

Inspection of City of Peterborough Academy

Reeves Way, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 5LQ

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do not feel free from bullying. They do not have confidence that staff will deal with bullying effectively. Many pupils do not report when bullying occurs. Some have experienced bullying getting worse when they have reported it.

Hearing and being subjected to offensive and derogatory language is commonplace for many pupils. A significant minority of pupils do not respect others' differences. This means that some pupils feel unsafe because they are different in some way.

Some pupils feel happy at school. They are well supported by the adults who care for them. They enjoy seeing their friends and like many of their subjects. Many pupils speak positively about the relationships they have with staff.

Most pupils, although not all, benefit from leaders' high expectations of what they can achieve academically. They are helped to achieve well and enjoy learning interesting and challenging topics.

Pupils are positive about the wide range of clubs and enrichment opportunities that are available. They appreciate that there are many chances to develop their skills in different activities like sports or performances.

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

Leaders have not ensured that pupils are free from bullying or that bullying is dealt with appropriately. Many pupils feel unsafe in different locations in school. Experiencing derogatory language, particularly racist and homophobic, is common. Pupils do not routinely report instances of bullying with adults. They feel that, too often, reporting inappropriate behaviour makes the situation worse.

Where routines are established and teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct in lessons, pupils work well. However, in some lessons, disruptive behaviour causes learning to slow. This frustrates those pupils who want to learn.

Many pupils are not tolerant of differences in race, religion, or sexuality. This is reflected in their attitudes to others. Leaders have started to make changes to the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum to address this, but this work is recent and there is limited evidence of impact.

Leaders' use of alternative provision is ineffective. They do not consistently take responsibility for the academic progress or well-being of pupils attending alternative provision. The alternative providers are not aware of pupils' individual needs. The small number of pupils attending alternative provision do not receive a good quality of education. Leaders have decided that some pupils should not attend. They say this is because the school cannot meet the pupils' needs or to avoid permanent

exclusion. Leaders say that they are trying to find suitable places at other schools for these pupils. In the meantime, these pupils are not receiving appropriate education. Leaders' decision for pupils to attend alternative provision or not to attend the school is not in the pupils' best interests.

Trustees and leaders do not accept or recognise the extent of the issues within the school. Leaders do not provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to share their views. Leaders do not engage sufficiently well with the wider community and do not have the confidence and support of a significant minority pupils and parents.

Leaders have constructed a well-thought-through curriculum for most pupils. Pupils in school benefit from lessons that are well planned and build on their prior learning. Teachers are well trained to support pupils to do well in their learning. They plan appropriate activities that help pupils to learn the curriculum. Teachers use assessment well to identify and address quickly any gaps in pupils' understanding. This helps most pupils to keep up with their learning.

The quality of education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is variable. The small number of pupils with SEND attending alternative provision do not receive appropriate provision to meet their needs and help them learn effectively. Others have a much more positive experience. Many teachers are skilled at adapting their teaching to effectively support the learning of pupils with SEND.

Leaders have identified that literacy is a barrier to learning for some pupils. They have appropriate provision in place to support pupils to become fluent readers.

Leaders provide a wide range of enrichment opportunities that pupils enjoy. These activities help pupils to increase fitness, confidence or build friendships. High-quality careers education and advice helps pupils to make well-informed choices about their next steps.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that adults are confident in reporting concerns that they have about pupils. Staff know the risks that pupils face in the community and use the reporting system well. Although leaders follow up these concerns, and liaise with external agencies, this does not always happen in a timely manner.

Leaders are not as thorough as they could be in carrying out well-being checks for pupils who are not attending school each day, particularly those who are attending alternative provision. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and recognise risks.

Leaders make sure that appropriate checks are in place for adults who work with pupils. They manage concerns about adults appropriately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Many pupils do not routinely report bullying incidents as they are not confident that adults' intervention would help them. Leaders are unaware of the extent of bullying because incidents go unreported are not dealt with. Leaders need to create a culture where bullying is not tolerated. They must ensure that pupils are confident to report issues and, if they do so, that the bullying will stop.
- There are weaknesses in some aspects of safeguarding policies and procedures. Sometimes, pupils do not receive the support they need in a timely manner. Leaders' checks on the welfare and well-being of pupils who are absent from school, or who are educated off site are not systematic. Leaders need to ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures ensure that pupils always receive help in as timely a manner as possible. They should ensure that there are consistent systems for checking on pupils who are absent from school or alternative provision.
- Pupils experience racist and homophobic language routinely in school. They do not report this as it is commonplace and part of the school culture. Leaders need to establish an environment where differences are celebrated and where all pupils welcome diversity.
- Leaders are using alternative provision inappropriately and preventing some pupils from attending school without providing appropriate alternative education. This includes some pupils with SEND, including those who have an education, health or care (EHC) plan. Leaders must provide appropriate education for all, and always act in the best interests of the pupils.

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.

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	139082
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10255112
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	853
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Hamlin
Principal	Ben Pearce
Website	www.cityofpeterboroughacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	26 March 2019

Information about this school

- The school has appointed a new Principal since the previous inspection.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- 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 English, science, mathematics, PE, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a range of other lessons and scrutinised the curriculum in religious education.
- The lead inspector met with staff responsible for the administration of the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs to discuss the arrangements that are in place to safeguard pupils. The lead inspector scrutinised the school's safeguarding records and spoke to trustees regarding safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experience of school..
- An inspector met with leaders to discuss pupils' personal development and enrichment opportunities as well as behaviour and attendance.
- An inspector met with the school's deputy special educational needs coordinator.
- An inspector spoke to the alternative providers currently used by the school.
- The lead inspector met with trustees and scrutinised a range of documents.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey. Inspectors took account of 55 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 52 free text responses. Inspectors considered 40 staff responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Polly Lankester	Ofsted Inspector
Likhon Muhammad	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Kerridge	Ofsted Inspector

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