

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School, Walton-le-Dale

Higher Walton Road, Walton-le-Dale, Preston, Lancashire PR5 4HD

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress across key stages 1 and 2, in writing and mathematics, is not good. Pupils do not build on the strong progress that they make in the early years.
- Pupils in key stage 2 do not attain consistently well. The proportion of pupils either reaching or exceeding expected standards in writing and mathematics is low, given their starting points.
- Pupils' progress in writing is limited because teachers do not give pupils opportunities to write at length in different subjects.
- The quality of teaching in key stages 1 and 2 is not consistently good. Too frequently, teachers are not precise enough in identifying the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Some subject leaders do not focus sufficiently well on raising standards in their subject areas.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils, especially in English and mathematics.
- Leaders do not pay enough attention to ensuring that pupils deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects. Some teachers do not have the knowledge and expertise to identify gaps in pupils' learning.
- The procedures for checking the school's effectiveness are not robust enough. Consequently, leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of some aspects of the school's work.
- Some governors do not have the skills to hold leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Some parents are not satisfied with the information that they receive from the school about their children's progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Drawing on support from the local authority, the leadership team has recognised where improvement is needed and begun to tackle the identified weaknesses.
- Learning in the early years provides children with a strong start in school.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Consequently, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is above average.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and want to do well. They are tolerant and show respect for one another and for the adults in the school.
- Pupils actively participate in an increasing range of sports and this promotes their physical and mental well-being.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support and make good progress from their starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise standards in all subjects, including English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have high enough expectations of, and are held to account for, pupils' work and progress across all subjects, including English and mathematics
 - making sure that teachers have the knowledge and expertise in all subjects to be able to identify gaps in pupils' learning and provide the right support to prevent underachievement
 - giving pupils more frequent opportunities to write for extended periods of time in a range of different subjects.
- Improve the impact of leadership and governance on raising achievement by:
 - ensuring that the systems for checking and evaluating the school's performance are rigorous and accurate, so leaders and governors use them effectively to determine the priorities for improvement and the actions needed to meet them
 - ensuring that governors acquire the skills to enable them to check how well the school is performing compared with schools locally and nationally
 - ensuring that subject leaders have a greater impact on raising standards in their subjects.
- Improve communications with parents by:
 - giving them more information about their children's progress.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors do not ensure that all subjects are planned and taught in ways that enable pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Leaders plan for coverage of all the requirements of the national curriculum through half-termly topics. However, their plans do not systematically build on what pupils already know. There are large periods of time between the teaching of certain subjects, for example history and geography. These gaps mean that for some pupils the development of skills, knowledge and understanding is slowed.
- Leaders' evaluations of most aspects of the school's performance are too generous. They have put in place procedures for checking key aspects, for example the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. However, these are not always rigorously followed through, nor as frequent and timely as they need to be. This reduces the effectiveness of leaders in identifying the actions needed to improve the school and deciding on the most important priorities.
- There has been considerable staffing turbulence over the last two years and many teachers are only recently appointed. Consequently, subject leadership, other than in English, is in the early stages of development. The subject leaders now in place are enthusiastic and keen to make a difference to the school. Some are beginning to lead their area of responsibility well. However, they are not all sufficiently experienced to assess effectively pupils' progress or to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
- Almost half of the parents responding to Parent View indicated that they are not entirely happy with the way in which the school responds to their concerns. They typically comment on the effect of frequent staff changes on their children's learning. Inspection evidence shows that the staffing is more stable now and leaders and governors are doing all that they can to sustain this.
- Leaders' use of performance management to improve teaching is successful.
- The local authority continues to provide effective support to the school. The education advisers work closely with the headteacher. They support with improvement planning and provide training for teachers and support staff. Following the resignation of the deputy headteacher at the end of the summer term 2017, the local authority acted swiftly to provide an acting deputy headteacher, who is seconded from another school for the current academic year.
- The additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils is well used. This is because funding enables dedicated staff with particular expertise to assist pupils individually or in small groups. This approach provides a high level of personalised support. Consequently, all groups are now making better progress in their learning.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is also used effectively. As a result, pupils participate in an increased range of sporting activities. This contributes to their health and well-being.
- Leaders support pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils understand what it means to be a good citizen within modern British

society and they learn tolerance and understanding of different faiths.

