

# St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Littledale Avenue, Heysham, Morecambe, LA3 2ER

## Inspection dates

12-13 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- Achievement is good. Pupils' progress has accelerated across all classes in English and mathematics. Pupils make good, and sometimes exceptional, progress from their starting points.
- The achievement of the school's substantial groups of pupils from Gypsy Roma and Irish Traveller heritage is very good.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers are successful in meeting individual pupils' needs.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is of good quality and helps children get off to a flying start when they join school.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils from different backgrounds work harmoniously together and behave well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school's leaders, teachers and support staff work effectively and consistently as a team to support the learning of all pupils.
- Governors discharge their duties very effectively. They have an in-depth knowledge of the school and provide the right balance of support and challenge to the headteacher.
- The school's ethos underpins every aspect of its work. Pupils are taught to be tolerant, resilient and thoughtful members of society.
- The headteacher has secured the confidence of the communities the school serves; she works tirelessly with pupils and their families to remove obstacles to achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportions of pupils making exceptional progress in all areas of their learning are not yet high enough.
- Although improving, attendance remains low for some pupils.
- Some pupils do not form letters correctly. This affects the fluency of their handwriting.
- More opportunities are needed for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills.
- Pupils do not always respond fully to feedback on how to improve their work.
- Sometimes leaders' advice to teachers on how to improve is not specific enough.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, including one observed jointly with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. In addition, they made several brief visits to other lessons and observed individual and small group sessions being taught by support staff. They also visited assemblies.
- Inspectors visited the extra-curricular gymnastics club run by the headteacher and also watched part of a training session on ball skills that was delivered by visiting coaches.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, the learning mentor, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, two School Improvement Advisers from the local authority and a representative from Lancashire's Gypsy Roma and Traveller Service.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils from all classes. An inspector interviewed the school council about its work.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and considered the work in their books over time. They listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents. These included the school's records of attendance and achievement of pupils currently in school, minutes of governing body meetings, records of the school's monitoring of teaching and appraisal arrangements for teachers.
- Inspectors had informal discussions with parents and grandparents in school. There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be considered. Inspectors considered responses to the questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Shirley Gornall, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.*

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- An above average proportion of pupils are supported through the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Around two thirds of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Over half of the pupils in school are Gypsy Roma or Travellers of Irish heritage. Many of these pupils travel out of the area for extended periods of time during the school year. An above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language; their first languages are Polish and Spanish.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is much higher than the national average, at around two fifths of the school population.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A higher proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school at times other than the normal transition points than is the case nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- When it had its last full inspection, in September 2012, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. It received three monitoring inspections from one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The school was making reasonable progress towards the removal of serious weaknesses at each of these inspections. The school has received appropriate and effective support from local authority advisers and consultants.

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

- Improve teaching so that more pupils make outstanding progress by:
  - ensuring that pupils reflect and act upon the high quality feedback that teachers provide for them
  - taking every opportunity to improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar, including through emphasising these skills in pupils' writing across the curriculum
  - ensuring that all pupils are taught to form their letters correctly so that they can write with greater speed and fluency
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology.
- Improve leadership by:
  - refining the feedback given by leaders to teachers on the quality of their work, to include more subject-specific guidance
  - continuing to develop strong links with the different communities the school serves so as to raise attendance and full participation in the life of the school still further.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement shows sustained improvement as a result of leaders and teachers understanding the precise needs of individual pupils and building effective teams around children to make sure that nothing gets in the way of them making progress.
- There is variability in children's access to educational settings before they join school. Children enter the Reception class with skills that are below, and often well below, those that are expected. Their skills are typically weaker in communication and language and in personal, social and emotional development than their peers nationally. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress in response to high quality teaching, characterised by plenty of adult interaction and conversation with them. Children consequently enter Key Stage 1 with skills that are still below, but closer to, the national average.
- In Key Stage 1, most pupils make good progress. The profile of attainment has risen over the last three years from significantly below the national average to similar to the national standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils develop and consolidate their skills so that they leave primary education with standards similar to those found nationally. Virtually all pupils make expected progress and an increasing number exceed this. In 2013, the school's performance in reading and writing was stronger than in mathematics when considering the proportion making outstanding progress. Inspection evidence indicates that progress in mathematics has strengthened considerably, with some Year 6 pupils confidently tackling Level 6 work.
- In 2013, a smaller proportion of pupils than nationally achieved a higher level in the English punctuation, spelling and grammar test.
- All groups of pupils make at least good progress overall, including those with special educational needs who flourish in response to quality class teaching and small group or individual interventions. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged effectively; in all classes teachers adapt work effectively to meet the needs of different groups.
- The attainment of pupils of Gypsy Roma and Irish Traveller heritage is significantly better than that of these groups nationally.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium achieve very well in comparison with their peers nationally, on average performing two terms ahead of them. In 2013, pupils eligible for the pupil premium also performed about two terms ahead of their peers in school. This success testifies to the wisdom of the school's spending, including the appointment of additional staff to enable the 'team around the child' approach, and in the purchase of high quality resources to boost the teaching of literacy in school and through work that pupils and their families can access away from school.
- Pupils' reading skills develop quickly because teachers and support staff teach phonics (the relationship between letters and the sound they make) consistently well in a systematic way, monitoring individual progress carefully and revisiting any concepts that have not been mastered. Pupils develop the literacy skills they need to prepare them for the next stage in their education, along with a love of reading.
- Pupils' writing skills are generally developed well with regard to composition. However, there are weaknesses in the letter formation and handwriting of some pupils, particularly where there have been gaps in their schooling. These weaknesses impede the fluency and speed of their writing.
- Pupils' numeracy skills are developed sequentially, with good links to the science curriculum. There was less evidence during the inspection of pupils' capability in using information and communication technology.

