

St Peter's School

St Peter's Road, Huntingdon PE29 7DD

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is inadequate. Senior leaders and governors have not ensured that all pupils are kept safe.
- Written records are not maintained in a timely way. Insufficient evidence is kept of the actions taken to protect some of the school's most vulnerable pupils who leave, or go missing from education.
- Leaders and managers are not fully alert to the signs that pupils who go missing might be at risk of harm. Procedures are not routinely checked to make sure they are working well enough to protect these pupils.
- Governors have not acted quickly enough to tighten up procedures for safeguarding pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the last inspection, significant improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour, and leadership and management.
- The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, has maintained an unrelenting focus on improvement. Increasingly, middle leaders are making a strong contribution to raising achievement.
- Good teaching and consistent management of behaviour in classrooms are enabling pupils to make improved progress.
- Behaviour is good. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils are well-mannered and respectful.
- Outcomes are improving. However, the legacy of weak teaching and assessment in the past has not been fully overcome, particularly for pupils in Year 11, and in science.
- Improved targeting of resources is leading to the gaps in the achievement of disadvantaged and other pupils narrowing. However, more needs to be done to ensure these gaps close fully.
- The school is inclusive; pupils attending the Inspire Centre are helped to modify their behaviour and re-engage in learning.
- Sixth form provision is good as a result of effective teaching. Rigorous monitoring of students' progress, attendance and welfare is leading to significant improvements in academic and work-related qualifications. Students feel safe in the school.
- Increasingly, the school is fostering stronger links with parents and carers, and with other schools.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take urgent, effective action to ensure that the school's child protection and safeguarding arrangements are effective, by:
 - maintaining written records and supporting evidence to illustrate the actions taken to protect pupils; routinely checking these records to confirm that they are keeping pupils safe
 - ensuring that pupils who leave, or go missing from the school, receive a well-coordinated response from staff that protects them from harm
 - ensuring that senior leaders and governors responsible for child protection are more alert to the signs that pupils who go missing might be at risk of harm
 - working alongside other external agencies so that every possible action has been taken to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.

- Raise achievement, by:
 - further reducing the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally
 - evaluating the impact of the school's actions to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and, if necessary, amending plans to raise their achievement
 - applying the same strategies used to raise achievement in English and mathematics to raising standards in science
 - ensuring that improvements in teaching enable pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to achieve well in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate solely because leaders and governors have not ensured that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. There are serious flaws in the record-keeping of actions taken by staff to protect pupils from harm.
- Disappointingly, this failure to meet one of the school's main responsibilities undermines what is in general, good and effective leadership. Improvements led by the headteacher, noted at the time of the last monitoring inspection, are now firmly established. New partnerships with other schools and stronger links between the school and its local community have raised expectations and made staff much more accountable.
- Changes to the senior leadership team have increased the school's capacity to improve. They are all held accountable for leading improvements. Greater expectations and responsibility have been placed on middle leaders to contribute to improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Training to develop leaders is enabling them to use assessment data and monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their departments more effectively. Pastoral leads have been empowered to routinely monitor pupils' behaviour, attendance and academic progress.
- The leadership of teaching underpins much of the improvement made since the last inspection. Weak teaching is no longer tolerated; tough decisions have been taken when the quality of teaching has not been good enough. Significant changes in staffing have been made and further changes planned for next term. A comprehensive programme of staff development and training, coupled with systematic monitoring of lessons and pupils' work, is adding greater consistency to the day-to-day quality of teaching.
- Improved assessment procedures, based on regular testing of pupils in all year groups and thorough analysis of data, enables leaders and managers to intervene much more effectively to support those at risk of underachieving. Links with other schools are enabling leaders to validate the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' current progress.
- Intervention sessions are used effectively to withdraw pupils in need of additional support and to boost their confidence and understanding. These procedures have made a significant impact in English and mathematics, but not in science where outcomes for pupils remain low.
- A personal development programme, taught in daily tutorials, is used effectively to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Opportunities are also mapped well across the broad, balanced curriculum for pupils to develop their wider understanding of fundamental British values. For instance, pupils led their own school election. They followed this up with discussions about the implications of the 'Brexit vote', and the need for harmony and understanding among different groups in the school's local community.
- Records show that increasing numbers of parents and carers are attending parents evenings and are supporting events held in the school. Questionnaires carried out by senior leaders and online messages to Ofsted, during the inspection, confirm that the vast majority of those who responded are fully supportive of the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has been ineffective in keeping all pupils safe. Governors were made aware of shortfalls in the school's safeguarding records last year. Insufficient action was taken at this point to strengthen these procedures and ensure that all pupils are kept safe.
 - Governors have supported leaders in improving the school since the last inspection. They are knowledgeable and experienced and show a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Minutes of meetings show that they are holding leaders to account by asking for further information and by posing challenging questions about the school's performance. They readily take part in training events with staff, including recent safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training.
 - Governors' spending of the pupil premium was ineffective last year. They have changed this by targeting resources toward more intensive monitoring of the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, and by providing them with personalised mentoring and support to help them achieve. A governor has taken responsibility for overseeing this new approach and for reporting its impact to the governing body.
 - Governors are ambitious for the school. Plans are underway to secure its future development by joining a local multi-academy trust.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The single central record of staff recruitment checks is suitably maintained and checked by governors to make sure that it is complete and up to date. However, the same rigour is not applied to the arrangements to safeguard the school's most vulnerable pupils.

