

# St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Consett

Stanley Street, Consett, County Durham, DH8 6LN

**Inspection dates** 16–17 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Whilst standards improved in English in 2012 and are now broadly as expected, standards in mathematics have been below average for two years with only a slight improvement in 2012. Pupils are not making enough progress in their mental and written calculation skills.
- The quality of teaching varies with some that is good and some that requires improvement. Where teaching requires improvement it is because expectations are too low, activities are not interesting enough and worksheets do not give pupils enough opportunities to practise their skills independently at an appropriate level.
- Leadership and management are not good because improvements to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have not been rapid enough, particularly in mathematics.
- Checks on the quality of pupils' work do not focus sufficiently on achievement. The feedback given to teachers is not precise or detailed enough in order to improve standards.
- Whilst information about pupils' progress is collected, it is not updated often enough so that it can be used to identify all the improvements that may be needed.

### The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, considerate and friendly towards adults and each other. They feel safe in school.
- There are good relationships with parents and the local community.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the quality of teaching is good. Exciting activities stimulate children so that they are fully involved and learn well.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons taught by 17 teachers as well as shorter visits to lessons to look at pupils' work. Some of these observations also involved the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils and heard others in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 read. They observed pupils learning their letter sounds with both teachers and teaching assistants.
- The views of 45 parents, who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as four letters and a telephone conversation were taken into account. Inspectors talked to parents at the start of the first day.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The school's improvement plan and records of achievement, teaching, behaviour and safeguarding were examined.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in and out of lessons and a group of Year 5 pupils showed an inspector round the school and discussed behaviour and bullying while they did this.
- Forty-six staff submitted their views via a questionnaire, and inspectors took these into account.

## Inspection team

Christine Cottam, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Pattinson

Additional Inspector

Anne Vernon

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided is larger than the average-size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to that usually seen.
- There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 so that the vast majority is good or better by:
  - having higher expectations of the standards pupils can and should achieve
  - inspiring pupils through practical and interesting learning activities
  - using assessment information to match work more accurately to the ability of pupils
  - replacing worksheets with opportunities for pupils to record their work for themselves in order to increase their independence
  - making sure question and answer sessions are purposeful and do not last too long.
- Strengthen leadership and governance so that procedures to check the quality of teaching are sharper, more regular and result in quicker improvements to pupils' and teachers' performance by:
  - regularly checking the quality of work in pupils' books to make sure they are achieving as well as they should and then giving clear feedback to teachers so that they know exactly how to improve
  - revising the criteria used to check the quality of teaching so that its impact on pupils' achievement is taken more fully into account
  - updating data about pupils' achievement more regularly and using this information to identify and meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils whose progress is not yet good
  - making sure improvement plans have clearer targets and more urgent timescales.
- Raise standards in mathematics so that achievement is consistently good or better for all groups of pupils by:
  - setting out the order in which calculation skills should be taught and making sure that the work set for pupils follows this plan and is closely matched to their different abilities
  - giving pupils increased opportunities to practise their skills and develop their understanding by expecting them to record more work independently
  - allowing pupils time to practise and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects and in 'real-life' situations
  - closing the gap between the attainment and progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children start school in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are below those usually found for their age. Consistently good teaching throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children make good progress so that they gain the skills expected for their age by the time they start Year 1.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 has improved over time so that standards are now broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Overall, pupils' progress and the quality of their learning in Years 1 to 6 require improvement. Where teaching is good pupils make rapid progress, but the rates of learning vary within and between year groups. Pupils make better progress in English than they do in mathematics.
- Standards in reading have improved over time. Pupils are able to blend their letters and sounds and this helps them to read well. They enjoy reading regularly to adults and some pupils are avid readers. The school provides a good range of books to engage the interest of all pupils.
- In Key Stage 2, progress in writing has improved so that standards are broadly as expected. Pupils have good opportunities to practise their skills so that by the time they reach the end of Year 6 they can write extensively for a wide range of different purposes. Teachers set clear targets so that pupils know how to improve their writing.
- Standards in mathematics are below average. This is because the mathematics curriculum is not planned or taught well enough to allow pupils to make good progress in their understanding of number or to practise their calculation skills at an appropriate level. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their mathematics in other subjects or in 'real-life' situations in order to deepen their understanding.
- The achievement of pupils who are supported at school action or school action plus is similar to other pupils in that it is stronger in English than it is in mathematics.
- The attainment and progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to those pupils who are not eligible in English, but there is a gap in mathematics.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Adults share their enthusiasm for learning with children and use praise and encouragement to motivate them. Teachers plan exciting activities which help children to make good progress.
- The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 varies, with some that is good, but too much that requires improvement. Where teaching requires improvement, it is because expectations are not high enough and learning activities are not matched closely enough to pupils' ability, so that pupils do not make good progress. In these lessons, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to be involved in practical activities which interest them. In some classes, teachers rely too heavily on pre-printed worksheets that do not challenge pupils to think hard enough or to record their work for themselves.
- Where teaching is good, questioning is used well to gauge the understanding of pupils and to accelerate their progress. These question and answer sessions are short, sharp and involve all pupils. Where teaching requires improvement, questions are too easy and sessions last for too long so that pupils then do not have enough time to work independently.
- Teaching is mostly good in English. Pupils are taught their letters and sounds in a systematic way linked to their ability so that they make good progress in reading. Teachers plan effective activities to help pupils develop their writing skills. English books are marked well with good advice to pupils to help them to improve their writing so that standards are rising.
- Teaching requires improvement in mathematics and other subjects. In a good mathematics lesson, pupils were calculating the area of rectangles, triangles and hexagons. They made good

