

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Cashmore Avenue, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV31 3EU

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and her leadership team have successfully led the school through some challenging times. They provide clear, direct leadership and show a strong determination to provide the best possible education for all pupils.
- Leaders and governors know the school well, including its many strengths and those areas that need to improve further. Their efforts to improve rates of pupils' progress are proving effective. Evidence in pupils' books shows that pupils are progressing at a faster rate than they have done in the past. The great majority are now working at the standard expected for their age.
- Outcomes at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are improving for all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. However, pupils' rates of progress and outcomes need to improve further to be in line with those seen nationally.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school has improved in the last 18 months and is now securely good. Teachers make effective use of assessment information to help pupils make good progress.
- The school provides a safe and nurturing environment for all pupils.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. It engages pupils' interests and provides them with a range of memorable and practical learning experiences.
- Pupils generally behave well. They are courteous, friendly and proud of their school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported very well. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Teachers generally have high expectations about what the children can achieve. However, sometimes pupils are not clear about the task they have been set or have some misconceptions. Occasionally, activities are not well matched to pupils' needs. Some teachers do not pick up these difficulties quickly enough. When this happens, pupils sometimes lose interest and the pace of learning slows.
- Teachers and learning support assistants work well together to support pupils' learning effectively. They use skilful questioning to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Children in the early years make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Standards of presentation in pupils' work are not consistent across the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve outcomes across the school so that they are at least in line with those seen nationally by ensuring that:
 - a greater proportion of pupils make accelerated progress from their individual starting points.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - check pupils' understanding within lessons to correct errors and address misconceptions
 - plan activities that are accurately matched to pupils' needs
 - have high expectations for the quality of pupils' presentation of their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, the school has experienced some challenging times as a result of changes to leadership and staffing. However, the current leadership team, governors and staff have brought about many improvements and the school is now flourishing.
- The headteacher is extremely ambitious for the school and, along with governors, she has set a very clear vision to ensure that all pupils receive the best possible education. The headteacher demonstrates commitment, drive and determination that, together with other leaders, have resulted in improvements in pupils' behaviour, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The headteacher has the confidence of staff, who are overwhelmingly positive in their support of the school and school leaders. Staff feel valued, part of a strong team and they are proud to be members of the school community.
- The headteacher has high expectations of everyone and there are clear performance management systems in place to help ensure that improvements are made and targets are achieved. Leaders at all levels make regular checks on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making. They use this information to provide constructive feedback and to identify what the school needs to do next to improve further. Swift action is taken to tackle any underperformance. Weak teaching, identified in recent years, has now been eradicated. To support developments, staff have access to a range of effective training and development opportunities, both in school and externally.
- Leaders of English and mathematics are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. They have a good understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve. They use a wide range of evidence, such as work scrutiny and data, to support them. Leaders offer structured and clear support to colleagues to help drive forward improvements. As a result, staff are clear on the standards required in each year group and the best strategies to use to help pupils achieve these.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all areas of the national curriculum. The curriculum has a strong literacy focus. This supports the development of pupils' writing by giving them the opportunity to apply their skills across a range of subjects. Subject leaders are taking an increasingly active role in providing guidance for colleagues. This helps to ensure progression in pupils' key knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Science and art feature strongly across the school and pupils make good progress in these areas.
- Leaders have introduced a new topic-based curriculum that provides pupils with a range of exciting, cross-curricular experiences to capture their interests and to develop a love for learning. Topics often incorporate a trip to a place of interest or a visitor to the school. For example, during the inspection, Year 2 pupils went on a walk in Leamington Spa town centre as part of their 'Street Detectives' project. Older pupils talked excitedly about a forthcoming trip to a regimental museum that links to their learning about the First World War. Pupils also benefit from having access to a range of

additional activities such as sports, choir, homework club, liturgy group and early-morning intervention sessions.

