



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Walsall

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104233
Local Authority Walsall
Inspection number 286888
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Blue Lane East
School category	Voluntary aided		Walsall
Age range of pupils	3–11		WS2 8HN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01922 720063
Number on roll (school)	259	Fax number	01922 624144
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Wendy Jevon
		Headteacher	Gregory Gilroy
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	1–2 November 2006	286888

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Patrick's is an average sized school serving an area of Walsall with high levels of deprivation. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average. Children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are below those expected for children of their age.

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 Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and parents rightly feel that their children are well cared for. The views of one parent were echoed by many others when she said, 'Teachers are caring and show genuine concern for the children.' Pupils attain standards that are broadly average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This represents satisfactory achievement. Progress, however, is uneven, particularly for the more able pupils in mathematics and science. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory, teachers have yet to get to grips with making the best use of assessment information when planning lessons for these pupils. Although test results for 2006 show considerably more Year 6 pupils attained higher levels in both mathematics and science more able pupils are not consistently challenged in lessons.

The experiences children are given in the Foundation Stage provide them with a good start to their education. There is a strong and effective emphasis on the teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills. The promotion of children's personal and social skills is particularly strong in the Nursery class, where they get on well together, follow instructions and behave well. The personal development and well-being of the pupils are good throughout the school. Through well structured programmes, the pupils understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and many eat healthily and take part in the good range of physical activities on offer. Pupils take part in fund raising and participate in many community activities. Their enjoyment of school is evident in the significant improvement in attendance, which now matches the rates seen nationally. Because teachers have high expectations of them, pupils' behaviour is always at least good. One parent commented, 'Our daughter moved to this school earlier this year and there has been a marked improvement in her enthusiasm and behaviour.' The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Pupils with learning difficulties are given good support and this enables them to make good progress throughout the school. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and is enriched by a good range of clubs, visits and visitors.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher and leadership team are effective in their efforts to drive school improvement. The judicious use of 'booster classes' and additional support has helped to raise standards at the end of both key stages. Through effective monitoring, school leaders have improved the quality of teaching. However, subject leaders are not sufficiently skilled in identifying how well pupils are achieving in all year groups and in ensuring teachers make the best use of assessment information when planning work. The school has made good progress over the last three years. It has an accurate picture of what it needs to do to improve further and has shown that it has good capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all the more able pupils achieve as well as they should in mathematics and science in all year groups.

- Develop skills of subject leaders in identifying how well pupils are achieving .
- Improve the way teachers use assessment information to match work more closely to the needs of all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils make satisfactory progress overall and standards are average by the end of Year 6. Pupils leave school with key literacy and numeracy skills that give them a sound foundation for their continuing education. Children join the Nursery with below average skills. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and they start Year 1 with skills that are broadly average. The pupils who left the school in 2005 made satisfactory progress. Test results for 2006 indicate that standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are much better than in previous years. Far more pupils attained the higher levels in English, mathematics and science. The test results for both 2005 and 2006 are an improvement on previous years and show that there is an upward trend in standards. However, pupils' achievement is inconsistent throughout the school and more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and do not do as well as they should in mathematics and science. Standards in English have been consistently better and the school recognises it needs to improve them in mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties are provided with well targeted support and this enables them to make particularly good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Children in the Nursery make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and this provides a firm foundation for the future. Pupils have a well developed understanding of keeping fit and healthy and of keeping themselves and others safe. There are very close links with the Church which aid their spiritual development. Good moral and social development is confirmed through the pupils' consistently good behaviour both in and out of lessons. Pupils express their enjoyment of school and feel strongly that teachers and pupils are friendly. The pupils take on responsibilities within the school community with enthusiasm, for example, as members of the school and class councils. However, older pupils are not given as much responsibility for their own learning, particularly in lessons that are very teacher directed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good working habits are promoted particularly well in the Nursery class. In all year groups, expectations of behaviour are high and pupils respond well, staying on task. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and, as a result, engage the pupils' attention well. Whilst teachers have improved their use of assessment information to match work more closely to the needs of pupils, there are still inconsistencies. More able pupils are required to repeat work unnecessarily and work is not always pitched sufficiently high in mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties make consistently good progress because their needs are identified early and there is a well structured programme of support in place.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are provided with a good range of interesting activities that effectively stimulates their desire to learn. All subjects are taught in sufficient depth but planning does not identify how literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills can be used to encourage learning in all subjects. The senior management of the school has well advanced plans to introduce a more thematic approach through a wider use of writing skills, in order to make learning more exciting and practical for pupils.

Pupils enjoy the many good enrichment opportunities offered by the school. A girl in Year 6 said she liked the school much more than her last school 'because there are a lot more activities which help me to learn more'. These include many sports clubs, such as martial arts and Gaelic football, cooking, chess and health activities with 'Freddy Fit'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is providing good care for its pupils, who feel valued as individuals. Child protection procedures meet government requirements. The school places a strong emphasis on healthy lifestyles and the pupils are very pleased with the opportunities they have to participate in physical activities and to eat healthily. Pupils in Year 6 especially welcome their daily piece of toast on arrival.

Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from good support from teachers, class assistants and a wide range of external agencies, which helps them make good progress. Policies for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are in place throughout the school and give satisfactory guidance. However, teachers do not make consistent use of the guidance in their daily planning. Pupils are aware of their targets for learning through the 'must, could, should' guidance that they are given. Some

pupils, mainly older ones, have a clear understanding of how they are doing and how they can improve, but this is not the case with all pupils. The school has recently introduced new marking guidelines. Whilst there are examples of good marking, not all teachers are offering sufficient guidance to pupils on how they might improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior leaders have shown determination in tackling the two major issues facing the school. They have had notable success with both. Attendance, which was very low, is now in line with the national average. Through their effective monitoring of teaching and learning, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have improved steadily. School leaders recognise, however, that more needs to be done to ensure that pupils make more consistent progress throughout the school. Subject leaders are not yet sufficiently aware of where pupils are underachieving, particularly in mathematics and science. Whilst the school has good data on the overall standards pupils attain, it does not have as clear a picture of how well individuals are achieving. Parents' and pupils' views are ascertained through questionnaires and taken into account when determining future priorities for development. The governing body fulfils its duties satisfactorily. However, its effectiveness is hindered by its inability to recruit sufficient governors.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. St Patrick's is providing you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the highlights of your school

- Your good behaviour and your enthusiasm for lessons and other activities.
- The good range of clubs in which you enjoy taking part.
- The good relationships you have with one another and with the staff.
- The way in which adults look after you and keep you safe.
- You are developing a good understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy and safe.

These are the things we have suggested the school does now

- Make sure that the school gives some of you harder work in mathematics and science.
- Make sure the adults in charge of subjects improve the way in which they judge how well you are doing, and help teachers to make better use of this information to plan their lessons.

I hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.