

Phoenix St Peter Academy

Enstone Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 0NE

Inspection dates

26–27 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have an inflated view of the quality of provision at the school. Leaders and governors inaccurately judge the progress of pupils as good and do not sufficiently challenge teachers about underachievement.
- Leaders' and governors' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Targets set by leaders and governors for many pupils are below age-appropriate expectations.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding supports the social and emotional needs of disadvantaged pupils well, but has too little impact on their academic achievement.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, including for the most able pupils. Not enough pupils reach standards appropriate to their age or ability.
- Teachers do not plan lessons that deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils spend too much time copying or closely following teachers' examples.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is too low.
- Pupils across the school do not make consistently good progress from their starting points. In 2017, Year 6 pupils' progress was weak in mathematics and very weak in writing.
- Teachers in early years do not focus enough on the development of basic skills and preparation for learning in Year 1. Not enough children, particularly boys, reach a good level of development at the end of Reception.

The school has the following strengths

- The trust recognises the challenges faced by school leaders and has plans in place to improve outcomes.
- The curriculum and pastoral work at the school contributes to good behaviour. Pupils care for each other. They value their school and their education.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils enjoy reading and understand the importance of learning to read.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium grant is used well to inspire pupils to achieve in sport. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 participate in competitive sport and most report that they feel confident in sport.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that all leaders and governors:
 - set ambitious targets for pupils to achieve well, including those for disadvantaged pupils
 - hold leaders and teachers to account for pupils' academic achievement, including the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - check that the pupil premium funding is spent effectively so that the academic needs of disadvantaged pupils are supported as well as their social and emotional needs.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that outcomes are good for all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able, by:
 - ensuring that teaching deepens knowledge, understanding and skills and helps pupils to achieve well
 - planning lessons that challenge all pupils and ensure that they make at least good progress.
- Improve early years provision so more children reach a good level of development and are prepared for Year 1 by:
 - ensuring that teaching provides greater opportunities for children to practise and develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to ascertain how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since academy conversion, leaders have improved the school but have not yet secured good outcomes or consistently good teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders have raised the morale of staff and pupils. Phoenix St Peter Academy is an enjoyable place to work and learn. The majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey agree that they would recommend the school to others.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is overgenerous. Currently too few pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils make good progress in these subjects.
- Support from the REAch2 Academy Trust has increased leaders' and teachers' focus on outcomes and is having a positive impact. Trust leaders have a 'no-excuses' approach to holding leaders and teachers to account for pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' allocation of pupil premium funding has not yet led to disadvantaged pupils making consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupil premium funding has led to good progress in art and modern foreign languages and has provided opportunities for pupils to learn about drama.
- Leaders' use of funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has not yet led to these pupils making consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Many pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities benefit from emotional support provided by staff.
- Some parents expressed concern over the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They said that the school does not cater effectively for the additional needs of their children. Inspectors found the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to be inconsistent across the school.
- Middle leaders are increasingly effective in their work as a result of bespoke leadership training. Middle leaders are building teams of teachers who research, develop and share effective classroom practice. Recent actions taken by middle leaders demonstrate some positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders, in partnership with the trust, have overcome significant challenges in recruiting teachers. The school is currently fully staffed.
- Leaders have created an imaginative curriculum that is broad and balanced. Teachers plan learning activities that link a wide range of subjects within topics. Inspectors saw lessons about healthy lifestyles, during which pupils learned at the same time about PE, science, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively throughout the curriculum. Pupils celebrate different cultural backgrounds and enjoy learning about different faiths and religious practices. On the playground, inspectors heard pupils sharing their different home languages.
- The PE and sport premium funding is improving standards in PE and sport. Through the PE and sport premium, the school has secured good progress in PE. The PE leader

has high expectations and uses assessment information and pupil surveys to ensure that pupils of all ages enjoy PE and sport and achieve good outcomes.

- Leaders support newly qualified teachers very well and help prepare them for their next career steps. The trust holds fortnightly training sessions for newly qualified teachers from around the region. Newly qualified teachers use this training to develop solutions to whatever challenges they face in the classroom.
- Staff who completed the online questionnaire enjoy working at the school and are positive about the work of the school's leaders.

