

Inspection of Phoenix St Peter Academy

Enstone Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 0NE

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are valued as individuals and are keen to attend school. They have highly positive relationships with staff and adults. Pupils feel well cared for and looked after. Parents report that their children are happy at school.

Pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils are well supported to learn to read effectively. However, in some areas of the curriculum, pupils do not learn as much or as well as they could, including the youngest children in the early years. They are not always getting the specific support that they need in order to access the curriculum as effectively as they should.

Pupils are polite, well behaved, and supportive of others. They concentrate in class and listen well to their teachers. Playtime is a very happy time. They really enjoy playing in mixed-age groups, with a wide range of activities on offer, from archery, to cricket and dance.

Where there is bullying, which is rare, pupils are clear that the adults sort out problems quickly.

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

Over the last few years, there have been several changes of senior leadership and class teachers. Many of the teachers are new to the school. Senior leadership is now stable. Leaders know the school well. They understand where there are weaknesses and know what to do to improve these. They are ambitious in their vision for the school. Staff are appreciative of leaders' actions and ambitions.

Leaders have established a well-thought-through curriculum. This is more detailed for some year groups than others. In particular, the vocabulary that pupils need to learn is not always explicit in these plans. Staff are not always ensuring that pupils have a rich understanding of the essential vocabulary that they need to know.

In some areas of the curriculum, staff are not yet trained sufficiently to be able to deliver the curriculum as adeptly as they do elsewhere. Where this occurs, the activities and resources that teachers provide to pupils are not well matched to what pupils need to learn. Teachers' explanations also lack clarity. Leadership monitoring of the curriculum is underdeveloped.

Leaders have prioritised training for staff on specific aspects of the curriculum, for example, teaching phonics and early reading. This is ensuring that staff deliver these aspects of the curriculum well. Pupils learn the basic skills of reading effectively and quickly. The books that younger readers read are well matched to the sounds that they have been taught.

Leaders know that pupils need to access higher quality texts and challenging books as they move through the older years. They have a reading programme in place to develop this and have recently revamped the school library to encourage more pupils to engage with the wider range of texts available. Pupils are enthused by the change, but it has not yet had a chance to increase their love and engagement with this level of reading.

Pupils' writing does not match their reading skills. Too many younger pupils have poor pencil grip, untidy handwriting and weak presentation skills. Teachers are not identifying and acting to address this quickly among the younger pupils. Pupils are well supported to catch up before they move onto secondary school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access a broad and wide-ranging curriculum, alongside their peers. Individual support plans and staff training mean that staff understand pupils' needs well. Pupils are well supported to access learning. Where weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum exist, these pupils, alongside their classmates, are not yet developing a rich understanding of the topics, as they should.

There are a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils are highly motivated to gain awards for showing a wide range of behaviours, including the school's values. They are welcoming to others. They learn about different current issues, for example, writing messages of support for children in the Ukrainian conflict. However, there are weaknesses in curriculum delivery and staff training in the personal, social, and health education curriculum.

Disadvantaged pupils have the same opportunities as others. Leaders ensure that a wide range of care and services are in place for pupils who need additional support. Pupils independently use a range of strategies in the classrooms to help them concentrate and learn effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding and clear on the risks that pupils may face. They work closely with families, building up strong working relationships. They liaise effectively with other agencies as needed.

They make all appropriate checks on those employed by the school.

Pupils are taught about keeping themselves safe. Pupils spoken to could all name several adults they would be happy talking to if they had any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not all have the planning, knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver the full curriculum as effectively as intended. Where this delivery is weaker, activities do not match learning well, teachers' explanations lack clarity and staff do not ensure that pupils develop a rich understanding of essential vocabulary. As a result, pupils are not learning as effectively and making the progress in the curriculum that they should. Leaders need to ensure that staff have adequate planning, training and support to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- The quality of pupils' writing is too varied across the school. Teachers do not identify and support this well enough with younger pupils. Too much relies on catch up for older pupils. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are skilled in developing pupils' writing skills, and in supporting the youngest pupils who need early help in their writing development.
- Leadership of the curriculum is underdeveloped. Curriculum planning, monitoring and staff training has been focused on vital areas, but there are many areas of the curriculum that are not as well developed. Leaders need to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to develop planning, monitoring and training across subjects that are less well developed.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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	141983
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10227315
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gavin Robert
Headteacher	Tim Culpin
Website	www.phoenixstpeter.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 and 27 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school became an academy in August 2015. It is part of Reach2 multi-academy trust.
- The board of trustees has put in place an interim executive board instead of a local governing body to further support school improvement.
- The school is led by an executive headteacher and an associate headteacher, who also leads another primary school in the multi-academy trust.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs.
- A separately run and registered pre-school operates on the school site.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record and a sample of safeguarding records. They spoke to staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, associate headteacher, other senior leaders and a wide range of other staff. They met with representatives of the interim executive board.
- Inspectors spent time observing playtimes.
- Inspectors considered the 31 responses to the parent survey, 42 responses to the pupil survey and 16 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clare Fletcher

Ofsted Inspector

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