

# St Patrick's CofE School

Endmoor, Kendal, Cumbria, LA8 0HH

**Inspection dates** 8–9 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although, overall, pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, too few pupils are making better than expected progress in Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics.
- While there are examples of good teaching, teachers do not always plan lessons well enough to get the best out of the pupils.
- When marking work, teachers give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve but time is not regularly set aside in lessons for pupils to respond to teachers' comments.
- Turbulence in leadership has led to subject leaders having too few opportunities to be involved in training in order to develop their role. The new headteacher is addressing this but there has not yet been enough time for recent changes to bring about rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- The relatively new governing body is very supportive of the school but is not probing well enough the links between pupils' performance and the quality of teaching.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is taking a strong lead in improving the school. Teachers are now accountable for their areas of responsibility and the progress of every pupil is shared by a team of dedicated teachers and teaching assistants.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are well behaved and show great respect towards each other, staff and visitors. Pupils say they feel safe in school and learn how to keep safe elsewhere. The pupils' council encourages pupils to value their school and take on additional responsibilities.
- The introduction of a more creative curriculum has increased the opportunities for pupils to investigate areas which they find particularly interesting through topic work. Achieving the Artsmark has led to visiting artists and musicians which has enhanced the experience of pupils in the classroom and beyond.
- Leaders and managers now regularly measure pupils' progress and record this in detail. Staff work together to make necessary changes to support those pupils who may be getting behind with their work.
- The school plays a key role in the life of the village, with regular performances by pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed four teachers and visited eight lessons, one of which was observed with the headteacher. In addition, a number of short visits were made to lessons.
- Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, senior teachers and subject leaders, parents, a representative from the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, local authority reports, records of pupils' current attainment and progress, documents relating to pupils' attendance, behaviour and pupils' work.
- There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) prior to the inspection. The eight responses received during the inspection were taken into account by the inspector.

## Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Patrick's is a much smaller than average size primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils is of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Children are now taught in four classes in the mornings: Class 1 comprises Reception and Year 1; Class 2 comprises Year 2; Class 3 comprises Years 3 and 4; Class 4 comprises Years 5 and 6. In the afternoons, Year 2 pupils join Reception and Year 1.
- There has been turbulence in the school's leadership since the previous inspection. An acting headteacher was in place during the absence and then the subsequent departure of the previous headteacher. A new headteacher has recently been appointed.
- In 2012, the school achieved the Artsmark.
- There are breakfast, after-school and parent and toddler groups based at St Patrick's that are not managed by the governing body and are inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
  - responding to pupils' individual needs and adapting the pace of learning as necessary, remembering that some pupils work more quickly than others
  - setting work for pupils of different abilities that gets the best out of them all
  - regularly allowing time in lessons for pupils to respond to teachers' marking in order to correct and improve their work.
- Ensure that all Key Stage 2 pupils make at least good progress in mathematics by making sure that teachers provide increasingly complex number problems for pupils to solve.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - rigorously checking how well teachers are using the information on pupils' progress to plan work at the right level for each pupil
  - providing training for subject leaders so that they have the skills they need to improve teachers' and pupils' performance
  - developing the skills of the governing body, especially in understanding how much progress pupils are making, so that they can hold the school leaders fully to account for the impact of their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of effective links between school and home. The teacher and teaching assistant ensure a secure and happy environment which contributes to parents saying that their children 'can't wait to come to school'.
- Most children start school with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, as a result of a curriculum which provides activities led by adults and opportunities for children to play together and find out things for themselves both indoors and outdoors.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and enter Year 3 with broadly average skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Throughout Key Stage 2, most pupils make expected progress but too few pupils do better than that, particularly in mathematics. Occasionally, the work is too easy for the more able or too hard for the least able, and pupils' ability to solve more complex number problems requires improvement. Part of the reason for this is because of the turbulence in leadership and limited support for teachers to share good and better practice.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium do just as well as others in the school and across the country. Some make exceptional progress and this demonstrates that the school promotes equality of opportunity. The teaching assistants play an important role in supporting individuals and small groups of pupils both in the classroom and one-to-one.
- Overall, children's abilities in speech and language when they join the Reception class are lower than those expected for their age. Good teaching of reading skills in Reception and Key Stage 1 ensures that by the time they reach the end of Year 2, pupils are reading at the level expected for their age. They use their skills in linking letters and sounds to work out unfamiliar words for themselves and read with fluency and expression. They can retell their stories in their own words which demonstrate that they understand what they are reading.
- By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' ability to read is typical for their age. A new procedure to check and improve Key Stage 2 pupils' reading skills is being enthusiastically used by the pupils and staff but it is too early to see any significant improvement in their reading skills.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- While there is some good teaching, too much needs to be improved, especially in mathematics. This is why overall pupils are reaching the expected standard, and not higher, by the time they leave Year 6.
- Too often in mathematics lessons in Key Stage 2, the whole class is given a lengthy explanation by the teacher when the more able could move on more quickly to work independently. When pupils are finding the work too easy or too hard, the teachers do not always adapt the activities quickly enough to bring out the best in pupils. This particularly applies to problem solving tasks teachers set more-able pupils.
- The most effective teaching captures the imagination of pupils and inspires them to investigate and find out things for themselves. For example, in Class 1 the Reception and Year 1 pupils were captivated by the teachers' storytelling. This fired the imaginations of the younger children to work on their own to create a collage based on the lion in the story and to retell the story through puppets. Meanwhile, Year 1 pupils enthusiastically shared their thoughts on the characteristics of the lion before they got to work on creating a poster which included their own sentences using interesting words and the correct punctuation, including question and exclamation marks.
- Adults give pupils much praise and use skilful questioning to encourage pupils to think for themselves. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to encourage