- The much more stable staffing situation, the current effective support of the local authority and inspection evidence of more focused teaching indicate the school's capacity to improve further.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is ambitious for the future of the school and for each pupil. However, governors do not have the skills and training to hold leaders to account for pupils' progress across all subjects and have too generous a view of the school's performance.
- Governors hold discussions with subject leaders and receive useful information about topic areas, trips and visits. They do not have sufficient information on pupils' progress. As a result, they do not hold leaders to account with sufficient rigour.
- Governors are effective in checking on the use of additional funds, such as the pupil premium.
- Governors know the importance of linking pay progression to teachers' performance in the classroom and have not shirked from supporting the headteacher in challenging underperformance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of care and protection has a high profile in the school. Staff and governors' training is regular and effective in raising adults' awareness of the signs and symptoms of different forms of abuse. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are safe in school.
- The school site is a safe place.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe in a variety of situations. Work on e-safety has been particularly successful. This is reflected in pupils' heightened awareness of safe use of the internet and social media. Pupils are certain that incidents of bullying are rare and the school is a safe place to learn.
- The arrangements in place for the safer recruitment of staff are exemplary. Pre-employment checks and induction procedures for staff and visitors to the school are meticulous and carefully monitored by the governing body.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too often, in key stages 1 and 2, teachers are not adept enough in identifying the next steps in pupils' learning. Gaps in pupils' learning are not picked up quickly enough. Consequently, pupils have to revisit basic skills in writing when they should be learning in more depth.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise the skills that they have learned in reading, writing and mathematics across the range of subjects. Pupils'

topic and science books show that some teachers have given them few opportunities to deepen their learning, including their writing and mathematics, in different subjects.

- The quality of pupils' wider learning is inconsistent because some teachers have much lower expectations of what pupils can and should achieve in subjects other than English and mathematics. These lower expectations apply also to the most able pupils, who are not always challenged sufficiently to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They are conscientious workers who are eager to get on with each task. When appropriate, some teachers allow pupils to get on with their work without direct adult supervision. Others do not give pupils enough information on how to complete work independently. This leads to confusion and sometimes to silly behaviour. The most able pupils say that they do not always have challenging work to do. They are sometimes told to read while they wait for other pupils to catch up before they can continue with their learning.
- The majority of teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply their developing mathematical skills in mathematics lessons. Increasingly, teachers are providing more chances for pupils to use their reasoning skills, for example to show why they have chosen one particular calculation method over another. Their mathematical understanding is improving as a result.
- The teaching of phonics is particularly strong in the early years and gives children a firm foundation on which to develop good reading skills. In other year groups, the majority of teachers use good questioning to support pupils in developing their reading comprehension skills, extending their vocabulary and encouraging them to think more deeply.
- Teaching assistants work effectively with small groups of pupils across the full range of abilities. They are particularly successful in helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to take part in whole-class lessons along with their peers. Teaching assistants contribute effectively to the good progress that these pupils are now making.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils of all ages have good attitudes to their learning, even though they say that work is not always hard enough in lessons.
- Older pupils have a good sense of personal and social responsibility. They are keen to take on responsibilities, such as head boy and head girl, sports leaders and membership of the eco council.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, such as when using the internet or when approached by someone that they do not know. They are well informed on road and water safety.
- Pupils say that bullying of any kind is extremely rare. They occasionally fall out with

one another but say that they can soon sort things out between themselves.

