

# St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Stanley Street, Consett, County Durham, DH8 6LN

**Inspection dates** 9–10 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The energy and high ambition of the inspirational headteacher is effective in eliminating past underachievement. The recently strengthened senior leadership team is fully aware of what is needed to sustain the substantial gains made.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils of all ages achieve well, including those who are disabled, those with special educational needs, the disadvantaged and those learning English as an additional language.
- Teaching is effective, because it is well led and managed and all staff expect pupils to work hard.
- Early years provision is good with children making an excellent start in the Nursery class. Relationships with parents are a real strength.
- Behaviour is good with pupils' positive attitudes having a strong impact on their rising achievement. Pupils feel confident and express know staff will resolve any worries that they may have.
- The interesting curriculum meets the needs of the pupils extremely well. This is bolstered by pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governance is very supportive and robust in its challenge. Governors have an accurate view of the school's performance.
- Together leaders and managers, including governors, are an effective team improving the school's performance, particularly in raising pupils' achievement and improving the quality of teaching.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough teaching of the highest quality to produce a pattern of pupils' sustained rapid progress and high achievement.
- Occasionally, teaching over time fails to improve pupils' skills in writing, and does not always provide clear steps for further improvement for pupils' work and inspire them with thought-provoking ideas.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons, including seven paired observations and work scrutiny carried out with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the inclusion coordinator. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and undertook learning walks around the school in order to check the quality of what is provided for pupils.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils and had discussions with the headteacher, middle leaders, staff, governors and the local authority educational development partner.
- The inspectors also examined a range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, the school's view of how well it is doing, the monitoring of staff performance, the school's improvement plan and records relating to pupils' progress and behaviour.
- The inspectors took account of 59 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), two letters from parents and 27 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

## Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Pattinson	Additional Inspector
Alan Sergison	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average sized primary school.
- A very large majority of the pupils are of White British backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Currently, there is higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium funding. This funding is for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The provision in the early years Nursery class is part-time.
- The school provides a breakfast club each day and an after-school club four days per week. for school pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher took up post in January 2014. Six new teachers took up post in September 2014, including a deputy headteacher and an inclusion coordinator.

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

- Make certain that more teaching is inspiring and thought-provoking throughout the school, so that pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics continues to accelerate rapidly and further boosts pupils' achievement by:
  - sharing the staff expertise and imaginative practice that currently exists in the school even more widely
  - making sure that pupils of all abilities are constantly challenged and set high goals to ensure that they attain the highest levels
  - continually building upon and improving pupils' writing skills to further raise their achievement
  - providing well-defined steps for improvement for pupils of all abilities and needs.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- In the very successful drive to improve and eliminate weaknesses, the headteacher has led the school with passion, vision and gritty determination. She has successfully galvanised staff into an effective team. Together with a very encouraging and resolute governing body, the school has systematically added to its strengths since the previous inspection.
- Middle leaders are increasingly confident in using their expertise to check pupils' performance analytically and address any gaps or inconsistencies. This includes ensuring effective use is made of the extra funding for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, the gaps in attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared with similar groups nationally and with their classmates are being eliminated.
- Rigorous checks made on the school's performance ensure that judgements on the quality of learning and the outcomes for pupils are accurate. Teaching is skilfully and reflectively led and managed. As a result, well thought-out, relevant training programmes continually develop and extend staff skills. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes missed to share more widely the imaginative and effective practice that exists.
- Performance management is well established and ensures that teachers' pay progression is not automatic but rewards good teaching.
- The rich curriculum is well matched to the abilities and needs of all pupils. A wide variety of stimulating experiences help to bring learning to life, often in practical ways. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted effectively. The imaginative use of topics and themes link subjects together in thought-provoking ways and provide pupils with meaningful homework subjects, such as 'studying islands of all sizes and locations in the world'. The provision made for pupils' personal development is an emerging strength, preparing them well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary school sport funding is successfully used in maintaining pupils' high participation rates in, after-school sport, enhancing staff coaching skills and fostering pupils' development of higher skills in a variety of sport, such as netball, dance and keep-fit.
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures meet requirements. Procedures are clearly established and much good practice is adopted in the day-to-day management, care and protection of pupils.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's performance. It offers challenge and support in positive ways and has provided effective training and guidance in developing leaders' and managers' skills to improve their performance.
- The parents' response to the on-line questionnaire reveals overwhelming support for the improvements that have been made since the previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body recognises that in the past governors were not sharply focused enough on checking the school's performance, especially the outcomes for pupils. Governors now have an accurate view, because they challenge and hold leaders and teachers directly to account for the quality of teaching and learning. They participate fully in training when necessary. Governors check the school's information and have an accurate view of strengths and areas for improvement in teaching. They ensure that performance management is robust. They also make certain that the pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils is successfully used, narrowing and eradicating any attainment gaps between groups of pupils.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. At times their conduct is exemplary. They enjoy coming to school which is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils of all ages prosper in the warm, happy and caring school atmosphere. They display good levels of respect for each other, adults and visitors.
- Pupils are hardworking and eager to learn. They are attentive and respond extremely positively to classroom routines and the learning activities arranged for them. Now and then concentration drifts, but this has little impact on the pace or quality of learning.
- At social times, including after school and in the breakfast club at the start of the day, the cheery, friendly atmosphere reflects the school's highly positive school ethos.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All parents in their online responses feel that their children are looked after well. Pupils take much pride in their own and the school's achievements and thrive on the responsibilities that they are given, for example, when older pupils take responsibility for safely collecting litter at the end of morning break and lunchtime. This helps to prepare them well for life in the community around them.
- In discussions, pupils display a good understanding of what constitutes bullying in its various forms, such as cyber bullying. They recount that mean or unkind behaviour is rare and that staff deal with any inappropriate incidents promptly and effectively. Pupils are well informed about risk and danger and are clear about how to keep themselves safe and free from harm.

