



St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105827
LEA Rochdale
Inspection number 277421
Inspection dates 14 September 2005 to 15 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Mike Hewlett CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Foxholes Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Rochdale
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lancashire OL12 0ET
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 648089
Number on roll	266	Fax number	01706 357876
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Miss S McNally
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2000	Headteacher	Mr B Duffy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Patrick's is a large sized primary school where nearly one in five pupils claim free school meals. A smaller proportion, one in six, have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Both of these figures are close to national averages. Although the majority of pupils are white British, the number from minority ethnic groups is increasing with more joining the school in the last year than in the past. On entering reception classes, pupils have below average attainment.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. This judgement matches the school's own view of its effectiveness and that of parents and pupils. Standards are better than those found in schools nationally because the good teaching throughout the school helps all the children make effective progress. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is of high quality and they make good progress given their low starting points. Pupils' personal development is outstanding; they enjoy school, have very positive attitudes and behave exceptionally well. The increasing number of pupils from different backgrounds and with a range of language needs are very well integrated. A real strength is the way all are warmly welcomed by everyone associated with the school. Staff's skills in supporting these pupils are being developed more. The leadership of the headteacher, associate headteacher and governors is outstanding. Performance reviews for teaching assistants continue to be developed in line with the school's plans for further raising pupils' standards. Staff are committed to the safety and well-being of all the children. They make excellent use of assessment information to plan future work. The school has made great strides since the last inspection and school leaders have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve further. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

The following points, already identified in the school's strategic plan, will support its continuing drive to raise standards. The school should:

- develop training opportunities for all staff in teaching pupils whose first language is not English
- continue to develop performance reviews for learning assistants.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school judges achievement and standards as good and the inspection confirms that this is an accurate picture. Parents and children hold similar views on the performance of the school. Children make consistent progress and they achieve well. They start school with lower than average skills but they get off to a good start in the reception classes and make good progress during their first year. This picture continues year on year so that by the time they leave in year six, children's results are above average. This positive trend has continued with the 2005 test results. The targets set by the school are very challenging and are generally met. One of the reasons for this success is that children's results and overall performance are carefully analysed with changes made where necessary. For example, in literacy lessons the guided reading has been re-organised to make it more interesting and to better match children's needs. As a result, reading levels have increased and the importance of books and reading is apparent around the school.

Children with learning needs and those whose first language is not English make similarly good progress. The increasing numbers of pupils at the early stages of acquiring English make good progress because the school has been proactive in seeking outside support, identifying needs and then offering skilled teaching where necessary.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school is correct in viewing pupils' personal development and well-being as outstanding. The children enjoy coming to school and all that it offers them. They feel part of a welcoming, positive and happy community. Pupils work hard in lessons and enjoy excellent relationships with the staff. Outstanding behaviour, politeness and individual self-esteem are promoted by all staff, resulting in children showing care and consideration for each other. This ethos was highlighted during an assembly when children were asked to 'hold their friends in their hands as gently as they would hold a butterfly'.

The school council is thriving and contributes very effectively to the running of the school. School councillors are proud of the voice they provide for all the children and the changes they have initiated. The development of their playground and surrounding environment, as well as involvement with charitable fund raising, are but a few examples. In addition, classroom monitors are fully involved in promoting friendships and developing good relationships. Children of all ages throughout the school are positive about their roles, feeling that they are fully involved within their school community.

All children are encouraged to develop essential social skills that would be needed to act responsibly in later life. They have a growing awareness of other cultures and the multicultural society of which they are a part. In developing a healthy lifestyle children have a very good understanding of the importance of their diet and the effect that exercise has on their bodies.

Attendance levels are satisfactory and the school does all it can to promote regular attendance and punctuality.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and sometimes outstanding. As a result children make good progress and achieve well. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, are very well organised and keen to improve their practice. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning and the open and honest discussion between all staff about performance means that the school's own view of its performance is clearly understood. The school has rightly identified that more training opportunities are needed for all staff to support even more effectively the needs of the growing number of pupils whose first language is not English.