**The quality of teaching****is good**

- Teachers have worked extremely hard to develop consistently good practice across the school. Pupils now make good progress in all classes and are absolutely clear as to what teachers expect from them. 'Non-negotiables' are insisted upon in all classes and form a bedrock on which effective teaching and learning has been built.
- Learning proceeds in a productive but relaxed way; pupils comment that they like lessons where they have fun. A pupil in the Reception class was so excited about his phonics work that he exclaimed, 'I'm full of words today!' Similarly, an older pupil commented that 'writing is my passion.' Teachers are adept at capturing pupils' interests and building on these golden moments.
- Teaching maintains pupils' interest. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways. Collaborative working results in good progress; pupils are able to see the strengths and weaknesses in each other's work and give advice. Most pupils are able to concentrate on individual tasks, too.
- Teachers ask thoughtful questions that encourage pupils to think for themselves. They modify their questioning if one approach is not working and never lose patience.
- Teaching assistants and volunteers, including governors who regularly support classes, make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. They are very skilled, use the strategies modelled by the class teachers and help pupils who have gaps in their learning and those who need to be further extended.
- Teachers have a secure knowledge of each pupil's skills and talents. They are adept at planning lessons that build on these, including for those pupils who leave and return to school during the course of the year, or start their formal education at a different time from their peers. Planning shows that teachers help pupils build their skills sequentially through varied activities. Creative approaches are used to make learning enjoyable. For instance, in an English lesson, Year 5 pupils relished building complex sentences by rolling dice that led to random selections of connectives and subjects that they then linked together ingeniously.
- Teachers make pupils' learning relevant by building on topics of interest. Year 1 pupils enjoyed talking about the 'pirate books' that they had made and proudly displayed on the corridor, and explained how the flaps and rods worked to make their books exciting.
- In many lessons, and in individual support sessions, the school's values are meaningfully reinforced. Teachers and support staff find ways of engaging pupils in conversations that emphasise the importance of empathy, tolerance and perseverance.
- The quality of teachers' marking is consistently excellent in pupils' literacy and numeracy books. Teachers provide detailed and insightful feedback to pupils, with clear prompts as to what should be done to move on to the next stage in learning. Frequently, feedback includes a question to an individual pupil. Not all pupils respond fully to these and so opportunities for fruitful individual dialogue are sometimes missed. On some occasions, the marking of other work is less effective because teachers overlook spelling errors of key subject vocabulary.

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

- Pupils from different backgrounds work and play harmoniously together and respect each other's feelings. They are friendly, sociable and good-humoured. Their behaviour in lessons and at social times is good and most pupils have impeccable manners when speaking to adults.
- The school helps pupils who have particular behavioural, emotional or social difficulties to manage themselves well. Staff discuss problems fully with pupils and help them to build self-esteem that underpins positive relationships in school. The school's learning mentor has created good opportunities for older pupils to support younger ones as positive role models.
- Most pupils are enthusiastic learners. They show perseverance in their work and are keen to answer, and ask, thought-provoking questions. This was the case among Year 2 pupils who were keen to find out how nocturnal animals' lives were affected by predators. They held speculative

conversations about this among themselves without teacher direction. Year 6 pupils showed considerable resilience in working out which strategies helped them to solve division problems.

