

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Corby

Patrick Road, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN18 9NT

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils' rates of progress have been too variable. In 2013, Year 6 pupils did not achieve well.
- Attainment in reading was, until recently, below average.
- A gap in attainment still exists between pupils entitled to the government pupil premium funding and those who are not.
- Leaders' and managers' checks on teaching and efforts to improve it have not been fully successful because changes in staffing have reduced the impact of their work. Consequently, teaching still requires improvement.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to investigate in science and the amount of science taught in some classes is not enough.
- While more attention is now given to grammar, the previous lack of focus led to pupils' poor performance in this subject in 2013.
- Work in mathematics is sometimes too easy.
- Some staff who lead subjects are inexperienced and in need of further help in undertaking the roles that they fulfil.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school and much of the teaching is now good with a little that is outstanding. Rates of progress are now accelerating.
- Pupils behave well and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Parents think well of the school and all those who responded to the inspection questionnaire would recommend the school to others.
- Staff show good levels of care for the pupils and as a result pupils feel safe in school.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Twenty-four lessons or parts of lessons were observed, of which two were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, senior leadership team, various members of staff, a group of pupils, the Chair and former Chair of the Governing Body, and a local authority adviser.
- Inspectors observed the teaching of reading and listened to pupils read.
- Samples of work were studied and also information about pupils' progress.
- Safeguarding documentation and records of behaviour were examined.
- The inspectors looked at the 34 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The views of staff were obtained and 18 responded to a staff written questionnaire.

Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Ladner

Additional Inspector

Sherry Gladwin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school with one form of entry. It has a Nursery for part time as well as full time attendance. The great majority of the children transferred to the Reception class in September 2013 but the proportions doing so vary from year to year.
- Just over half the school's pupils, a smaller proportion than average, are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than usually found.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding to be used for pupils who are looked after by the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or from families with a parent in the armed forces, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is around the national average.
- The school meets government floor targets. These are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- A daily breakfast club and after school club are provided by the school. Inspectors looked at this extra provision.
- Two staff were on maternity leave at the time of inspection.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher began their duties in January 2012. Since that time the headteacher has been on maternity leave, returning in February 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - making sure that the work is always sufficiently challenging
 - improving pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary
 - making sure pupils use grammar correctly in all their written and spoken work
 - ensuring that all pupils receive enough tuition in science and providing more regular opportunities for pupils to investigate in this subject.
- Improve pupils' attainment and skills in reading by:
 - encouraging pupils to talk to one another about books which they have read and can recommend in order to stimulate their thirst for reading
 - encouraging pupils to read widely and often.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers by:
 - strengthening the expertise of subject leaders so that they make a greater contribution to developing the subjects for which they have responsibility.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. When they leave in Year 6, attainment is usually broadly average, but it dipped to below average in 2013. Results in the spelling, grammar and punctuation test were weak. This inconsistency is why achievement requires improvement.
- Key Stage 2 pupils have not always built well enough on their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. In 2013, the proportions of pupils who made expected and better than expected progress were lower than average. Pupils' progress and attainment in reading have not matched that in writing and mathematics.
- The attainment gap between pupils entitled to the pupil premium and their peers widened in 2013 to nearly a year behind in mathematics, reading and writing. They are still not making as much progress as their peers and there is a gap of over half a term's progress at present at the top of the school.
- More able Year 6 pupils last year did better than nationally for this group in writing but not as well in other areas.
- Children's make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment at the end of Reception varies from year to year dependent on the number of children who find learning difficult. In 2013 results were above local and national averages.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is usually broadly average, although reading has been lower than other aspects. More focused attention to phonics (the sounds that letters make) is leading to good improvements. Pupils' performance in the Year 1 national phonics check in 2013 was better than the previous year and was above average.
- Current school data indicate significant improvement. This is thoroughly confirmed in pupils' workbooks. Pupils are making more rapid progress than before. New teaching initiatives in reading and writing, better teaching quality and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning are all contributing to this better picture of progress.
- All groups of pupils including minority ethnic pupils, those who speak English as an additional language and pupils who are disabled and have special educational needs are now making good progress. They respond well to the quick response of teachers and support staff when they are in danger of falling behind.
- Pupils much enjoy the additional sports clubs that have been made possible by the additional sports funding from specialist staff. It is difficult to assess the impact at this stage as it is quite new, but more pupils are joining in sports activities.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not been consistently good and this was reflected in below average results in 2013, when reading was weak. Past teaching of reading has not helped pupils to improve their skills sufficiently well. Teachers' efforts to encourage pupils to read widely are not yet having the required impact.

