

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

Todholes Road, Cleator Moor, Cumbria CA25 5DG

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils live and breathe the school's values of 'living and learning' at this extremely successful school. Pupils are happy and refer to the school as a place of belonging where everyone is welcomed. Pupils celebrate and champion difference. Their understanding of equality is impressive. They are proud of the diversity that exists within their school and the wider community.

Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is impeccable. They proudly rise to meet the extremely high expectations that the school has for their behaviour, academic achievement and personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally strong. Pupils have a high level of respect for adults. They feel safe and they know that there is someone in the school that they can go to if they have a worry. Pupils approach their work with great pride and resilience. They spoke confidently about their learning and have a real thirst to learn more every day. Pupils achieve remarkably well and make excellent progress from a low starting point.

Pupils enjoy being with their friends and care deeply for one another and for the wider world. They appreciate spending time in the new nature area. For example, conducting science experiments, drawing, or just relaxing and enjoying the pond, plants and wildlife.

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

The school's aspirations for pupils are extremely high. The school has developed a vibrant and ambitious learning journey. It has clearly and precisely identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn from the beginning of early years to the end of Year 6. The school makes sure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn new content in a logical way. This enables pupils to build firm foundations for future learning.

Highly-trained staff teach the curriculum with expertise and enthusiasm. Their passion for learning is infectious. They skilfully design learning activities that help pupils to make strong connections between what they already know and the new learning. They make careful checks to ensure pupils do not develop misconceptions. Pupils showcase a depth of knowledge across all areas of the curriculum. They discuss their learning with great confidence.

The 2023 published data in mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar was below the national average. This was as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The school has taken swift and decisive action such as tutoring and targeted interventions to address these gaps. As a result, current pupils achieve very well.

The school has equally high expectations for pupils with SEND. Pupils' needs are quickly and accurately identified. Staff adapt the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can thrive and achieve alongside their peers. Equality of opportunity is at the core of the school's work. Consequently, these pupils make excellent progress through the curriculum and participate fully in school life.

The school prioritises reading. Children begin to learn the school's phonics programme from the moment that they arrive in the Reception class. The school ensures that staff deliver the phonics programme with fidelity. Staff make sure that the books that pupils read are carefully matched to the sounds that they know. Assessments are used very effectively to ensure pupils who have gaps in their phonics knowledge are swiftly identified and supported. This results in the majority of pupils being confident, fluent readers by the time that they reach the end of Year 2. Staff act as positive role models to develop pupils' love of reading. Pupils spoke with passion about their favourite books and authors and are proud to be librarians and care for this special space within school. Older pupils enjoy supporting younger peers during lunchtime with their reading.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They learn without distraction and are highly respectful towards staff, pupils and visitors. The school is tenacious in its approach to tackling any instance of low attendance. This ensures that pupils attend school as often as they should.

The curriculum to promote pupils' personal development is remarkably well thought out. It is carefully designed to ensure that pupils have the knowledge and skills to become successful citizens in modern-day Britain. Staff provide pupils with an array of enrichment activities that nurture and develop pupils' talents and interests. Pupils enjoy taking part in drama, sport and music activities that are well beyond the norm. Pupils equally value the opportunity that they have to debate and share their opinion and ideas across the curriculum. This supports them to become highly confident and self-assured pupils who are ready to take on the challenges of high school and beyond.

Staff are extremely well supported by leaders. Their morale is high. Staff know that leaders, including governors, consider their workload and well-being when decisions are made. For example, changes to the curriculum have benefited staff greatly. Governors are passionate about the school. They understand and fulfil their statutory duties with

diligence. They provide highly effective support and challenge and are forward thinking in their approach.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2019.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	132835
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10348229
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	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Giel
Co-headteachers	Gayle Wilkinson and Lisa Pritchard
Website	www.st-pats.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 October, under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Roman Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in March 2022. The next scheduled inspection should take place in the academic year 2027 to 2028.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school runs a before-school club for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the co-headteachers, other school leaders and members of staff. She met representatives of the governing body, including the chair. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she held discussions about 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 observed pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including records of governing body meetings, leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and observed their behaviour at playtime. She considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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