



# St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112340  
**LEA** Cumbria  
**Inspection number** 278910  
**Inspection dates** 21 September 2005 to 22 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Jackie Barnes

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Derwent Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Workington
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Cumbria, CA14 2DW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01900 325237
<b>Number on roll</b>	174	<b>Fax number</b>	01900 325099
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Angela Hawley
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pauline Conway

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21 September 2005 - 22 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278910
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Patrick's Catholic Primary is an average-sized school, situated close to the sea on the northern side of the small town of Workington. Many of the children live close to the school, although about one in three travel from further afield. It is a stable school community despite being in an area of urban renewal. The entitlement to free school meals is low. Overall, the children enter the school in the reception class with better than average skills for their age, although individual children vary widely in what they know and can do. Throughout the school, about one in seven children has learning difficulties or disabilities, including a small number with statements of special educational need. This is an increase over recent years but is similar to the average for other schools. English is the family language of all the children. The improvements to the school building which have taken place in recent months are now complete and the increased space is in use.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with the capacity for further improvement. It has above average standards, well behaved children and the confidence of its parents. Children have a good start when they enter school in the reception year and make satisfactory progress by Year 6. They enjoy school and attendance is very good. They are well cared for and feel safe. Children benefit from a curriculum with a strong emphasis on personal development and a satisfactory range of practical and sporting activities. They understand how to contribute to the care of other children and how to have a healthy life. They are very knowledgeable about how to develop and sustain good relationships, and regularly put this into practice within the school and local community. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and set to improve with the further use of the information now available on children's progress. Children are keen to do well in lessons but occasionally lose concentration when their work is not interesting. The most competent children are not always set work which is challenging enough to enable them to make good progress.

The headteacher, staff and governors share a strong commitment to improving the school following a fall in performance since the last inspection. Although their planning for the school's development is not yet complete, successes are already evident particularly in raising standards in reading. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make more effective use of assessment information to set useful targets for individual children and groups, and regularly check their progress.
- Ensure teachers' planning is sufficiently well matched to children's needs, especially for the most and least capable children in English and mathematics.
- Improve the school development plan by identifying clear priorities, setting time scales, and showing clearly how success will be recognised.
- Enable the subject managers and the coordinator for special educational needs to check the quality of pupils' learning and use this information to target support for staff and children.
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## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children's achievement is satisfactory overall and by Year 6 standards are above average. The school is recovering well from a short period of falling standards. Most children start school with good skills, particularly in speaking, and they make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Almost all enter Year 1 with the confidence, skills and enthusiasm of good learners with over half exceeding the expectations for their age. Overall, in Years 1 to 6 they make satisfactory progress, retaining their enjoyment of learning and bringing increasingly mature attitudes to their work. There are

inconsistencies in the rate that children make progress in English and mathematics from year to year, with writing being consistently the weakest area. These are becoming less evident as teachers improve their use of assessment information when planning lessons. The best progress is made in Years 3 to 6. This is reflected in the 2005 test results which are above average and much improved from the previous year. The results for the higher attainers fell slightly but were still higher than the national figures. The children currently in Year 6 are firm in their view that they have to work hard. Where the school has focused on improving progress and standards in specific areas throughout the school, such as reading and science, this has been successful.

The progress made by children with special educational needs is satisfactory mainly because they are often well supported by teaching assistants, and their learning needs have been carefully identified, with clear targets for improvement set and checked. The most able children also make satisfactory progress but their needs and targets are generally given less attention; most could achieve higher standards.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enjoy school very much and, together with their parents, are particularly appreciative of the strong family feel to the school. Children feel safe and are confident that any difficulties will be sorted out. Attendance is very good. Children behave very well in class and around the school, and are sensible and courteous. There are very good opportunities for them to develop a healthy lifestyle, and the knowledge and understanding of these matters shown by children in Year 6 are strong. Children develop a sense of health and safety from lessons and special days run by local services. They gain a satisfactory sense of citizenship and economic awareness from participation in class and school councils and through some special events for Years 5 and 6 run in conjunction with the local secondary schools. Good contributions are made to the community, including singing for others and raising money to sponsor a tiger through the World Wildlife Fund.

Children' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good overall. Social and moral development is a strength shown in their care and concern for one another, such as when the older children act as 'buddies' to younger children. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, and how to make choices which is demonstrated well in the written work on display. These values are well supported by the school's faith foundation and mission. Children gain a good understanding of their own culture through lessons and other activities. They learn satisfactorily about the richness of the cultures of others, through art and music for example, and to value and respect the faith of others through religious education and lessons focused on personal development. Children's social and personal development is a strength in the reception class, where days start with a welcome which delights and encourages everyone.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory but they are not consistent through the school. Since the beginning of the term two weeks ago, all teachers, except staff in the Foundation Stage, have been teaching a year group different from the one they taught last year. This did not detract from the children's learning in most year groups although there was some inadequate teaching caused by unfamiliarity with the age group. The children have an enthusiasm for new experiences and teachers manage behaviour very well, so lessons are calm and orderly places for learning. In most lessons, the children followed the carefully planned teaching points well. They were helped to understand effectively by the use of visual or practical items, such as number charts and the use of coins to help with the calculation of money. They were encouraged to contribute to discussions and skilful questioning by teachers gave most children the chance to answer questions at the right level for them.

