

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111687
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	356964
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Barbara Hudson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Nora Moffatt
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Fairfield Road Stockton-on-Tees County Durham TS19 7PL
Telephone number	01642 580850
Fax number	01642 570697
Email address	stpatricks.school.fairfield@stockton.gov.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed 11 different teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books and teachers' assessments. Documents looked at included those related to safeguarding and development planning. In addition to questionnaires received and analysed from pupils and staff, a total of 100 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

- The rates at which pupils progress across the key stages.
- Teaching and the use of assessment across the whole school to see whether they are consistently good.
- How well the school is preparing the pupils for living in multicultural Britain.

Information about the school

St Patrick's is larger than the averaged-sized primary school. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Patrick's is a good school where pupils thrive in a caring and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils say they enjoy school and this is evident because their attendance is excellent. The school is a harmonious and inclusive community in which every child is valued and enabled to achieve as well as he or she can. It is because of the high levels of quality support for all pupils that make the school's care, guidance and support outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress to reach very high standards by the end of Year 6. Progress in reading and mathematics is greater than in writing. This is because the writing targets are not specific enough and pupils are not always clear as to what they need to do to achieve the target.

Teaching is good. Lessons are planned effectively and the activities pupils do are matched well to their abilities. Pupils, however, have limited opportunities to research and develop their own ways of recording their findings, restricting their development as independent learners. Marking of pupils' work is good and most pupils know what they do well and how to improve an individual piece of work. The good curriculum is well planned and supports progress in each separate subject. It provides pupils with a wide range of learning experiences. Pupils do not make links between different subjects nor do they have sufficient opportunities to practise their basic skills and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.

The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and the governing body have worked very hard over the last three years with a clear focus on priorities. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and demonstrates a good capacity for future improvement. Pupils' attainment and progress are rising because teaching has improved. The school has taken on board and successfully implemented advice received from various sources. The school now has robust systems in place to monitor the school's work. They are used well to spot any relative weakness and solutions to solve them are quickly put in place. Senior and middle leaders are keen to fulfil their responsibilities, which they do well. Subject leaders are proactive in evaluating the quality of the work in their subject. The school's self-evaluation process is comprehensive and the school's and inspection judgements about the quality of work are well matched. Staff and the governing body are actively involved in developing the school's evaluation of its work and the school development plan, resulting in a comprehensive view of what is needed. The vast majority of parents and carers are very supportive of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the curriculum further so that pupils have more opportunities to:
 - make stronger links between the different subjects

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- practise their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in subjects across the curriculum
- make more decisions for themselves and become more independent learners.
- Simplify pupils' writing targets so that they know what they need to do next to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy learning and achieve extremely well. They respond positively to guidance, listen carefully to instructions and complete their tasks conscientiously. Pupils say they enjoy working hard and gain most satisfaction when they have been made to think deeply. Most children enter the Nursery with the skills and knowledge expected for their age. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 all pupils make good progress to reach standards that are well above those expected for their ages. In Key Stage 2, teachers build on these very good foundations in learning so that all pupils make outstanding progress to reach attainment in English and mathematics that is high. The excellent support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or whose circumstances make them more vulnerable than most, enables them to progress extremely well. As a result, they often reach the levels expected nationally of all pupils by Year 6.

Pupils are extremely proud of their school. During the inspection pupils said that they feel safe in school and are certain that the staff will look after them. Their knowledge of keeping safe beyond the school is less secure. Pupils have a good understanding of eating healthily and the importance of keeping active. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school, parish, local and international communities, such as through fund-raising events, but have few opportunities to help decide how they are going to raise the money. Pupils are well prepared for the future in relation to the development of basic skills in English and mathematics although the development of other key personal skills such as making their own decisions is less secure. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their spiritual development is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

In all lessons, the relationships between pupils and staff are very strong. As a result pupils are eager to work hard and to do their best. Teachers plan work that is very well matched to the different ability groups within their class, which means all pupils are productively engaged in the activities. Teaching assistants are very well deployed and they make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work is good. There are examples of high-quality marking and feedback in Key Stage 2. As a result pupils know how well they have done and how to improve individual pieces of work. When pupils do not take enough care in presenting their work this is not always challenged by teachers. Teaching is always structured carefully and instructions are very clear. Lessons observed and scrutiny of samples of pupils' work revealed too few opportunities for pupils to work independently or direct their own learning.