- In mathematics lessons, teachers do not routinely use mathematical vocabulary to help pupils understand different mathematical terms. In this and in a range of subjects, there is a lack of regular reminders to pupils to use correct grammar. This is one reason why results in the grammar test in 2013 were weak.
- Teaching is improving quickly, including the teaching of reading. Much good teaching was observed and a little that is outstanding and this mirrors that seen by school leaders. Teachers are giving more attention to reading through daily guided reading sessions and regular teaching of phonics. Progress is quickening. Teaching assistants are used well to support individuals and different groups, making a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Teachers skilfully make sure that no group is left for long without ensuring that they can manage their tasks. This ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates. They check pupils' ability to do particular tasks but sometimes the pupils are not challenged enough in mathematics.
- Teachers plan work well, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the poor quality of some of the large electronic screens reduces the impact of this good preparation as pupils find it difficult to see the text.
- Staff conduct lessons in a calm atmosphere. The use of individual whiteboards keeps pupils active as they record answers or note down ideas.
- Marking is effective, values what pupils have written and provides examples of how they can improve. Pupils know what they have to do to get to the next level, but some of the information is written in adult language and difficult for pupils to understand.
- Classroom environments support pupils' efforts, for example by providing examples of interesting vocabulary they can use. Teachers expect and obtain high standards in the presentation of work helping pupils' accuracy. Homework tasks linked to current class work contribute to pupils' interest in, and understanding of, their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils quickly realise they are valued and respected as individuals and in turn respect adults and other pupils. They come to lessons punctually. They are eager to participate in all that is on offer and keen to make progress.
- Pupils behave well in the breakfast club. In lessons, very occasionally, chatter creeps in which can reduce concentration and slow progress. Pupils are polite and courteous and enjoy their work. Records of behaviour and pupils' own comments indicate that behaviour is typically good. There have been no racist incidents recorded.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils' punctuality indicates their enjoyment of school. They say teachers help and encourage them.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school gives good attention to making pupils aware of their own safety. They know that the internet can be dangerous and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know about different forms of bullying but indicate it is not a problem. They know what to do should it ever occur.

- The school council considers school issues and charities pupils can support. Pupils have raised money for several. They enjoy the range of clubs which are available and these extend and widen their interests. The sports clubs assist their healthy approach to living.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Some teachers responsible for subjects are inexperienced because they have quite new responsibilities. They are gaining in their skills in identifying strengths and aspects that need development and they are taking action. However, the full impact of the work to tackle the difference in attainment between pupils entitled to pupil premium funding and those who are not, is not yet evident.
- Using a range of methods, for example looking at work, senior staff maintain a good oversight over teaching and learning. There is, however, variability in the quality of analysis arising from these.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work well together and are benefiting from each other's experience. Correct priorities for further development have been agreed and the school improvement plan is well written. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.
- Performance arrangements are well organised, clearly linked to the *Teachers' Standards* and targets for individual staff worded clearly. It is easy to know when targets are reached because of the clear link to data.
- Pupil premium money has been spent wisely on extra staff and teaching materials but the impact of the extra funding in narrowing the attainment gap between those pupils entitled to the funding and their peers has not yet closed.
- The use of the sports grant on the deployment of a specialist physical education teacher has resulted in more sports clubs and more pupils taking part in extra sport. It has helped teachers' skills because the specialist works alongside them.
- While a broad range of experiences is provided, in several classes there are insufficient opportunities for science investigation. This leads to pupils not having enough skills in tackling experiments for themselves. The school has recognised the lack of progress in reading and adjusted the timetable to allow extra time for reading studies. Latest data indicate accelerated progress in reading. The good range of well attended extra-curricular activities supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Amongst other advice, the local authority has supported staff well in judging lesson quality and provided support in English and mathematics.
- The school's good links with other schools facilitates joint training and sharing successful practice together. It has good links with parents. Pupils have equal opportunities and there is no evidence of discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The work of the governing body is hampered because there are unfilled vacancies. It finds it difficult to recruit new members and is four governors short.
 - The new Chair of the Governing Body visits regularly and so is well informed of developments.

Some governors have links to subjects and make occasional visits to keep abreast of progress but they have not managed finances well enough to ensure that poor resources, where evident, are improved. A few governors understand data enabling them to question and challenge the school and to help fellow governors' understanding.

- Governors know how the sports grant has been spent and its positive effect on sport in the school but they are less familiar with the impact of pupil premium spending.
- Governors know the quality of teaching and the performance arrangements for staff and their link to the *Teachers' Standards* and pay. Governors can explain what is being done to improve the school and tackle underperformance.
- Safeguarding arrangements are considered well and meet current government requirements. The extra provision for pupils before and after school is well managed.

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

Unique reference number	122045
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	430718

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	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann-Marie Lawson
Headteacher	Louise Blair
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2012
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