- Written records are not maintained in a timely way. They do not illustrate the actions taken up to, and after, a safeguarding matter arises, or when a referral is made to the local authority. Comprehensive records are not kept to show what leaders and managers have done to protect those who leave the school or go missing from education. In some cases, there is very little evidence to show that information is shared with the relevant support agencies to help to protect these pupils.
- The combination of a very large caseload and a lack of action in the past to improve procedures mean that the designated safeguarding lead is inundated with a backlog of files to maintain. Some progress has been made in updating these records, but major gaps in cases involving pupils going missing for extended periods of time and leaving the country remain. The files of these pupils contain a minimal amount of information about what has been done to find out where they are and whether they are safe.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe on the school site. Risk assessments for off-site visits are in place. The fire alarm and procedures have been recently tested.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Following the last inspection, senior leaders recognised that urgent action was needed to improve the quality of teaching. Systematic procedures were implemented, based on non-negotiables in lessons and challenging conversations with staff about their practice. These procedures work effectively because they are applied rigorously, and are followed through properly to make sure that they lead to improvement.
- Regular scrutiny of lessons and feedback to staff about the quality of teaching and learning have led to significant improvements. Some staff who were unable to improve their effectiveness have left the school. Those who have remained have received regular training and support to increase their effectiveness. Nevertheless, a residue of weak teaching remains in science and mathematics; leaders are aware of this and are taking steps to eradicate it.
- A large proportion of teachers have increased their effectiveness by participating in the developing effective teaching programme. A smaller proportion have taken part in the outstanding teacher programme. Whole-staff events and other training, including external professional development tailored to meet the needs of teachers, have strengthened overall provision. The school's monitoring data shows that teaching has improved significantly this year.
- Observations by inspectors confirmed the views of leaders that training for staff has improved teaching. Pupils can explain what they are learning about. Questioning is used more effectively. Detailed marking and feedback provided for pupils in line with the school's policy are common in most lessons. Pupils say that they appreciate this feedback and that it helps them to understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Inspectors noted regular opportunities for pupils to write at length, mostly in English but also in a few other subjects. When asked, pupils read aloud in lessons with confidence. In mathematics, questioning by teachers and discussions among pupils help to deepen their understanding of mathematical theory and formulae. A few weaknesses remain. For example, not all pupils show pride in their work and this is left unchallenged by some teachers.
- Teachers set half-termly tests based on GCSE examination questions to assess pupils' progress in all year groups. Results of these tests are moderated internally, and shared with other school leaders to test their validity. This provides staff with more accurate information to show how well pupils are doing and to identify who needs further support. The appropriateness of these questions for pupils at key stage 3 has been evaluated and is likely to change next year as the school introduces its own modified tests.
- Monitoring is much more systematic. Analysis of assessment data is used to inform a wide range of interventions in additional classes in English and mathematics. These enable pupils to catch up. Not all staff are fully aware of how they can use this information to plan learning matched to the different needs of pupils of all abilities, particularly the most able.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving. A relatively new leader is beginning to establish procedures well to assess pupils' individual needs. This, in turn, is used effectively to inform individual 'pupil passports' and to share these with teachers and provide training for staff to improve the learning and progress of pupils in their classes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.

