

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wednesfield

Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104381

Headteacher: Mrs W Wozmirska

Lead inspector: Mrs Julie Moore

Dates of inspection: 27th - 29th June 2005

Inspection number: 267914

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 216.5

School address: Graiseley Lane
Wednesfield
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
Postcode: WV11 1PG

Telephone number: (01902) 556 451
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body
Name of chair of Mr J McConnell
governors:

Date of previous 18th January 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is an average-sized school, situated two miles from the centre of Wolverhampton. There are 199 pupils on roll and 36 in the Nursery. Pupils come from a range of economic, cultural and social backgrounds. When they start in the Nursery, their skills and understanding are usually well below average. This year, children's skills are below average overall but well below average in speaking and listening and in creative development.

The school has recently admitted a number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages who speak English as an additional language, and there is a small number of refugees and asylum seekers. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds but an increasing number of pupils from a range of backgrounds are joining the school. Many of these are mixed heritage from the Asian and African sub-continent. The main languages spoken are Hindi, Urdu and Tagalog. An average percentage of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals and a broadly average percentage of pupils have learning difficulties. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need.

The school is involved in a programme to support physical education teaching and a Local Education Authority (LEA) initiative focusing on developing quality standards for pupils with special educational needs alongside educational inclusion.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8710	Julie Moore	Lead inspector	Science Art and design
9411	Rosemary Last	Lay inspector	
18346	Rod Bristow	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education
21816	Beryl Thomas	Team inspector	Geography History Music Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage
3751	Trudy Cotton	Team inspector	English Special educational needs English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **good** education for its pupils within a caring and Catholic atmosphere. Pupils are well taught and their learning is productive. Everyone is included in all aspects of the school's day-to-day life and their individual needs are met well. The headteacher provides good leadership and her very capable deputy ably supports her. Staff, governors, parents and pupils work together successfully to ensure that the school moves forward. The school gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching means that pupils achieve well during their time in school.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage¹.
- The headteacher and her deputy provide effective leadership but the subject leadership is limited because there is no planned time to monitor what is happening in classrooms.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and extend their speaking and listening skills across the wider curriculum.
- The school looks after all its pupils well. Pupils with learning difficulties have good support, as do those pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Attendance levels are lower than they are in most other primary schools in the country and learning is held back for those pupils who are poor attenders.
- Most pupils' work is marked at least adequately, but there are significant variations in the quality of marking that result in some pupils being unclear about how to improve their work.

The school has made **good** progress since it was last inspected six years ago. There were a number of issues that were related to the school's management. These have been tackled well; there is a good curriculum in place, the development plan is now a working document that guides the school's development forward, learning resources are satisfactory and the provision for the youngest children in school is excellent.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Boys and girls achieve **well** and this includes pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language. The results of the 2004 tests are outlined in the table below. The school has worked hard to improve on these results, with significant success in 2005. A much higher proportion of eleven-year-olds have attained the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Current standards in these subjects are broadly average, as they are in most other subjects except physical education where standards are above average. Religious education was not inspected as it is to be inspected by the church authorities.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	D	D	D

¹ This is the name given to the Nursery and Reception classes.

Mathematics	C	C	D	D
Science	D	D	D	D

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Standards for seven-year-olds are broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and their achievement is good. Standards are inadequate in speaking and listening, mainly because the year group had very limited skills when they joined St Patrick's and they have much ground to cover before they reach an average standard. In this current year (2004/5), children joined the Foundation Stage with below average skills and understanding. They have made good progress and most of them are on course to achieve their targets² by the end of the Reception year, a good improvement on previous years. There is an upward trend in standards across the board. Pupils are keen to come to school and they enjoy learning because they are well taught. Their personal development is good, as is their behaviour. Relationships are good and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance levels are unsatisfactory because too many parents find it difficult to ensure their children attend school regularly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**, with very good features in most of the year groups. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and this helps them to achieve as well as their classmates. Pupils with English as an additional language have good support from their teachers and from specialist teachers. Their achievement is also good. Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage. Children get off to an excellent start to their school career because the Nursery and Reception staff have an excellent understanding of the most effective ways to encourage young children's learning to be productive.

The school's curriculum has a rich variety that holds pupils' interest well. They enjoy their many visits out as well as the visitors who come to school, including artists and musicians. The accommodation is satisfactory, as is the level of learning resources. Pupils are well cared for. There are good links with other schools and satisfactory links with parents and the wider community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is **good** and she is supported exceptionally well by her very capable deputy. Teamwork is effective. The school's management is good. The main weakness in leadership is linked to the role of the subject leaders, many of whom have had little opportunity to monitor, standards, teaching and learning in the classrooms. Governance is sound and all the statutory requirements are met. Funds are managed well and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views about the school and they are pleased with the support that it provides for their children. Pupils like school and they enjoy being there.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

² These are called the Early Learning Goals.

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Widen the opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills across the whole curriculum.
- Extend the role of the subject leaders so they all have the opportunity to check out standards, teaching and learning in the classrooms.
- Continue to work in partnership with parents to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that inconsistencies in marking are ironed out and that pupils have clearer guidance about how to achieve their targets.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good**. Standards are improving well, and this year significantly more pupils have attained higher levels than in previous years.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good for higher, average and lower attaining boys and girls.
- By the end of Year 6 current standards are average in English, mathematics and science. When this group started school their standards were well below average.
- Standards are below average in English at the end of Year 2.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well.
- Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because they have good support.
- The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. They are well represented in all the ability groups.

Commentary

1. Standards are broadly average in the main subjects³ at the end of Years 2 and 6, the only exception being English at the end of Year 2 where standards are just below average. Standards have dipped since the last inspection six-and-a-half years ago. This is because the school population is rapidly changing, with increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs. There are also significantly more pupils from a range of minority ethnic heritages, all of whom are at different stages in developing their spoken English skills and this curtails their progress. Pupils in both these groups achieve well, like their classmates.
2. In the 2004 national tests for eleven-year-olds, standards were below average as they were for the seven-year-olds. When compared to similar schools, standards were at the same level. This year, 2005, there has been a significant improvement with a greater proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in all the tested subjects. This is due to well-focused teaching that has boosted standards and achievement successfully across the board. Targets are challenging and achievable and they have been reached this year.
3. Standards in speaking and listening are below average throughout the school. The strong focus on reading and writing has diverted teachers' attention from speaking and listening and this is the next area for development. In Year 6, pupils use their vocabulary effectively when asked to do so but they lack confidence in speaking out to adults or each other. Reading skills are developing well. Most pupils read appropriate texts fluently and they have a good understanding of the author's meaning. Writing is lively and thoughtful as pupils write clearly and effectively in different genres. In mathematics, pupils have increased their speed as they work out problems mentally. Number facts are now secure and, in science, pupils are adept at setting up their science investigations.