## The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Teaching is consistently good over time. Now and then it is inspiring and imaginative. Since her appointment, the headteacher has worked doggedly to strengthen the quality of teaching. As a result, improvements are having a very decisive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and their rate of progress in all groups throughout the school.
- High expectations of what pupils of all abilities and backgrounds can achieve are evident throughout the school, as is a clear understanding of the needs of individual pupils. There is an increasing use of methods that encourage pupils to think critically, explain their thoughts and work things out for themselves which capture and hold their interest well.
- When pupils' progress is fastest and their achievement highest:
  - expectations of what each pupil can achieve are consistently high
  - activities are thoughtfully tailored and continually adapted to take into account the learning needs of individual pupils
  - checks and assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding constantly challenge their thinking
  - high-quality relationships in the classroom underpin the non-stop encouragement that all pupils receive.
- When progress is not quite as speedy and, every now and then, a little uneven:
  - methods adopted occasionally lack that vital spark that provokes thinking and deepens understanding
  - activities are not consistently well matched or reshaped to individual needs and interests
  - questions do not test pupils' thinking enough to ensure misunderstandings are prevented or explained
  - marking does not always demand corrections and leave pupils in no doubt as to how to improve.
- In the best practice, well-planned teaching draws out pupils' thinking and imagination. For example, a group of pupils were engrossed in planning a letter of complaint following disappointment with the quality of service first-class passengers on the Titanic received when in the Turkish baths.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and increasingly thoroughly. Pupils are left in no doubt how well they have done against their targets, but opportunities are sometimes missed to make it clear in what ways they can improve their work. Teaching assistants closely follow pupils' thinking, probing and testing their understanding. This includes those with particular learning needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This makes sure that all pupils work at a good pace.

## The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- The vibrant school atmosphere ensures that pupils settle happily, fostering a keenness to learn. Progress is constantly accelerating and achievement rising, because the quality of learning is continually improving.
- In Key Stage 2, progress is accelerating steadily in reading, writing and mathematics as past underachievement is systematically eradicated. Increasing proportions of pupils exceed what is expected of them in reading and mathematics. Standards in the 2014 Year 6 national tests were average in reading and mathematics and broadly average in writing. Decisive action to improve pupils' writing skills is having a positive impact. Inspection evidence reveals that current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving higher than expected standards in writing is predicted to be at least at national levels, closing the gap with reading and mathematics.
- In Key Stage 1, progress is consistently good and constantly quickening as activities are presented in ever more imaginative and thought-provoking ways. The number of pupils reaching expected standards in the 2014 Year 1 screening check on phonics (letters and the sounds they make) was above average. Almost

all of those who resit the test, reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average and rising by the time pupils enter Year 3.

- Since the previous inspection, the school has sharpened its approaches to raising the achievement of the most able pupils. This includes in their grammar, punctuation and spelling. Consequently, increasing proportions of the most able pupils are achieving the highest levels in all subjects and their standards are constantly rising.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve as well as their classmates. In individual cases, their progress is rapid and sustained. This is because of the increasingly accurate checks by staff pinpointing their precise needs and leading to successful planning of these pupils' learning.
- The school is successfully closing attainment gaps between the non-disadvantaged and disadvantaged pupils both within the school and with similar groups nationally. In 2014 national tests at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, disadvantaged pupils were close to one term behind other pupils nationally and under one term behind their classmates. Current school information reveals no gaps in reading and mathematics and the gap closing quickly in writing.
- Pupils read widely and achieve well in their reading across all ages. Pupils display a genuine interest in books and enjoy their reading. At age six, skills are broadly typical for their age and improving steadily. Many older pupils are fluent and confident readers and are well informed about authors and the themes in novels.

### The early years provision is good

- Most children start the Nursery class with skills lower than are typical for their age. Speech, language, social and emotional development are weaknesses. In the Nursery class, all children make a rapid start, especially in developing essential social, emotional and communication skills.
- Children settle happily because the staff provide a caring and supportive atmosphere in which they can work and play. All children are kept safe and secure and behave well. Although progress in the Reception class is less rapid, children achieve well from their starting points. Children enter Year 1 with the confidence and skills to continue to make good progress. This includes those with special educational needs and the most able and talented.
- Teaching is good and often outstanding in the Nursery class. Activities engage children's interests well and ensure that the fundamental skills acquired are transferable to all areas of learning. Good opportunities are provided for children to discover and explore the world around them for themselves, both in and outdoors. Independent skills are promoted particularly well in the Nursery class.
- Staff frequently and accurately check and record children's progress and development. These assessments are used productively to plan activities at the right level, and ensures that all areas of learning are developed equally and effectively. Parents confidently share helpful and relevant information about their children's development with staff.
- Excellent leadership ensures that staff have an accurate grasp of the strengths in the quality of provision and areas for improvement. This ensures that the learning environments are well organised and there is a strong and non-stop emphasis upon nurturing children's interests, skills and abilities.

## 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>	114250
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	442232

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>	421
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Golightly
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jennifer Gill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 503982
<b>Fax number</b>	01207 588918
<b>Email address</b>	consettstpatrick@durhamlearning.net



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