Governance of the school

- Governors have focused too heavily on the improvement in personal development, behaviour and welfare when judging the school's effectiveness. Governors describe a much-improved school since the conversion to academy status, based on the decline in poor behaviour and the improved social skills and pride pupils have in the school. With the support of the trust, governors have now made improving pupil outcomes a key priority for the school.
- Governors' minutes show that during meetings they challenge the headteacher and other leaders regarding pupils' outcomes. However, they have not always followed up on these issues after governing body meetings. Governors question school leaders about the accuracy of judgements regarding the quality of pupils' achievement. On occasions they have too readily accepted the explanations provided by school leaders even when external audits contradict leaders' views.
- Governors review the use of external funding, including the pupil premium, and take a close interest in the social and emotional development of disadvantaged pupils. Governors recognise the need to raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils. Even so, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are not yet good and are not improving quickly enough.
- Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding well. For example, governors undertake regular safeguarding visits to ensure the proper vetting of all adults working with pupils and to check that pupils are kept safe and feel safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff receive regular training, which contributes towards their awareness of safeguarding risks, including the 'Prevent' duty and local 'county lines', the criminal activities of gangs.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school's single central record of recruitment checks of staff is compliant with current requirements.
- Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and vigilantly look for signs of neglect and abuse. In instances when pupils appear at risk of harm, staff get help from external agencies to make sure that pupils are safe.
- Staff work effectively with external agencies to support pupils and families when child

protection issues arise.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching does not consistently prepare pupils to achieve well, including the most able pupils. The work set for pupils is frequently undemanding and well within their capabilities. This limits the progress that pupils make.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise what they learn. Pupils regularly rely on the thinking of the teacher to complete their work and spend too much time copying work into their books.
- The teaching of writing does not consistently help pupils move beyond using basic sentence structures and punctuation.
- In lessons, pupils do not always understand what they are trying to learn. Pupils can talk about what they are doing but find it difficult to explain what they are learning.
- Evidence from work in pupils' books and from lesson observations demonstrates that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. This inconsistency prevents strong progress for pupils, many of whom are not on track to attain the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils value the ongoing feedback from teachers in lessons and act upon their advice. This regular feedback helps pupils improve their learning.
- The teaching of phonics and the newly refurbished library help pupils develop a love for reading. Pupils say that they like reading and appreciate the new library. One pupil spoke for many by saying, 'We have different books for us all to read now.'
- Teaching assistants work well in lessons and when working outside the classroom with small groups to support pupils' learning. Volunteer adult readers regularly visit the school and read with pupils who find it hard to read at home.
- Pupils show good understanding of what they are trying to learn in PE and music and are able to work without reliance on adults in these subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's values are clear and consistently demonstrated by staff and pupils. All adults take responsibility to teach and model the school values. The effective teaching of these values leads to an age-appropriate grasp of the fundamental British values.
- Leaders have created an inclusive and positive school community where pupils are well known and cared for by staff. Pupils, regardless of their backgrounds, are made welcome at the school. Many pupils, including those new this year, said 'it's easy to make friends' at the school.
- Pupils are taught throughout the curriculum how to stay safe and live healthy lifestyles.

In science, pupils learn about nutrition and are encouraged to apply this learning to their own lives at school and home. Pupils willingly take part in physical fitness activities. The school's pupil voice survey shows that over 90% of pupils in key stage 2 enjoy and are confident in PE.

- Pupils say that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively by adults when it does occur. Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is. Pupils told inspectors that they have people they trust to speak with at school when faced with challenging social or emotional circumstances.
- Relationships are universally strong and pupils enjoy learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- School leaders have made good progress in improving the quality of behaviour over the three years since the school became an academy. Pupils, staff and the majority of parents say that pupils are well behaved. This was evident during the inspection in both lessons and on the playground.
- Pupils generally behave well and follow instructions in lessons. When teaching is less effective, pupils can become restless, and on these occasions the quality of learning declines.
- Leaders have created an ethos within which poor behaviour is not acceptable. School records show that the number of negative behaviours is declining quickly and exclusions are rare. Pupils report that when negative behaviour occurs, adults deal with this effectively to ensure that it does not happen again.
- The school's behaviour policy is used consistently by all staff. Pupils understand the positive and negative consequences of their behaviour and, more importantly, value making good choices in their conduct. Leaders have worked with determination to ensure that attendance continues to improve, regardless of the challenges faced by pupils who are external to school. In this academic year, disadvantaged pupils have maintained higher attendance than other pupils in the school.
- Staff's effective support for families has helped to reduce the number of pupils who are frequent non-attenders.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress over time has been too inconsistent. In 2017, progress was well below the national average in writing and below the national average in mathematics at the end of key stage 2. School data for 2018, confirmed by what inspectors saw in pupils' books, shows that although many pupils are now making better progress, not enough are on track to achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Historic published assessment information shows that pupils' attainment was too low and their progress was not good enough across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. The work seen in books shows that current Year 6 pupils are making better progress and attainment is rising.