³ These are English, mathematics and science.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (26.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.0 (27.0)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.8 (28.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. In Year 2, speaking and listening skills are below average, as they are in Year 6. Pupils have a limited vocabulary and many of them find it difficult to speak clearly and articulately in small or large groups. What is missing is a co-ordinated approach to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills across the whole curriculum. Pupils do not have enough practice at speaking to each other and to larger groups. Reading skills are taught well and pupils use a range of strategies to identify unknown words. They enjoy reading and they relate well to the characters in their books. Writing skills are also developing well as pupils create a good structure to their written work. Number facts are understood and pupils enjoy planning their science investigations.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (16.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.0 (14.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.7 (16.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Across the school, standards are broadly average in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, history, geography and music. Standards are above average in physical education (PE). Religious education was not inspected as St Patrick's is a church school. It is to be inspected by the church authorities later in the year. There is very little difference in the achievement of girls and boys in all subjects.
6. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well. This year, their skills and understanding were below average when they joined the school, with well below average skills in communication, language and literacy and in creative development. Good progress has been made, with very good achievement in the areas of learning. Most children are on course to achieve their targets by the end of the Reception year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, are **good**. The levels of attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to be included in learning activities.
- The quality of relationships is good, helping to create a positive climate for learning.
- Behaviour is good overall and learning takes place unhindered.
- Attendance levels are too low and this holds back pupils' learning. A few pupils are regularly late.

Commentary

7. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and most enjoy being there. They try hard and are prepared to do their best. For example, in a very good PE lesson with the Reception class, the children gained in confidence travelling sideways, taking their weight on different parts of their body. They were ready to experiment with various methods of moving and their demonstrations were greeted with claps of praise by other members of the class. A few older pupils do not have quite such positive attitudes to learning, but they are in a minority. Pupils of all ages speak with pleasure about the clubs offered by the school and are eager to propose more!
8. Relationships between pupils are good. This is true of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and both genders. They are happy to collaborate and co-operate with each other, as seen in a good Year 3 science lesson on *Shadows*. Pupils supported each other in making shadow puppet characters and inventing their monster scenarios productively. The caring ethos alongside the personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) generate respect for the feelings of others and this contributes successfully to St Patrick's friendly atmosphere. Both boys and girls talk of respecting and liking their teachers; this helps them learn and achieve effectively. They take care of their equipment and resources, such as library books.
9. Behaviour in and around the school is good overall. In the Foundation Stage and the infants, it is usually very good, which allows learning to take place unhindered. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions clearly because of the consistent implementation of the behaviour and discipline policy. From the Nursery to Year 4, they respond most positively to a range of rewards, particularly valuing the certificates and stickers. In Years 5 and 6 there are occasional thoughtless incidents, but any unsuitable behaviour is properly checked and improvement is supported well. Behaviour diaries keep parents well informed of progress when their children's behaviour needs to be improved. Bullying, racial discrimination and other forms of harassment are rarely problems. Only one racist incident has been logged this school year and this matter was resolved well. Most pupils and parents are confident that any such issues will be dealt with swiftly and fairly.
10. Pupils' personal development is good. One example of the way pupils take opportunities offered to them is the exemplary manner in which a group from Year 5 led and constructively played with the Reception pupils in the *Huff'n'Puff* session during the lunch break. Fundraising for charities, such as *Cafod* and *Red Nose Day*, are undertaken with gusto. The spiritual, moral and social aspects of their development remain good. There is now greater time for reflection and this is shown not only in assemblies but in lessons such as science. The *Reflection Room* at lunchtime offers thinking time and pastoral support when needed. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own culture is good and their knowledge of the multi-ethnic society and traditions in twentieth century Britain has improved and is sound.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2003/4)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1%	School data	1.2%
National data	5.1%	National data	0.4%

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

11. In spite of the sound range of strategies the school has in place, the levels of attendance have barely risen since the last inspection. In 2003/4, it was in the bottom 10 per cent of schools nationally. During the current year, attendance is improving and the school is on course to meet its target of 93 per cent. The school tries hard to work with those families who have problems in ensuring their children get to school and arrive in good time. It is having some success in this. It has limited authorisation of holidays to ten days per year and clearly states this to parents, but a few of them still exceed this period. Registration is accurate, but as teachers start their sessions promptly, the latecomers can prove distracting to other pupils. There were three fixed-term exclusions in 2003/4 and the situation is the same for this current year. All were fully justified and this action is only used as a last resort.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	188	2	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British- any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	9	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
Parent/ pupil preferred not to say	4	0	0

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good with a number of strengths throughout the school.
- There is a high percentage of very good teaching in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills across the wider curriculum.
- Targets are used effectively to boost achievement in literacy and numeracy.

