CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSPECTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES

Painsley Catholic College

URN: 138729

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Birmingham

06–07 February 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

1

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference	Yes
The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop	Yes
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Compliance statement

- This school fully complies with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- This school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of His Grace.
- This school has fully addressed all previous areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- Painsley Catholic College provides a holistic education that respects the dignity of every community member and is underpinned by gospel values.
- The religious education department is a strong team; all members contribute extremely effectively to students' moral, ethical, and spiritual formation.
- Positive relationships between staff and students emanate from a shared faith, which creates an environment where students can learn purposefully and serve others.
- The pastoral care provided for all community members is exemplary and an outstanding strength of the school, which allows students to flourish.
- Staff inspire others through their modelling of excellent practice as leaders of and participants in prayer and liturgy.

What the school needs to improve

- Fully implement the *Religious Education Directory* (RED), including working collaboratively with the diocese.
- Routinely provide opportunities for students to plan and deliver prayer throughout the school so that students embrace a personal approach to liturgical ministry.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Painsley Catholic College is explicitly a Catholic school which puts Christ at the centre of every aspect of school life. Students profoundly understand their distinctive Catholic identity and are authentic witnesses to their faith. Prayer punctuates daily life, and students deeply understand what their faith means to them. The 'Painsley Way' explores Catholic social teaching linked to gospel values. Consequently, students are given the theology and opportunity to put their faith into practice. Students are encouraged to show respect for themselves and others and feel highly valued for who they are and their achievements. They thrive through their holistic education and consequently feel a genuine sense of care. Students respond extremely positively to the call to service to others and recognise how helping others enriches them in their own lives. They see themselves as part of an active faith community and contribute excellently to the Catholic life of the school, parish and diocese. This is a unique and integral aspect of school life and is an outstanding feature. Students speak enthusiastically about the practical work they have accomplished, which has enabled them to deepen their relationship with God.

Painsley Catholic College goes to great lengths to provide a range of inspiring activities which clearly impact every aspect of school life. Staff commitment at all levels is exceptional. They readily serve the community and participate willingly in activities and routines which promote the school's high expectations and standards. The school motto is 'Know Yourself', and a well-established culture of support encourages all students to be the best version of themselves in every aspect of their lives. This is a significant strength. Staff actively encourage students to try their best, and they achieve many outstanding outcomes. This underpins the belief that each student has gifts and talents which are unique to them. Attractive displays are evident throughout the school, inspiring prayer, reflection, awe and wonder. The school has a

celebratory culture where individual achievement is recognised. Parents regard the school highly. They speak enthusiastically about the school's 'caring and supportive ethos'. One parent commented, 'My son has settled in so quickly – he is happy, engaged and thriving'. Another parent described, 'Catholic values and a strong sense of community and family are at the heart of this school'.

Leaders and governors are committed to the ongoing development of Catholic life. The principal has an inspirational vision for Catholic education and provides exceptional leadership, which everyone values. A dedicated and enthusiastic leadership team ably supports her. Students' views are regularly sought, and they are readily involved in shaping the school's Catholic life and mission. Sixth formers produce and edit their own newspaper, 'The Painsley Pilgrim – Guiding Minds, Inspiring Journeys', which is outstanding. Leaders and students are actively involved in the lives of the parishes and the broader community. Outreach work also includes collaboration with the diocese and other local Catholic schools. The link governor provides excellent support in monitoring and evaluating Catholic life. Governors and leaders enthusiastically support new staff induction, encouraging full participation in the school's Catholic life and mission. One training day is used annually across the multi academy company to develop teachers' understanding of Catholic values and ethos. Consequently, staff speak eloquently about what their involvement means to them on both a practical and personal level. The latest work on Catholic social teaching has positively impacted the whole community at Painsley Catholic College.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

1

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

1

Students engage exceptionally well in various activities and approach their work with great interest and enjoyment. They are proud to say that they enjoy their learning in religious education. There is a robust learning culture in all classrooms and key stages. Embedded routines across the department enable learning to flow seamlessly in lessons, from when students enter the classroom to when they move through the school's different phases of learning to extended writing tasks. Outcomes in religious education over the last three years have been outstanding. A detailed analysis indicates that religious education is a leading subject at Painsley, and leaders profess that it is the 'core of the core', which is clearly evident. Students treat each other respectfully and listen attentively when discussing religious concepts and alternative views. Key vocabulary is revisited routinely, which helps students become confident in using religious language. A Year 13 lesson observed on philosophy was exceptional, with students demonstrating secure and profound knowledge and understanding, which they applied to their discussions.

