

St Peter's Church of England Aided School

Quarry Road, Exeter, EX2 5AP

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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
Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- There has been a decline over time in the numbers of high achieving students achieving the top GCSE grades of A* and A in many subjects, but especially in English.
- In 2012 and 2013, the proportion of students who achieved 5 A*-C grades including English and mathematics, was above the national average, but because too many high ability students, middle ability boys and those students who have special educational needs do not make their expected progress, GCSE examination results were not as good as they should be.
- Marking varies in quality between subjects and teachers. Teachers do not consistently help students to improve the quality of their work by giving them high quality written feedback
- Behaviour in lessons is generally good but at break and lunch times, some students' behaviour is not as good as it should be.
- Teachers do not always pitch their lessons correctly so that all students are enabled to make the progress of which they are capable, particularly those who have special educational needs or those who are eligible for the pupil premium.
- Fixed-term exclusions and internal exclusions are too high.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher demonstrates a strong and focused vision for the school. This, together with strong support from the senior team, staff and the governors, means that the school is well placed to move forward.
- The Christian ethos of the school underpins students' high quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is a strength of the school.
- There are many examples of good and outstanding teaching in mathematics and science as well as a number of other subjects.
- Systems for checking students' progress and setting targets have been refined and are being used to support the learning of students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 55 lessons, of which five were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of additional visits to assemblies and tutorial sessions and carried out a learning walk with the headteacher across a range of subject areas.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the chair of governors and other members of the governing body, and a representative from the Exeter diocese.
- Inspectors spoke to students in lessons, at break and at lunchtimes. They also spoke to four groups of students representing all year groups in the school.
- Inspectors heard a group of Years 7 and 8 students read and listened to students read in lessons.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, and statistical information about students' progress, achievement, behaviour and exclusions. They also looked at samples of students' work in lessons.
- Inspectors took account of the 113 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, and the 71 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Christine Young, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marion Marks	Additional Inspector
Justine Hocking	Additional Inspector
Marian Hobbs	Additional Inspector
Terry Payne	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Peter's Church of England Aided School is a larger than average comprehensive school, serving Exeter and the surrounding area.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and the percentage of students from ethnic groups or whose first language is not English is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. (This is additional money allocated by the government for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.)
- The proportion of students supported by school action is well above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school was previously designated as a specialist Language College.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress for secondary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement and rates of progress further, especially for the most able, the least able, and middle ability boys by:
 - making sure that marking in all subjects consistently sets clear targets for improvement and that these targets are systematically followed up by both students and teachers so that expected progress can be achieved or surpassed
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of what students are capable of achieving are appropriately high enough to enable all lessons to be pitched at the right level for all students
 - ensuring all outcomes are used effectively in order to plan for individual differences and to support the learning of all groups of students so that they can make good progress.
- Leaders, managers and teachers need to focus on needs of those students who are eligible for the pupil premium and who have special educational needs by:
 - differentiating work so that all students are able to make progress
 - using the school's data more effectively when planning lessons so that work is suitably challenging and more individual support is given where necessary