Each separate subject is well organised and planned but lacks the dynamism that gets pupils really inspired about their learning. Planned opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum are limited because the links between subjects have not been developed sufficiently. Pupils say they enjoy their work and speak most enthusiastically about the 2010 World Cup whole-school topic, which incorporated many different subjects together. There are a wide range of enrichment opportunities, especially after school clubs, and these are popular and well attended.

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A caring and welcoming ethos pervades the whole school and underpins the excellent relationships between pupils and staff, creating very high-quality emotional well-being for all. Potentially vulnerable pupils are provided with high-quality care and support in every respect and, as a result, are fully integrated into the life of the school. Early intervention and targeted provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented ensures that they have very good support. Transition procedures in school and when pupils transfer to another school are robust.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The strong leadership of the headteacher and the very effective team work has very successfully ensured that the life and work of the school is focused around every child's needs. Every child is valued and this has led to a very harmonious community where adults and pupils respect one another. There is a constant drive to improve pupils' academic attainment and well-being so that all have maximum benefit from their schooling. Over the last three years, marked improvements have taken place in pupils' learning and progress. This is because staff are adept at adapting their teaching or initiating targeted support to help pupils overcome difficulties and accelerate progress. Rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making in each class underpin these improvements resulting in very high performance targets being met.

The governing body provides strong support and appropriate challenge for leaders. It is highly focused on getting the best possible outcome for all the children in the school. Financial management is very efficient. Safeguarding procedures follow recommended best practice and staff are very aware of their responsibilities. The school's partnerships with other schools external providers and other agencies are good and contribute to the well-being and experiences of all pupils. The achievement of different groups and individuals and their participation in all aspects of school life are monitored well, helping to close gaps in achievement and promote the personal development of all. Community cohesion is strong within the school, the parish and locally. The excellent charity work the school does with communities abroad is having a positive impact on pupils' understanding of what it is like to live in another country. The school is developing work to help pupils understand multicultural Britain. Most parents and carers are very supportive of the school. The good outcomes for pupils and the efficient use of resources ensure that there is good value for money.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good teaching and the effective work of leaders and managers. Most children enter Nursery with the skills and knowledge expected for their age. They make good progress and by the time they start Year 1 most are working above what is expected for their age. Excellent relationships between staff, children, parents and carers are fundamental to the good progress the children make. Good activities both indoors and outdoors provide children with a wide range of learning experiences and give them the opportunity to work things out for themselves. Staff have high expectations for the children. They expect them to behave well, which they do. They encourage the children to talk about what they are doing by engaging them in discussions and asking pertinent questions which moves their learning on. Staff encourage children to suggest developments to and extensions of the activities in which they participate. They take careful note of what the children say and do. This helps them plan tasks that are matched well to children's needs. Individual children's progress is very well annotated and recorded but analysis of the progress of different groups of children is limited and impedes evaluation of the effectiveness of the work of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are vigilant about children's safety and well-being and ensure that children's welfare needs are exceptionally well met. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader leads a strong, well-informed and cohesive team. Everyone's expertise is used very well to provide good learning opportunities for the children. The leader ensures that planned improvements are implemented effectively.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

'Our children enjoy going to school and have a great relationship with their teachers.' typifies the sentiments of most parents and carers. Just over a third of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire they were asked to complete prior to the inspection. Nearly all parents and carers who responded were very supportive of the school's work. In all areas there were very high, positive returns. A very small minority of cases raised concerns about communications between school and parents and carers. Inspectors were shown some amendments that had been made to some communications and were assured that the school was monitoring the impact of these improvements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 289 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	64	34	34	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	70	29	29	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	37	56	56	6	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	43	51	51	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	47	49	49	4	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	38	49	49	12	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	51	41	41	7	7	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	34	58	58	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	42	53	53	2	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	37	49	49	8	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	32	54	54	8	8	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	34	34	53	53	9	9	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	47	45	45	5	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Stockton-on-Tees TS19 7PL**

On behalf of my colleagues and myself I thank you for your very warm welcome when we inspected your school recently. I am sure you will be delighted to know that we judge your school to be a good school. This means that there are lots of good features in your school which are helping you to achieve high standards and there are some things which need improving.

The best things about your school are:

- that you enjoy being in school to learn and your attendance is excellent
- you work hard and achieve very high standards
- the staff care for you very well
- teaching is good and they plan work carefully to match your ability
- the school is run very well.

The things the school can improve are to provide you with more opportunities to:

- make links between the different subjects
- practise your literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum
- make decisions and become more independent learners
- improve your writing skills by simplifying your targets.

Thank you again for helping with the inspection. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Hudson

Lead inspector

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