progress because the teacher had high expectations and had planned practical activities to challenge all abilities. This is not typical of most mathematics lessons where pupils do not have enough time to practise their calculation skills or record their work at a suitable level.

- Good support is provided in literacy for those pupils who are supported at school action, school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs so that they make good progress in their reading and writing skills. They make less progress in mathematics, but this is similar to other pupils.

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

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They have good attitudes to learning and understand how their achievement will affect their future. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour and there have been no exclusions for a number of years. This is because adults manage pupils' behaviour well and are positive role models for pupils.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and show high levels of respect for each other. They have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including racism, and say that it rarely happens.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of safety, including how to stay safe on the internet, and say that they feel safe in school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their social skills and quickly develop the confidence to work with each other and adults. They settle in quickly in a safe, secure environment and work happily together, learning to share and support each other.
- Attendance is improving and is now average with good punctuality. The school has good checks in place and takes action when pupils do not attend regularly enough so that few pupils are now persistently absent.
- Parents speak very positively about the high standards of care at the school. They feel that their children thrive in an atmosphere where they are valued and that the school has a genuine 'open-door' policy.

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

- Senior leaders and governors want to provide the very best education for pupils. They have created a nurturing environment where pupils are valued as members of a close Christian family. There is an absence of bullying or racism because the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles any discriminatory behaviour well.
- A concise improvement plan sets out relevant priorities but not all targets and timescales are precise or urgent enough. Previous actions have led to improvements, for example, standards at the end of Year 2 have risen, but improvements to teaching and mathematics have not been rapid enough.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching by looking at pupils' work and visiting lessons and this has helped to improve teaching and marking in English. However, the feedback given to teachers is not always precise enough and does not take account of pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers assess the levels pupils have reached at the end of every term. The system for collating this information is difficult to analyse and share with staff so that it is not yet used well enough to improve achievement in mathematics or the quality of teaching.
- The professional development of staff is well managed overall because it is matched to the needs of individuals. For example, a teacher new to the Early Years Foundation Stage has received extensive and appropriate training and this is matched closely to her performance management targets. However, the school recognises that more needs to be done to improve teaching in mathematics.
- There are good partnerships with parents who say that the school is approachable, welcoming

and caring. They are kept fully informed about the progress their children are making.

- Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced and helps to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. It is less effective in mathematics, where it is not planned well enough to make sure pupils make good progress in their calculation skills or their understanding of number.
- The school takes the safety of pupils seriously and has good systems in place that meet all safeguarding requirements.
- The local authority is providing good support for senior and subject leaders, including governors, helping them to more accurately check how well the school is performing, for example, the local authority has shared an honest appraisal of achievement and the quality of teaching directly with the governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses and involves itself well in the day-to-day life of the school. Governors have started to challenge senior leaders, for example, when reviewing the pay of staff in order to more accurately reflect performance. The governing body manages finances prudently. It is using pupil-premium funding to provide additional tuition for pupils who are underachieving, although this has had a more positive impact in English, where the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals is much closer to those that are not eligible, than it is in mathematics.

## 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>	114250
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	401416

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	437
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Golightly
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pat Henson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 503982
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