

Paternoster School

Watermoor Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1JR

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The quality of leadership and changes in staffing have been a barrier to the school's improvement. Continuing problems with staffing are hampering the school's capacity to improve.
- Leaders, including governors, are too positive in their view of pupils' progress. This means that they do not have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors have not provided sufficient support and challenge to leaders to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education. Newly appointed governors demonstrate a willingness to make the necessary improvements.
- Development plans do not provide a clear direction for the rapid improvement that is needed.
- Leaders do not check and evaluate well enough the progress that pupils and groups of pupils make. Consequently, outcomes for pupils are inadequate.
- Subject coordinators have had too little impact on raising pupils' achievement in their subjects.
- Although there are pockets of effective practice, the overall quality of teaching is inadequate. Some teachers do not have sufficient training or effective guidance in order to improve their practice.
- Some teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently secure, especially in the teaching of phonics.
- Assessment of what pupils know, can do and understand is not reliable. Therefore, activities planned for pupils do not meet their needs well enough.
- A minority of pupils lose concentration and become disengaged when teachers do not plan activities which motivate or challenge them sufficiently.
- Although statutory requirements for safeguarding are met, record-keeping is not rigorous enough.
- Many parents and carers have concerns about the quality of education that their children receive.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are courteous, well mannered and polite.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their regular attendance.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of 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?

- Rapidly improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that safeguarding records are clear about how actions taken keep pupils safe
 - setting clear priorities for improvement, which are carefully and regularly monitored and evaluated for impact by leaders, including governors
 - strengthening governance to ensure that governors carry out their roles and responsibilities to swiftly improve the quality of education pupils receive
 - leaders implementing a planned cycle of monitoring to check that actions taken are making a difference to pupils' learning and development
 - ensuring that leaders' checking of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment includes a clear focus on pupils' progress, including that of groups of pupils
 - ensuring that checks to monitor what pupils know, can do and understand are securely in place and evaluated by leaders to ensure that they are accurate
 - providing high-quality training for subject coordinators and time in order for them to carry out their roles effectively
 - providing staff with high-quality guidance and support to improve their practice
 - taking action to improve staff morale and reduce staff absence.
- Quickly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers raise their expectations of what pupils are able to achieve to enable them to make the best possible progress
 - teachers accurately assess what pupils can and cannot do to inform planning, so that learning precisely meets the needs of all pupils
 - teachers plan work which motivates, excites, challenges and enables pupils to concentrate and achieve well
 - teachers' subject knowledge is secure across all subjects, especially in the teaching of phonics.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Significant turbulence in staffing and changes to leadership are having a detrimental impact on the quality of education and care of pupils at Paternoster School. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders, including governors, are too positive in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness. This means that they do not have an accurate knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, leaders and governors do not demonstrate the capacity to quickly turn the school around.
- The school's current development plan for improvement is weak. It does not identify precisely enough what leaders need to do to tackle weaknesses and so rapidly improve the quality of education at the school. It does not identify well enough who is going to monitor the outcomes or how the checks will be made to establish what is working well and why.
- Leaders do not check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment rigorously enough. This means that they do not have accurate information about the achievement of pupils. Consequently, leaders have not taken the necessary steps to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Leaders are not effectively managing the performance of teachers. They do not hold teachers rigorously to account for the quality of their work or the achievement and progress that pupils make. Too frequently, targets set by leaders are not focused well enough on improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Subject leadership is fragile. Subject coordinators do not have the training they require or the time needed to lead their subjects effectively. Consequently, they have little impact on raising the achievement of pupils.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors or completed the online survey raise significant concerns about the quality of education their children receive. They are particularly concerned about the consistency of teaching staff, high staff turnover and the absence of staff. They described how this situation is impacting negatively on their children's education.
- The school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The school provides pupils with experiences across a wide range of subjects with a strong focus on reading, writing and mathematics. However, subject coordinators recognise that some schemes of work need to be modified in order to meet the needs of pupils more precisely, for example in modern foreign languages.
- Pupils have the opportunity to enjoy a range of extra activities in school. Learning how to cook is a firm favourite, particularly the opportunity to bake cakes. Such activities are enjoyed by pupils and give them increased independence.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted effectively in the school. Pupils understand the need to be kind, considerate and respectful. For example, they show care and compassion for each other if they get upset.

