

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

Littledale Avenue, Heysham, Morecambe, Lancashire LA3 2ER

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like their school. They feel safe, secure and well cared for by staff. Children in the early years settle in quickly. There are so many exciting things to do in their beautiful classroom. Older pupils enjoy playing energetic games or just chatting with their friends at breaktimes. Some pupils join the school at different times during the year. Others move away and return again later. Pupils said that there is always a warm welcome for everyone, no matter when they arrive.

Leaders and staff expect pupils to work hard. Pupils try their best to live up to these high expectations. They listen carefully and follow their teachers' instructions. They know that they can ask for help if they need it. Pupils across the school typically achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils are well mannered and respectful to adults and visitors. They understand and follow the school rules. For example, older pupils walk sensibly and quietly to assembly. Children in the early years put toys and resources back in the right place when they have finished with them. Adults respond quickly and effectively to any bullying on the rare occasions that it occurs.

There is a wide variety of activities beyond the academic curriculum. For example, pupils can participate in drama, performing arts and sports clubs. They can learn useful skills such as how to ride a bike or how to cook. Pupils relish the opportunities that they have to take on responsibilities, such as being play or sports leaders. All pupils participate in these activities, including those with SEND.

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

Leaders have designed an exciting and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders have thought carefully about what they most want pupils to know and be able to do by the time they leave the school. In most subjects, this important knowledge has been broken down into smaller steps from the early years to Year 6. Pupils

build up their knowledge securely in these subjects. In a very small number of subjects, the curriculum does not contain enough information about some smaller steps of knowledge. This makes it more difficult for teachers to ensure that pupils learn everything that they need to know in these subjects.

Leaders have put reading at the heart of the curriculum. They have provided staff with training to enable them to deliver the reading curriculum well. Children in the early years learn about phonics as soon as they join the school. They learn new letters and sounds every day. This continues into Year 1. Staff provide prompt help for any pupils at risk of falling behind.

In 2022, pupils in key stage 2 achieved less well in reading when compared to other pupils nationally. This was especially the case for pupils who had missed important learning through long absences, for example during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders have made changes to the reading curriculum. These changes are helping pupils to catch up more quickly if they have missed school. Pupils, including those with SEND, currently in school are achieving well in reading.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to make learning memorable for pupils. Pupils have opportunities to revisit earlier learning so that they do not forget it. Teachers check regularly in lessons to make sure that pupils have understood before they move on to new learning. This helps pupils to build their new knowledge on firm foundations. Leaders and staff make effective use of the information that they gather through their checks to adjust future teaching.

Leaders work effectively with staff to identify any pupils who may have SEND. They make careful adaptations to their teaching to enable these pupils to learn the curriculum with their classmates. Leaders communicate well with a range of professionals to secure prompt and expert help for these pupils should they need it. Parents and carers are fully involved in this process. Pupils with SEND achieve similarly to other pupils in school. Pupils commit to their learning in lessons and try not to disturb each other by talking when they should not. These sensible attitudes make a positive contribution to pupils' ability to learn and achieve.

Leaders communicate well with parents to explain the importance of regular school attendance for their children's learning. This work has had a positive impact, and absences have reduced over time.

The programme to support pupils' wider development is extensive. Leaders provide pupils with a range of trips and visits to enrich their learning. For example, pupils visit the Lake District to explore archaeological finds from the Stone Age. They visit museums and historic buildings to understand more about the community in which they live. Pupils participate in activities to develop their awareness of social justice. They learn about fundamental British values such as democracy when they vote for school council members or when they represent their school in the local pupil parliament.

Pupils have an understanding of difference and diversity that is appropriate for their age. For example, they learn about a range of faiths and cultures in their own community and

the wider world. All of these experiences help them to develop into well-rounded young people, ready for the next stage in their education.

Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ask leaders plenty of questions to hold them to account for their work to improve the school. Staff appreciate the concern that governors and leaders show for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff, including those new to the school, receive regular safeguarding training. Staff understand how to report any concerns that they may have for pupils' welfare.

Leaders and staff gather a range of information to understand all of the barriers to their learning that pupils might face. Leaders communicate extremely effectively with a wide range of agencies, such as social workers and early help services. This helps leaders to secure extra support for pupils and families if it is needed.

Through the curriculum, pupils develop an appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe when working online. Pupils know who to speak to if they notice anything that does not look right.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not clearly identified all of the smaller components of knowledge that pupils need to learn. This prevents teachers from ensuring that pupils learn everything that they need to know in these subjects. Leaders should refine the curriculum even further so that pupils can build their knowledge securely over time.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	119583
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10256217
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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Theresa Moore
Headteacher	Carol Hind
Website	www.stpatricksheysham.com
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Lancaster. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2018.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other leaders and with members of the governing body. The inspector also spoke on the telephone to representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Lancaster.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. The inspector also spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe.
- The inspector considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke with some pupils about school life. The inspector took account of responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke with staff to discuss leaders' support for their workload and well-being. The inspector took account of the responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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