

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103088
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	286556
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Sadie Shinkins
Headteacher	Miss Margaret Fahey and Miss Theresa O'Toole
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001
School address	Longfield Avenue London E17 7DP
Telephone number	020 8509 4321
Fax number	020 8509 4300

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This much larger than average Catholic primary school caters for pupils from increasingly diverse and multi-cultural backgrounds. Four fifths of the pupils are from minority groups, the largest group being Polish, and over a third of the pupils do not have English as a first language. Over 60 pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The school is part of a Bilingual Learners' Network. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is similar to that in most other schools, but rising. There has been a recent increase in pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and the number of such pupils is now about average. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is below average because about half do not have English as their first language. The two assistant head teachers have been acting heads for a year. A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2007. The school has just been awarded Healthy Schools Status for the second time.

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 that is successful in its aim to promote 'love and respect for each other'. The strong Christian ethos and regard for the beliefs of others ensure a secure, caring and happy environment where all are valued. Outstanding provision for the arts and the commitment to developing pupils' spirituality and self esteem ensure pupils' personal development and wellbeing is outstanding. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. St. Patrick's is a happy place to be.

Because so many children start school with limited or no knowledge of the English language, their skills on entry to the nursery are below average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage as teachers produce imaginative activities that engage children in their learning. By the end of their Reception Year, standards are similar to most children of the same age. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Infants, generally attaining average levels. However, standards at the end of Year 2 are below average this year and few pupils attain the higher levels. This is because some teachers do not expect enough of their pupils or give them sufficient guidance on how to improve. Pupils achieve well throughout Key Stage 2 and, by Year 6, standards are above average. This is a tribute to the good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching and pupils' impressive attitudes to their work.

The high quality provision for the arts, especially excellent opportunities for enjoying music making, gives pupils a rich and varied curriculum. In the Foundation Stage, a good balance between independent and adult led activities prepares children well for the next stage of their learning. The planning for teaching basic skills is effective in the Juniors, and the school makes good use of their tracking of pupils' progress to provide additional support when needed. Pupils with specific learning needs are supported well throughout the school. In Key Stage 1, although there is an appropriate curriculum for English and mathematics, it is not adapted sufficiently to meet all pupils' needs, especially the more able. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory.

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils. There are exemplary systems for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare. The provision for personal, social and health education is outstanding. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the school's care and support for their children and pupils are full of praise for the way the school cares for them. There are good systems for assessing pupils' abilities and tracking their progress. These are used to set pupils' academic targets to help teachers meet their needs. However, pupils only have individual targets for English, missing opportunities for them to take responsibility for their learning in other subjects. In Key Stage 1, teachers' marking rarely gives pupils advice on how to improve their work.

The acting headteachers have led the school well over the last year. Their love of the school and ambitions for the pupils influence all they do. Other leaders and managers are fully involved in school improvement. They are fully aware of what the school needs to do to improve further. Their knowledge and skills ensure good potential for further improvement under the new leadership next term.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers in Years 1 and 2 expect enough of their pupils, especially the most able, and that they match work more closely to pupils' needs.

- Provide pupils throughout the school with guidance on how to improve their work to enable them to take more responsibility for their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with below average skills, especially in communication, language and literacy. By the time they leave Year 6, standards are above average. Almost all attain average levels in English and mathematics and many attain the higher levels. In science this year, all pupils achieved at least average standards. This represents good achievement overall, especially as several pupils joined the school after Year 3 with little or no spoken English. However, pupils' progress is uneven through the school. Progress is good in the Nursery and Reception classes because children are constantly exposed to good learning experiences with adults and their peers. Pupils' progress slows in Years 1 and 2, especially in mathematics, and the school has identified the need to improve teaching and learning to address this. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 because of the good and frequently outstanding teaching and their eagerness to learn.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and racist incidents or bullying are extremely rare. As pupils say, 'We get on well together'. They love coming to school and feel safe and secure and there are very few unauthorised absences. Those new to the school are made very welcome by their peers and quickly make friends. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. They are local athletics champions for the third year running. The school council has been very active in promoting healthy eating. Pupils make a significant contribution to the community through charities, visits and performances. Pupils are thoughtful and very aware of the feelings and beliefs of others. Their high quality singing is sensitive and thoughtful, joyous and celebratory. The multicultural nature of the school is celebrated and, throughout, there is a strong sense of the importance of faith in pupils' lives. Pupils develop skills to support their futures well. The school council manages a budget and pupils are using ICT to support learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. In the Foundation Stage adults provide a wide range of abilities that promote learning across all aspects of the curriculum. Children are encouraged to learn in a range of different ways, both formally and through play. Good use of resources enhances children's enjoyment and makes learning fun. Throughout the school, adults' warmth and friendliness give pupils confidence to respond to challenges. Lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace. In many lessons, work is well-matched to pupils' abilities, challenging and extending learning. However, this is not the case in some lessons, especially mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Here some pupils repeat work already understood or have to complete 'easy' work before being challenged. All teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Some give clear points for improvement and expect pupils to respond. In some books, however, marking is limited to

