

Inspection of a good school: St Patrick's RC Primary and Nursery School

Lee Street, Oldham, Lancashire OL8 1EF

Inspection dates:

11–12 February 2020

Outcome

St Patrick's RC Primary and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They bubbled with excitement as they told me about their science and mathematics learning. Their knowledge of science was impressive. In class, pupils in Years 2 to 6 behave well and listen quietly. They follow adults' instructions and they are keen to join in discussions. They work well with others. At times, the younger pupils get distracted and mess around. Pupils play happily together at breaktimes. They make good use of the climbing frames, the grassed areas and the play areas. They make good use of the equipment such as lacrosse sticks and tennis racquets.

The pupils that I spoke with said that they feel safe and there is little bullying. There are few incidents of name-calling or racism. Pupils said that staff deal quickly with any poor behaviour or bullying.

The staff work well together at St Patrick's. There is a good team spirit. They are improving the curriculum subject by subject. Even so, staff's expectations for disadvantaged pupils and the younger pupils are not high enough. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in a number of subjects, including reading. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do well in science and mathematics, but less well in reading.

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

Faith and spirituality are at the heart of the curriculum. There is a good range of trips, visits and after-school clubs. These are chosen to broaden pupils' experience and knowledge. Pupils enjoy visits to Skipton Castle, Oldham Library and careers events. Adults show pupils how to develop a respect for other cultures and ways of life. Pupils' respect for people from different families is well developed.

The curriculum does not meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils as well as it could. They do not attain as well as other pupils nationally by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. The governing body has not checked that the extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is making a difference to pupils' learning. Leaders have started to make improvements. They have reviewed the curriculum for each disadvantaged pupil to make sure that these pupils make better gains in their learning.

Leaders have made positive changes to the science curriculum. Lessons now build on what pupils already know. Pupils have a secure and deep knowledge of aspects of science. Their knowledge of electricity, plants and the human body was impressive. They show pride in how they present their work. The older pupils have built on what they learned in previous years. There is a good focus on investigations and experiments. Leaders are making similar changes to other subjects, such as computing, art and design, and French. However, the curriculum in these subjects does not help pupils to learn as well as they should.

In the Nursery and Reception classes, leaders have made improvements since the last inspection. The staff have created a curriculum that makes better use of the bigger outdoor area. It was good to be among groups of children finding shapes outdoors and working on capacity. Some children find it difficult to concentrate and listen when sitting together in a large group. They sometimes disrupt the teacher and the lesson. They fidget and mess around. There is not enough time spent on phonics to develop children's early reading knowledge.

Pupils do not attain as well as they should in reading and phonics. Leaders have acted. They have bought new reading books. The new books now match the pupils' reading abilities. In some class libraries, the books are not of a good quality or well kept. Staff are determined that the pupils who have fallen behind should catch up with the rest of the class. They have introduced extra lessons in the afternoons. This means that these pupils miss parts of other subjects. Pupils with SEND have extra reading sessions and are making better progress through the planned reading programme.

Some adults and pupils do not pronounce the sounds that letters make accurately. Staff and pupils sometimes do not use correct standard spoken English. Adults check pupils' understanding well. They are quick to correct any reading mistakes but sometimes move on without checking that pupils have understood.

In the key stage 1 national assessments, pupils' attainment in mathematics has been well below the national average. This is because the curriculum was not sequenced well enough. Leaders have reviewed the sequence of learning in this subject. They have introduced new long-term plans to help teachers organise pupils' learning so that they can build on what they already know. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children's early mathematics knowledge is improving. Teachers make sure that children understand new learning before moving on.

The mathematics curriculum has a strong focus on solving problems and thinking mathematically. In key stage 2 lessons, most teachers work hard to make sure that pupils remember key facts. They also are good at spotting when pupils make mathematical

mistakes. Despite this, they still sometimes move on to the next activities without checking that everyone understands.

Leaders look after the staff. They make sure that the workload is manageable. They have introduced some features which help staff with their well-being. They have created a team culture to help and support each other.

Pupils have lots to do at breaktime. They are active and make good use of equipment. In class, they rarely disrupt lessons and, through the curriculum, they learn to take pride in their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, consider the safety of pupils as a priority. They take any potential incidents seriously. They follow up incidents well. Leaders and staff know the families well. They are not scared of taking decisive action to make sure that children and pupils are safe. Staff work well with other agencies, such as the police, health professionals, housing departments and social services.

The staff have been trained at an appropriate level. There is a system to update staff and governors about different aspects of safeguarding. It is not as effective as it could be because it is infrequent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not achieve as well as they should in reading. In 2019, approximately one third of pupils in Year 1 did not attain the expected standard in the national phonics screening check. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 is below average. The phonics programme is not taught well from the early years onwards. Some class library books are not of a good quality. Often, the books that pupils can access do not match their reading ability. Leaders should ensure that reading resources enable pupils to become confident and fluent readers. They must ensure that all staff are suitably trained in early reading in order to provide children and young pupils with a secure foundation on which to build as they move through the school.
- The staff are reviewing the planning for teaching different subjects in the curriculum. Some subjects are more developed than others. Leaders know that the progression and sequencing of activities are not as good in some subjects, such as French, art and design, and computing. Teachers following a sequence of activities sometimes move on to more complex ideas before checking that all pupils fully understand. This means that some pupils continue with their work without fully understanding the concept. Leaders should continue their review of the curriculum to make sure that, in every subject,

there is a clear sequence of learning to ensure that pupils gain the intended knowledge by the end of each unit of work.

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 28–29 June 2016.

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 the school and 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	105726
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10135173
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	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Father Phil Sumner
Headteacher	Clare Mitchell
Website	www.st-patricks.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 June 2016

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic school. The faith aspects of the school were inspected on 9 February 2016 under section 48 of the Education Act.
- Since the last inspection, the governing body has appointed a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The governing body manages a daily breakfast club on the school's site.

Information about this inspection

- The headteacher and/or the deputy headteacher joined me for most of the inspection activities. I met with a range of senior and subject leaders.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. I met the subject leader, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. I looked at the long-term plans for each subject and spoke with groups of pupils. I also spent some time looking at how well children learn in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- I met with three representatives of the governing body, as well as the staff governor.
- To understand how well the school safeguards pupils, I considered the security of the school site. I looked through some of the school's policies and documentation. I spoke

with a range of staff and a representative of the local authority about the cases of some individual pupils. I interviewed some members of the governing body. I also looked at how well the school checks the identity and clearances for adults to work with children.

- I met with two representatives of the local authority.
- Fewer than 10 parents completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I therefore took into account the 63 responses to the school's own survey of parents.
- As no pupil completed Ofsted's online survey, I met a large number of pupils to talk about their learning. I also observed pupils at breaktimes.
- I considered the views expressed by the 10 members of staff who completed Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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