- Leaders and staff make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught about British values, such as democracy, the rule of law and tolerance towards others. Pupils also learn about a range of different faiths and cultures. The school environment is rich in displays and opportunities to celebrate these aspects of pupils' development, for example: pupils' artwork; healthy living; celebrating Catholic life; school election day; Remembrance Day events; regular charity events; and overseas links. Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils and provide opportunities to widen pupils' experiences, for example through visits to Warwick University. As a result of these opportunities, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school has secure systems in place to identify and assess pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Their needs are addressed in a variety of ways, including extra support in class and specialist interventions from both school staff and external agencies. The impact of additional support is tracked carefully to ensure that the input is effective in helping the pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Activities are adapted as necessary. Additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well managed. Support for pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs is a strength of the school and all staff have received training to support this aspect of their work.
- Careful consideration is given to how the pupil premium funding is spent so that disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively and have opportunities to take part in all that the school has to offer. Senior leaders and staff have a good awareness of the barriers to learning and the challenges that this group of pupils face. As a result, more disadvantaged pupils are working at the standard expected for their age across the school.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sports funding is used effectively to improve pupils' participation in, and enjoyment of, sport. More pupils now take up the opportunity to attend an after-school sports club and many pupils, including those from vulnerable groups, take part in sporting events and competitions with local schools. Training for staff, provided by a specialist coach, has increased the quality of PE teaching across the school.
- The great majority of parents are positive about the work of the school. They value the commitment shown by staff to ensuring that all pupils are well looked after and happy in school. Most parents stated that they are well informed about their children's progress and they enjoy the opportunity to visit their children's classes during regular open mornings.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body have a good overview of the school and they are ambitious for its future. They bring a range of relevant experience and expertise to their roles.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's many strengths and priorities for development. In particular, they are aware that while pupils' progress is improving

there is a need to ensure that standards continue to rise. They ensure that performance management procedures are in place and that the procedures are effective at securing improvements in teaching and learning.

- Governors are fully aware of how additional funds are being spent, for example the pupil premium grant and funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They understand the impact that this funding is having on the progress and attainment of vulnerable pupils.
- Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge to the school leadership team. They use information gathered through visits to school, as well as from reports provided by leaders, to ask challenging questions in order to bring about improvements.
- The governing body takes its safeguarding duties seriously. The safeguarding link governor regularly meets with school leaders to ensure that systems and processes are up to date and are being followed closely.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Keeping children safe is central to the work of the school and leaders have created a culture where all staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. As a result, the school is a safe environment for pupils and they are well cared for at all times.
- All staff have regular and wide-ranging training to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. They have a good awareness of what constitutes abuse and are vigilant in looking out for indicators of risk or harm. Leaders also have a clear understanding of the specific safeguarding concerns that relate to the context of the school.
- The safeguarding team maintains the required confidential records and, when appropriate, the team shares information with relevant external agencies. Leaders are persistent when concerned about a pupil's welfare and follow up concerns with these agencies as necessary.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all adults appointed to work at the school.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. They are taught how to keep safe online. Pupils are confident that any issues raised will be quickly resolved.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Following a period of change and instability, teaching across the school has improved and is now good. This is enabling the great majority of pupils to make more rapid progress. Regular training and frequent checks on the work in pupils' books have helped to ensure that all teachers share a common understanding about the school's expectations.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and learning opportunities are engaging in all classes.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons that use a range of strategies to stimulate pupils' interest and curiosity.