Commentary

12. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. They are very good in the Foundation Stage and good in the rest of the school - Years 1 to 6. New systems for improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, alongside rigorous monitoring, have all contributed to improvements. Standards and achievement are boosted all round, with significantly more pupils than in previous years currently attaining higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6.
13. The very good teaching in the Foundation Stage results in children getting off to a very good start as they tackle learning. The really strong focus on developing and extending pupils' personal, social and emotional development enables all learning to be productive as the children are positive about coming to school and they try hard to do well. This year, most children are on course to achieve their targets at the end of the Reception year, an improvement on previous years.
14. In Years 1 to 6, the pupils' tasks are planned well. Targets are used effectively to boost achievement in literacy and numeracy, demonstrating good results in the most recent tests in 2005. Teachers have good systems for tracking how well pupils are doing and this enables them to pitch work that is at the right level. There are a few occasions when this does not happen. For example, when pupils' work is recorded mainly on worksheets, this limits pupils' opportunities to use and practise their literacy skills. In the main, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are used well to support and extend learning. In the classes that have interactive whiteboards, pupils are adept at using them to explain their ideas, develop their thinking and extend their learning.
15. Teaching assistants play an increasingly important role when matching teaching and learning to the needs of individuals and groups regardless of ability or gender. Their talents are developed to benefit learning, particularly in ICT.
16. There are few weaknesses in the teaching that act as barriers to effective learning. The main one is the limited opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills across the whole curriculum. For example, in a physical education lesson, pupils did not spend enough time explaining how they could improve their performance and that of their classmates, and in a science lesson there were missed opportunities to extend pupils' understanding of 'fair testing'. This curtails pupils' progress in extending their vocabulary and developing their speaking skills.
17. At best, marking is excellent, giving very clear pointers for pupils so they understand what needs to be done to improve their work but there are variations. In the weaker examples, marking is too cursory and is not sufficiently focused on improvement. Homework is used soundly to support pupils' learning in class. Teaching assistants are effective in their drive to provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and this boosts their achievement well. Pupils with English as an additional language

have good support from specialist teachers as well as good support in their class. They too achieve well as a result.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	16 (40%)	18 (45%)	5 (13%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

THE CURRICULUM

Curriculum provision is **good** overall. Enrichment opportunities are **good**. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enrichment opportunities are good and enliven learning.
- Pupils’ participation in sport and in the arts is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall, and this enables them to make good progress.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good.

Commentary

18. The school provides a good, well-balanced and relevant curriculum. Its strengths lie in the provision of an exciting range of effective and imaginative experiences in the Foundation Stage, and a range of extra-curricular activities, which enrich and motivate learning. Pupils widen their different knowledge of places and cultures as they take part in a ‘Mexican Day’. They also have opportunities to participate in Indian Bangra dancing and many of them join school clubs to learn German or Spanish. Creative arts and sports activities are well attended, with visiting theatre groups and sports coaches adding an extra dimension to learning. Visits to places of historical interest, such as Selly Manor, and Cannock Chase War Memorial, are well linked to lessons and add valuable first-hand experiences to pupils’ learning.
19. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be sound. There now is a consistent approach to long-term planning in each subject, and the Foundation Stage benefits from an improved outside play area. The school has a strategic overview of all curriculum subjects, but as yet, not all subject leaders are given the time to monitor and evaluate teaching, learning and the curriculum through classroom observations. At present, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills across the whole curriculum.
20. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very good. All areas of learning are covered very well in interesting and challenging ways, making sure that young children are motivated into wanting to learn. The very good strategies for developing children’s personal, social and emotional development provide a firm basis for later learning as children move through the school, and there is good provision in each year group.
21. All groups are included in the work and life of the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and is tailored to meet the pupils’ specific needs. There is a clear, well-targeted support for pupils who are learning English as an

additional language. The skills of experts from outside the school are used well to provide specific support when needed for these pupils.

22. There is a satisfactory match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum, except in the Foundation Stage, where the match is excellent. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school's outdoor environment provides a pleasant grassed play-area for work and recreation, which effectively supports the school's positive ethos.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is **good**, as are the support, advice and guidance they receive at St Patrick's. The school involves pupils in the life of the school soundly, treating with respect their suggestions and ideas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils receive a good level of care; staff build up good relationships with them.
- Pupils are well supported, with good advice and guidance given to all of them. However, better marking would help them to focus on what they need to do to improve.
- Staff effectively support their personal development.
- Achievements of all pupils are recognised and celebrated well, helping to enhance their self-esteem and confidence.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and achieve well.
- Induction arrangements for the youngest children are excellent, helping them to settle quickly and happily.

Commentary

23. St Patrick's Catholic Primary School has a caring, Christian atmosphere, which is appreciated by both parents and pupils. The staff place a high priority on forming good relationships with the pupils; most children believe it is easy to talk to members of staff and that their comments are listened to. Induction of new children is good; it is particularly effective in the Nursery where there is a very good programme involving home visits. This helps to forge an effective home-school partnership.
24. Staff take good care of all pupils, including the most vulnerable. Child protection procedures have been formalised since the last inspection. The designated person is suitably trained, works closely with the headteacher and briefs her colleagues appropriately. The health and safety of the school community are given a high priority by all. Teaching staff ensure that pupils are aware of any likely hazards and that they move and use equipment safely. Regular fire drills now take place and are duly logged with the evacuation time noted. Supervision at lunchtimes is sound, with an induction programme for new assistants firmly in place.
25. Pupils receive appropriate support from staff to help them improve academically. In English and mathematics, targets are shared, showing pupils what they have to do to move forward. All work is marked, but in some cases better, more consistent marking would help pupils focus more clearly on what they need to do to improve. Teachers and their assistants are sensitive to the needs of all pupils and ensure that they are fully involved in class activities. The pupils with special needs and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language are supported well and achieve well. Outside agencies are used well to support their language development.

26. Staff know their pupils well and use this knowledge effectively to support and guide their personal development. The PSHCE⁴ programme makes a significant contribution to this. Very supportive pastoral care at times of trauma is offered to pupils and their families. Achievement in all areas of school life is celebrated and this public acknowledgement encourages pupils to work to achieve more.
27. Pupils are asked their opinions both informally and more formally in class discussions. They understand that their views are important, although not necessarily decisive, in shaping the life of the school. The school council, which was formed in March 2005, is acting as a forum for ideas from pupils in Years 1 to 6. There was the opportunity to elect two representatives, a boy and a girl, from each class. Year 6 pupils have taken on the posts of chair and secretary and are carrying out their duties well. The current focus is on making the playground more interesting. The council members are finding out about funding and undertaking to raise money to accomplish their plans. The council has the capacity to involve every pupil and consider their views more systematically but, as yet, it is not deeply embedded in the life of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the community are **sound**, whilst the links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school and church form a strong partnership which supports pupils' learning and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Parents are pleased with this school and what it offers and achieves.
- Links with other schools and the college are effective and productive.
- The Parents/Teachers/Friends/Association (PTFA) offers good support to the life of the school, both through fund-raising and social events.

