

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Whitefriars, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 7BW

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Since the last inspection, pupils' achievement has improved considerably. It is now regularly above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- All groups of pupils make good progress because teaching has improved and is now consistently good and sometimes outstanding.
- There has been significant improvement in the provision for Reception children. They make rapid progress because of well-planned and exciting learning activities.
- Strong guidance for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that pupils get on very well together. The school's mission statement and values underpin the excellent relationships and respect amongst adults and pupils.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and, as a result, attendance is above average. They feel safe and well cared for and are always warmly welcomed into the school's family atmosphere. Pupils are unfailingly polite and well behaved.
- Determined and rigorous action led by the headteacher is resulting in significant improvement in all aspects of the school's work. She is well supported by senior leaders and governors.
- The school community is now stable after a period of very high staff turnover. Everyone is fully committed to the vision of the school becoming outstanding.
- The local authority is continuing to offer the school a good level of support.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers, although effective over time, have not yet developed all the skills they need to help pupils learn as rapidly as they might.
- Very occasionally, a small minority of pupils are not fully engaged in lessons because the task is not at the correct level for them.
- Marking is not specific enough in telling pupils how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed nine teachers. They also talked to pupils about their work and heard individual pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6 read.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including systems for checking progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's analysis of how well it is doing and how it plans to improve. Records of monitoring the quality of teaching and the minutes of the governing body meetings were also examined.
- The inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and ages.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, school staff and groups of pupils. Individual pupils were spoken to in lessons and around the school. A meeting took place with a school adviser from the local authority.
- Questionnaires from 12 members of staff were analysed. The inspectors took account of the views expressed in the 47 online responses from Parent View and comments from parents during informal meetings before school during the inspection.

Inspection team

Anna Sketchley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

George Long

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Patrick's is an average-sized primary school. Pupils attend from a wide area.
- All pupils are taught in single-age classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding (pupil premium) is average. This is funding for children in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. A very small number are in the early stages of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a breakfast club run by the school.
- A privately run pre-school operates on the site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality of teaching further so that a higher proportion of outstanding teaching enables pupils to make even quicker progress by:
 - using the outstanding practice that already exists in the school as a model to improve the quality of teaching
 - ensuring that teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing during the lesson and adapt tasks when they are either too easy or too difficult to ensure that pupils remain on task
 - further improve marking by making comments very specific for pupils so that they know exactly how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with knowledge and skills mostly typical for their age, although some aspects of communication and language and mathematics are below those expected.
- The Reception class offers a warm and well organised start to school and children quickly become confident in their surroundings. Carefully planned and exciting and stimulating learning and development opportunities support their good progress. By the end of Reception, attainment is now above that typical for their age.
- Good progress in Reception is now successfully built upon in Years 1 and 2. Checks on pupils' progress for Year 2 last year and evidence gathered during the inspection show that standards have improved and are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Achievement in writing is particularly strong. For example, more able pupils in Year 1 write interesting sentences using correct punctuation and spelling.
- Last year, the national phonics (linking sounds and letters) screening check in Year 1 showed pupils' attainment to be above average.
- The school's strong reading culture ensures that pupils now read very well and reach high standards. Pupils told inspectors that 'the school thinks reading is very important'. Younger pupils use their phonic knowledge well to tackle unfamiliar words and confidently correct their errors. Older pupils read with great fluency and expression. They discuss their knowledge of authors and the different types of books they enjoy and ably explain settings and characters.
- Training for teachers in a range of new approaches for teaching reading, writing and mathematics has been very successful in raising standards across the school. Appropriate topics and texts for boys have helped to raise their achievement in reading and writing.
- All groups of pupils make good progress. Attainment in all three subject areas has been at least above average and sometimes significantly above in 2012 and 2013. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows this is being sustained in the current Year 6.
- Tasks for the more able pupils are helping them reach a higher level throughout the school than is nationally expected. These include challenging investigations and number puzzles in mathematics, and the opportunity for all pupils to write at length during the weekly 'Big Write' sessions. The number of pupils reaching this higher level in Year 6 is above the national average.
- School information shows that the gap in achievement for pupils currently receiving additional support from pupil premium funding is closing in all year groups. By Year 6, they are reaching standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are similar to those of the other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and the small minority who are in the early stages of learning English are well supported in the classroom by teachers and teaching assistants. These groups make good progress from their starting points, reaching standards close to those of the same groups nationally. Some pupils reach above average standards.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and pupils' progress shows that it is good over time. However, it is not outstanding because teachers have not yet had enough opportunities to improve their practice through observing outstanding teaching.
- Pupils are very clear about what is expected of them because teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour. Lessons start promptly, no time is wasted and the pace of lessons is sharp.
- Pupils are interested and eager to learn because information, topics and lessons capture their interest and imagination. Data projectors and interactive whiteboards are used well for this purpose.
- Teachers often plan lessons to involve pupils' own interests while making sure that essential

skills are covered. Pupils' books and topic folders in Year 5 showed how their interest in mountains had been used as a stimulus for writing. The school invested for a short time in a climbing wall in the playground. Pupils wrote avidly about their experience of climbing on the wall.

