



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116398
Local Authority Southampton
Inspection number 290522
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Fort Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Southampton
Age range of pupils	4–11		SO19 2JE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02380448502
Number on roll (school)	305	Fax number	02380438823
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Emma Scott-Copeland
		Headteacher	Ms Elizabeth Kenny
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The great majority of the pupils in this larger than average school are of White British origin, although there are more pupils from other minority ethnic groups than in most schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above the national average. One pupil has a statement of educational need. The school has recently undergone a partial refurbishment.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Its strong pastoral provision contributes to pupils' good personal development. One pupil said, 'I see it as my second home'. The spiritual side of the pupils' life is emphasised well with a very good commitment to music, poetry and opportunities for reflection. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe, behave well and benefit from the good nurturing of their physical and emotional health.

Pupils start school with broadly average skills, although written communication is a weakness. Good relationships in the Foundation Stage help ensure that children settle well, and make good progress. In Years 1 and 2 pupils generally make good progress and achieve average standards in reading and mathematics. Not all teachers plan work that challenges pupils, particularly boys in writing, and standards in this area are below average. In Years 3 to 6 the majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach average standards in English and mathematics. However inconsistencies in the way teachers use assessment data to plan pupils' work results in a number of middle attaining pupils not achieving as well as they might in mathematics. Standards in science are above average. The school has rightly identified the need to raise standards and is having some success in improving the performance of higher attaining pupils in mathematics. Improved tracking of pupils' progress is helping to ensure that pupils requiring additional support are quickly identified. The use of appropriate support strategies, including good one-to-one support, contributes to the good achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The leadership of the school has developed systems for self-evaluation and monitoring which have brought some significant improvements. Teaching has improved and is now more consistently satisfactory with elements of good teaching, however some inconsistencies remain. Some teachers do not make the aims of the lesson clear enough. Consequently pupils find it difficult to judge their progress and identify how they can improve their work. The curriculum strongly supports the pupils' personal development. Pupils benefit from a good variety of opportunities to participate in the school community and in out-of-lesson activities. The school is very well supported by an excellent governing body who visit the school regularly, consult widely, and effectively hold the school to account. Along with the committed and experienced headteacher, they have made improvements since the last inspection in standards and achievement. This reflects a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and writing
- Ensure that the work planned meets the needs of all pupils, particularly boys and middle attainers.
- Increase the pupils' understanding of how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average overall, and the achievement of pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, is satisfactory. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and understanding which are broadly average for four year olds. They get a good start to their education, and most enter Year 1 having achieved the expected learning goals. Weaknesses in written communication skills remain, but pupils' personal and social development is well advanced.

New tracking procedures are contributing to good progress for pupils by the end of Year 2. Standards in mathematics and reading are average, whilst writing standards are below average. The quality of teaching is more variable in Years 3 to 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards in English and mathematics remain average.

Teaching meets the needs of many pupils including those with learning difficulties, who make good progress. As a result of inconsistencies in the way teachers plan work, some higher attaining pupils, particularly boys in writing and middle attainers in mathematics, do not achieve as well as they might.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good. Pupils' spiritual awareness is well advanced by the well-planned opportunities for pupils to participate in music, poetry and reflection. Positive relationships exist and reflect the Catholic ethos.

