

# St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School

Griffin Road, Plumstead, London, SE18 7QG

**Inspection dates** 8–9 November 2012

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well in all key stages. Overall, the levels they reach from a low start by the time they leave are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The improving rates of progress made by pupils are leading to rising standards across the school.
- Most of the time teaching is good. In particular, improvements to the teaching of writing have had a significant impact on pupils' achievement. Consistent and effective marking supports pupils' learning well.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are enthusiastic about their learning. Their behaviour is good. Attendance is well above average and rising.
- Key areas of the school's work have improved significantly since the previous inspection, including the quality of teaching. The new headteacher has very effectively united staff to build on the school's existing strengths.
- High expectations and a clear vision of how to improve the school's effectiveness have increased the pace of change and secured a good quality of education for pupils.
- Parents and carers recognise the increased priority given to promoting pupils' academic abilities since the arrival of the new headteacher. Staff are rightly proud of their success in securing improvements, and determined to continue and sustain this trend.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although usually good, teaching is rarely outstanding. Sometimes tasks do not match pupils' needs precisely enough. In particular, more-able pupils are not challenged consistently well.
- Teachers do not always adapt what they intended to do during lessons by reacting to how well pupils are doing.
- Very occasionally, teaching in mathematics is less effective than in other subjects.
- Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage sometimes miss opportunities to develop children's language skills during play activities.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 24 lessons, including five jointly with the headteacher.
- They evaluated pupils' work and talked with a range of pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors also held discussions with parents and carers, staff, a range of school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- They took account of 13 responses to the online survey (Parent View), as well as a small number of letters sent to the inspection team.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' progress, the school's own monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, records of behaviour and incidents, safeguarding documentation and the governing body minutes.

## Inspection team

Clive Dunn, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Jill Thewlis

Additional inspector

Kewal Goel

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, the largest group being those of Black African heritage. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language, although very few are at the earliest stages of learning the language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the additional government funding known as the pupil premium is above average. This money is intended to raise their achievement and narrow the gap with all pupils nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is much lower than average. However, the proportion that is supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- During the inspection, the Reception classes were using temporary accommodation as a result of building work. In addition, the permanent Nursery teacher was absent.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2012.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, so that more is outstanding by:
  - ensuring lessons meet the needs of all pupils more precisely, in particular checking that more-able pupils are sufficiently challenged
  - ensuring teachers have a consistent understanding of the most effective way to teach number skills, so that they always know how best to help pupils who struggle to understand
  - developing teachers' confidence to make changes to their planned lessons in response to how well pupils are doing.
- Ensure that adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage make the most of all opportunities to promote speaking and listening to develop children's language.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Overall, children are working well below expected levels for their age when they start in the Nursery. Historically, it has taken until the end of Year 6 to close this gap because pupils' rates of progress only increased as they moved through Key Stage 2.
- Good pupils' progress is now much more consistent across all year groups. This means that across the school standards are rising and increasingly pupils are reaching or exceeding expected levels before the end of Year 6. For the first time, in 2012, pupils attained broadly average levels at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. Children are also now reaching expected levels at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage. Leaders recognise that rapid rates of pupils' progress have not yet been sustained for long enough to lift the proportion of pupils who exceed the expected national average levels by the time they leave.
- Pupils' progress in writing has particularly increased, making up for previously slow progress. Pupils' vocabulary develops well alongside their punctuation, sentence structure and ability to make the writing interesting for the reader. Although good overall, rates of progress in mathematics now often lag slightly behind those in reading and writing.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups, including Black African pupils, pupils with special educational needs, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, achieve well.
- Those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are also achieving well and closing the gap on what other pupils are achieving nationally. In 2012, these pupils attained broadly in line with the national averages for all pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, and above at Key Stage 1.
- There is a strong focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills to support their learning. Younger pupils are encouraged to say sentences aloud to check they make sense before writing them. In the Nursery, children are encouraged at snack times to ask for things using whole sentences, correctly modelled by the adults. However, across the Early Years Foundation Stage, these opportunities are sometimes missed, including for example, chances to engage in children's role play to make sure it includes dialogue.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Younger pupils have a secure understanding of letters and sounds (phonics). Most pupils reached the nationally expected standard in the recent phonics screening check, the proportion being much higher than that seen nationally.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching at St Patrick's usually engages pupils and promotes their enjoyment well.
- English teaching is particularly effective. It follows logical sequences of reading and analysing texts, learning about particular writing techniques and then teaching pupils how to apply this to their own writing.
- Teachers check carefully that pupils understand what is expected of them. This is particularly effective in helping pupils to achieve well at their own level. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 5, pupils imagined they were First World War soldiers writing home. They were thoughtful about how they should convey the emotions they might feel. The challenge for more-able pupils was to balance this with the desire not to worry the recipient of the letter too much. Pupils understood this subtlety well and worked hard to achieve it in their writing.
- In mathematics, pupils have regular opportunities to use and apply the number skills they learn to investigate or solve problems. However, when teachers identify gaps in pupils' understanding, they do not always go back well enough to break it down for pupils and check their understanding of basic concepts, such as the value of the digits in a number.
- Teaching mostly meets pupils' differing needs well. However, sometimes the level of challenge is not precise enough to secure outstanding achievement, particularly for more-able pupils. Teachers do not always adjust what they have planned to do during lessons once they find that

pupils are struggling or grasping ideas more quickly than they had anticipated.