Commentary

28. Overall, parents are pleased with St Patrick's school. They appreciate what it provides and achieves and they recognise the value of its caring, Christian ethos. They are very satisfied at the way in which their children settle down happily and quickly in the Nursery. A few parents were unsure if older children behaved well at school. However, inspectors found that in spite of some inappropriate behaviour on the part of a very few pupils, teachers' class management generally works well and learning is not hindered by occasional ill discipline.
29. There is a range of good quality information for parents about the school and about their child's progress. The school provides a range of helpful written information for parents, both about the school and their child's achievements, with the end-of-year report giving a good picture of each child's progress. However, some parents would appreciate more details about subject targets. In addition to the reports, there are three formal parent consultation sessions, as well as more informal opportunities for parents to talk to teachers. Parents of children with special needs are invited to regular

⁴ Personal, social, health and citizenship education.

meetings with the Special Needs Co-ordinator, which keeps them well informed about their child's progress.

30. Some parents help in school and on school visits, particularly with the younger pupils. This has a beneficial influence on pupils' learning. Volunteers believe their support is appreciated both by staff and children. The school would like to build on this and welcome more parents into school. The school is working hard to strengthen the home-school relationship as it aims to increase parental involvement in their children's learning. Currently the partnership is sound. Topic information and curriculum workshops have helped parents to understand more about what their children are learning, although some parents would like further knowledge, particularly of literacy and numeracy. In July, in co-operation with the City of Wolverhampton College, two planned family learning workshops designed '... to help you help your children' will be held as one response to this desire. The school plans to further improve communications with parents of children moving from Reception to Year 1, so that they can support their children better in the transition to Key Stage 1. A few parents would like to be consulted more, but inspectors judge the school's procedures are appropriate.
31. Parents, staff and members of the local community are co-workers in the PTFA, which contributes not only money to the school but organises social events. Funds raised purchase resources requested by teachers to support the children's education, such as science equipment. The school council has also applied for funds to buy playground equipment. A school magazine for the community has been launched which contains interesting items contributed by the children, their parents and the staff.
32. Links with the parish church are strong. The priest regularly takes assemblies, pupils visit the church and parishioners are welcomed into the school. He contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Examples of sound community links include pupil performances at the day care centre, carol services at different churches and visits to the local library.
33. The school works effectively with other primary and secondary schools in the local cluster to develop and improve the quality of education for its pupils. There are very productive sporting links which give opportunities for pupils to access sports not offered at St Patrick's. Pupils gain and enhance their skills in such sports as trampolining. Fruitful training links exist with Wolverhampton and Newman Colleges.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is **good**, as is the management of the school. The governance of the school is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose that has helped the school to move forward.
- Governors have a secure understanding of the priorities of the school and they are effective in seeking best value for money.
- Teamwork of teaching and support staff is good; together they work tirelessly to promote inclusion and very good equality of opportunity.

- Leaders of curriculum have very little planned time to fulfil their leadership and monitoring role in the classroom.

Commentary

34. The headteacher works effectively to move the school forward and she is devoted to providing the best for the pupils of St Patrick's. Under her determined leadership, successful improvements have been permeating upwards through the school, with Nursery and Reception children benefiting most as they start to move through the school. Pupils build consistently well on the excellent start made in the Foundation Stage, which is superbly led and managed by the deputy headteacher. Issues related to leadership and management highlighted at the time of the last inspection have been addressed well. The more recent introduction of a senior management team of key subject and phase leaders is supporting good advancements in leadership by middle managers.
35. Subject leaders are becoming more actively involved in raising standards by producing action plans for their subjects, analysing strengths and areas for development. Plans are in hand for them to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom. Currently this is an omission as it means there are gaps in the information that is available to subject leaders as they plan the future development of their subjects. Teaching and support staff have a shared commitment to raising standards and continued professional development sharpens their teaching skills well as strategies for effective learning are put in place. There are good procedures for monitoring the performance management of all staff, and follow-on support is well directed to boost standards and enhance achievement.
36. Governors fulfil their statutory duties efficiently and they challenge and support the leadership of the school soundly. Where possible they visit classrooms, oversee curriculum provision and receive reports from, and hold discussions with, subject leaders. Governors ensure that all pupils benefit from decisions made and they are very well prepared to contribute to planning for the future. Temporary and long-term absences have been managed soundly to ensure that disruption has been kept to a minimum. Governors are determined to advance the recently introduced committee structure and are eager to extend involvement in the governing body.
37. There are good systems and procedures in place to record what pupils know, understand and can do and this information is shared with parents. However, too little use is made of this data in order to track the progress of different groups and this is a weakness. In spite of the long-term absence of key staff, the day-to-day management is sound and the recent audit report proved to be satisfactory, indicating that the governing body have their finger on the pulse of financial matters. They plan appropriately for school improvement despite a tight budget. Since teaching and learning are good and achievement is good, the value for money is also good as each pupil costs an average amount of money to be educated at St Patrick's. The school continues to provide good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	557,572	Balance from previous year	72,208

Total expenditure	576,978
Expenditure per pupil	2,659

Balance carried forward to the next year	52,802
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PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **excellent**, enabling all children to achieve very well. The children enter Nursery in the September, January or April of each year following their third birthday. At the time of the inspection there were 27 children on roll in Reception and 36 part-time children in the Nursery. There were eight children with learning difficulties and seven children who speak English as an additional language. When children join the Nursery, their skills and understanding are lower than those of similar aged children across the country, except in communication, language and literacy and creative development where their skills fall well short of expectations for their age.

MAIN STRENGTHS

- Excellent provision ensures children receive a flying start to their education. The leadership is excellent.
- Achievement is very good because children are keen to learn and their needs are effectively met through an exciting, imaginative and enriching curriculum, which includes a strong programme of outdoor activities where children sustain their enjoyment very well.
- Teaching and learning are consistently very good in the Foundation Stage because the Nursery and Reception staff have an excellent understanding of the most effective ways to encourage young children's learning to be productive.
- Excellent induction arrangements to Nursery and into Reception together with very good links with parents, enable children to settle quickly and happily into this very happy, secure environment.
- Very comprehensive and analytical assessment procedures are organised precisely to give the school a very clear insight into children's progress, within and across stages, and for achievements of children with special educational needs and those with English as their second language.
- The classrooms, inside and outside, celebrate all areas of learning. They are bright and welcoming, stimulating and spacious. They have been used well to support learning.
- Teaching assistants are well informed and are very effective in their role of supporting the learning of all children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social, and emotional development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because of the very good teaching and high expectations set by staff.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote children's confidence and independence.
- Relationships are excellent with both adults and peers.
- Behaviour is very good at all times.