- Senior leaders have strengthened the teaching of phonics. Training and restructuring of the approaches used have ensured that teaching and learning in this area have significantly improved so that pupils now receive good-quality phonics teaching. Pupils who read to inspectors used their phonics skills well to attempt unfamiliar words. Pupils read with a fluency and understanding appropriate for their age.
- The development of reading has a high profile across the school. Pupils across key stage 2 benefit from a structured approach to the teaching of comprehension skills. This is proving effective and helping pupils to develop their understanding across a wide range of subjects. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly at home and, in school, older pupils act as 'reading buddies' for younger children.
- The quality of pupils' writing is improving. Pupils are being given increasing opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects and they demonstrate a developing use of grammar and punctuation skills.
- Teachers plan mathematics lessons that build on pupils' prior learning. Teachers ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics. Pupils can increasingly explain their mathematical thinking and justify their ideas.
- Learning support assistants are deployed well across the school to support pupils' learning. They work closely with classroom teachers to enhance the learning opportunities for pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants use questioning very effectively to extend and deepen pupils' thinking, for example by asking pupils to explain their reasoning.
- Pupils' progress is regularly assessed and leaders use this information to identify priorities and any additional support necessary. Leaders and teachers compare samples of work with colleagues both in school and from other schools. This helps everyone to reach a common understanding about the expected standards.
- Teachers routinely plan activities that are adapted for pupils with different starting points. Most teachers do this well and ensure that work is appropriately challenging, including for the most able pupils. However, occasionally work can be either too easy or too hard for pupils to complete independently. When this happens, learning time can be lost.
- Teachers use a wide range of strategies to develop pupils' understanding during lessons. However, sometimes pupils do not understand what the teacher is asking them to do or they have a misconception that teachers do not notice quickly enough. Occasionally, pupils make errors, such as simple spelling mistakes or reversing numbers, which go uncorrected. When this happens, pupils may not make the progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Leaders have created a positive, nurturing environment in which pupils are able to thrive. Each classroom includes a range of displays to support pupils' learning and celebrate their achievements. Weekly celebration assemblies acknowledge pupils' successes, whether they are for academic achievement or demonstrating school values.
- Pastoral support is a strength of the school and pupils who require additional help are able to access small group or one-to-one support from a learning mentor or counsellor. The pupils involved talk openly about the positive impact that this provision has on their behaviour and their ability to manage their emotions.
- Pupils generally show enjoyment in their work and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to answer questions in lessons. Pupils' books are often neatly presented and many show a pride in their work, although these high standards are not consistent across the school.
- Pupils have many opportunities to make a contribution to school life and the wider community, for example by raising money for local charities. Older pupils have the opportunity to take on a range of school-wide responsibilities, for example head boy and girl, school council representatives and reading buddies. Pupils feel that they 'have a voice' and can make a difference to the life of the school. For example, the school council were involved in selecting additional equipment for the playground and suggested that additional litter bins would help to keep the school environment tidy. These opportunities are helping to prepare the pupils well for the next stage in their education.
- Teachers help pupils to become independent learners in a variety of ways. For example, pupils are encouraged to use practical resources on the 'prove it' table or reference materials on the 'enable table' in each classroom.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's behaviour policy is generally effective and focuses on motivating the pupils to behave well. Pupils and staff understand the policy and pupils said that most teachers use it consistently. There is a sense of order and calmness throughout the school. School behaviour records show that adults are consistent in tackling negative behaviours and that the number of serious behaviour incidents, resulting in pupils being excluded from school, has dropped considerably.
- Behaviour in classrooms is generally of a high standard, with most pupils being keen to learn. Occasionally, pupils lose focus or become distracted if the level or the pace of the lesson is not right for them. This can affect the progress that they make.
- School attendance levels have improved and are now in line with those seen nationally. Leaders work effectively with families who are struggling to get their children into school. As a result, levels of attendance for vulnerable pupils have improved over the last year, although they remain below the level for all pupils. Leaders track attendance carefully and promptly follow up any absence. They are alert to the possibility of children going missing from education and work with external agencies to minimise any risk.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Evidence in pupils' books and displays around the school indicate that the majority of pupils across all year groups are currently making good progress and are now working at the standard expected for their age across a wide range of subjects. This applies to pupils of all ability ranges, including the most able, and supports leaders' views that rates of progress and outcomes are continuing to improve.
- In 2017, by the end of key stage 2, pupils' rates of progress were in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. While outcomes remain below the national average, gaps in attainment have reduced in reading and mathematics for all pupils and for disadvantaged pupils.
- The school has an increasing number of pupils who join or leave the school during the school year. Rates of progress and outcomes for pupils who are in school for an extended period are higher than for those who have recently arrived. This is particularly true of mathematics.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 show improvements, especially in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who achieve the higher standards expected for their age has increased, particularly in reading and writing. Boys achieve well compared to all boys nationally.
- In 2017, outcomes in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 remained below the national average for all pupils. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved the expected standard was in line with that seen nationally, as was the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Due to consistently high-quality phonics teaching, the progress of current Year 1 pupils is more rapid and standards are higher.
- Pupils' outcomes in science are in line with those seen nationally at the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points and outcomes are in line with those of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to their individual starting points. Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully and adapt support and intervention according to need.
- Leaders and governors are clear that, while rates of progress are improving across the school, further strengthening outcomes remains a key priority for the school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with knowledge and skills that are slightly below what is typical for their age. Over the last three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been close to the national average. The majority of children make good progress, and are well prepared for their transition into Year 1.
- The children are well cared for and they are confident and eager to join in activities. Children's behaviour is good and they show respect for each other. Both Nursery-age and Reception-age children play cooperatively, sharing resources and discussing their