Children enjoy their learning. They are inspired and motivated by the good quality teaching. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Clearly established routines and high expectations help pupils' develop very good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is excellent. Staff value children's work and achievements. Praise and encouragement is a strong feature in all lessons and this helps raise pupils' self-esteem, feel successful and encourages them in learning. 'You are going to find this really hard but I know you can do it', summed up the attitude in one class and the children rose to the challenge. This overall approach goes some way to explaining why children do so well.

Where staff are unsure if children have understood, they ask probing questions to find out the level of support needed. Regular assessment is a feature of all the lessons enabling teachers to judge the appropriate level and difficulty of the work set. Children are also encouraged to assess their own work: 'I need to think of some better words for that poem, it's too boring', said one girl in a Key Stage 2 class.

Teachers use support staff and other helpers productively, identifying particular skills, such as a musical talent, and then making sure it is used to best effect in the classroom. Together, they encourage children to develop the basic skills they need to be more confident and independent in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides an exciting and well-balanced curriculum, which meets the needs of all pupils. The school judgement is accurate. The curriculum for personal development reflects the ethos of a caring, calm, community of faith.

The curriculum is closely monitored with co-ordinators maintaining a record of pupils' work within each core subject area. The school is seeking to improve the links between subjects with themed activities such as the 'Multicultural Day' that celebrates the diverse society in which the pupils live. The work of the school is also enriched by a wide range of extra curricular activities that the school offers its pupils. They particularly enjoy gardening, music, sport and computer clubs. Children are aware of how to make healthy lifestyle choices. The school has earned the Healthy Schools Award for work in this area. Children are well cared for by staff and feel safe and secure within their school. They are fully aware of the importance of supporting each other.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is rightly proud of the outstanding care it provides for its pupils. Children are valued and their individual needs met. Throughout the inspection it was evident that children enjoy their school and feel happy, trusting the adults within the school. Child protection procedures are well established and regularly reviewed. Pupil's opinions are encouraged and excellent relationships are in evidence within the school, with children working hard during lesson time. Children are actively encouraged to develop

their citizenship skills having positions of responsibility to care for and support their younger colleagues.

The school has outstanding relationships with parents and other external agencies who work for the benefit of the pupils. Well-organised transfer arrangements are in place supporting children and parents as they move through and beyond the school.

The school teaches children about the dangers of drug misuse and the importance of promoting a healthy lifestyle such as the need for exercise and a well balanced diet.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school judges leadership and management to be good but evidence gathered during the inspection demonstrates that it is outstanding. The school has successfully created an environment in which teaching and learning continue to improve. The clarity of vision of the management team results in pupils making good progress with achievement continuing to rise in the context of a caring school.

All areas of leadership and management are regularly and rigorously monitored. This informs action plans that are both reflective and developmental. They provide the school with a clear and shared direction for the future and allow accurate and challenging targets to be set. Performance reviews for learning assistants are in the process of being introduced to the same high standards as those for teachers.

Children feel valued and are afforded equality of opportunity to access and be supported in their programmes of study. All staff within the school are used effectively. For example, welfare staff develop positive relationships with pupils by supporting individuals with their reading. The school is well respected within the community. Parents are happy with the school and they feel that staff are approachable and listen to and act on their views.

The governing body is well informed and knowledgeable acting, as a critical friend to the school. The governors' in-service training programme has heightened levels of expertise and encouraged levels of enquiry. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and make an excellent contribution in guiding the school forward by working closely with the school's leadership and management team.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	No
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	No
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, a team of inspectors visited your school recently to find out if your school is giving you the education you should receive.

Thank you very much for making us so welcome. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about what you enjoyed doing. You are really proud of your school and rightly so.

Some of the things we really liked were:

- the way your headteacher and other adults look after you so well and help you to work hard
- the excellent way you take on responsibilities, help to make decisions about your school and care about one another
- your behaviour and attitude to work which was exceptionally good
- the welcome everyone gives to children who are new to your school
- the way in which your work is planned and set at just the right level.

We were so impressed with what we saw that we have decided that there are no big things that have to be changed. The adults in your school have already spotted what needs to be done and we agree with them.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to improve St Patrick's Catholic Primary School.