

St Peter's School

St Peter's Road, Huntingdon, PE29 7DD

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough students achieve average standards in a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is not good. Many teachers do not make full use of the information they have about what students already know to set challenging work so they reach their full potential.
- Mathematics is not as good as English.
- Students do not have sufficient opportunities to practise writing at length in a range of subjects to help improve their writing skills.
- Marking is erratic. A significant proportion of teachers do not follow the school's marking policy. They do not mark students' work regularly and accurately, or include comments to show students how to improve their work and require them to make corrections.
- The purpose and expectation of lessons is not always crystal clear to students to help them quickly develop knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Students' attitudes to learning are not consistently good. A significant proportion does not apply themselves well in lessons.
- Leaders at all levels have not been rigorous enough in their checking of teaching and students' progress to keep sufficiently accurate records. They do not know which strategies are most effective.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The quality of teaching is not yet good.
- Some initiatives introduced by the headteacher and governors are beginning to show impact on students' achievement. However, progress is too slow and strategies are not checked for effectiveness.

The school has the following strengths

- A good range of sporting clubs, educational visits and residential trips, including overseas, promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Students are kept safe at school.
- The governors, headteacher and staff have successfully collaborated with external partners to improve the quality of teaching. The range of subjects taught is broad and accessible to all.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons. Six of these observations were completed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed students at breaks and lunchtimes and attended tutorial periods.
- Discussions were held with students, staff, governors, the headteacher, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took account of 30 responses to staff questionnaires and correspondence from parents.
- A wide range of documents was examined including samples of students' work, information about students' progress, the school's development plan and self-evaluation, records of any poor behaviour, and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors listened to students' read, and observed reading-support lessons and the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).

Inspection team

Sherry Gladwin, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jamie Clarke	Additional Inspector
Sarah Murrell	Additional Inspector
Nisha Tank	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school became an academy converter in September 2011.
- The school is larger than an average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British. The proportions of minority ethnic students are below average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has worked in partnership with the Comberton School to improve teaching in mathematics.
- The school purchases off-site alternative provision for five students on a full-time or part-time basis from The ACE Centre in Peterborough and The County School. The school also operates alternative provision on site on a full-time basis for 15 students in Key Stage 4. This is known as the 'Inspire Centre'.
- A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching good and raise achievement for students by:
 - ensuring marking is consistently good because it is regular, accurate, includes comments that show students how to improve their work and requires them to make corrections
 - providing more opportunities for students to write at length in a range of subjects to practise their writing skills
 - supporting students to learn and achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English
 - challenging students to work to the best of their ability in every lesson particularly the most able, so they reach their potential
 - ensuring that the purpose and expectation for learning in each lesson is crystal clear so students develop knowledge, understanding and skills quickly
 - checking that all teachers apply the school's literacy and numeracy policies when they plan learning and mark students' books to build confidence and skills more quickly.
- Improve the quality of behaviour so it is consistently good, by:
 - supporting students to develop consistently good attitudes to learning to promote better progress
 - checking that students take greater responsibility for their work so it is of a high quality and presented with pride and care.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that:
 - leaders become rigorous in checking teaching and the tracking of students' progress so that students receive the help they need and leaders can assess the effectiveness of strategies to raise achievement

- governors receive accurate information and are equipped to challenge senior leaders about how well the school is doing.
- A external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- For some time, students have joined the school with well-below average attainment and left Year 11 with well-below average GCSEs. In 2013, slightly more students left Year 11 with 5 GCSEs grade A* to C, including English and mathematics, than in 2012, but this was still well below average. Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching has improved, but it is not consistently good and does not speed up students' progress. Furthermore, students do not always show positive attitudes to learning and this slows down their progress.
- In 2013, the proportion of students who made good progress in English compared well with national figures, though there was a small decline on the 2012 results. In mathematics, there was good improvement in results, compared to 2012. However, the proportion of students who made good progress was well below national figures.
- The school is gaining in confidence about how to track progress. School information shows, that current Year 11 students are on track to make good progress in English and improve on last year's results. In mathematics, the proportion of Year 11 students on track to make good progress is similar to last year and remains well-below national figures because students do not have a confident grasp of basic skills.
- The achievement of students supported by the pupil premium has not been as good as that of other students. In 2013, eligible Year 11 students were, on average, more than a GCSE grade behind other students in English and mathematics. The funding is used to provide intervention and support, which is helping some students make good progress in English, so that their attainment is at least in line with others. In mathematics, these students remain a GCSE grade behind others.
- In 2013, significant proportions of the most-able students did not make good progress. The school realises that these students did not reach their full potential and is using a variety of enrichment activities and support to help students progress more quickly. Some of these students are now making better progress. However, they are not sufficiently challenged in lessons to work at the level that they are capable of achieving.
- In 2013, students attending off-site courses did not do as well as their peers in school because they were not always able to sit exams for recognised qualifications. The school has addressed this situation. The onsite 'Inspire Centre' caters for more of these students and arrangements for them to study English and mathematics is much improved.
- Some disabled students and those who have special educational needs did not make good progress in 2013. Recent changes in the leadership and management of the special needs provision is leading to better progress for these students because they now receive good support and the quality of small-group teaching is improving.
- Year 7 'catch-up' funding for students who join the school with below-average attainment in English and mathematics is used to address gaps in students' learning with the aim of helping them to develop literacy and mathematical skills that are appropriate to their age. The impact of this support and the additional lessons they receive in English and mathematics is not yet evident because it has not had time to show effect.
- The progress of minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is improving quickly because of the accurate assessments completed to gauge students' abilities