- Teaching assistants effectively support learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Care is taken to make sure that there is an effective balance between giving pupils the extra help they need while allowing them enough time to work independently. For example, in a lesson in Key Stage 1, the teaching assistant worked with a small group to model the task, before gradually prompting the pupils to take-over while constantly reinforcing the key learning, and then withdrawing completely when pupils were confident.
- Pupils' work is consistently well marked, especially their writing. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to check their own or each other's work to see how well they have met the requirements of a given task. Teachers then respond to this in their own marking and identify what pupils have done well and where they could improve. Regular 'F.U.T.s' or 'Follow-Up Tasks' are set and checked. Pupils and teachers diligently follow this process, which consequently has a good impact on pupils' learning.

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

- Pupils are eager to do well. They work positively together and are quickly responsive to their teachers. Pupils tackle tasks with enthusiasm and usually work at a good pace. Very occasionally in lessons where pupils are not challenged appropriately, a few stop working for short periods to chat. However, there are seldom disruptions to the whole class.
- The mostly positive views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff indicate that this positive view of behaviour reflects their usual experiences. There have been no exclusions in recent years. When moving around the school, pupils' behaviour is often exemplary.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at school, and parents and carers who responded to Parent View unanimously agree. Pupils have a good understanding of issues relating to bullying, including a strong awareness of different types of bullying such as cyber-bullying. Although pupils acknowledge that bullying does occasionally happen, they are very confident that adults deal with issues effectively.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The passionate and skilful leadership of the headteacher has quickly won the confidence of pupils, parents and carers, staff, members of the governing body and the local authority. All spoke in different ways of how the headteacher has brought clarity to what the school is trying to achieve so that everyone is working together for the same aim.
- The increasing rigour of systems and strategies has accelerated the pace of improvement. Much tighter use of performance management has ensured that staff are effectively supported to improve, including through strong links with other schools, but also feel increasingly accountable for pupils' progress. There is no automatic progression on the pay scale. The headteacher and governing body are rightly establishing procedures to ensure that teachers continue to sustain an appropriate quality of teaching according to previous pay decisions.
- The school's capacity to improve is demonstrated at different levels. The headteacher is very ably supported by an effective deputy and assistant headteacher. Significant improvements to the quality of teaching and the consistency with which teachers implement new strategies such as the marking policy is testament to the shared determination of staff to do the best for pupils.
- Teachers and middle leaders make increasingly good use of very well developed systems for tracking pupils' achievement. Individuals and groups are clearly identified and successful action taken to narrow gaps in achievement where necessary, reflecting the school's strong commitment to promote equal opportunities and ensure there is no discrimination.
- Parents' views are mostly positive. The school has started to improve the information it provides to parents about the children's progress, including levels their children are working at and aiming

for, and how this compares with national expectations. Teachers regularly set and mark homework.

- The curriculum promotes both pupils' academic achievement and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Good links between subjects, particularly using a range of good-quality books as a stimulus, motivates pupils. Wide-ranging enrichment activities, including a residential visit and access to specialist sports and music teaching, broaden pupils' experiences.
- The local authority has every confidence in the capacity of school leaders to secure necessary improvements. Consequently, any support has largely been at the request of the school. This external support has helped confirm and strengthen the school's own evaluations of its performance and prioritise areas to secure rapid improvement where necessary, such as pupils' achievement in writing.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's effectiveness, including the quality of teaching. It is focusing policies and procedures, including for performance management, to ensure the improving trend continues. Through developing its use of data, the governing body is becoming increasingly adept at rigorously checking the school's performance against national indicators. The governing body is seeking to strengthen further the evaluation of the impact of its strategic and financial decisions. Together with school leaders, it has already evaluated the difference made by its use of pupil premium. The school has used this funding to contribute to a balance of personal and well-being support, for example to contribute towards costs of the 'Place to Be' counselling service, as well as specifically targeting academic achievement, including additional small-group interventions. The school meets statutory safeguarding requirements. The designated governor regularly checks this and reports to the governing body.

## 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>	100173
<b>Local authority</b>	Greenwich
<b>Inspection number</b>	400397

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>	347
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kathy Elliffe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Murphy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8854 3881
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8885 9988
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@stpatricksprimary.org.uk



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