activities.

- Children generally respond well to instructions from adults. The children know and follow clear classroom routines so that little learning time is wasted. The children choose from a range of activities and the majority show resilience by focusing on a task for an extended period, even when working independently. For example, a Reception-age boy created a space picture using chalks while a Nursery-age girl showed great musicality and rhythm using bells at the 'music station'.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and welfare requirements in the early years are met fully. This includes provision for the small number of Nursery-age children who are currently attending the school alongside those who are of Reception age.
- The teaching of early literacy skills through phonics is generally effective. Children are accurately taught how to recognise the sounds that letters make and blend these together to make words. Children are beginning to write independently. However, some phonics sessions are too long for children to maintain concentration. As a result, children become distracted and learning time is lost.
- Mathematics activities support pupils' early number development and shape recognition. For example, a small group of children were playing skittles and, supported by an adult, counted the number of skittles knocked over each time.
- The early years leader has a good knowledge of the children and plans activities to address their needs and to help them catch up if necessary. There is effective provision in place for the increasing proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language and who start school with low levels of spoken English.
- Early years staff are welcoming and encourage regular communication with parents. This includes a home visit early in the autumn term. This is effective in building confidence and ensuring that the children settle quickly. Staff record children's progress in individual learning journals that they share with parents. Parents also have the opportunity to find out more about their child's learning through open mornings and workshops.
- The early years learning environment, both indoors and outside, is well resourced and effectively supports all areas of learning.

School details

Unique reference number	125715
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10037877

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Allison
Headteacher	Mrs Nichola Damms
Telephone number	01926 425958
Website	www.stpatricks-lspa.com
Email address	admin3543@welearn365.com
Date of previous inspection	4–5 December 2012

Information about this school

- St Patrick's Catholic Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school has one class per year group from Year 1 to Year 6. The school also runs an early years unit. Children, from age three, attend part time in the Nursery and full time in the Reception class.
- Just over half of the school's pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average and increasing.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to that found in most primary schools.
- The school runs a breakfast club. The school's governing body manages this provision.
- Since the last inspection, there have been many changes of staff at all levels within school.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 24 lessons or small-group sessions. A number of these observations were undertaken jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with pupils and listened to some pupils read. They looked at examples of pupils' work in their books and spoke to pupils formally and informally. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and around the school, as well as in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, records relating to safeguarding and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, school performance data and the school's website.
- Inspectors considered parents' opinions through scrutinising 48 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including nine free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke to parents on the first day of the inspection.
- Twelve responses to the staff questionnaire were considered as part of the inspection.

Inspection team

Catherine Crooks, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Patrick Amieli

Ofsted Inspector

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