- The school uses additional sports funding effectively to improve physical education. For example, pupils spoke with joy and excitement about a variety of sports, including swimming, sailing, horse riding and canoeing.
- Staff work hard to promote equality of opportunity for pupils. For example, pupils relished the opportunity to take part in the recent production of 'Aladdin'. All pupils, irrespective of the complexity of their special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities participate in such events, and this helps to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

Governance of the school

- Governance is weak. Governors do not have an accurate view of the quality of education the school provides. They do not hold leaders robustly to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress.
- A lack of strategic direction has resulted in the school's decline since the previous inspection.
- Governors do not check well enough that the independent advice they receive is accurate and supports the school to improve. Leaders' performance management does not stipulate precise targets to successfully tackle the weaknesses in the school.
- Recently, there have been a number of changes within the governing body, including the appointment of a new chair.
- Governors know that the school is not currently effective in providing a high-quality education for pupils and demonstrate a willingness to quickly make the necessary improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- Leaders, including governors, are well trained in safe recruitment. As a result, all staff are carefully checked prior to starting to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.
- Staff and governors demonstrate a good understanding of the safeguarding requirements needed to protect these vulnerable pupils from all possible risks. They keep themselves up to date with current guidance by attending training on safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. This means that staff are able to take the necessary action with confidence should they have any concerns about a pupil.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspectors described how staff keep them safe. However, staff shared their concerns with inspectors that pupils' safety is compromised when there is an insufficient number of staff on site.
- Most parents expressed their confidence that their children feel safe in school. However, a number of them raised concerns about the impact that staff absence has on ensuring that their children are safe. Comments such as 'I have seen under-staffed

classrooms', and 'Staffing levels are inadequate' are just two of several received from parents. In addition, staff's records of incidents do not clearly and consistently record how actions taken keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- As a consequence of staff turbulence and staff absence, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not been good enough to ensure that pupils consistently make good progress from their starting points.
- There is too much variability in teaching across the school. Where teaching is strong, activities are well planned and meet pupils' needs well. However, there are too many occurrences when teaching is poorly planned and pupils' progress stalls.
- Too many teachers do not expect enough from their pupils. This is because they do not check the learning and progress of pupils well enough. Consequently, too often activities planned are either too easy or too difficult for pupils. This was exemplified when inspectors scrutinised pupils' work. For example, pupils who demonstrated strong writing skills at the start of the school year are not provided with opportunities to further develop their writing. This results in pupils' progress stalling and, at times, regressing.
- The quality of teachers' questioning is too variable. It does not check pupils' understanding or probe their thinking to deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a key stage 4 mathematics lesson, pupils were working on a sequencing activity using tablet devices. While some pupils were able to progress quickly through the challenges, others had to repeat the same activity several times before being successful. When questioned it was clear that pupils had little understanding of the concept of ordering numbers, and their success was too often due to trial and error.
- The subject knowledge of teachers and teaching assistants is inconsistent. This is especially so with regards to the teaching of phonics. This impacts negatively on the progress that pupils make in their reading.
- There is some effective teaching in the school. This occurs when teachers plan lessons which motivate and engage pupils, and activities carefully meet the individual needs of pupils. When pupils receive high-quality teaching, they make stronger progress and show positive attitudes to learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. The management of the school's risk assessment and documentation to record incidents are disorganised. As a result, the school cannot monitor, as effectively as it might, whether systems and processes best support pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.

