

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 July 2025

Karen Dobson
Headteacher
St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy
Barnsley Road
Sheffield Lane Top
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S5 0QF

Dear Mrs Dobson

Special measures monitoring inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 10 and 11 June 2025, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place October 2024.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chair of the governing board, the acting director of schools from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hallam and a representative from Sheffield Council the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons, met with staff and reviewed school documentation. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to no longer be judged as requiring special measures.

HMCI strongly recommends that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection we carry out.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

There have been changes to staffing since the graded inspection in October 2024. You started a secondment to the school as the executive headteacher in January 2025. In February 2025, two associate headteachers from St Clare's multi-academy trust were seconded to the school. The role of special educational needs coordinator is being covered by one of the associate headteachers. There are two long-term supply teachers in key stage 2. There have also been some changes to the local governing board, including the appointment of a new chair of governors. The school is due to move to the St Clare's multi-academy trust in September 2025.

The school has very recently introduced a new phonics scheme. It has provided training to all teaching and class-based support staff to enable them to teach pupils who are at the early stages of reading with confidence. The start of the new scheme coincided with this inspection and so it was not possible to see the impact of its implementation.

You have established that the broader curriculum requires significant development. Working with leaders, you are in the process of introducing a new curriculum for the new academic year. This is an important next step for the school in raising standards in pupils' education. You recognise that for this to be successful, careful consideration will need to be given to how the curriculum is implemented and how staff training needs will be addressed.

The school has reviewed its provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It has considered carefully the actions it needs to take to enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. The school is supporting the training needs of teaching and non-teaching staff so that they can support these pupils during lessons effectively. Much of this is at a very early stage of development.

You have worked with staff to introduce a new behaviour policy. This has provided clarity to both pupils and staff about what is expected and the consequences of behaviour that is not acceptable. While leaders and staff recognise that there is still more to do to ensure a consistent approach, they, along with pupils, acknowledge the improvements that have been made so far. There remain inconsistencies in the standards of behaviour across classes. However, the number of lessons affected by disruptive behaviour has significantly reduced in recent months. Pupils told me that they like being able to earn rewards and feel that the new behaviour policy now supports and recognises their positive behaviour, which is important to them.

The school's rapid improvement committee meets regularly to review the actions taken to improve the school. Through this, and the associated strategic plan, leaders have identified the most important areas for the school to address. Given the findings of the graded inspection, we agreed that it would be appropriate to ensure that actions include more specific reference to improvements required in the early years.

Staff generally feel supported in their roles. They recognise that there is much to do to improve the school. They value the ways that leaders help to manage their workload. Staff appreciate that you and other leaders share the school's improvement priorities with them. This helps them to understand how their role supports the school's development.

The school's most recent inspection identified some improvements that needed to be made to safeguard pupils. The school has responded to, and addressed, these areas. You have trained staff on how to record concerns on the school's central system. Staff speak with confidence about the importance of clear and concise recording and how any information, no matter how small, helps to build a bigger picture about pupils' safety and well-being. You have ensured that staff receive regular training and updates. As a leadership team, you ensure that safeguarding concerns are routinely reviewed and that pupils and their families are supported appropriately. Additionally, you consider the training opportunities that may result from individual incidents or patterns that you spot.

The school has worked in partnership with the St Clare's multi-academy trust, the local authority and diocese to urgently address shortcomings identified at the previous inspection. St Clare's has provided additional, much needed, leadership capacity to the school. This partnership working is planned to continue as the school joins the trust.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of governors, the director of education for the Diocese of Hallam, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Sheffield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Harrington
His Majesty's Inspector