

Inspection of a good school: St Peter's Church of England Aided School

Quarry Lane, Heavitree, Exeter, Devon EX2 5AP

Inspection dates:

12–13 November 2019

Outcome

St Peter's Church of England Aided School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Peter's provides pupils with a good education that prepares them for life beyond school. Pupils learn about the importance of kindness, friendship and charity. They discuss issues such as homelessness with wisdom and insight. Pupils learn the importance of helping others through charity work and support roles within school. As a result, the school is a calm, harmonious place where pupils enjoy learning.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are strong. Pupils state that bullying is very rare, but when it happens, staff resolve it quickly.

Staff provide a high level of care for pupils. Pupils have good relationships with staff. In lessons, pupils explore their perceptions of the world freely. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe both physically and mentally.

Pupils have high aspirations. They pay attention in class and work hard. Pupils also relish the opportunities to develop other skills such as leadership and fund-raising. The school's 'character compass' supports the development of pupils as future citizens very well. Consequently, pupils at St Peter's are well prepared for life beyond school. One parent's view reflected the views of many, when they stated that 'staff focus on the "whole person" without losing sight of the academic'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have planned the curriculum carefully to ensure that pupils develop socially, emotionally and academically. In lessons and extra-curricular activities, pupils learn resilience, leadership and empathy for others. For example, many pupils visit a school and hospital in Malawi every year. They raise funds to help the school and hospital. Pupils have many opportunities to take on important roles within the school. They have been trained to mentor other pupils. Pupils also lead assemblies and organise sporting events. They run discussions about the Bible and faith. Consequently, pupils learn to be confident citizens.

Staff have planned well what pupils learn and how they learn. Teachers build pupils' knowledge well. For example, pupils develop impressive mathematical knowledge and achieve well at the end of key stage 4. This is a strength of the school. Leaders revise the plans for subjects where pupils do not achieve as well, such as languages. Pupils understand and recall words and grammar more successfully in French and Spanish as a result.

Leaders select exciting and challenging texts for pupils to study in English. For example, pupils in Year 7 study Anthony Horowitz's novel, 'Point Blanc', with enthusiasm. Pupils listen carefully and respond thoughtfully. Teachers help them to think about the ways in which the writer's language shapes the presentation of ideas and characters. Similarly, in other subjects such as history, drama and physical education, pupils demonstrate strong attitudes to learning.

Leaders have created a thinking school. Pupils reflect on why they think the way they do. Staff think about teaching and learning. Leaders have established a strong programme to continually improve the quality of education at the school.

The school provides a strong programme for pupils who struggle with reading and writing in Years 7 and 8. Pupils told inspectors how much they value this support. Although leaders and staff have identified literacy and language as an issue for some pupils, there is not a consistent approach in all subjects. In some subjects, disadvantaged pupils struggle to learn well. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils nationally.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive high-quality social and emotional support. Pupils who attend the literacy programme in Years 7 and 8 make strong progress in their reading and writing skills. However, those pupils who do not attend this programme are not as well supported to read and write in every subject they study.

Staff overwhelmingly state that leaders provide effective support. They are proud to work at the school. Staff stated that leaders ensure that their workload is manageable. Governors visit the school regularly to gather information about the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, they pose effective challenge to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant about keeping pupils safe, both emotionally and physically. Staff receive appropriate training and know how to identify a pupil who may be at risk of harm. Leaders act on all referrals in a timely manner. Leaders record all referrals meticulously. The school's checks on adults who work at the school are effective. Pupils, staff and parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted surveys agree that the school keeps pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have established an intensive programme of support for pupils who struggle with reading and writing in Years 7 and 8. However, there is not a consistent approach to helping disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers nationally in all subjects. This is also the case for pupils with SEND. Leaders need to ensure that teachers in all subjects provide explicit support to improve the language and literacy of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 30 September to 1 October 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113553
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10058427
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Karen Leach
Headteacher	Phil Randall
Website	www.spexe.org/
Date of previous inspection	30 September–1 October 2015

Information about this school

- St Peter's Church of England Aided School has a literacy unit for 26 pupils in Years 7 and 8.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support by the pupil premium funding is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior and curriculum leaders, and governors. The lead inspector also spoke with the school's improvement partner by telephone.
- An inspector met with staff to consider their views. The inspector also evaluated the views of staff in the Ofsted staff questionnaire and 184 pupils in the pupil questionnaire.

- We reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to review the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. We spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their school.
- We considered the views of 171 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View, including 169 free-text responses.
- The inspection carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history modern foreign languages, drama and physical education. This meant that, in each subject, the inspector met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' work.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Carol Hannaford

Ofsted Inspector

Richard Steward

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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