- Most pupils feel safe in school. However, this is not universal and some commented that they do not always feel secure, especially at times when other pupils become distressed and exhibit challenging behaviours.
- Pupils learn to be kind and considerate to each other, recognising each other's individual and often complex needs. Together, they celebrate small steps of success such as learning to walk or achieving a new skill in sport like throwing a ball. This helps to raise pupils' self-esteem.
- Staff form positive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils quickly learn to trust adults. Pupils are confident that they can share their worries or concerns and that staff will deal with them quickly.
- Pupils have an understanding of how to keep safe according to their stage of development. For example, they know how to keep safe in the swimming pool and the importance of not talking to strangers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils, when they are not provided with activities which excite or precisely meet their needs, become restless and disengaged with their learning and exhibit some behaviours which do not support good learning. This hampers the progress they make.
- Pupils generally play well together and socialise at playtimes and lunchtimes. However, when there are not sufficient activities in which to get involved they become bored. This can result in fall-outs and some pushing around.
- Parents typically commented that pupils are encouraged to behave well in school. Nevertheless, some parents have raised concerns about the behaviour of pupils and, due to changes in staffing and staffing levels, they are not confident that poor behaviour is dealt with quickly. 'Constant lack of consistency with managing our child's behaviour' is a view shared with inspectors by a number of parents.
- Pupils attend school regularly and attendance is in line with the national average. This is because most pupils enjoy their time in school and want to be there.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' attainment on entry is significantly below that expected for their age, due to their complex needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. However, outcomes are inadequate because pupils across year groups do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teaching is not securing consistently good progress. It does not help pupils to acquire the essential knowledge, skills and understanding to support them in their future and enable them to become as independent as they possibly can be. For example, work in mathematics shows that pupils are not acquiring the necessary skills to successfully solve number problems or apply mathematical reasoning. This is because pupils do not have the opportunity to consolidate their learning. For example, in key stage 4

mathematics, pupils were given activities on fractions before they had a secure understanding of number. This hampers the progress pupils make.

- Assessment is not consistently accurate. Inspection evidence shows that the progress pupils make is not always accurately recorded. This impacts on teachers' planning, as tasks pupils are asked to complete do not build on their previous learning or are not matched to meet their needs. As a result, pupils do not make strong progress.
- Although there is a focus on communication and improving pupils' writing and reading skills, activities do not promote the development of these skills well enough. For example, pupils who read to inspectors were eager and keen to talk about reading. However, books are not always well matched to pupils' reading ability. Furthermore, older pupils do not have access to reading materials that are age appropriate and that engage and inspire them to read.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is small. Although their progress is similar to that of their peers who have similar needs, it is not good enough.
- During their time in school, pupils are helped to increase their level of independence. For example, pupils learn how to use the toilet independently and to look after their intimate needs. The joy of a pupil learning how to feed themselves using a knife and fork for the first time was shared by staff.
- Pupils who leave the school at the end of key stage 4 successfully transfer to further education.

School details

Unique reference number	115824
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10032527

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Crooks
Headteachers	Julie Mantell and Jennie Walsh
Telephone number	01285 652480
Website	www.paternosterschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@paternoster.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 July 2014

Information about this school

- Paternoster is a special school for children who have severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Since the previous inspection, the school has seen an increase in the number of pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders and associated behaviour and emotional needs.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education and health care plan.
- Although the school is designated for those aged two to 18 years, currently there are no children under three years old and there is no sixth form. At the time of the inspection, there were two children in the early years provision, and therefore no separate judgement was made.
- The percentage of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.

- A very small number of pupils receive literacy and numeracy catch-up funding for Year 7.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication on its website of information about additional funding it receives, the curriculum or its complaints policy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes, and many observations were conducted jointly with leaders. The quality of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the assistant headteacher, subject coordinators, staff and governors. Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to staff questionnaires. A meeting was held with an education adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils to listen to their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors heard pupils read.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's development plan and information relating to pupils' achievement and progress. Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered the 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 17 text messages were taken into account. Correspondence received from a parent was also considered. Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the day.

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