- Pupils are taught to value and celebrate the similarities and differences they have with others. The school's curriculum and ethos equip them with the knowledge and understanding necessary to accept and respect others, regardless of their culture, religious beliefs or family background.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and well mannered towards each other and to adults, including visitors to the school. They move in and around the school buildings sensibly and safely.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are punctual and attend regularly, ensuring that attendance is above average.
- In 2016, the levels of persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were higher than the national average. Current information shows that leaders have successfully improved the attendance of these particular groups of pupils.
- The majority of pupils take pride in their work. It is well presented and shows that pupils are making an effort to use neat, well-crafted handwriting to underline titles and space work out correctly. This high-quality presentation is not as evident in their topic and science books as it is in English and mathematics books.
- Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Disruption to learning in lessons is rare. Occasionally, where small groups of pupils are working without an adult, or on unstructured tasks, pupils lose interest and their behaviour is not as good.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress across key stages 1 and 2 is not consistently good.
- Unvalidated results from 2017 show that the progress of Year 6 pupils was significantly lower than that of those leaving in 2016. Pupils who left key stage 1 either at the expected or above the expected levels of attainment did not make strong enough progress.
- By the end of key stage 1 in 2016, the attainment of pupils who had left the early years at expected levels of development or exceeded them was below that of pupils with similar starting points nationally. Provisional outcomes in 2017 indicate an improvement in reading but not in writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of most able pupils reaching a higher than expected standard at the end of key stage 2 in writing and mathematics is not as high as it should be because there is not always enough challenge in lessons for these pupils.
- The very small numbers of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make national comparisons difficult. However, inspection evidence found that these pupils are well supported and make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' standards in the national phonics screening check in Year 1 are above average

and have been so over the last four years. This reflects the consistency of effective teaching of phonics throughout the early years and Year 1.

- The standards reached by pupils in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test at the end of key stage 2 are also above average over time. Focused teaching supports pupils in learning the rules and using them in related tasks and activities. Work in books shows that pupils can apply these skills in longer pieces of writing but are not given enough opportunities to do so in English or in other subjects.
- Leaders are increasingly effective in holding teachers to account for the attainment and progress of each child. This is going some way to improving standards. Nonetheless, the inconsistencies in teaching and learning across the school remain a barrier to some pupils achieving their full potential.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress in the early years and are very well prepared for Year 1. They generally enter the school with skills typical for their age or above. Staff capitalise on this and make sure that children learn at a fast pace, especially in phonics.
- Staff have a strong understanding of children’s developmental needs. Adults’ observations inform the activities that children do so that they are able to take full advantage of the learning environment.
- The early years leader has a detailed overview of the effectiveness of what is on offer. She and her team provide a rich and stimulating classroom. Both inside and outside areas are set up to enliven children’s curiosity, so they are keen to explore different areas of learning, including promoting their language development. For example, children pursued their interest in dinosaurs and building a dinosaur den, as they chattered about diplodocus and tyrannosaurus.
- Adults are well trained in the procedures required to keep children safe at school and children behave well. Resources are well organised. Staff have quickly established good routines to ensure that children behave well and tidy up in order to keep spaces clear and safe.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Many children already know some of their letter sounds and are encouraged to move on quickly and tackle others that are not so familiar. Teaching in the early years is good.
- The teacher and teaching assistants help children to become engrossed in their learning and develop their thinking. However, occasionally adults are a little too quick to intervene in children’s play. This sometimes reduces the opportunities for building on what children say in order to develop their language and thinking further.
- Parents of children in the early years typically comment that they feel welcome in school and really appreciate the arrangements in place to help their children settle into school very quickly. In addition to visiting local nursery provisions, staff arrange home visits in the summer term prior to entry. Parents and children are invited into school to meet the staff and to become familiar with the school’s environment and routines. All of this contributes to the strong start that children make.

School details

Unique reference number	119640
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10036718

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Murphy
Headteacher	Catherine Maddocks
Telephone number	01772 555436
Website	www.st-patricks.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@st-patricks.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- There has been considerable staff turbulence over the last two years, including within the senior leadership team. Currently, there is an acting deputy headteacher in place.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups. They observed the teaching of early reading skills.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about the school and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, subject leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- The lead inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of the 59 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and a letter from a parent.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation of its current performance, the school's most recent information on the attainment and progress of pupils, information relating to the safeguarding of pupils, and the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils.

Inspection team

Jan Corlett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mavis Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Doris Bell	Ofsted Inspector

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