



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103439
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 285556
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector Nigel Pett AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dudley Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		West Midlands B18 7QW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4540767
Number on roll	188	Fax number	0121 4522008
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Reverend A P Piercy
Date of previous inspection	4 May 2004	Headteacher	Mr Gerald Hickey

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and a high proportion of pupils are of black African and Caribbean heritage. Very few do not speak English as their mother tongue. There are significantly more boys than girls on roll. Many pupils come from areas of social and economic disadvantage, and more pupils than is usual join and leave the school throughout the year. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above the national average. When the youngest pupils (Foundation Stage) start school their ability levels are usually well below those expected for their age. There have been significant staffing difficulties over the past eighteen months.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St. Patrick's is a satisfactory school, a judgement that confirms the school's view of itself. It works in challenging circumstances, and has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection through the improvement in leadership and management, which are now satisfactory, and good governance. Together they give the school the capacity to improve further. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating its work have highlighted the key priorities for improvement but the ways used to measure the progress made are not always clear. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, although the outdoor learning area limits learning opportunities. Children are making good progress from their wellbelow- average starting points. In other year groups, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although standards are below the national average and the school knows that there is still more to be done to improve pupils' basic skills. The school works well to include all pupils. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported. Teaching is satisfactory, although the frequent use of several supply teachers has undermined pupils' progress. Learning activities sometimes lack sufficient challenge for the different ability levels in their classes because the way that teachers use assessment information is inconsistent. Pupils are not always sure how they can improve their work. Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school, and their behaviour is good. Most pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory but for a significant minority they are unsatisfactory. Parents and carers are happy with the school but not all are involved enough and supportive of their children's learning. The curriculum and the provision for pupils' care, support and guidance are satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the ways it measures whether the priorities within the school development plan are improving the quality of education.
- Raise pupils' achievement by using assessment more effectively so that work set consistently challenges the full range of ability in the class.
- Provide an outside learning area in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve the way that parents are involved in their children's learning, especially in improving the attendance and punctuality of a significant minority of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The national test results at the end of Year 6 in 2005 show an improvement over those in 2003 and 2004, although they are below the national average. Pupils did better than expected and the school met its targets, which were suitably challenging. Boys and girls, as well as those from different ethnic backgrounds, achieved equally well. Attainment on entry in the Foundation Stage is well below the expectations for the children's age, and many children have very limited language skills. They make good progress but do not reach the expected standards for their age in all areas of learning. The very limited outside play area restricts their

learning. Results in the 2005 national assessments at the end of Year 2 were below average, although pupils made satisfactory progress. Results in reading were low but standards in the current Year 2 show sound improvement through good teaching. Pupils' progress across Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, although standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 remain below average. The staffing difficulties have disrupted pupils' learning as they have had to get used to different teachers, but where classes have had the same teacher pupils' progress is good. Pupils across the range of different ethnic backgrounds make similar satisfactory progress, although pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive. The achievement of the minorities of gifted and talented pupils, and those whose first language is not English, is satisfactory. The school recognises that it now needs to improve pupils' progress and achievement still further by improving the challenge in lessons and pupils' literacy skills. As a result, the whole-school achievement targets for 2006 are challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy their learning, and they feel safe at school. Behaviour is good, but attendance and punctuality are only satisfactory as a significant minority of pupils often arrive late and some have unsatisfactory attendance. Pupils relate well to each other. Older pupils take their responsibilities as peer mediators very seriously and are very successful in supporting pupils experiencing difficulties. The class and school councils give pupils a good opportunity to contribute to school life. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay healthy. They show pride in the local community and make valuable contributions, such as in the design of displays on a local canal bridge to show their cultural diversity. Pupils are developing satisfactory skills for their future economic well-being through their work in literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT) but there are too few opportunities for them to make decisions about their work and to use their initiative in lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are good in the Foundation Stage, where children's work is well planned and the staff team work very well together so that children make good progress. The long-term use of supply teachers in the rest of the school undermines pupils' learning. The school has implemented good monitoring procedures, which have improved the quality of teaching and learning in the last year, and this is beginning to raise pupils' achievement from its satisfactory levels. In the best lessons teachers prepare work carefully and pupils are clear about what they are to learn and therefore quickly get down to work. The good relationships staff have with pupils and the use of praise help pupils to enjoy their learning, develop confidence