praise and ticks or comments on the amount of support given. This does not help pupils to know how to improve their work. Teaching assistants provide good support throughout the school and pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those with English as an additional language make good progress because of effective identification of their needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum and some aspects are outstanding. The excellent provision for the arts, especially music, permeates throughout the school. At lunchtime, for example, a group of pupils spontaneously made music together, playing a popular song in harmony with recorders and a glockenspiel. An artist in residence works with pupils resulting in high standards in art. The humanities curriculum is enhanced with visits and visitors and the school is increasingly planning links between subjects to make learning more relevant. There is good consistency between classes of the same age, providing equal opportunities for all. Good opportunities for sport and languages add breadth to pupils' learning. There is a 'language of the month', one of the home languages of pupils in school. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is outstanding, giving pupils an excellent grounding in personal skills. The curriculum for English, mathematics and science is good overall, but is not sufficiently adapted to meet all pupils' needs and aspirations in the Key Stage 1 classes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for the pupils and the pastoral aspects of these are outstanding. All government requirements and advice for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare are rigorously applied. Exemplary procedures for promoting good behaviour have a clear impact on pupils' personal development and wellbeing and incidences of inappropriate behaviour are extremely rare. There is good support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Swift identification of their needs and very good communication with parents and outside agencies enable them to make good progress. Pupils in the early stages of learning English are supported well. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Although some teachers give pupils written guidance on how to improve their work, this is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils have targets for improving their writing but are not clear what they need to know to achieve the next level. Many have insufficient guidance to help improve their mathematics. This prevents pupils using their excellent attitudes to their work to take responsibility for improving their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteachers have been in school for several years and have very successfully maintained the school's ethos and commitment to continuing improvement. They, alongside other members of the senior management team and core subject leaders, regularly monitor teaching and learning, setting targets for improvement. This has resulted in improving standards and achievement. The school has very good links with parents and each class has a parent representative who visits regularly. The good support from a consultant headteacher has helped the acting headteachers to ensure the school continues to run efficiently. Governance is good. Governors support and challenge leaders well. They are,

alongside the school management, fully aware of the school's developmental needs. They were specific about the attributes they expected of the new headteacher. Development planning clearly identifies where improvements are needed but is limited to this year and lacks priorities. However, it is a sensible interim plan, giving the new headteacher flexibility. Above all, there is a strong sense of enthusiasm for improving the school further amongst all concerned with leading and managing the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, London, E17 7DP

It was a real pleasure to meet you all during our visit to your school. Thank you for your help, friendliness and big beaming smiles. Thank you especially for your lovely music that we all enjoyed. We were very impressed with your art work as well. Well done. I know how proud your teachers are of the way you behave, care for and respect each other. We agree with them. You behave extremely well and it is very clear that you enjoy school. Keep up the good work!

You told us that your teachers take good care of you and help you to do your best. We agree that your teachers do a good job. This, and your hard work, enables most of you to make good progress and achieve well. Sometimes you are given work to do that is too easy and we have asked teachers of Years 1 and 2 to make sure that they give you all work that makes you think, especially in mathematics. This will help you to make the same good progress that older pupils and children in the Nursery and Reception classes do. We have also asked all your teachers to make sure you know how to improve your work and what you need to do next. This will help you decide for yourselves how you can make your work even better. Please make sure that you take your teachers' advice.

You have lots of interesting things to learn about. I am glad to see that you have the chance to learn a little of each other's language. We know you take care of yourselves well. You choose healthy food to eat and we saw some of you learning how to ride your bicycles on the roads safely. Your school is well led and managed and everyone is very keen to make sure you do your best and enjoy your school days. It is very clear that your faiths are very important to you all and this is one of the reasons why your good school is such a happy place to be.

Best wishes

Mrs Judy Dawson Lead inspector