

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



20 May 2022

Mark Brandon  
Principal  
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School  
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School & Nursery  
Marston Road  
Stafford  
Staffordshire  
ST16 3BT

Dear Mr Brandon

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Patrick's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 5 May 2022, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. I discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**The school continues to require improvement. Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action toward the school becoming a good school.**

### **Context**

There have been considerable changes in school leadership since the previous section 5 inspection. You joined the school as principal in June 2020. A new vice-principal was

appointed substantively in April 2021 following a 10-month secondment to the school. Leaders have also appointed new curriculum leads for mathematics, early years, and English and reading since the last inspection. A new chair of governors was elected in September 2020.

## **Main findings**

You have established high expectations for the school and the pupils since your appointment in June 2020. Together with support from the multi-academy company (MAC) and school leaders, you have worked hard to make improvements to the curriculum and other areas of the school's work. You have strengthened the leadership team with the appointment of a new vice-principal and leaders for mathematics, English and early years. These changes are making a positive difference.

You have maintained a rigorous focus on improving the quality of education pupils receive. Curriculum development has been at the centre of this work. Leaders have an accurate view of the school. You quickly and accurately identified what needed doing to improve the school. Your school's improvement plans are specific about the actions that leaders are taking and the impact of these actions. Leaders have clear roles and responsibilities and communicate these effectively. Staff are committed to improving the quality of education. They are proud to work at the school.

Leaders acted quickly to improve the teaching of mathematics following the previous section 5 inspection. They ensured that curriculum plans build on what pupils have learned before. Opportunities to extend learning are also planned. Pupils, including the youngest, discuss enthusiastically the challenges teachers set and how to solve them. In addition, leaders ensure that teachers know how to teach the mathematics curriculum well. As a result, teachers are consistent in the way that they teach mathematics across the school.

The quality of pupils' handwriting was very variable at the time of the last inspection. You have addressed differences in the teaching of early letter formation and ensured that there is a sharp focus on the consistent teaching of handwriting. There is now much more consistency with the quality of handwriting across the school. Where there are minor discrepancies in expectations, you are aware and are addressing this.

Curriculum leaders are working effectively to improve the quality of the curriculum in foundation subjects. You have made sure that curriculum plans are in place for all subjects. Leaders have identified the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn to progress. These plans are well sequenced and start in the early years. Leaders ensure that staff benefit from opportunities for professional development, including time to focus on subject research. Curriculum leaders have worked with other schools in the MAC to develop subject knowledge and to suggest ways to refine curriculum planning and improve staff pedagogy. The MAC designated St Patrick's as the Art Hub since the last inspection, and you lead on art across all primary schools in the MAC. Pupils' artwork is

impressive and aligned closely to the school's vision for delivering a high-quality art curriculum.

Governors contribute effectively to the school's work. They have systems in place to support and challenge leaders effectively. These systems include work to monitor the quality of education in the school. You and your leaders provide a wide range of information to help governors to understand how the curriculum is improving. As a result, governors have an accurate view of the school.

### **Additional support**

Leaders have been supported by The Painsley Catholic Academy. They have also worked with a national leader of education. Curriculum leaders have benefited from opportunities to work with the subject hubs across the MAC. This support has helped leaders to raise their expectations about the quality of the curriculum. It has also developed middle leaders' confidence in subject leadership.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your vice-principal and other curriculum leaders. I also discussed the actions taken since the last inspection with representatives of those responsible for governance, a school improvement representative from the Diocese of Birmingham and the chief executive officer from The Painsley Catholic Academy.

I examined the school's single central record. I also reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, subject improvement plans and minutes of local governing body meetings. I visited lessons and looked at curriculum documents alongside pupils' books. I spoke informally with pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of The Painsley Catholic Academy, the multi-academy company which runs the school, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Emma Gater  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**