

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Todholes Road, Cleator Moor, Cumbria, CA25 5DG

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Following a good start in Reception, most pupils make outstanding progress by the end of Year 2 and good and improving progress during Key Stage 2.
- Described by a member of staff as 'an excellent role model who leads by example' the headteacher knows how successful the school can be. All staff share her vision and passion and work extremely well together as a team.
- School leaders, including governors, have taken very firm steps to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The school continues to get better.
- The curriculum provides an extensive range of stimulating experiences within and beyond school which the pupils enjoy. Staff ensure that every opportunity is taken to allow pupils to broaden their horizons and flourish.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure tasks are pitched at just the right level of difficulty for all pupils. Teachers' marking is particularly strong and helps pupils to improve their work.
- The teaching of reading is very effective and pupils develop a love of books from an early age. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education.
- The excellent system for checking pupils' progress ensures highly effective support is swiftly put into place when needed.
- Behaviour is good. This is a very caring school and pupils say they feel safe. Pupils who have difficulty controlling their actions are managed effectively and rarely disturb others.
- The school works extremely well with outside agencies to support pupils and their families.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently outstanding.
- The school recognises the need for teachers and teaching assistants to see more outstanding practice in other schools.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 17 lessons. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with: school staff; groups of pupils; senior staff and leaders with responsibility for a specific subject; members of the governing body; parents and; a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, its development plans, records of pupils' standards and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour, and pupils' work in their books.
- There were 32 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) which the inspectors took into account alongside the responses to the school's own parental survey. Twenty-four responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff were taken into account.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Patrick's is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is much higher than that found nationally. (This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families.)
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is in line with that found nationally.
- The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- There are increasing numbers of pupils joining the school other than at the usual times.
- Since the previous inspection there have been changes to staffing in Years 3 and 4. There have been some new appointments to the teaching staff and senior leadership team.
- The school is a partner in the Western Lakes Teaching School Alliance. It takes a leading role in providing support for other schools, including the development of newly qualified teachers.
- The school is a national support school. The headteacher is a National Leader in Education and the deputy headteacher is a Specialist Leader in Education.
- The school has achieved Arts Mark Gold and International Schools awards.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding in order to raise attainment and achievement further by:
 - ensuring teachers provide even more opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy and ICT skills across subjects
 - providing teachers in all key stages with more opportunities to share outstanding practice within and beyond the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are significantly below what is expected for their age, especially in reading, writing and number. They make good progress in all areas of learning and in their personal development because of skilful teaching and a very supportive learning environment both in the classroom and also outdoors. This prepares them well for learning in Year 1.
- In the 2013 Year 1 reading test, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was an improvement on the previous year and once again higher than the national average.
- Outstanding progress in Key Stage 1 ensures that pupils reach standards that are usually slightly above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Published results in 2013 show a decline in standards with too few pupils making better than expected progress by the time pupils left school. This outcome was directly linked to staffing issues when these pupils were in Years 3 and 4. The school has taken swift action to address this issue.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books across Key Stage 2 which shows rapid acceleration in pupils' progress across reading, writing and mathematics due to now consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching. As pupils move through the school increasing numbers make expected and above expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good, and some better, progress because their different needs are quickly identified. Good support from teachers, teaching assistants and external agencies helps each of them to make progress in reaching their targets.
- From their differing starting points, those who join the school later than at the usual times during Key Stages 1 and 2 also make good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress. The very few who speak English as an additional language make at least good progress. The most able pupils make good progress and there are currently an increasing proportion of pupils working at Level 6 across core subjects by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school provides good support for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, which demonstrates its commitment to equal opportunities. Assessment information shows that gaps in attainment between eligible pupils and their peers reduce as pupils move up through the school. In the 2013 national tests the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals in Year 6 was two terms behind their classmates in mathematics and writing and one term behind in reading. Nevertheless, good progress overall was made given their starting points.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good with some examples of excellent teaching which helps pupils to make good, and some better, progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled in the teaching of phonics (matching letters to the sounds that they make). This was seen when a group of Reception children came together and demonstrated how well they recognise letters and the sounds they make. With their index finger in the air, they practised writing the letter 'b', remembering to go down the boot and around the toes. When the teacher told them that 'b' is for 'boot' one pupil eagerly called out saying 'and 'b' is for ball'. Excellent progress was made by all pupils.
- Similarly excellent progress was made in a Year 4 mathematics lesson. Pupils were being introduced to subtracting numbers with two digits. Two pupils took on the role of the teacher and, using the interactive whiteboard, they demonstrated their understanding of this method. There was laughter and much excitement as pupils then moved into small groups to embark on work which the teacher had carefully planned with the teaching assistant to ensure pupils of all

abilities were challenged.

- Opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills have been extended since the previous inspection. Every opportunity is taken to celebrate pupils' writing in different genres through displays on walls in school, in community venues and on the school website. Year 6 boys enthusiastically told an inspector about the roles they had taken as reporters, editors and photographers for their school newspaper. Pupils enjoy such opportunities to write and are keen readers too. 'Books are like a film, but better' one Year 6 boy told an inspector.
- Effective teamwork by teachers and skilled teaching assistants, guarantees a high level of support for all groups of pupils, including the most able.
- Teachers' marking is of a particularly high standard and this helps pupils to correct and improve their work. In pupils' books, there is evidence of an ongoing written dialogue between teachers and pupils which is developing the ability of pupils to check their own understanding of how well they are doing.
- There are not always enough opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy and ICT skills across different subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This view is shared by pupils, parents and staff. Throughout the inspection, behaviour was good in lessons and around the school. Pupils show respect for each other, adults around them and visitors to the school. School records show that this is the norm.
- Since the previous inspection a new behaviour policy has been introduced to which pupils have contributed their own ideas. At the start of the week, pupils decide on how they would like to spend their 'Golden Time' and this is a real incentive for those who find sustaining appropriate behaviour difficult. Those who lose their 'Golden Time' have to record the reasons for this, encouraging them to learn from their mistakes.
- The school has developed older pupils to act as role-models. For example, the 'Behaviour Scouts' carry their clipboards around at lunchtimes to record examples of exemplary behaviour which are then rewarded.
- The nurture group and sensory room provide bespoke support for small groups of pupils and individuals who need extra help from time-to-time. The learning mentor plays a key role in building positive links between school and home.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in school and also how to make the right choices to be able to stay safe within and beyond their local community. Prior to trips and residential visits, pupils undertake their own analysis of risks they might encounter and how to avoid danger.
- Bullying is very rare indeed but there are appropriate systems in place when this occurs. Records illustrate that these procedures are followed.
- The primary school sport funding is used to provide additional sporting activities, including dance sessions, for pupils. Some of these activities are taught by external coaches. This helps to improve pupils' well-being as well as teachers' skills, so that they can teach a wider range of sporting activities to a higher standard and more pupils can take part.
- The vast majority of parents make sure that their children get to school on time. What is more, pupils' attendance is above average and improving further which reflects the pupils' enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and the governing body are relentless in their drive to continually improve the school. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has introduced some new staff to the school. This has led to the establishment of an extremely talented team of dedicated staff who put the pupils and their families at the heart of all they do. Inadequate and weaker teaching has been eradicated. All groups of pupils make at least good progress during

their time at St Patrick's and there is clear evidence that the proportion making outstanding progress increasing.

- Senior and middle leaders use regular lesson observations, impromptu visits to classrooms and scrutinies of pupils' work to very effectively check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Staff are not content with teaching which is less than good. This is a key factor in why the quality of teaching is now consistently good and improving.
- Tailored staff training is in place to rapidly drive whole-school improvement. Staff who are new to the school, including newly qualified teachers, settle very quickly and are extremely well supported through training opportunities both within the school and beyond. Senior staff also support newly qualified teachers from other schools and help schools in developing robust systems to accurately check pupils' progress.
- Teachers visit other schools but the school recognises the need to increase further the opportunities for them to share outstanding practice both across the school and beyond.
- Staff are set challenging targets which are directly linked to pay awards.
- The local authority provides effective guidance to the school with light-touch support as there is a clear recognition of the skills of senior leaders and their ability to develop their own school and to support other schools.
- The curriculum now provides a wide range of learning activities and the pupils particularly enjoy their topic work, art, music, sport, opportunities to learn a foreign language and trips across and beyond Cumbria. This has had a significant impact on nurturing pupils' love for learning.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional and supports pupils to make an excellent contribution to the positive atmosphere in school. Many classes have active links with schools overseas.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a very accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and the strengths and priorities of the school. This is because they are kept extremely well informed by the headteacher, they are regular visitors and volunteers at the school and they canvass the views of parents. Governors regularly attend training to develop their expertise which ensures that they have a very thorough understanding of school performance data, so that they can continue to challenge and support the school exceptionally well. The governing body makes sure that those pupils known to be eligible for pupil-premium funding continue to be very effectively supported. Statutory duties, including financial and safeguarding requirements, are fulfilled. Governors fully understand the links between staff performance management, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and make sure that teachers' progression through the pay scale is linked to how effective they are.

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	132835
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	433277

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rita Edge
Headteacher	Emma Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2010
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