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Over time, there has been a steady decline in the numbers of more able students who achieve the top GCSE A* and A grades. In 2012, a large number of students did not achieve these high grades in nearly half of their subjects. This was particularly evident in English where students did not make their higher expected levels of progress.
- The percentages of students achieving A* to C in RE, Spanish, German, art and health and social care are below the national average. The school enters all students for GCSE RE and all students are entered for a second modern foreign language.
- The achievement of students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, especially those supported by school action, is below expectations.
- The achievement of middle ability boys particularly in English and their performance at GCSE level is below national averages.
- Students enter the school in Year 7 with above average prior attainment but by the time they leave in Year 11, many have not made the progress of which they are capable.
- In 2012, poor GCSE results in modern foreign languages (MFL) were a result of the specialist language college's policy to enter all students for GCSE in two languages including early entry for GCSE French in Year 9 and a second language at key stage 4. This no longer takes place as the provision of languages teaching and examination entry has been revised for Key Stage 3 from 2014. GCSE results in French 2013 were much improved.
- Because students did not always achieve their potential, the school no longer enters students early for GCSE.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics was above average in 2012 and 2013. However high ability students, middle ability boys and students with special educational needs did not achieve their potential.
- The proportion of students who achieved five or more GCSE grades A* to C was above average. Student attainment in English literature, English language, mathematics, dance, drama, physical education, music and science was above the national average.
- The school makes use of the pupil premium funding to provide targeted support for students. This includes additional coaching and extra resources. The targeted support is proving effective in mathematics where students' average points scores show that the gap in performance between those eligible for free school meals and their classmates is decreasing. However, the impact of that support in English has been less effective and the gap has widened in 2013.
- All students in Year 7 follow a 'learning to learn' programme, which successfully equips them with thinking tools for use across the curriculum and encourages the development of learning strategies across a range of subjects.
- Teaching assistants are effective in their involvement in planning and support in lessons. They have an extremely positive impact on the achievement of the students they support.
- In Year 7, the 'catch-up' funding, which supports students who are weaker readers, has been used effectively. Students are reading more often than they were and are now better at reading with understanding and confidence. The school's RWCM (reading, writing, communication and mathematics) programme successfully provides support for individuals and groups of students, primarily in Year 7.
- The school's work as a Language College has enabled them to develop a highly successful international dimension to learning. They have exchanges with schools in France, Germany, and a partner school in Malawi which groups of students visit each year to extend their linguistics skills and to experience different cultures.
- Recent achievements the school has celebrated include: highly successful sports teams playing at county, regional and national levels across a range of sports; combined cadet force, national maths challenge, chemistry competitions, public speaking competitions and many dance, drama

and music performances. The school is part of the national APAUSE (added power and understanding in sex education) programme.