and learning needs. Students are keen to make good progress in their learning and show positive attitudes. They use a lunch-time club well to improve their language and social skills.

- In 2013, some students were entered early for GCSE English and mathematics to give them the opportunity to improve their grades. A small number of students benefited from this approach in English and progressed to study AS level English. The impact on the most able students was a positive extension of their learning.
- In 2013, students in the sixth form, studying academic AS and A Level subjects achieved below national figures. Students studying work-related courses reached higher standards and achieved above national figures. School information shows that current Year 12 and 13 students, are on track to achieve better results in 2014, in both work-related courses and at AS level. Currently, A Level results for 2014 look to remain in line with 2013 results. With the exception of work-related courses, examination results will thus be below national expectations. The proportion of students who are expected to achieve A* to B grades is improving for both boys and girls.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good because too much teaching requires improvement. A significant number of teachers do not use the information they have about what students already know and can do, to plan learning that has crystal clear purpose and expectations. This means that lessons do not build sufficiently on students' prior learning to help them acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills. In mathematics, some students lack confidence and the basic skills required to be successful at GCSE.
- Not enough teachers plan learning activities which are stimulating and hold students' interest. Students are not challenged to produce their best and work at the level they are capable of achieving, particularly the most-able students.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are not taught consistently well. While support is provided to improve progress in these subjects, the effectiveness of the different approaches has not been evaluated to determine which are of best value. Teachers do not apply the school's literacy and numeracy policies to their subjects when they plan lessons and mark students' work. Neither are there enough opportunities for students to write at length in a variety of subjects and practise their writing skills.
- A significant proportion of teachers do not provide high-quality feedback to show students how to improve their work, or ensure that students act on the comments and advice they are given. While some teachers provide students with helpful comments, they are in the minority.
- Where teachers and teaching assistants work closely to plan small-group work and in-class support for disabled students or those who have special educational needs, teaching assistants are used effectively and students make better progress as a result.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form has improved and this is leading to better progress for students. Following the previous inspection, the school focused on improving the range of courses and teaching. The wider choice of academic subjects and work-related courses available to students means they better suit their abilities and interests. The school is working to improve standards in English, psychology and design and technology