Commentary

38. Children enter school with below average skills in this area of learning. Teaching is always very good and as a result, all children make very good progress and achieve very well in their social development. All children are on course to achieve more than might be expected in their attitudes and behaviour with a few children moving beyond the Early Learning Goals⁵. All the adults have established secure routines so that children feel safe and confident in their learning. The class bears, *Barnaby and Ted* are used to teach the children how to care for other people. Children are expected to clear up after themselves, which they do so very effectively. Children have many opportunities to work alone and in small groups. Staff use every opportunity to praise children, constantly reinforcing the excellent relationships and rewarding them. Everyone has very high expectations of children's behaviour. Clear boundaries are established and the consistent role models set by the adults ensure that children know clearly what is expected of them. During *Family Group* time, the children continue to take part in activities encouraging co-operation and trust. Assessment and record-keeping for this area of learning are excellent, making sure that the children's personal growth is nurtured and extended. Most children have developed their independence in dressing and undressing and to take care with their personal hygiene.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because very good teaching and learning are focused on developing children's skills through an interesting, imaginative curriculum and in classrooms that celebrate language.
- Children love listening to stories, enjoy handling books and are making very good progress in starting to read and write.
- Very high expectations ensure all children take great care with the presentation of their work.

Commentary

39. Most children enter Nursery with well below average skills in communication, language and literacy. Indications are that many children, including those with learning difficulties and children who are learning English as an additional language, are on course to achieve their targets in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Children have made very good progress as a result of the many very good opportunities they are given.
40. All staff take every opportunity during all activities to develop the children's vocabulary through very good probing questions and continual chattering to the children, making them think, and choose appropriate words to describe what they are doing or what might be in the '*Treasure Box*'. Children are consistently taught very well in class and in very small groups. Focused texts, structured activities and a wide variety of rhymes and songs related to the seaside are developing listening skills well and giving the children confidence in answering questions and joining in enthusiastically with the words they know. Children enjoy books and when a story is read to them, for example,

⁵ The name given to children's targets they are expected to achieve at the end of the Reception year.

when the teacher read the story of 'Smiley Shark', the children were listening attentively, hanging on to her every word. Children are making a very good start with their reading. Most children are beginning to recognise the early words in the chosen reading scheme and a number are beginning to read the first books. Children are stimulated to use writing for a variety of purposes as they play in Wednesfield Lighthouse and on the beach at the seaside. Children write postcards, letters for a bottle, job sheets and keep a captain's log when sailing in their ships. All children have been taught to hold their pencils correctly and to leave finger spaces. Most children in Reception have made very good progress with their writing, with very good progression evident, from mark-making to starting to write independently.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to encourage children's mathematical development through a very exciting and imaginative curriculum.
- Children achieve well because they are given many opportunities to develop mathematical skills across all areas of learning, inside and outside the classrooms.

Commentary

41. Children enter Nursery with skills below the levels expected for their age in mathematics. This area is very well taught, with a focus on first-hand practical activities, number rhymes and songs which help children to understand number sequence and develop their counting skills. The analysis of the children's work in Reception shows that most children will be well on their way to achieve their learning goals by the end of the year, with a few children exceeding them because teachers' expectations are very high. Some children in Reception can count to 27 and can work out the number of children present by subtracting the number absent on that day. Staff take every opportunity to reinforce and extend children's mathematical skills and language. For example, children daily take an active role in practising mental strategies, counting and recognising numbers, sorting and matching, creating repeating patterns, estimating and learning to tell the time.
42. There is very good provision for them to develop good language, for instance, *more, less*, when adding and subtracting seaside objects and *big, little, larger and smaller* when comparing the different types of shells. Excellent practical activities in the role-play areas prepare the way for future learning. Children learn from action, learn from seeing, and develop a strong sense of pattern. They learn to manipulate, to observe, and notice. Teachers sustain children's interest very well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of very good teaching which is focused on developing children's skills through a practical, imaginative curriculum.
- A very good range of resources, visits and visitors, the use of computers and celebrating special events develop children's understanding well.
- Very good use is made of the outdoor and indoor classroom for exploration and investigation.

Commentary

43. When the children enter Nursery, they have limited experiences to draw upon. Teaching and learning are very good and all children achieve well. Most will be well on their way to achieving their targets. There is a very good variety of appropriate interesting activities planned to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding, for example the visit to the *Teddy Bear Trail* at Cannock Chase, and the well-planned *Dragon Hunt* and *Treasure Hunt* outside the classroom. These serve as a basis for exploring the senses of smell, touch, hearing and sight, using clues and activities to explore properties of materials, sounds in the environment, and to listen and respond to actions and understand floating and sinking. The children have lots of opportunities to engage in cookery activities. Children had been making ice-cream kebabs, banana boats and boat sandwiches. Children enjoy tasting food and comparing the sweet and savoury recipes. Everybody at the school works very hard to promote awareness of cultures and beliefs. All children celebrated the Chinese New Year, making lanterns and masks, chanting to the music on the Internet and tasting Chinese food. Computer skills are very well taught on a daily basis, enabling most children to achieve the learning goals in ICT. Staff build up children's confidence in using tape and video recorders, the Roamer, and computers. As a result, they have positive attitudes and display equally good skills.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan very well for learning inside and outside the classroom.
- Children enjoy their physical education lessons.

Commentary

44. Children are on course to achieve their targets by the end of the Reception Year. Teaching and learning are very good. In a gymnastics lesson, the children were beginning to show a good awareness of space, of themselves and others as they travelled in a variety of ways, using different parts of the body as they pretended to be sea creatures. They experiment with different ways of moving as they safely use the wheeled vehicles, and balance on the balance trail, making sure they did not fall off '*into the sea*,' High expectations and evaluation push up standards. Children develop their manipulative skills well by handling scissors, and manipulate small and large construction equipment with increasing dexterity.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because they are taught very well and experience a wide range of creative activities.
- The imaginative play areas are very well resourced, and are used well to encourage children's creative response.
- Children with special educational needs and those learning to speak English as an additional language are fully integrated in all activities.