- The school's student leadership group, led by their four principal students, enables students to take responsibility within the life of the school and develop their self-confidence and awareness of citizenship skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching across the school is inconsistent and ranges from outstanding teaching to teaching that is inadequate. Not enough high achieving students make the progress of which they are capable because some teachers do not challenge them sufficiently as work is not always pitched at a high enough level.
- Teachers do not always provide challenge for middle ability boys in their learning. There needs to be a greater focus on raising boys' achievement and progress levels.
- Teaching does not always focus on students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding; this leads to insufficient progress across a range of subjects, which means their progress is behind that of their classmates.
- A range of interventions are in place to support the needs of different groups of students. Although most teachers show a good understanding of how to cater for particular groups, the use of differentiation by some teachers is inconsistent across the school and this results in many students not making the progress of which they are capable.
- In some lessons, teachers do not use regular and effective assessments to plan the next steps in learning and give students work that enables them to learn at a faster rate and gain better understanding.
- Teaching in a range of subjects, including mathematics, science, drama, most of English, MFL, and technology, is well planned to meet students' needs. Teachers also challenge and use their expertise to enable students of all abilities, including the more able, disabled students and those students who have special educational needs, to make good progress.
- The school has correctly identified improving the quality and consistency of marking and feedback. Teachers' marking and feedback is not always good. Some work, in different subjects, is marked regularly and students are provided with helpful comments outlining what they need to do to improve. However, other work, often within the same subject area, is not marked regularly or receives no more than a tick. Where there is this type of marking, students do not know how to make their work better and reach higher grades.
- The best learning seen was where teachers used high-quality questioning and planned lessons that clearly enabled students to understand how they could progress; learning was particularly rapid when the lessons were tailored towards supporting students' understanding of how to improve their progress. Detailed verbal and written feedback from teachers gave students, particularly in examination classes, the information they needed to meet their target grade or beyond. These lessons were engaging and students were stretched and provided with challenge. For example, in a Year 11 chemistry lesson, the teacher's love of the subject inspired her students. There was genuine excitement and curiosity about scientific enquiry for all students.
- In lessons that were judged to be good or better, teachers' questioning is a strength. Most teachers make sure all students focus on the key concepts being taught. They use probing questions effectively to encourage students to delve deeper and extend their understanding of the subject. This was evident in a Year 7 technology lesson, where students were challenged on their discussions relating to the properties and manufactured process of plywood. All students were engaged swiftly to make outstanding progress.
- Teachers build effective working relationships with students. They help them to develop the confidence to work both independently and with others, and to complete their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Fixed-term exclusions are high. Internal exclusions, where the school provides support and guidance for students who have behaved badly in class, are also high. The number of students who have special educational needs who spend time in the school's internal exclusion unit is very high.
- Most students have developed good and highly positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do their best in class. However, at break and lunchtime there are a number of students who do not always behave as well as they could.
- A few students present challenging behaviour; their needs are met well by the school's support systems and internal behaviour unit. Students receive good care and support from dedicated staff who help with behaviour, attendance, and personal needs.
- Relationships between staff and students are a strength of the school and the vast majority of students are polite, helpful, courteous and well mannered.
- Parents and carers say that their children are both happy and safe at school. Students say they feel safe and happy and are rightly proud of their school. If there are any incidents, students say these are dealt with promptly and effectively. If any bullying occurs, it is dealt with quickly by the school. Students are well aware of the different types of bullying and have a good level of understanding of e-safety.
- Attendance is broadly average. Students are punctual to school and in lessons and they say they enjoy coming to school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- There is a need for improved focus on the work set by teachers so that students who are eligible for pupil premium, those students who have high prior attainment and middle achieving boys are able to make at least expected progress.
- The acting headteacher and the leadership team have a very clear understanding of what needs to be improved and how this can be achieved. The school has identified the right priorities for the future. Recent developments are already having a positive impact and demonstrate the school's capacity to improve further.
- Since September, the school has developed a successful fast-track programme for students with low levels of literacy and numeracy to give them sustained support in Year 7. In Years 8 and 9, additional literacy hours have been provided for students in need of extra support. This is a highly successful initiative but it has not been in place for long enough to measure its impact on student progress.
- School leaders' assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. They are making good use of data to judge how well the school is doing. This is not yet fully embedded with all middle leaders in charge of subjects to enable them to take full responsibility for achievement and progress in their areas.
- The subjects that students learn are significantly enhanced by an extensive range of after-school clubs and activities. These are greatly valued and well attended by students. The school has links with a school in Malawi; whole-year group visits to France provide opportunities that enable students to learn about other cultures and develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding exceptionally well.
- The school has introduced a more robust performance management system for teachers, which is accurate and clearly identifies the skills that need to improve. The professional development programme is supported well by the school; there is a strong focus on the development of middle leaders and improving teaching.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions is high in particular, especially for students who have special educational needs; the leadership team is determined to deal firmly with those students who challenge authority. The number of internal exclusions is also very high; the school

leadership team has begun to address the issue and plans have been put in place to provide extra support for students who present challenging behaviour through the school's special inclusion unit.

- Safeguarding policies, practice and child protection arrangements meet statutory requirements and ensure that students are safe.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governance of the school is good. Governors have an accurate understanding of the main strengths and areas for further development of the school. The governing body has a clear and focused understanding of the school's performance and holds it to account for the quality of teaching and students' achievement. It knows how the pupil premium is spent and the impact of this funding for eligible students. The governing body is aware of how targets are set for teachers and monitors how these targets are linked to pay increases.
- All governors have undertaken all appropriate training and are confident about their roles and responsibilities.
- Governors make regular visits to the school and link with curriculum areas and take active steps to engage with parents. They are proactive in the life and Christian ethos of the school.
- The governing body makes sure the school fulfils its responsibilities regarding safeguarding.

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	113553
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	429535

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Church of England Aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Heather Morgan
Headteacher	Lyn Bourne
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 June 2009
Telephone number	01392 204764
Email address	school@SPEXE.org

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