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Although school records and students report that there has been a noticeable improvement in behaviour, it is not yet consistently good. This is because a significant proportion of pupils do not show positive attitudes to learning which slows their own and other students' progress. There is too much doodling in exercise books and not enough work is covered by some students during lessons because time is lost in unrelated chatter.
- Some teachers are skilled classroom managers and establish good levels of rapport with students. The majority of students respond well to these members of staff and co-operate to create a positive environment for learning where they can make progress. In a significant number of lessons, some students have to be reminded to listen respectfully to others and not speak over them when they are sharing responses or when the teacher is speaking.
- The school supports disabled students and those who have special educational needs, or challenging behaviour, to improve their behaviour. Some of the pupil premium has been used to establish good links with parents and carers. Close work with parents and carers, external agencies, and the full involvement of students in decisions about the support they receive, result in good support plans and consistent approaches to behaviour management. Case studies show that some students respond well to this help.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Students feel safe. They understand right from wrong and can explain different types of bullying, including racist, sexist and homophobic name-calling. They recognise the harm that this causes and explained that it does occur from time to time but state confidently that it is dealt with quickly by staff. Internet safety is taught well. Students attending courses off site are monitored closely and they are safe.
- Attendance is average. It has improved over the past year. Exclusions have remained at below the national average. The 'Inspire Centre' plays a key role in helping to meet the learning needs of students who find academic learning challenging and who might prefer to stay away from the academy. The good range of work-related opportunities supported by practical learning has led to raised attendance and reduced exclusions for many students. Those eligible for pupil premium and those with special education needs working at school action plus have the lowest attendance. The academy makes use of some of the pupil premium to employ staff to improve attendance for these students.
- Students are friendly, polite and courteous. They respond maturely and benefit from the range of opportunities available to them to serve the school as members of the academy council, and as organisers for charity fundraising. They enjoy these opportunities and gain a great deal of leadership experience from them. The vertical tutor groups, the four guilds, and the use of well-planned assemblies promote belonging and community throughout the school.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good. Students are friendly, courteous and have mature attitudes to learning. They do not always have an opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning and small class sizes restrict approaches to learning. Students serve the school as prefects and there is competition for the role of head boy, head girl and corresponding deputy roles. Some sixth formers assist younger students in a variety of ways, including through peer mediation and listening to reading.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is supported by staff, governors and parents. Since the previous inspection they have used a number of initiatives to address the key issues identified in the previous report.

None of the strategies are fully secure and have not had sufficient impact on raising students' achievement, improving the quality of teaching and learning or behaviour and safety, or increasing the effectiveness of leadership and management.

- The school checks the quality of teaching and assesses students' progress at least once each term. This is intended to help leaders form a view of progress and determine what needs to be done to improve teaching and achievement. However, the monitoring is not rigorous enough, and up-to-date, accurate records are not kept by the school to help judge progress and identify the kind of support that might benefit students most.
- The senior leaders and subject leaders are growing in skill and confidence because of the external support they have received from the Comberton School to judge the quality of teaching accurately. During the inspection, senior leaders engaged in joint lesson observations with inspectors and arrived at similar judgements.
- Leaders have developed clear systems to manage the performance of staff linked to the national 'Teachers' Standards'. This is helping to improve standards in the school because staff are asked to give an account of their performance to senior leaders and governors.
- The school's range of subjects and topics caters for students of all abilities and interests. A wide range of subjects is available, including work-related opportunities. Classroom learning is enhanced by assemblies, visitors to the academy and through a variety of after-school clubs and sporting competitions with local schools. Residential trips to places as varied as Ghana and Germany also support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural values.
- The school partially promotes equality of opportunity. Although, students are generally free from discrimination and bullying, they do not make good progress by the time they leave Year 11. Consequently, their career options are limited. The pupil premium is used to provide additional activities and a range of academic support for eligible students, but the effectiveness of these initiatives is not evaluated.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school. A minority expressed concerns about the extent to which their children are, happy and safe, free from bullying and encouraged to behave well. Some parents also expressed concern with the academy's response to them when they raised concerns. During the inspection, inspectors were contacted through visits and written correspondence by parents who wanted to express their support for the school and thanks for the care their children have received. One parent wrote 'As a school, St Peter's has never let me down'.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are improving. Leaders can identify strengths and areas for development, and strategies are in place to improve standards. These strategies have begun to have effect but are not yet secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed. They bring a valuable set of professional skills and experience to the governing body. Governors have laid good foundations for the future and rebuilt the governing body so that it operates more effectively. Governors monitor progress against targets in the school's development plan. They are well trained and understand student progress data. However they are dependent on the information they receive from the school about the quality of teaching and students' progress. This information is not always the most accurate and up-to-date and the progress of students in Key Stage 3 is not included. Governors are now aware and intent on receiving better quality information because they understand the necessity of good challenge and support for senior leaders.

- Governors are developing better links with subjects and key areas of the academy's development plan. Their visits to the school support a growing understanding of its strengths and areas for development. This knowledge is helping to shape strategic thinking.
- Governors value staff appraisal, clear processes and procedures are in place to set targets for staff including the headteacher. Targets are linked to the key priorities in the school's development plan and help to focus staff on improvement. Teachers are required to teach consistently well and meet all of their targets in order to qualify for a pay increase. Governors manage finances effectively. Governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137248
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	442085

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1094
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Goodridge
Headteacher	Valerie Ford
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2013
Telephone number	01480 459581
Fax number	01480 457968
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