Commentary

45. This area of learning is particularly well planned. There are daily opportunities for children to develop creativity to raise standards from the well below average skills they have when they enter Nursery. Teaching and learning are very good and most children will achieve their targets by the end of the year. Children have access to a very good range of materials, resources and sensory experiences to explore colour, texture and techniques. The displays of the children's work show how well adults value the children's efforts. The collaborative representations of life under the sea, banners and sails show how well children have thoroughly enjoyed experiencing a wide range of techniques and textures. Children have a very good introduction to music appreciation, they handle instruments well and enjoy singing to nearly everything they do in all areas of the curriculum, able to match actions and maintain a steady beat to the music. The areas for imaginative role-play are very exciting. This strand is excellently well organised in Nursery and Reception; for example, children use their imagination to be a lighthouse keeper, sailor, captain, pirate or holiday maker and can be heard chanting many rhymes like '*A sailor went to sea, sea, sea*' and '*This is the way the waves roll in...*'.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils take pride in their written work and it is neat and tidy.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills are not wide enough.
- Basic literacy skills are taught well.
- Teachers provide a good range of purposeful writing experiences, which are helping to raise standards.
- Leadership and management are good.

COMMENTARY

46. Over time, standards in the national tests in English in Year 2 and Year 6 have varied from above average to below average. Present inspection findings judge standards at the end of Year 6 to be broadly average. This is because teachers provide a range of purposeful writing experiences, and their effective assessment and analysis of pupils' work provides a clear pathway for improvement. This year's test results show an increasing number of pupils achieving the Higher Level 5 than in previous years. At the end of Year 2, standards are below average.
47. Achievement in English is good overall. Pupils start school with well below average language and literacy skills, but make good headway with their reading and writing and achieve well in Year 1 and 2. Throughout the school, basic skills in literacy are built upon progressively, and so pupils learn to read and write with greater independence. A clear focus on structuring stories and non-fictional writing helps pupils to improve their written work in Years 3, 4 and 6. The higher standards reached in Year 6 this year stem from this. However, achievement in speaking is more variable, and by Year 5 and 6 is less than expected for this age group. Pupils lack confidence as speakers, few initiate talk, or volunteer to add to discussions in lessons. Presently, opportunities to develop speaking skills in English and in other subjects are not wide enough. The pupils themselves would like to see more drama and role-play experiences built into their lessons. The skilful support of two specialist teachers is of benefit to pupils learning English as an additional language, enabling them to make good progress and to gain in confidence and fluency.
48. In Year 2, standards in reading are below average. The class has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils at the earlier stages of learning to speak English, and this lowers attainment overall. Nevertheless, pupils read accurately and fluently, and with understanding. Discussions with pupils indicate that they are unsure of the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. By Year 6, higher-attaining readers enjoy reading, read widely and choose to read voluntarily. Pupils reaching average levels are not so enthusiastic about their reading, and would like to have more say when choosing books and time to read by themselves in class.
49. By Year 2, standards in writing are below average, but all ability groups make good progress with their learning. Pupils make convincing attempts at spelling words by themselves, organise their stories successfully and begin to punctuate their work.
50. Evidence from pupils' written work, and from work in lessons, indicates standards in writing are average overall by Year 6, but higher-attaining pupils are reaching above expectation with their work. Pupils undertake a range of purposeful writing and successfully learn how to shape and organise their ideas through narrative and non-fictional writing. With the exception of a small minority of pupils' work in Year 5, writing is neat and tidy and well presented.
51. Teaching and learning are good overall. However, in one unsatisfactory lesson, the poor behaviour of a small group of pupils stopped others from learning. Teachers have good subject expertise and ensure all pupils join in lessons.. For instance, the expertise of the learning support assistants is effectively targeted to ensure pupils with learning difficulties have the specific help they need. Marking is consistent and can be of a high quality but, on occasions, work at the top end of the school is over-marked, and this takes away the opportunity for pupils to self-assess, read through, edit and improve their own work. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and apply themselves well to their learning.

52. Leadership and management are good. The role of the subject leader has been developed successfully since the last inspection, and the subject is moving forward. The school makes good use of test results to track pupils' progress and to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning. The subject leader monitors curriculum coverage and the quality of teaching and learning well, to ensure consistency. Presently, standards are not as high in Year 2 and Year 6 when compared with the previous inspection for the reasons outlined earlier in this report. Reading resources have improved and the good range of interesting books encourage pupils to want to read.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. English is promoted soundly across the wider curriculum. In Year 6, there are some good links with reading and writing, through 'survival guide' booklets linked to the study of mountains in geography. Literature is used well in Year 5 to develop wider insight into different cultures, through the study of books such as *Grandpa Chatterj* and *No gun for Amir*. There are missed opportunities to develop and widen the pupils' speaking in other subjects and this holds back their achievement.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average by the end of Year 2, as they are at the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and have good attitudes to learning.
- ICT is used well to support learning.

Commentary

54. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, where one in three pupils are being challenged at the higher level 5. Pupils behave very well and enjoy their lessons. They co-operate well when working in pairs or groups. Standards are lower than they were at the last inspection for the reasons outlined earlier in this report.
55. The focused support provided by the local authority has been successful in adding more consistency to teaching and learning. The decision to concentrate on mental and oral skills has added to the quality of learning. In addition, teachers are beginning to use the good systems in place which record what pupils know and understand to target improvement. More consistency is now needed in using marking to inform pupils of their successes and then guiding them to improve.
56. Teaching is good, with teaching in Years 1 and 2 being very good. Here pupils are expected to explain their reasoning and are challenged to work at a rigorous pace. Pupils explain that they enjoy mathematics more when carrying out investigations. Progress is good for all, including those pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language. Classroom assistants work effectively. Pupils of all abilities are assisted well as they are encouraged to work at challenging problems. Computers are used effectively to support learning with many programs that

enable pupils of all ages and abilities to improve their speed and accuracy. The three interactive whiteboards are used effectively by teachers and pupils to boost the quality of teaching and learning for all groups.