- Pupils take pride in their work as evident in the many vibrant displays around the school and in their work books. They willingly talk about their work and explain which pieces give them greatest pleasure.
- Attendance is low overall; however, there is an improving picture due to the school's close working with families and assiduous monitoring of the whereabouts of children of Gypsy Roma and Irish Traveller heritage when they are travelling away from Heysham. The attendance of both these groups is above the national level for their groups. When they are resident in Heysham, the pupils' attendance levels compare well with those of their peers in school and are in line with national figures. The school encourages families to register their children for formal education in the locations to which they travel and is proactive in providing homework packs and online learning programs to reduce the impact of extended absences on pupils' learning. Parents appreciate this provision.
- The school's rewards for good attendance motivate pupils. They wear their gold stars with pride and are punctual to school and to lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. This is demonstrated through improvements to the building, including the remodelling of the reception area. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They discuss various forms of bullying through their personal, social and health education lessons and are confident about how to respond should bullying occur; pupils say that the only bullying in school is occasional name-calling, which is not tolerated by themselves or the staff.
- The school is rigorous in monitoring the whereabouts of any pupils who are absent; this includes pupils who are travelling. Appropriate processes are followed for children deemed to be missing education.

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

- The headteacher, according to parents, staff and pupils, always 'puts children first.' She has developed a team which has the same philosophy: no step is too much trouble in making a difference to a child or their family; every child is an individual and every child is highly valued. The deputy headteacher, Early Years Foundation Stage leader and subject leaders work effectively with the headteacher to ensure that pupils benefit from an interesting curriculum that helps develop pupils' basic skills in a sequential way. As a result of the determined and principled leadership of the senior leaders, teaching has improved and achievement has risen solidly across the school.
- Through their positive relationships with the local private nursery, children's centre and high schools, leaders ensure that pupils are well supported at transition points as they join and leave the school. A measure of the school's success is that in 2013, the full cohort of Year 6 pupils continued into secondary education. Cross-phase projects such as older students from a local high school mentoring St Patrick's pupils are helping to raise aspirations and encourage continuity in formal education.
- Subject leaders for literacy and numeracy have been instrumental in driving up standards through setting a framework of expectations for teachers, monitoring their work, auditing resources and contributing to good spending decisions, for instance in purchasing online programs and reading comprehension packs that enable pupils, including those who are travelling, to continue their education.
- Clear direction, tenacious leadership and manageable policies have resulted in consistently good teaching. The senior leaders have a consultative approach that has resulted in staff understanding and fully supporting the school's improvement drive. Teachers have benefited from training, coaching and opportunities to observe colleagues and to receive constructive feedback on their own practice. As one put it, 'we work hard and it's worth it because we can see the benefits in children's enjoyment and progress.'

- Pupil premium funding is spent prudently, including through paying for learning mentor and teaching assistant support for individual and small group interventions. Pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress because their individual needs are skilfully met.
- Primary sports funding is being used to buy in coaching support and purchase equipment so that pupils can enjoy a range of activities. They relish the gymnastics club that is run by the headteacher and also the opportunities provided by staff from Morecambe Football Club.
- The school serves and celebrates a diverse community. Pupils subscribe to the school values which are explicit in all classrooms and on the website. During the inspection, pupils focused on 'thoughtfulness' and made sensitive links between religious teachings and their own behaviour. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong, reflect on their own choices of behaviour and willingly take on leadership roles, including as school councillors. Links with the parish are strong. The school is twinned with a school in Africa and this helps pupils to develop a broader cultural awareness.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors bring a variety of skills and shared dedication to the school. They have a detailed understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupil performance, including the performance of those eligible for the pupil premium. Through the standards and effectiveness committee, they keep the school's improvement plan under careful review.
  - Governors understand the school's strengths and development priorities and make a valuable contribution to its life, including through regularly visiting classes. A governor with science teaching expertise is supporting the review of the science curriculum. Governors are both knowledgeable and approachable; they have good links with a range of local services.
  - Governors ensure that the appraisal of staff follows a clear policy and that decisions about staff pay are linked to pupils' progress. Governors receive regular training to keep abreast of developments. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including with regard to safeguarding and ensure that equal opportunities are promoted and that no discrimination or harassment is tolerated.



## 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>	119583
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	426033

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>	172
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Theresa Moore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Hind
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 September 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 851766
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