Pupils enjoy school, laughing appropriately for example, during poetry recitals in assembly. Pupils say that adults respect them. They discuss healthy living, and apply their knowledge about healthy food through studying the diet of the Ancient Greeks in history. The pupils keep active during breaks where the school has recently extended the range of activities on offer to pupils. They play a full part in regular sports' lessons with specialist sports' coaches for upper junior children, which help to develop their fitness levels. Pupils participate well in the local community, particularly within the local diocese. One pupil's comment reflects the open nature of the school, 'We work as a community with visitors from other churches'. They act as class monitors and council members, take part in musical concerts and work to raise money for charities. A computer skills centre helps pupils make satisfactory progress in preparing for later life, although there are limited opportunities for pupils to learn how businesses work. Attendance is broadly average, but is hindered by parents taking holidays during school term.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching meets the needs of many pupils including those with learning difficulties, who make good progress. In the Foundation Stage teachers skilfully use good strategies that enable children to make good progress. Elsewhere a significant minority of pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, make limited progress often because the work set does not match the needs of all pupils. Teachers manage classes well, nurturing good relationships and encouraging pupils to work both independently and collaboratively. They are less successful in translating these strengths into successful learning especially for some middle attainers in mathematics, and higher attaining boys in writing. Strategies to improve the teaching of writing have been developed, but as yet they are applied inconsistently or with insufficient rigour to significantly raise achievement. Lesson objectives are relevant, but are frequently too general, and not sufficiently linked to appropriate lesson activities. Teachers assess work better than at the time of the previous inspection, but the resulting information is not used sufficiently in planning or in classroom activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development, which is a strength of the school. Pupils greatly appreciate the good range of class-based and other activities. A strong feature is the excellent music provision, particularly in instrumental teaching. Pupils also enjoy the good range of lunchtime activities led by Year 6. Information and communication technology effectively supports learning in other subjects, for example through using databases in geography. Occasionally, in subject planning, learning objectives are not specific enough and make lesson planning more difficult. Booster activities help pupils with learning difficulties to make good progress. The personal, social and health education programme is well established, with very good use made of the local community, including visitors. For example parents run clubs and provide activities such as sewing and cookery.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Overall the care, guidance and support given to pupils are satisfactory. A particular strength is the very good level of care provided. Health and safety arrangements and child protection procedures are secure. Rigorous checks ensure that staff and volunteers are cleared to work with children. The school has positive relationships with outside agencies that support vulnerable pupils and families. Pupils are clear about who they can approach if they need help. Transition arrangements are good, reinforcing parent-school relationships and helping pupils to settle quickly. The school works well

to ensure that parents are involved in their children's education. This is reflected in parents' views of the school. One parent commented 'if you have any problems there is always someone at St. Patrick's to help and guide you'. Whilst there are some good pupil interviews that identify targets, achievement in lessons is limited when pupils have too few opportunities to evaluate their own work and identify what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The entire leadership helps to sustain the spiritual and moral foundations which strongly underpin pupils' personal development and which create a "family" atmosphere.

Governors are as committed as before, but now make an excellent contribution to monitoring and evaluation. They seek the views of parents, pupils and staff and use the knowledge to help define future strategy. The role of subject managers has been well developed, and they now have more responsibility for monitoring and improving provision. The school makes effective use of its resources, and makes very good use of links with other external organisations to improve provision.

The management team share a clear vision for improvement. Most aspects of the school's self-evaluation are accurate, realistic, and reflect the recognition of the need to improve achievement. Well supported by parents and staff, several relevant strategies have been introduced to take the school forward. Some have not yet been applied with enough rigour or consistency to significantly improve standards and achievement. For example, improved assessment procedures are not yet having a notable impact on pupils' performance in lessons, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

Parents recognise the success of the leadership in sustaining a strong, caring Catholic ethos, in which the individual is valued and personal development thrives, but the school has not sufficiently built on these foundations to raise academic standards to the same level.

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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	3
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
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	1
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

You will remember our visit to your school. We really enjoyed talking to you, and listening to what you had to say. Thank you. We believe your school gives you a satisfactory education, and is good in many things it gives you.

Things we liked:

- That you're really well behaved, playing and working together in a very good way
- The way you take part in activities outside lessons, particularly sports
- That you get really good opportunities to play musical instruments, read poetry and think about issues that affect your life
- That you feel safe in school. You told us that the 'school keeps reminding you of how to keep safe'. This helps you to concentrate on your work
- The way that Year 6 pupils help look after children in Reception
- How well the school cares for you. That some of you benefit from the good work of teaching assistants
- The way governors, your head teacher and other staff are planning to make your school even better.

I have asked the school to:

- help teachers to give you work that challenges you more
- help some of you to further improve your writing and mathematics
- give you a better idea of what you are expected to learn in class, and to give you more information about how to make your work even better.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector