

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic College, A Voluntary Catholic Academy

Baysdale Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, Teesside TS17 9DE

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

St Patrick's Catholic College has improved substantially since its last inspection. Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They enjoy attending school. Most attend well. Pupils are polite, well mannered and courteous. Senior leaders have made many changes to make the school better, including changes to the curriculum. The quality of education that pupils receive is good.

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. It captures the interest of pupils and motivates them to do well. This is leading to pupils knowing and remembering more in most subjects. For example, in mathematics, pupils are becoming fluent mathematicians and they are achieving well.

The Catholic ethos supports pupils' personal development well. Pupils engage in constructive debates. During the inspection, Year 7 pupils enthusiastically debated the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities that are offered. Many participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and after-school clubs.

Behaviour is a strength. Pupils and parents say that behaviour has improved. Inspectors agree. Strong relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pupils say that bullying is rare. When it happens, they are confident that adults will resolve it quickly and effectively.

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

Leaders have acted with urgency to address previous weaknesses. They have improved the quality of education that pupils receive.

Leaders have constructed an ambitious and well-considered curriculum for all pupils. Subject directors are passionate about their roles. They have strong subject knowledge. They ensure that teachers know what to teach and when. Teachers have received subject-specific training. They plan the important knowledge that they want pupils to know. Teachers start lessons by checking what important knowledge pupils can remember. This is particularly strong in mathematics and science. These checks help pupils build on their prior learning well in these subjects.

In some subjects, such as English and modern foreign languages (MFL), some teachers do not consistently follow the school's curriculum plans well enough. In these subjects, some pupils struggle to remember what they have previously been taught. Leaders have sensible plans in place to address this.

Leaders have prioritised reading. The school's reading curriculum is well thought out and organised. Leaders have created opportunities for all pupils to read for pleasure. Teachers promote a love of reading well. Pupils say they enjoy reading. They have

lots of opportunities to practise their reading skills. Pupils who need support with reading receive the help they need to catch up.

The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) assesses and identifies pupils' additional needs well. Pupils with SEND study the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers adapt their lessons so that pupils receive the right support. As a result, they are achieving well. Pupils with SEND are involved in all aspects of school life, including enrichment activities.

Lessons are calm, orderly and purposeful. This helps pupils to learn well. Staff follow the school's behaviour policy consistently. Pupils understand what is expected of them. They behave well in and out of lessons. Most pupils attend well. However, some pupils do not attend as often as they should. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely. Leaders have a range of effective approaches to improve attendance, including working closely with families. Leaders know that attendance needs to improve for some pupils.

The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. The school's curriculum extends well beyond the academic subjects. Pupils have a well-informed understanding of fundamental British values and equalities. They value the experiences they have in lessons and beyond. The careers guidance programme is exceptional. Pupils receive excellent independent careers advice and guidance. This helps prepare them for their next steps.

Knowledgeable and highly skilled governors and trust leaders know the school well. They understand the school's strengths and priorities for improvements. They support and challenge school leaders effectively.

Senior leaders and governors support the well-being of staff. They listen to the views of staff and act to reduce workload. Staff feel valued and they are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The trust oversees the school's safeguarding arrangements. Leaders and governors make sure that safeguarding has a high priority. The right checks are completed on staff before they start to work at the school. Leaders have created a culture where staff are vigilant because 'it could happen here'. Leaders ensure that staff have regular safeguarding training so that they can identify if a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff know how to report concerns. Leaders keep thorough safeguarding records. They work extensively with other agencies to protect pupils.

The curriculum is planned well so that pupils are taught how to manage risks to their safety. Pupils are taught and know how to keep themselves safe in different ways, including when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, such as English and French, some teachers do not have strong enough subject knowledge. They do not follow curriculum plans carefully enough. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects. Senior leaders should carry out their plan to help teachers develop their subject-specific knowledge in these areas of the curriculum, so that they can deliver the planned curriculum effectively and ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should in these subjects.
- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should despite the efforts of the school to engage with parents and pupils. Because of this, those pupils who are regularly absent miss out on important knowledge that they need to succeed and to achieve their full potential. Leaders should continue to address weak attendance, including working with parents and pupils, so that they understand the importance of attending school regularly.

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	142281
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10200714
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	494
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Mark Ryan
Headteacher	Michael Burns
Website	https://stpatricks.npcat.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 February 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher and head of school were appointed after the last section 5 inspection.
- The school is part of the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust.
- The school uses alternative education provision for a small number of pupils. The providers used are Daisy Chain and Skills Academy.

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 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the senior leadership team, the SENCo, middle leaders and a range of teaching and support staff. An inspector spoke with the trust's chief executive officer, a representative from the diocese, and four governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, MFL and science. Here, inspectors met with the curriculum leaders for each subject, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' punctuality, behaviour and conduct across the school day. Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils. Inspectors met with different members of staff, including an early career teacher, to gauge their views on how well pupils behave and conduct themselves. Inspectors spoke to some pupils who have received sanctions in the past.
- Inspectors carried out a range of activities to check the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. Inspectors looked at the school's policies relating to safeguarding, met the designated safeguarding leader and considered records of the vetting checks the school makes on its staff.
- Inspectors looked at other information about behaviour, attendance and extra-curricular activities that support pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors considered the 37 responses to Ofsted pupils' survey and 44 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff. Inspectors also considered the views of the 22 parents in their responses to Ofsted's online survey and Parent View questionnaire, as well as the nine free-text responses.

Inspection team

Jean Watt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tim Jenner	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christine Durand	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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