Teachers adapt work for different groups of children using their own assessment of the children's overall abilities. Although this approach worked well for the majority of children, it did not always provide enough variation to ensure that all children had teaching and work that were well matched to their needs. In some lessons, children's attention wandered because they had been listening for longer than they could concentrate. Although assessment information is being used more frequently by teachers, it is not as effective as it could be in planning children's progress, mainly because the school has not yet fully analysed all the assessment information that it now holds. As a consequence, children's targets for English and mathematics are often too general and do not identify clearly enough what children have learned and what they need to do next. Potentially useful arrangements for tracking children's progress through the school are being developed but are not yet in regular use. Occasionally, the most capable children were challenged by experiences such as the study of Shakespeare's plays, and their progress and pleasure in their learning was clearly evident. Generally, however, the school has not planned how to make sure these children consistently achieve as well as they could. Teaching assistants support children with special educational needs effectively, and this considerably improves the progress they make.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The children enjoy the curriculum they experience. They are especially keen on practical and creative activities, together with the after-school sporting activities which they consider, 'make school fun'. They attribute these, in part, to their good attendance and punctuality. The older children recognise that out-of-school visits to theatres and other places of interest, and their efforts within the local community, help them to understand what they are taught, as well as being an interesting change from routine classroom lessons. The school's curriculum strongly supports children's personal

development, successfully ensuring they know how to live healthily, gain in personal confidence, be responsible for their own behaviour and take good care of others. The children are proud of themselves and their school.

Within the required subjects of the curriculum, there is opportunity for wide ranging study, but not consistently at the depth needed to challenge the most competent children. There is a tendency to rely too heavily on published schemes of work which do not meet the wide range of different needs in each year group, leaving a minority of children with underdeveloped skills in key areas such as writing. On occasions, the curriculum is adapted to provide specific activities for selected groups of children, for instance, work in mathematics to boost the performance of older children, and small group and individual teaching of children with special educational needs. This approach has usually led to improved progress. The school is set to extend these opportunities when assessment information is fully analysed.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school takes good care of all its children, dealing sensitively with personal situations, and providing an atmosphere of trust and support which the children describe as 'like being in a big family'. Care is taken to ensure their physical safety, especially in the new building, and the children are confident about turning to an adult if they are upset or in need of help. Child protection procedures are well established. Parents confirm they are welcomed and well informed, and are positive about how the school deals with matters they raise. The children say they feel safe from bullying and are unusually knowledgeable about how to handle the personal situations from which bullying might arise. Tracking children's progress and setting targets for achievement based on assessment are at an early stage and not yet fully effective in involving children in improving their own learning. However, developments such as brief comments on how to improve are beginning to be incorporated within the marking of books and the 'thumbs up or down' approach to encouraging children to assess their own gains in learning is successfully used on occasions.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has led the school successfully from a period of significant change in management and performance, with three headteachers in one year and a drop in standards, to a more positive position. Staff and governors are rightly proud of their achievements so far, and know the school needs to improve further if all children are to reach suitably high standards. Procedures and systems have been introduced to help the school with this important next stage, but not all are rigorously implemented and this has led to some over optimism in the school's self-evaluation. Some useful innovations, such as the school development plan, are not sufficiently detailed at present to provide the clear priorities and direction that staff and parents need to make an effective contribution. Others, such as the monitoring of children's progress

and setting of targets, are often too general to help teachers plan accurately for children's improvement.

Hard work and commitment to improvement are clearly evident among all those involved with the continuing development of the school, but there are some barriers to using this energy efficiently. The post of deputy headteacher is in abeyance, and the senior staff are all full-time class teachers, with very little time available to fulfil their management duties. As a result, the subject managers' impact on children's progress is only rarely supported by direct experience of teaching and learning. Key tasks such as the analysis of data and working with teachers on the individual education plans for children with special educational needs, take a long time to complete. The headteacher tends to be overburdened with overall responsibility for the management of pupils' learning, the curriculum and the day to day running of the school. Most governors have been appointed in the last year and are gaining knowledge of the role and the school rapidly, but currently rely heavily on the headteacher's recommendations. A slight fall in the number of children on roll has also affected the budget, so that appointing additional staff is unlikely to be possible.

However, there is a sound, shared vision for the future. The school's involvement in the Primary Leadership Programme has been valued by staff who report having gained valuable knowledge and improved management skills. Children's personal development is well managed and there are improvements in standards. The school has an established record for improvement and has the capacity to build on these successes.



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	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	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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

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27 September 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for being so helpful when you talked with us. We were very interested in what you had to say and learned a lot about your school and how your teachers help you to learn. We also appreciated you telling us about your special interests and where you thought things could be better.

We found that your school is a friendly place where you are well cared for and feel safe. We agree with you that the school 'is like a big family' and that it helps you to gain confidence in yourself and to care about other people. We saw that you behaved very well and this helped you and others to learn. We thought the teaching in most of your lessons was interesting and you enjoyed your work.

We have asked your headteacher and governors to make your school even better by making sure that all your lessons are as good as the very best ones, so everyone gets to be as successful as they can. We would also like all the teachers who are leaders to have the chance to be sure that you are all making good progress in your subjects.

Thank you again for your help,

Yours sincerely,

Jackie Barnes  
Lead Inspector

Annex B