57. The management of mathematics is good. The enthusiastic subject leader has contributed to the raising of standards by promoting professional development for all staff to increase their subject knowledge; modifying national guidelines so that they more closely match the needs of pupils; and by working with a numeracy consultant to monitor standards. She is now ideally placed to increase her effectiveness by monitoring teaching and learning in the classroom to drive up standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. The use of mathematical skills to support learning in other areas of the curriculum is good. Charts, tables and graphs are used effectively to record investigations in science; an understanding of scales and co-ordinates improves mapping skills in geography; and time lines foster an understanding of chronology in history.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average by the end of Year 6 and this is a significant improvement over previous years. Almost half the year group have attained higher levels this year.
- Teaching is good and this is the main reason that pupils achieve well.
- Older pupils have a good understanding of 'fair testing'. They record their findings accurately, using their literacy and numeracy skills effectively.
- Some junior pupils spend too much time completing work sheets.
- The lack of opportunities to observe teaching and learning in lessons hinder the subject leader's full grasp of standards and quality in science.

Commentary

59. Pupils achieve well and by Years 2 and 6, most reach average standards. This is a good improvement since 2004 when standards for the eleven-year-olds were below average. Achievement is good, with significantly more pupils reaching higher levels across the board. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve equally as well as their classmates. Pupils speaking English as an additional language are well represented across all the ability groups and their achievement is good.
60. Teaching is good. Lessons are carefully planned and they are pitched at the right level, with a good balance between practical activities and recording findings of investigations. Where interactive whiteboards are in place these are used well to accelerate pupils' learning. Effective links with other subjects, such as a Year 3 class making a shadow puppet and presenting a performance, means that pupils' knowledge and understanding of shadow formation is reinforced and extended successfully.
61. By Year 6, many of the higher and average attainers are confident in predicting the outcomes of their testing and drawing conclusions based on their own knowledge and

understanding. They are very confident when setting up an investigation that is 'fair'. Lower attainers are not at this level, but, with help from their teacher or teaching assistant, they gain confidence and are willing to 'have a go' at predicting what might happen during an investigation. Ongoing assessment enables teachers to track pupils' progress and achievement at regular intervals so that the momentum for learning is maintained well.

62. Pupils' early experiences in Years 1 and 2 prepare them successfully for later learning as they move through Years 3 to 6. Throughout the school, most classes have a good balance of scientific activities during the course of the school year. A small minority of classes work mostly on worksheets. When this happens, learning is curtailed as pupils are not thinking things out for themselves or deciding how they are going to record their findings.
63. The subject leadership is satisfactory and the leader has a very good grasp of where the strengths and weaknesses lie. The main weakness is her lack of planned time to monitor standards, achievement, teaching and learning in the classrooms. Without this it is difficult to plan the next stages in the subject's development accurately.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are broadly average and better than at the time of the last inspection.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good.
- ICT is used well to support learning in different subjects.
- Assessment is used effectively to record pupils' individual progress.
- The subject is well led and staff have good subject knowledge.

Commentary

64. In spite of increased demands, the provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. Pupils attain average standards, with a significant proportion exceeding this level. The quality of progressive skill teaching has ensured that by the ages of seven and eleven, all pupils are given regular opportunities to apply their skills effectively. Pupils enjoy their learning and are highly motivated to use technology to extend their learning. They co-operate well when sharing resources and revel in opportunities to help each other.
65. The decision to locate computers in classrooms, and to appoint an ICT manager in a supportive role to the subject leader, has contributed significantly to the good quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection and to the use of computer technology to support learning in other subjects.
66. In the Year 2 class, pupils were guided to find information from CD-ROM by using 'menu and index'. They also knew that additional information could be gained by searching the Internet. A group of six pupils handled the mouse and keyboard confidently and worked collaboratively in pairs to investigate dinosaurs.
67. By the time pupils have progressed to end of Year 6, they have developed these skills to undertake higher order research and study skills. When designing a multimedia presentation

to show their understanding of Britain since the 1930s, higher-achieving pupils used PowerPoint confidently, changed fonts and colours freely, and added images, soundtrack and commentary, as well as using hyperlinks to access chosen Internet pages, and to link aspects of their presentation.

68. Teaching in both these lessons was good and the level of support was impressive. Independent learning was encouraged throughout and guidance was given sensitively by adults with secure subject knowledge. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed their experiences and responded enthusiastically to the levels of challenge and the opportunities to make decisions and share opinions with their partners. Achievement was consistently good for both boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language progress at the same rate as others in their class.
69. The leadership of ICT is good and national funding has been used effectively to maintain and improve teacher expertise. Good assessment strategies track and record gains in skills and understanding with successes shared with parents.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. COMPUTERS ARE UTILISED WELL TO SUPPORT LEARNING IN OTHER SUBJECTS. INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARDS ARE USED TO PROVIDE AN EXCITING NEW DIMENSION TO TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR TEACHERS AND PUPILS. PUPILS USE THE INTERNET TO EXTEND THEIR STUDIES, PARTICULARLY IN NUMERACY TO SHARPEN THEIR MENTAL NUMBER SKILLS, AND IN LITERACY WHERE PUPILS DEVELOP A RANGE OF WRITING STYLES FOR A WIDER AUDIENCE. OTHER SUBJECTS ARE BROUGHT TO LIFE AS WHEN INVESTIGATING 'RIVERS' IN GEOGRAPHY OR 'ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS' IN HISTORY. A GOOD RANGE OF SOFTWARE ENABLES PUPILS TO RECORD DATA - AS WHEN COMPLETING A TRAFFIC SURVEY - BEFORE GIVING THEM OPPORTUNITIES TO REPRESENT AND ANALYSE DATA IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

HUMANITIES

71. Religious education (RE) was not inspected as St Patrick's is a church school and the church authorities inspect this subject at a later date. All other subjects, except the main subjects discussed earlier in the report, were sampled in this inspection.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

72. There is every indication from pupils' work in history and geography that standards are broadly average in Year 2 and Year 6. This includes the pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language. This is a similar picture to that reported at the last inspection.
73. In both subjects, it is clear that a range of visits and visitors play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant and enhance pupils learning in both subjects. In geography for example, a visit to the local high street to interview locals and discuss with shopkeepers enabled the pupils to come to their conclusions as to whether the high street should be closed to traffic. Walks around the local area studying local maps give pupils a good knowledge about the past and present in Wednesfield. The residential visit to Kingswood helps to develop geographical skills. It enables the pupils to compare and contrast features and changes, giving them a greater understanding about the nature of this place in comparison with their own town. In history, the visits to Weston Park, Cannock Chase and Selly Manor play an important part in bringing

this subject alive and makes the work interesting and relevant, developing pupils' historical skills well, as well as helping pupils to understand their heritage.