- In 2017, the proportions of pupils in key stage 1 that achieved the expected standard in mathematics and writing were broadly in line with the national average and above the national average in reading. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved the expected standard was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors found similar achievement in the books of current key stage 1 pupils.
- The quality of pupils' writing in books is inconsistent across the school. Inspectors saw some good writing from some of the most able pupils but, on the whole, pupils' writing shows not enough use of the sophisticated vocabulary and punctuation expected of pupils of similar ages.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics in comparison with other pupils nationally. In 2017, the progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in comparison with other pupils nationally was well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Leaders have implemented new teaching approaches to reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics that are starting to improve pupil outcomes.
- The progress and attainment of those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not yet good. Leaders are currently accessing training in order to make improvements for these pupils.
- The school's current assessment information shows an improvement in the proportion of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils who met the national standard in phonics. Inspectors observed positive outcomes in phonics lessons, confirming the school's assessment information.
- When reading to inspectors, pupils read with fluency and enjoyment and showed their understanding of phonics. Younger pupils use their phonics skills effectively to read new words and older pupils guess accurately the meaning of new words.
- Pupils make good progress in music lessons, during which they train as musicians to play instruments independently and in orchestras.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Improvement in the early years has been negatively affected by unavoidable changes in staffing. New leadership and teaching staff are starting to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and to plan appropriate improvements.
- By the end of the Reception Year, not enough children are prepared for the Year 1 curriculum. Even so, attainment has been improving in the early years for the past two years. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is moving closer to the national average.
- Boys do not acquire new skills as quickly as girls to prepare themselves for Year 1, especially in writing. Activities provided by teachers do not tempt boys to practise their writing. Many boys avoid writing when they make their own choices about activities they want to try.
- The early years classrooms have good-quality displays that extend the curriculum and celebrate children's learning and success.

- Children's behaviour is good overall. Children demonstrate the social skills they are taught and enjoy learning together. When teaching is not stimulating enough, the children can become restless.
- Teaching assistants have been well trained and support children well in the early years. Inspectors observed teaching assistants modelling language effectively.
- Staff work well with parents. Good online communication helps parents support their children at home and extend their learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. All staff understand safeguarding procedures and work effectively to keep the children safe and happy. Children in the early years attend regularly.

School details

Unique reference number	141983
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10046609

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sophie Martin
Headteacher	Nadia Paczuska
Telephone number	01502 574 586
Website	www.phoenixstpeter.co.uk
Email address	office@phoenixstpeter.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in September 2016 and is part of the REAch2 Academy Trust. This is the school's first inspection. When the predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The school is led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The leadership team is held accountable by the local governing body who report to regional boards of the trust. The trust board is responsible for functions delegated to the local governing body. The trust board is also the accountable body.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in every class. Inspectors looked at pupils' books across a wide range of subjects and all year groups. Inspectors looked at pupils' books from different groups of pupils in the school, including disadvantaged pupils, higher-attaining pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors held discussions with the regional director of the trust, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, members of the governing body, middle leaders, teachers, support staff, parents and pupils. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a consultant headteacher commissioned by the trust to support the improvement work of leaders at the school.
- Inspectors read and considered a range of documents: school improvement documents; policies; information about pupils' progress; evaluations of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; information about pupils' behaviour and attendance; and the single central record of recruitment checks of staff.
- Inspectors considered 64 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 15 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also read one letter received from a member of the public. No pupils responded to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Al Mistrano, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Webb

Her Majesty's Inspector

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