and behave well. Resources are used well and most pupils enjoy learning through a range of practical 'fun' activities. However, activities sometimes lack challenge and are not always planned well enough to ensure that they match the different ability levels in each class and pupils are challenged by the tasks set. The support for helping pupils improve their literacy is satisfactory but teachers do not always use questions well enough and use too many worksheets, limiting the opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Satisfactory use is made of ICT. Teachers' written marking clearly praises what pupils have done well but does not always give them enough guidance about how to improve their work. Some pupils, though, are beginning to evaluate their own learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by able teaching assistants, and support for the minority of pupils for whom English is not their first language is satisfactory. A learning mentor is well used to give pupils extra support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage, although opportunities for outdoor activities are very limited. In Years 1 to 6, national guidelines are used to ensure that subjects are effectively covered. Planning in subjects to support pupils' literacy development is satisfactory, as is the provision for ICT, which has improved well. However, the school has identified the need to develop the use of ICT across the curriculum further. The blocking of subjects and special themed events, such as the St Patrick's Day celebrations, are satisfactory and beginning to make learning more meaningful and interesting. The personal, social and health education programme and opportunities for pupils to contribute to discussions such as at 'circle times' are good and contribute well to pupils' understanding of the importance of being healthy, staying safe and working together co-operatively. Pupils talk enthusiastically about after-school activities which contribute well to pupils' personal development. Good use is made of visits and visitors to help pupils in their general learning and cultural understanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils' personal development is well tracked but the checking of their academic progress is only satisfactory because the systems are not consistently used. Although many of the pupils are not Catholics, they are cared for in a Christian context. Child protection procedures and checks to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are effective. Systems to improve attendance and punctuality are satisfactory but more needs to be done to involve parents and carers. Support for Foundation Stage children is good and helps them settle quickly into new routines. Pupils who join the school throughout the year are also well supported. Throughout the school, relationships with adults are good and pupils know there is always someone to turn to with any worries or concerns. They value their peer mediators and their learning mentor. Pupils are given good guidance on how to adopt a healthy

lifestyle and the personal and social education provision includes some good work on relationships. Outside agencies are used well to support pupils with learning and personal difficulties. Links with secondary schools for Year 6 are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The self-evaluation process is accurate and shows that there has been effective improvement since the last inspection, with effective support from the local authority. The headteacher is giving better direction for school improvement, and the priorities in the school development plan are the right ones, but the systems to measure the progress made are not always clear enough. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher is accurate and has led to improvements. Because of staffing difficulties, senior managers and coordinators are carrying a heavy workload. This limits the pace of improvement because they do not have the opportunities to make sure that all procedures, such as the use of assessment information, are well used to drive up pupils' standards and achievement. Governance is good and governors are challenging school managers well. Parents are happy with the school but they are not involved enough in their children's learning. Overall, there is capacity to improve the school further.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	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	3	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	2	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	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
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

June 2006 Dear Pupils Thank you for welcoming us when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed the opportunities to talk to you. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and has a number of important good aspects. What we most liked about your school You enjoy school and feel safe there. You behave well, and enjoy being given responsibility, especially in bringing your ideas to your class and school councils, and acting as peer mediators. Those of you in the reception class learn well. You enjoy your after-school activities. What we have asked your school to do now

- Improve the way that the headteacher and governors check how well the school is making changes for your education.
- Help you to reach even better standards in your work, especially by setting work which gives you all the right opportunities to do well and making it easier for you to understand how you can improve.
- Provide an outside area to give those of you in the reception class more learning opportunities.
- Improve the way that your parents and carers are involved in your learning, especially in improving attendance and punctuality of some children.

Thank you for welcoming us during our visit. We hope that you will all continue to do your best and make St Patrick's an even better school. Yours sincerely
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