The religious education department is a strong team; teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subject and high expectations of students at all key stages. Consequently, they ask searching and incisive questions to test and develop student understanding in lessons. This enables students to debate topics at length and to a high level. Teaching is well-sequenced, allowing students of all abilities to write fluently and at length in their books. Work is appropriately adapted to meet the needs of all students, and they are challenged effectively in their learning throughout the lesson. Positive, warm relationships exist in class and generate a strong sense of belonging. As a result, students are confident in answering questions and contributing to discussion. Pair and group work is used effectively to consolidate student understanding. Students improve their work through regular self-assessment and peer assessment, and the use

of 'purple pen' is regular and consistent across the department. Assessment is used effectively to identify students who make exceptional progress or who may need further support. Oracy has been a strategic focus for the school. Whole-school training techniques such as choral response and reciprocal reading are discussed at department level and then applied by individual teachers via the coaching model.

Painsley Catholic College is a very special workplace with an unmistakable spirit of collaboration among staff members. This is evident in the coaching culture within the department, and this is an outstanding feature. The excellent head of department provides a clear vision for learning and teaching. It encourages all teachers to develop their own unique style that draws upon their strengths and theological interests and has enabled students to become exceptionally religiously literate. The impact of staff training is evident in classrooms. The work introduced by leaders on oracy is embedded, and students 'turn and talk' effortlessly. This enables students to be confident and articulate in class. Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching is highly effective. It goes beyond compliance with policies to skilfully adapt assessment practices and curriculum structures to enhance the learning of different groups of students. For example, school leaders planned to raise the achievement of low prior-attaining students by designing new and improved homework booklets. The link governor has strong links with the department and meets regularly, formally and informally, to monitor progress and discuss areas for development. Records of governor visits are available, enabling governors to be very well informed of present standards and ensure highly effective plans are in place to sustain further improvement.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

Students are fully immersed in the meaningful prayer and liturgy life of Painsley Catholic College. A rich and varied prayer experience includes morning prayer during 'Emmaus time', 'pause and pray', prayers before lunch and at the end of the day. Students plan and deliver weekly acts of worship, and they are incredibly confident in leading worship. Students relish this opportunity, have a deep sense of identity and flourish in their varying roles, including the Lourdes group, the 'Rainbow' group, the chaplaincy crew and chaplaincy leaders. The school has successfully created an environment where students can celebrate together with a deep sense of joy. Students are highly respectful, and everyone participates thoughtfully and reverently in prayer. Prayerful silence was observed before the Years 10 and 11 acts of worship. Students are well-equipped to plan, organise, lead, and evaluate their services. They are reflective and explain eloquently how prayer and liturgy inspire them to serve others.

Praying together follows the natural rhythm and richness of this Catholic school. The school benefits greatly from the support of the priest and lay chaplains, who provide various enriching worship experiences. Students articulate that they know different forms of praying, including traditional prayers, meditation, and reflection. Scripture is central to prayer and liturgy, and staff members are adept at meaningfully interpreting scripture for students. Reflection is used effectively to allow students to make connections between current issues experienced by communities around the world and their impact on their daily lives—for example, the 'Live Simply' campaign, where students exchanged books on World Book Day. A rich and well-designed retreat programme is available for students in all year groups. The number of people who volunteer to support the most vulnerable at Lourdes is significantly high. Students describe how this has had a profound impact on their daily lives. Students from other faiths, and indeed, no faith at all, are supported and feel welcomed and valued as school community members.

Families and parishes are thoughtfully included in the school's prayer life with a termly parish network group meeting. The many icons, statues, artwork, and prayer spaces around the school all reflect the mission and values of the school. The chapel is clearly a sacred space and is physically and spiritually central to the community's life.

Leaders and governors deeply understand their role in leading a community of faith. Staff inspire others by modelling exemplary practice as leaders of and participants in prayer and liturgy. Student leadership of prayer is encouraged, and the chaplaincy crew and leaders' work is outstanding. Sixth form students are excellent role models and willingly support younger students on their faith journey. They carry out their responsibilities joyfully and genuinely commit to enriching the community. The lay chaplain has a strong vision for achieving excellence in prayer and liturgy and supports students and staff to secure that vision. She is highly effective in creating parish links, is an inspirational leader, and is highly regarded by the whole community. Leaders plan the calendar carefully to ensure that all key celebrations in the Church’s year are observed. A particular highlight of the Painsley year is the outdoor whole school Mass, where every department is involved in its creation and celebration. Monitoring and evaluating prayer and subsequent strategic coaching are a strength of leaders and governors. Their impactful work forms the bedrock of the school's outstanding quality and improvement of prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Painsley Catholic College
School unique reference number (URN)	138729
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	860 4610
Full postal address of the school	Station Road, Cheadle, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 1LH
School phone number	01538 493777
Headteacher	Rachel Waugh
Chair of governing board	Kenneth Wilson
School Website	www.painsley.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	The Painsley Catholic Academy
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Garry Maher	Lead
Peter Foley	Team
Chris Martin	Team
Claire Restell	Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement