

St Peter's Independent School

Independent school progress report

DCSF registration number	928/6056
Unique reference number	122143
Inspection number	344263
Inspection dates	10 to 11 November 2009
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik HMI

This inspection visit to the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 at the request of the registering authority for independent schools.

Age group: 4-18

Published:

Reference no: 090137

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Purpose and scope of the visit

This inspection visit was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002.

The visit was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Information about the school

St Peter's Independent School is a coeducational day school in Northampton. It opened in 1979 and is owned by St Peter's School Trust, which is a non-profit making body. There are 82 pupils currently on roll aged from four to 18 years. All attend full time. The intake is multiracial and of mixed ability. No pupils have a statement of special educational need, although the school has admitted such pupils in the past. No pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

The aim of the school is to *'provide a broad and balanced curriculum within a caring family-orientated environment so that each child reaches its full potential'*.

Context of the visit

The last inspection of the school, which was unannounced, was in September 2008. The school did not meet all the regulations for independent schools, and in particular the overall provision for health and safety was inadequate. The failure to properly safeguard pupils meant that the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage was inadequate. The school did not provide all of the required information to parents and others and the complaints policy and admissions register were not fully compliant. Teachers were not using assessment information effectively to ensure work was properly matched to pupils' capabilities. Careers education for secondary pupils was not provided. The school was not maintained in a clean and tidy condition.

The school was required to produce an action plan to remedy these weaknesses. The action plan was accepted by the Department for Children, Schools and Families on 2 October 2009 subject to some modifications. This report judges the extent of improvement in the areas where the school failed to meet regulatory requirements. The overall quality of education remains satisfactory.

The new headteacher has settled in well and is moving the school in the right direction. The trustees and governors have a much better oversight of the school's work and are calling the school to account for its outcomes.

This is the second monitoring visit to evaluate progress against the school's action plan. The first monitoring visit was in April 2009.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

A satisfactory action plan was drawn up following the last inspection. It identified which regulatory requirements were unmet and appropriately outlined how weaknesses would be remedied. Good progress has been made since the last monitoring visit to ensure all regulatory requirements are now met.

Good progress has been made in rectifying the safeguarding weaknesses. Safeguarding procedures are good and are no longer inadequate. Action plan deadlines were prompt, clear and met. All of the required recruitment and employment checks have been carried out on the proprietorial body, staff and others to confirm their suitability to work with children. The school's single central register contains all of the required information. A satisfactory child protection policy is in place and it is implemented effectively. All staff, including the designated member in charge of child protection, have been suitably trained to fulfil their responsibilities. The chair of governors and chair of trustees have both undertaken child protection training so that they can appropriately oversee the school's child protection work. The school is fully aware of its duty to refer a person who is deemed to be unsuitable for working with children to the Independent Safeguarding Authority and has undertaken these responsibilities diligently. Concerns raised by some pupils and some parents before the inspection started in September 2008, have been examined and resolved by the appropriate bodies. As safeguarding and complaint procedures are now robust the overall quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage is at least satisfactory and no longer inadequate.

Good progress has been made since the last monitoring visit to improve careers provision. The work was completed within the deadline set in the action plan. An appropriate scheme of work for careers education now exists for secondary age pupils. It is based on a commercial programme of study that covers a variety of suitable topics to ensure pupils gain a secure understanding of the world of work and adult life. Personal, social, health and citizenship lessons also include elements of careers education and this helps to consolidate and further extend pupils' learning. The school is working with the local Connexions service to provide work experience for pupils in Years 10 and 11 during the summer term 2010. Contact has been made with parents and others to see if their expertise and professional knowledge can be used to inform pupils about jobs and career paths. Pupils say they enjoyed the visit by doctors as it gave them insights into the medical profession and the qualifications needed to study medicine. Links have also been made with professional bodies, and individuals are planning to access courses linked to their specific needs and aspirations.

Satisfactory progress has been made in ensuring teachers take pupils' aptitudes, needs and prior attainment into account when planning lessons. Revised assessment procedures in each phase mean that teachers have a clearer understanding of what pupils can and cannot do, and are now using the assessment information to plan and provide a suitable range of learning experiences appropriate for each pupil's stage of

development. A common format for lesson planning has recently been adopted and the vast majority of lessons have clear learning objectives and activities that move pupils' learning forward.

Good progress has been made improving the cleanliness and tidiness of the school premises, although there is further work to be done to improve the grounds. The action plan was clear about what improvements were required and by when. The inside of the school is well maintained and is in good decorative order. It is clean and tidy. Storage facilities are much improved. Large parts of the older main building have been decorated and new flooring and furniture has been installed in a number of classrooms. The computer and music suites have been refurbished and are of good quality and are well used. An outside contractor cleans the inside of the building regularly and staff and pupils are no longer routinely cleaning the premises. There has been a wholesale clear out of old furniture, unwanted resources and unused equipment and the school is better for it. Lockers have been installed and each pupil has one. Pupils now have a secure place in which to store possessions which they appreciate. Additional shelving and cupboard space has also been installed and this means that resources are now properly stored and are more easily accessible to staff and pupils. Resources and pupils' bags are no longer left lying around in an untidy and hazardous way. The outside areas are satisfactory. The lack of kerbing and walls around the grassed areas means that mud and dirt spills onto paving and this spoils the appearance of the site. There is some litter around the perimeter of the school that is not cleared quickly enough.

Progress in rectifying the weaknesses in the information supplied to parents and others, and the complaints policy and admissions register has been good. Regulatory requirements are met in all of these aspects.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements.

School details

Name of school	St Peter's Independent School		
DCSF number	928/6056		
Unique reference number	122143		
Type of school	Primary and secondary school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1979		
Age range of pupils	4-18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full time pupils)	Boys: 43	Girls: 39	Total: 82
Number on roll (part time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 3,600 - £4,050		
Address of school	Lingswood Park Blackthorn Northampton NN3 8TA		
Telephone number	01604 411745		
Email address	headsps@btconnect.com		
Headteacher	Mr Timothy Cooper		
Proprietor	St Peter's School Trust		
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik HMI		
Dates of inspection	10 to 11 November 2009		