pupils to find out things for themselves. The introduction of topic work has helped pupils to explore areas which are of particular interest to them. This increases pupils' enjoyment of learning.

- Teachers regularly check on pupils' understanding of what they are learning during lessons but occasionally this interrupts the more able who are keen to carry on with their work. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work but time is not always set aside in lessons for pupils to respond to teachers' comments in order to improve their work. Occasionally, when pupils are given number problems to solve, the work set for some is too easy.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are increasingly using their knowledge of a wide range of subjects to plan imaginative topics to which pupils respond with great interest.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils behave very well and are polite and friendly towards staff and visitors to the school. From an early age, they learn to respect each other and their school environment. The school council is made up of representatives from Years 1 to 6 and they take pride in working with staff to look after and improve their school.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and they learn how to stay safe in their own community and other environments. The older pupils were able to explain how to keep safe when using computers and the potential dangers of making friends through the Internet. Parents and staff alike are confident that the school provides a safe and secure place which encourages pupils' personal and academic development.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils learn about different forms of bullying but pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen at St Patrick's. They are also clear that they could turn to any adult if they had any concerns.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and generally find lessons interesting although admit to sometimes finding the work too easy. Even then, behaviour remains good. Pupils help each other and enjoy opportunities to share ideas with each other but work equally well on their own.
- All staff are dedicated to looking after the pupils at St Patrick's. One parent was confident in saying that staff 'really know our children; their strengths and weaknesses'.
- When the school comes together for collective worship everyone clearly demonstrate respect for each other. During the weekly celebration assemblies, pupils enthusiastically encourage each other and share the work they have been doing. The older pupils' behaviour provides an excellent example for the younger children. A drama group performs during collective worship every Monday and this is something that the pupils really look forward to.
- Most pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time. There is a very small number whose learning is interrupted due to regular absences.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- During a period of turbulence in leadership, the local authority has been supportive of the school by helping to appoint an acting headteacher. The local authority has also helped in forming a new governing body and providing relevant training to develop the skills of its members.
- The headteacher has a very clear view of how successful the school can be. School leaders, including the governing body, are very committed and determined to drive forward improvements. Already, staff are talking about positive changes that are being made.
- Leaders and managers regularly check the progress that pupils are making. There are procedures in place to check how well teaching is helping pupils to learn. However, there is not yet enough rigour in seeing how well teachers use information on pupils' progress to plan activities to meet the needs of individuals, particularly the more-able.
- Class structures have recently changed. Year 2 is now taught separately in the mornings in order

to improve how quickly this year group makes progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. A more creative curriculum is now being used and this gives pupils the opportunity to learn through topics, which they clearly enjoy. Achieving the Artsmark has led to pupils working with a range of artists. This is reflected in the high quality of pupils' artwork displayed around the school.

- The headteacher and senior teacher are at an early stage in developing long-term plans to raise attainment throughout the school but know what needs to be done and how to do it. More time is now being given to subject leaders to work with specialists and other schools in order to increase the opportunities for sharing good and better practice to improve teaching. The headteacher has set challenging targets for staff and is linking this with performance management.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is very committed to seeing the school improve. The governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities; all staff have been vetted and trained appropriately to keep pupils safe. They have an accurate overview of overall provision. However, governors are not yet challenging staff enough on why progress in Key Stage 2 is not yet as strong as it is in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 and the link to the quality of teaching and performance management. Under the leadership of the headteacher, governors are now playing a more central role in shaping the long-term plans for the school based on how well pupils are progressing compared to other schools. They have taken important spending decisions, including changes to staff contracts. The governing body has also agreed the use of pupil premium funding to provide one-to-one help and small group work to ensure that all pupils make the same progress.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112318
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	403180

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	63
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Colin Milner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Suzanne Edmondson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 February 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 567388
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