74. Often worksheets are used to record work but there are some opportunities to develop literacy skills through note-taking, writing persuasive letters to express their own views and opinions about local issues, people and events in Tudor and Victorian times, and accounts of what it might have been like to live in past times. In their current topic on, *Life during the Second World War*, pupils in Year 6 found out about life as an evacuee and how Wolverhampton was bombed during the war. Marking is variable and lacks consistency making it difficult for pupils to understand what needs to be done to improve their work.
75. In both subjects, good use is made of ICT to find out more about places and events, today and in the past. The *Mountain Survival Guides* in Year 6 show how well pupils' skills have been developed.
76. In both history and geography, end-of-unit assessment is undertaken. As yet there is no effective system for tracking and recording pupils' progress and attainment over time. The subject leaders have had little opportunity to monitor standards, teaching and learning in the classrooms and this limits the information that is available to them as they plan the way forward in their subjects.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

77. This subject was sampled in the inspection. Work in art and design is varied and interesting. Pupils enjoy the subject and they try hard to do their best. Standards are broadly average throughout the school, all of which is a good improvement since the last inspection. There are good cross-curricular links with other subjects. For example, in history, pupils have created evocative silhouettes depicting the Great Fire of London and, using ICT successfully, they have created animals in the design of a woodcut. Colours are mixed effectively to create different tones and textures as pupils work individually or in larger groups. The subject leadership is satisfactory, but there are no planned opportunities for the leader to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom. This means that she has limited information to plan the way forward for the subject.

Design and technology

78. This subject was sampled during the inspection. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils are able to select materials independently and they progress seamlessly from the 'designing' to 'making' stage of a fairground ride. In discussion, pupils explained clearly, giving good reasons for their intention to use pulleys and belt drives, or cams. They had experienced different adhesives and chose materials wisely. Although needing more opportunities to practise using drills and saws, pupils were aware of the need for safety when handling tools. Pupils learned from their mistakes and discussed ways of improving their designs and modifying techniques.

Music

79. In music, pupils observed in lessons and in assembly expressed a sense of performance and occasion. Pupils sing tunefully and with real enjoyment, with

awareness of breathing, diction and dynamics and most obviously enjoy singing. A highly qualified music teacher volunteer plays the piano during some music lessons and in assembly. Singing standards in the songster group which she runs are well above average. It is quite clear that the new music scheme, recently acquired, has enabled all teachers to be more confident in teaching the subject and is now being used well to help pupils to move forward in composition work. In the two lessons observed, both children and teachers thoroughly enjoyed taking part performing rhythm and action in time to a steady beat. Since the previous inspection, a subject leader has been appointed but she has had little opportunity to monitor standards, teaching and learning in the classrooms and this is an omission.

Physical education

The provision for PE is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6.
- PE is given a high profile, and pupils respond enthusiastically.
- Standards are extended by an impressive range of activities outside of the normal school day.
- The use of external coaches is effective.
- PE contributes well to pupils' social and moral development.

Commentary

80. In the one lesson seen in both key stages, teaching and learning was at least satisfactory and based on skill development. National guidelines indicate a good balance of gymnastic, dance and games teaching. The teaching by specialised 'coaches' was very good. Learning unfolded at a hectic pace and skills were built on according to the needs of different ability groupings. Pupils were challenged to devise activities using a wide range of small apparatus.
81. In the parts of lessons observed in Years 4 and 5, there was evidence that pupils were capable of vigorous exercise and co-operated well in pairs and as teams. They behaved very well and thoroughly enjoyed being extended. Progress in throwing and catching had improved considerably over time. Pupils achieved well and pupils of all ages and abilities were encouraged to develop their talents. Pupils speaking English as an additional language achieved equally as well as others. PE contributes well to pupils' social and moral development.
82. PE, which is managed well, is given a high profile, with pupils of all ages given two hours of activities each week. St Patrick's School has strong links with partnership schools, including the local Sports College, contributing to an exhaustive list of inter-school activities, clubs and other sporting opportunities. At varying times boys and

girls experience 19 different sporting activities. The proportion of pupils involved in out of school activities exceeds that of other schools in the partnership. Coaches are invited to develop skills in athletics, basketball, tag rugby and football, and all pupils in Year 4 are at least beginners in swimming, with many taking advanced awards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

83. The subject was sampled during the inspection and only two lessons were seen. Both were effective. In Year 4, the focus on vandalism and its effect on the community gave good opportunities for pupils to discuss and explain why they arrived at their decisions. In Year 2, pupils explored a range of actions, determining if they were good or bad and thinking about the impact of these actions and about the choices they make themselves. Pupils were honest and open in their comments, respecting the views of others. Both lessons contributed well to pupils' personal development.
84. The personal, social and health education and citizenship programme is taught mainly through science, religious education, assemblies and circle time, when the teacher and pupils discuss issues relating to personal, social and health education. For example, the science curriculum covers healthy eating, care of teeth and the dangers of drugs and smoking and the pupils are well aware of these aspects. Visits from outside agencies, such as the nurse, support the learning well.
85. The inclusive ethos, which the school promotes very effectively, supports pupils' personal development well. The welcoming atmosphere is successfully encouraging pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Their social and personal development is also aided well during residential and day visits.
86. The recently formed school council gave pupils from Years 1 to 6 the opportunity to elect two representatives per class to serve on the council, a good example of citizenship in action. It is useful preparation for living in a democracy as they can be involved in decisions about matters that affect them directly, such as the upgrading of the junior playground.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).