

Inspection of Painsley Catholic College

Station Road, Cheadle, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST10 1LH

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Ofsted has not previously inspected Painsley Catholic College under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Painsley Catholic College to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where staff have very high academic expectations of all pupils. Younger pupils sometimes find this daunting, but they learn to value the school's rigorous approach to learning as they move through the school. Pupils rise to the school's high expectations. They make excellent progress in all subjects and achieve high standards. They are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps when they leave the school at the end of Year 11 or Year 13.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and are keen to do well. It is rare for learning to be disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Pupils feel safe in school. When staff are aware of issues such as bullying, they usually deal with them effectively. However, there is more to be done to ensure that pupils always seek help when they need it.

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities that pupils embrace with enthusiasm. The enrichment programme in the sixth form is especially rich and well planned. Activities help students develop important life and employability skills that they need to fulfil their career aspirations.

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

The school has a well-established, ambitious, academic curriculum for all pupils. Typically, more than 80% of pupils in key stage 4 study the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) group of subjects. This is well above the national figure. Pupils' learning builds strongly from year to year in all subjects. Consequently, pupils achieve high standards at the end of Year 11. This has been the case for many years. Standards in the sixth form have improved over recent years. Students now make excellent progress.

Almost all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities study the same curriculum as their peers. Staff support them well and their progress exceeds that of other pupils. Disadvantaged pupils also thrive on the exacting standards expected of them.

The school has a rigorous assessment regime. Regular assessments ensure that teachers know how well pupils are learning. They use this information well to plan future learning and to make changes to the curriculum. Leaders use assessments to provide parents with information about their children's progress. Parents value this information.

Leaders place great emphasis on developing teachers' expertise. As a result, teachers are experts in their subjects. They explain new content well. They skilfully provide feedback and extra support for pupils in their classes. Teachers new to the profession are supported extremely well. They settle into the school quickly. Staff

are overwhelmingly positive about working at Painsley. They appreciate the care and support that leaders provide.

Leaders promote reading well. They encourage all pupils to read. Those who find reading difficult are supported to become proficient readers. In all subjects, teachers insist that pupils use correct vocabulary. In the sixth form, students read demanding academic texts as many prepare for study at university.

The school has clear systems for pastoral care. Staff care deeply about pupils' welfare. Staff usually deal effectively with issues, such as bullying, when they arise. However, some pupils do not trust the school's staff or systems. They told inspectors they are reluctant to report issues, fearing the reaction of their peers. Consequently, staff are not always aware of when there are issues that need tackling.

Aspects of the school's work to promote pupils' personal development are highly effective. High-quality careers advice and guidance are provided throughout the school. This means that pupils make informed choices about future study. In the sixth form, staff support students well, whether they intend to move on to university, an apprenticeship or employment.

Pupils enjoy a wide variety of enrichment opportunities. They take on leadership responsibilities, and they serve the local community. Many pupils play in musical ensembles and take part in regular school shows.

The school's personal, social and health education programme is comprehensive. However, several pupils told inspectors that they would like more information about how to maintain their mental well-being. Leaders were unaware of this feeling among pupils.

Governance is effective. The board of directors and local governing body have clear remits and good lines of communication. Members of both bodies are committed to the school. They provide good challenge and support to leaders.

Most parents are very happy with the school. However, some are not. They do not believe that leaders always take effective action when they report issues. Leaders and governors have not engaged as well as they could with the views of these parents. Difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to this issue.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have provided plentiful and well-focused safeguarding training for staff. Consequently, staff are alert to the signs that pupils may need extra support. They pass on any concerns using the school's systems. Leaders deal appropriately with concerns that are brought to their attention. They involve outside agencies at the right time to ensure that pupils get the support they need.

Most pupils feel safe in school and most parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils are reluctant to share their views or concerns with staff. Similarly, some parents do not believe that the school listens to them or acts on their concerns. Consequently, leaders are sometimes unaware of concerns and some pupils and parents lose faith in the school's staff and systems. Governors and leaders should engage more effectively with the views of pupils and parents so that they have an accurate understanding of these stakeholders' concerns. They should then ensure they take effective action to address concerns when appropriate.

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	138729
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10229059
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,365
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ken Wilson
Principal	Rachel Waugh
Website	www.painsley.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Painsley Catholic College converted to become an academy school in September 2012. At this time, it joined The Painsley Catholic Academy, a multi-academy company (MAC). When its predecessor school, Painsley Catholic College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- This is a Catholic school. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2018. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of that date.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The principal took up her post in September 2018.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers.

- The school used to share its sixth form with two other schools. This arrangement ceased in September 2018. Since that date, the school has had its own sixth form.

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 met with the principal and other senior leaders. They met with members of the local governing body and the board of directors, including the chairs of both groups. They also met with the chief executive officer of the Painsley MAC and a representative of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, design technology and music. 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 considered safeguarding by meeting with the designated safeguarding lead. They scrutinised policies and records relating to child protection and examined the safeguarding checks made on staff before they join the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses from staff to their online inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime. They observed the school at these times. An inspector met with a group of senior student leaders and sixth-form students.
- Inspectors visited morning Emmaus sessions.
- Inspectors considered the responses, including written responses, to Ofsted Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire. They held telephone conversations with two parents.

Inspection team

Alun Williams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Jacqueline Newsome	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermit	Ofsted Inspector

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