- Ineffective arrangements for safeguarding pupils means that the welfare of a small minority of pupils is put at risk. Senior leaders and managers cannot demonstrate through their record-keeping and following-up of procedures that everything possible is done to look after these pupils and keep them safe.
- Inspectors' discussions with pupils confirmed that they feel safe, free from bullying and are taught about the risks attached in using social media. When bullying does happen, usually name-calling, they know who to speak with to stop it from happening.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown in their regular attendance and improved punctuality. Increased monitoring of the reasons for the absence of disadvantaged pupils, and improved liaison with their parents and carers have improved their attendance.
- Pupils talked enthusiastically about the range of enrichment activities provided after school, the opportunities for off-site visits and trips to other countries.
- Pupils receive good-quality information, guidance and support about further education, and future careers. This includes an experience of the workplace. During the inspection the school hosted a careers fair enabling pupils to listen to, and talk with, a wide range of professionals.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Expectations of pupils have been raised. Agreed procedures to manage behaviour in lessons are applied much more consistently, and better supervision outside of lessons ensures that pupils behave appropriately. They are responsible and courteous when moving around the school. They meet sociably in friendship groups and mix together well.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved significantly in recent years. Parents who responded to questionnaires also feel that behaviour has improved. All of the school's monitoring information points to significant reductions in incidents of poor behaviour, less bullying and fewer referrals to the isolation room.
- In lessons seen by inspectors, pupils were well behaved and prepared for learning. Consistent management of behaviour by staff ensured that pupils knew the consequences of poor behaviour and understood the need to behave responsibly and sensibly. Where teaching failed to inspire, a few pupils allowed others to do all of the work.
- The Inspire Centre enables a small proportion of pupils who have disengaged from learning, or have been excluded from school, to modify their behaviour and attitudes. A bespoke curriculum suited to their needs and linked to future careers, taught in a calm environment in small groups, helps to re-engage them with learning.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Good teaching and consistent management of behaviour, coupled with much higher expectations, is leading to improved progress for most pupils. Regular testing and analysis of assessment information is giving senior and middle leaders a clear picture of how well pupils are doing.
- At key stage 3, a small proportion of less-able pupils, including some who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn together in small nurture classes, taught by the same teacher and teaching assistants. They make good progress because this builds their confidence and self-esteem, and increases their understanding of basic literacy and numeracy. Parents and carers of these pupils appreciate the quality of the support provided.
- School information shows that Year 10 pupils are making good progress. Pupils' progress is less pronounced in Year 11, mainly due to the poor teaching they have had in the past that has left gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Intensive support provided before, during and after school has helped to increase their progress. Current forecasts show that value-added measures are expected to be much higher than they were last year.
- The proportions of Year 11 pupils who are making or exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics are likely to be above those found nationally this year. Senior leaders feel that these predictions are accurate as assessment information has been moderated internally and validated externally.
- In lessons, inspectors found that pupils make improved progress due to better teaching. They noted good progress in English, mathematics, art, and travel and tourism but only steady progress in humanities, and French.
- Gaps in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, compared with other pupils nationally, are expected to narrow significantly this year. However, as the school's improvement strategies raise the achievement of all pupils, gaps between them and others in the school are not closing fast enough. More time is needed for the school's new strategy for disadvantaged pupils to embed and impact fully on raising their achievement.

- Similarly, more time is needed for improved teaching to raise the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Current assessment information shows that these pupils in Year 11 are not making enough progress in mathematics.
- Overall attainment is also set to rise this year. Assessment information shows a modest improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics. Also, a much higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils are achieving well this year when compared with last year. Senior leaders feel that new measures introduced to show overall achievement in eight subjects presents a more positive picture.
- All of the most able pupils studying the three sciences are predicted to attain high GCSE grades. In core and additional science, results are expected to be lower than last year, mainly due to staffing changes in the department and an over-reliance on temporary staff. New appointments have been made to improve this situation next term.
- A group of the most able pupils told inspectors that they feel suitably challenged in lessons and are given additional, harder tasks to stretch their knowledge and understanding. Not all teachers are using the assessment information they have about pupils to plan learning matched to their different abilities.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Improvements to the sixth form reflect those made in the main school. Better quality teaching, more rigorous monitoring and targeted support from staff to prevent students from underachieving is leading to significant improvement.
- Students commented favourably on the quality of teaching they receive. If they feel it is not good enough at times, they have the confidence to raise this matter with staff. In most of the lessons observed by inspectors, good teaching was leading to good progress. Students displayed positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Overall outcomes show an improving trend in academic and work-related subjects since the last inspection. Retention rates are higher than average. The large majority of students leaving Year 13 this year have secured a place at university.
- Improved information, advice and guidance is raising awareness of the opportunities for further education provided locally, and this is ensuring that students stay on into the sixth form because they can choose a clear, academic or vocational route into higher education.
- Students without GCSE English or mathematics have the opportunity to study and resit examinations to achieve an A* to C grade.
- Attendance is similar to that found nationally. Weekly tutorials enable staff to mentor students, keep in touch with them and to discuss issues about their progress and welfare.
- Leadership of the sixth form has been strengthened through support and training for the head of sixth form from a senior leader. The leader has been empowered to hold staff accountable for the quality of teaching and learning provided for students.

School details

Unique reference number	137248
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10011859

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	983
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Goodridge
Headteacher	Christopher Bennet
Telephone number	01480 459581
Website	www.stpeters.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	office@stpeters.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those that have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan, is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils entitled to free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has its own on-site, alternative education setting, the Inspire Centre, for a small minority of pupils with challenging behaviour.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards (the minimum targets that schools are expected to achieve) in 2015.
- The school meets requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 lessons, one tutorial and carried out a learning walk to observe pupils' behaviour. They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, three groups of pupils, a group of sixth form students, and governors. The lead inspector held a telephone call with the school's school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at the safeguarding policy and procedures, self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of governors' meetings, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and other information provided by the school leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in classrooms. They considered the response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 33 free texts sent by parents and carers, one written complaint and 56 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire from staff.

Inspection team

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