- Pupils are very clear about what they are to learn in a lesson and enjoy the challenging tasks they are set. They work diligently and if they are stuck, they know what to do to help themselves. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils readily found 'number lines' and 'number squares' and used information on the classroom wall to help them with their multiplication task.
- Teachers' questioning is usually successful in extending pupils' thinking and encourages them to explain their answers, especially in mathematics.
- However, occasionally teachers do not ensure that pupils fully understand what they are learning and that tasks are at the correct level. When tasks are either too easy or too difficult, a few pupils lose interest and do not learn as quickly as they should.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils who find some aspects of learning difficult.
- Marking has improved since the last inspection and pupils are given time to respond to comments made by their teachers. However, sometimes comments are not specific enough and do not give enough examples to help pupils make the necessary improvement in their learning.
- A wide variety of well-planned homework tasks gives pupils good opportunities to practise their skills at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It has been sustained since the last inspection. Incidents of challenging behaviour and exclusions are very rare.
- The school's mission statement and values, and its commitment to being a Rights Respecting School, make a significant contribution to the strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This fully supports pupils' good achievement and prepares them well for the next stage in their education.
- During the inspection, pupils' attitudes were warm and friendly towards visitors. They were unfailingly polite and well behaved around the building, in assembly and on the playground.
- Pupils say they look forward to coming to school because 'it is so friendly and learning is fun'.
- They have a good attitude to learning and work well at their tasks in lessons, even when unsupervised. On a very few occasions, when tasks do not meet their needs well enough, they sometimes become disengaged but they do not disrupt the learning of others.
- Pupils play a full part in the life of the school and thoroughly enjoy all the responsibilities they are given. These include being, for example, school council members, play leaders with younger pupils, house captains and librarians, and editing the school newsletter.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good and pupils say they feel very safe in school. This view is fully supported by a large majority of parents who expressed their views.
- Pupils have a good understanding of internet safety and are very clear about how to deal with any kind of bullying should it arise. They say with conviction that there is none in the school but that they know exactly what to do and who to go to should they be worried or need help. School records and provision confirm that their views are accurate.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has worked relentlessly to secure the necessary improvement and has successfully dealt with all previously identified issues.
- Senior leaders, staff, the governing body and the local authority have fully supported the drive to improve and, together with the headteacher, they have the determination and ambition to

fulfil their vision of becoming an outstanding school.

- Accurate plans for future developments show that the school knows exactly what needs to be done to secure further improvement and its recent success proves that it has the capacity to do this.
- Strategies implemented to improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics are managed well by middle leaders. Some middle leaders are new to their posts but there are comprehensive plans to support their further development.
- Rapid improvements in teaching have already ensured that pupils' achievement has risen significantly. This is because teachers' performance is rigorously measured against national standards and training needs are identified quickly.
- However, the skills of some teachers are not yet effective enough to secure the outstanding teaching that would enable pupils to make even quicker progress.
- Thorough six-weekly tracking of pupils' progress and regular pupil progress meetings ensure that teachers know their pupils very well indeed and plan what they need to do next very carefully.
- The stimulating way different subjects are taught is a very strong feature. Through such topics as 'The Mystery Traveller' and 'Rivers and Mountains' key skills, understanding and knowledge are made meaningful to pupils. They have plenty of opportunities to practise their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.
- A good range of clubs are offered including various sports, dance, choir, chess and the Children's Rosary Club, along with opportunities to play a wide variety of instruments. Visitors and visits, such as becoming a Victorian for the day at a local museum, all enhance pupils' experiences and make a valuable contribution to their social development.
- Additional funding for sport is being effectively used to provide further training for teachers, high quality sports provision through a sports coaching partnership and a wider range of sports. The impact is already being seen in pupils' enjoyment and improvement of their physical skills and the take-up of sports after school.
- Strong partnerships with local schools, the local Catholic community, a link with a school in the Cameroon, external agencies and parent involvement all support and enrich pupils' learning and development very well.
- Equal opportunities for different groups of pupils are promoted well and the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. The governing body and the school staff make sure that safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously and fully meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have attended a wide range of specific governor training courses and made regular visits to the school. This has improved their skills and their knowledge of the school's performance and its strengths and areas for development. Governors now ask searching and challenging questions as well as support the school's future improvement. They carefully link teachers' performance with pay and the progress pupils make and are fully aware of what has been done to address past underperformance. They set rigorous objectives for the headteacher, monitor them throughout the year and review them annually. Governors have a robust knowledge of the spending and impact of additional funding for both pupil premium and primary school sport. They carry out their statutory duties diligently.

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	116390
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	441460

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cecilia White
Headteacher	Paula Dix
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 November 2012
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