well-being very closely. Staff intervene to provide well-targeted support where necessary. Through successful partnerships with many other agencies, the most vulnerable students are extremely well supported both emotionally and academically. Excellent induction processes in class and at lunchtimes ensure that all students, including vulnerable groups, feel secure on entry and throughout their time in school. Students themselves contribute significantly to the excellent care and support that pervade the school, for example, the student mentor system helps positive relationships develop between older and younger students in the mixed-age tutor groups. The school provides a welcoming environment; in particular the learning environment in the resistant materials area, is first rate, encouraging high achievement in the products that are made. Strategies to improve attendance have been very successful. Close communication with individuals and their families, particularly more vulnerable students, have been highly effective in reducing persistent absence. Students are given outstanding advice and guidance as to options choices and future pathways.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	2
	2
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	1
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, governors and senior leaders set high expectations of themselves and others and their strong commitment to improvement is shared by staff and students. The National Challenge programme has helped the school to successfully improve students' achievement. Secure self-evaluation identifies the right priorities and clear planning helps drive forward improvements. Rigorous systems to monitor students' progress ensure that underachievement is recognised and tackled quickly and that middle leaders and class teachers are made accountable for students' progress. Well-focused monitoring of teaching and learning by senior and middle leaders leads to improved provision. Carefully planned professional development and in-service training, with a significant contribution from the specialist subject areas, are leading to improved teaching and learning. Opportunities to share best practice in teaching are not yet fully developed.

The governing body is highly supportive of the school's caring, supportive and inclusive ethos. It is firmly committed to school improvement and holds leaders to account well. The governing body fulfils its monitoring role effectively and is well informed of the achievement of students. The governing body and leaders are fully committed to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. The school is welcoming and supportive of all students whatever their circumstances and barriers to learning. Close monitoring of students' progress is helping to ensure that gaps between the achievement of different groups are closing, for example, the proportion of students gaining A* and A grades is increasing.

Governors and leaders ensure that policies and procedures for safeguarding students are strong and effective. The school responds rapidly when there are concerns about a student's well-being, and works closely with partner agencies when required. Both staff and students understand the importance of remaining safe.

Community cohesion is well planned and its impact on students is evaluated. The school is a cohesive community where students from many different backgrounds and circumstances get along well with each other. Students work effectively within many different groups with the local community. The curriculum ensures that differences between cultures and religions are explored and respected although direct contact with diverse communities within Great Britain has been more limited. Students' further understanding of community cohesion has been successfully forged with contrasting school communities in Uganda and in Michigan.

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is good.

Parents and carers say that the school responds well to their concerns and they are involved in reviewing the learning of their children through parent consultations, reporting and evenings when curriculum choices are discussed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The small number of responses from parents and carers were highly supportive of the school's work. Parents and carers comments reflect an appreciation for the high quality of care and support provided by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saint Peter's Catholic College of Maths and Computing to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 13 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 385 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	6	50	6	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	7	58	5	42	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	58	5	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	67	4	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	58	5	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	50	6	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	50	6	50	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	67	2	17	1	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	50	6	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	42	7	58	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	42	6	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	50	6	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	75	3	25	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Saint Peter's Catholic College of Maths and Computing, Middlesbrough, TS6 6SP

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school. You are right to be proud of your school. It is a good school that is improving all the time. The care, support and guidance you receive is outstanding. Leaders and staff care deeply for your well-being and they make sure that everything is done to ensure that you are safe and secure in school and that you have an excellent understanding of how best to keep yourselves safe, especially when using the internet. You are a credit to your school and you respond well to the school's high expectations of you. You behave well and are supportive of one another in many ways. You have a very strong sense of right and wrong and are highly sensitive to each other's needs. You think deeply about the plight of others and are reflective in assemblies and tutorials. You are highly committed to raising funds and supporting many charities.

You are working hard in lessons and you achieve well, reaching good standards in many subjects. The excellent range of interesting courses helps you to do well and remain interested in your futures. The standards you reach in English and mathematics, although improving are not as high as in some other subjects. Leaders, including the governing body, are very clear about how to make further improvements in order for you to reach higher standards, particularly in mathematics and English. We have asked them to focus on:

- helping more of you to reach the highest levels in your qualifications
- ensuring that all of you are fully challenged to work to your own level of ability in lessons
- spending more time sharing the best ways of teaching and learning among staff.

Do continue to work hard and enjoy your time at St Peter's.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead Inspector

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