

Inspection of a good school: St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Derwent Street, Workington, Cumbria CA14 2DW

Inspection dates:

25–26 September 2019

Outcome

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils cherish their time at St Patrick's Primary School. They see themselves as part of a large family in which teachers and other adults are kind and helpful. Pupils eagerly share their positive feelings about the school and staff. Pupils say that they feel safe because all staff care about them. Pupils and adults show high levels of respect for each other in school.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs and educational visits that they can take part in. These include visits to farms, fishing trips and theatre performances. Pupils also enjoy participating in many sporting competitions. Pupils and parents told me about exciting residential visits on offer. Parents also appreciate staff's efforts to ensure that all pupils are able to access these events.

The school provides opportunities for all pupils to succeed. The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to explore different subjects. Pupils relish the high expectations that teachers have of them. Teachers prepare interesting lessons. Consequently, pupils achieve well and are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

The behaviour in school is excellent. Pupils found it hard to remember any incidents of bullying. However, they are confident that members of staff would deal quickly with any that did occur.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The executive headteacher and head of school are knowledgeable. They lead the school well. Leaders have high ambition for pupils. They share this ambition with a committed team of staff. All staff have pupils' welfare and education at the heart of all that they do. Governors know the school well and visit often to check on how it is doing. Leaders look after teachers' well-being. Positive actions, such as changes to how the school reports to parents have reduced teachers' workload.

The school curriculum is ambitious. Pupils study the wide range of subjects found in the national curriculum. The school's curriculum is complemented by many additional experiences. These include clubs, external visits and visiting speakers to the school. All of these experiences enrich pupils' education. The curriculum design builds pupils' knowledge and understanding of different subjects over time. Pupils practise and apply new skills and knowledge often. This helps pupils to remember key facts and concepts.

Teachers are committed to doing the best for their pupils. They make learning activities fun and interesting. Teachers match the tasks they set to reflect pupils' abilities. This makes sure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can take part and learn. Leaders make sure that teachers get the training that they need to improve their knowledge of the subjects that they teach.

Leaders understand that reading is very important in helping pupils learn. Staff are well trained in phonics. This helps children get off to a good start in reading when they join the school. Well-considered book choices help younger pupils to practise the sound letters. As a result, almost all pupils achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. As pupils move through the school they become fluent readers. They use changes in tone, pace and volume to help bring texts to life. Teachers choose class texts that help pupils learn in other subjects. Pupils told me how they love reading. They explained how studies of historical fiction had helped their studies in history. I also heard pupils speak eloquently about their favourite authors and the reasons for why they enjoy them.

Teachers have been well trained and are knowledgeable about mathematics. The curriculum design supports pupils to build on their prior learning. Teaching activities ensure that pupils develop their knowledge of mathematical concepts. Pupils also have many opportunities to become confident mathematicians and to solve problems.

The science curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Teachers bring science to life. They often use practical experiments that are fun and interesting. These include investigating animal droppings to find clues into an animal's diet. They also include experiments to investigate the solubility of different materials. However, some teachers have occasional gaps in their subject knowledge. This can lead to misconceptions.

Pupils achieve well in school. Attainment in national assessments are in line with national averages. However, in the provisional 2019 key stage 2 assessments, pupils' progress scores in mathematics were disappointing. Conversely, pupils with SEND take full advantage of all the school has to offer and achieve well. This is because teachers believe that every child can learn, and do their best to make it happen.

In the early years children achieve well. They relish learning in the outdoor environment. There is a strong focus on early reading and mathematics. Staff are knowledgeable and focused on guiding children's learning in all areas.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable across the school. Disruption to learning because of unruly behaviour is extremely rare.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and all staff at St Patrick's Primary School have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. This is because they receive frequent training. Staff are vigilant and dedicated to keeping pupils safe. Leaders complete appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff. Leaders keep meticulous records that are fit for purpose. They share information with the right people when it is necessary to protect pupils who may be at risk of harm. Governors ensure the appropriate monitoring and filtering of the school's internet connection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In 2019, pupils' progress in end of key stage 2 national assessments in mathematics was disappointing. Leaders accept that this needs to improve. They have already taken effective action reverse this. For example, they have ensured that staff are suitably trained to promote stronger progress in mathematics. They must now ensure that their work bears fruit in the end of key stage assessments.
- Occasionally, some teachers lack subject knowledge in aspects of science, for example the recognition that sugars in a common energy drink are carbohydrates. As a result, some teaching promotes misconceptions that will need to be untaught at a later date. Leaders must make best use of the scientific expertise found in school. This is to ensure that all teachers have secure knowledge of the areas of science that they are responsible for teaching.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 12–13 May 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

| | |
|---|--|
| Unique reference number | 112340 |
| Local authority | Cumbria |
| Inspection number | 10087695 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 210 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Mr D Jones |
| Headteacher | Mrs S Slack (Executive headteacher) Mrs Z Whitehead (Head of school) |
| Website | www.stpatricksworkington.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 12 May 2015 |

Information about this school

- St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage
- The school is part of a collaborative partnership with another local primary school. The headteacher of St Patrick's Primary School is the executive headteacher of both schools. Each school also has a head of school as part of its senior leadership team.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I looked in detail at reading, mathematics and science. This involved discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and discussions with pupils. I also listened to pupils reading.
- I spoke with members of the governing body, the executive headteacher and the head of school. I also met with the teacher and teaching assistant responsible for Reception class.

- I reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and the checks carried out during the appointment of staff. I also looked at records of pupils' attendance.
- I considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

John Nixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019