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Saint Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 120223
Local Authority Leicester City
Inspection number 291674
Inspection dates 9–10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Peter Callow

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Harrison Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Leicester
Age range of pupils	3–11		LE4 6QN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0116 2661149
Number on roll (school)	230	Fax number	0116 2611356
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	David Shoubridge
		Headteacher	Mirosław Olszewski
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 9–10 January 2007	Inspection number 291674
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils come from a wide area to attend this oversubscribed, urban school. Many are from districts where there is a high level of deprivation. A higher than average proportion have learning difficulties. Over half of all pupils are from minority ethnic groups. A higher than average, and increasing, proportion of pupils join the school other than at the normal time. The majority of these are new to the United Kingdom and do not have English as their first language. A significant number have not previously attended school in their home country. The proportion of pupils in the school who do not have English as their first language is about one quarter.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of St Patrick's is good and the school has continued to improve well since the time of its last inspection. This is because of the good quality of its self-evaluation and the strong leadership of the headteacher. He has built on the strengths of the school, taken positive action to address areas of weakness and is making good provision for an increasing number of pupils who are arriving from other countries. As one parent said, 'The headteacher is genuinely committed to all pupils and the school's improvement.' Good leadership and management, combined with the dedication and skills of the staff, provides the school with the good capacity to improve further.

The achievement of pupils of different abilities and backgrounds is good. There is a consistency of good teaching and learning across the school and some outstanding teaching. This ensures that the needs of individual pupils are met and they make good progress, particularly those whose first language is not English. Overall, children's standards on entry to the Nursery Class are below those expected, especially in communication, language and literacy. Despite pupils' good progress, it takes time for their skills in all areas to catch up. This results in standards that are still below average at the end of the Reception Year and Year 2, but are broadly average by the end of Year 6.

The difficulties many pupils experience in language and literacy are most apparent in their written work, where standards are lower than in other subjects in each year group. The school has good systems for setting targets to help pupils improve their work, including those in writing. However, it is aware that pupils could reach higher standards in writing if teachers, pupils and their parents had a shared understanding of what needs to be done next to improve pupils' learning.

The curriculum is good, particularly for the Nursery and Reception classes. Here the children learn well through a variety of topics. For example, pupils were observed in the Nursery Class making gingerbread as part of a topic about 'The Gingerbread Man.' A three-year-old pupil was confidently able to talk about the smell of ginger and the baking process. Every opportunity is taken to make the curriculum relevant and enjoyable for all pupils through a variety of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. Whilst the school has good resources for the teaching and learning of information and communication technology (ICT), it could be used even more effectively to support learning across the curriculum, particularly in literacy.

Care, guidance and support are good and contribute significantly to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils show considerable respect for each other, welcoming newcomers to the school and helping them to settle in. Whilst pupils really enjoy coming to school, attendance is below average. A small but significant number of pupils do not attend regularly which means that they are not making the progress of which they are capable.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing through a shared understanding by teachers, pupils and their parents of what needs to be done next to improve pupils' learning.
- Work with parents to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.
- Develop the skills and knowledge of staff in ICT in order to improve pupils' learning across the curriculum, particularly in literacy.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils of different abilities who start in the Nursery Class make good progress as they move up through the school. Those pupils who join the school in other classes, particularly those who arrive speaking little or no English, also make good progress because of well-focused teaching and support.

Children's standards on entry into the Nursery Class vary considerably but the majority have standards below those expected for their age. A significant number in some year groups start with exceptionally low standards. These are most common in communication, language and literacy. Those pupils who join the school having recently arrived from other countries frequently begin with standards that are much lower than average in all areas.

Despite good progress, standards overall remain below average at the end of the Reception Year and Year 2. This is because many pupils have a lot of catching up to do in acquiring basic skills, especially in language and literacy. As a result of continued good progress, however, standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. The difficulties many pupils have in language and literacy are most evident in writing where standards are lower than in other subjects across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave well and are polite and courteous to adults. Their concern for others in the community is evident by the considerable amount of fundraising they do for charities and a local hospice. Of particular note is the communication established with a school in New York after they sent prayers and letters following the major terrorist incident.

Pupils really enjoy school because they feel safe and valued. The school has recently developed good systems for monitoring attendance and following up absences but these have yet to show their full impact. Attendance remains below average because of the poor attendance of a small but significant group of pupils, which is affecting their achievement.

Pupils understand that taking regular exercise and eating a balanced diet keep you healthy. For example, a pupil in Year 1 confidently said, 'Water is needed to make your brain work' and a Year 5 pupil was able to explain the effects of adding sugar and

colourings to foods. Whilst literacy and numeracy skills remain low, pupils develop lifeskills such as managing finances while running the Healthy Eating Tuck Shop. Pupils also learn the importance of working together as a team while taking on responsibilities such as playground buddies and librarians.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching is the main reason why pupils achieve well. Lessons are well planned to ensure that pupils learn at a good pace and that activities match their differing needs. Good support is provided by teaching assistants which enables pupils of all abilities to achieve success. Interactive whiteboards are often well used to enhance both teaching and learning.

Relationships are very positive in all classes and contribute to pupils' good attitudes to their learning. Questioning is used well to find out what pupils know and to develop their skills in speaking. Teachers provide a clear focus at the start of lessons and summarise and consolidate learning well at the end. However, marking of pupils' written work does not always give enough information to pupils about how well they have succeeded in the lesson and what they need to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enthusiastically explain how trips such as those to the Warning Zone, where they learn about the emergency services, make learning exciting. The school also provides a good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities which pupils also feel help to make school enjoyable.

The school has considerably improved its resources for the teaching and learning of ICT since the last inspection. However, it has correctly identified the need to develop the skills of all staff so that ICT is used more effectively to support learning across the curriculum, particularly in literacy. The good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and well-being. For example, pupils' cultural development is enhanced through the good use of theme days such as 'Foods of the World' and multi-faith assemblies.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good care, guidance and support leads to a positive atmosphere in school where all staff help to look after pupils well, especially those who are new. Effective measures are in place to ensure pupils feel safe and they know whom to ask for help. Risk assessments are carried out thoroughly and child protection procedures are fully in place.

The school has good links with external agencies and other providers to support the differing needs of pupils. Those with learning difficulties and those who do not have English as their first language are particularly well supported by teaching assistants. A good system for target setting is in place, which helps pupils to improve their work. The school is aware that pupils could reach higher standards, particularly in writing, if teachers, pupils and their parents worked together more closely to understand what pupils need to do next to improve their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The continued improvement of the school is the result of the strong leadership of the headteacher. He has a very clear focus on raising standards and achievements for all pupils, recognising and responding to the changing needs of pupils entering the school. He is doing this successfully whilst ensuring that the personal development and well-being of pupils is also given high priority. His concern to have happy, motivated and well-behaved pupils who are keen to learn is very much in evidence throughout the school. He is very well supported by a capable senior management team.

Parents overwhelmingly have a very positive view of the school and appreciate how much it has improved. Despite having very good relationships with parents, the school realises the need to ensure that more parents are fully involved in their children's education to help raise standards.

The school has some excellent systems for checking and evaluating the performance of the school but is seeking to improve its use of assessment data in order to ensure that the expectations of what each pupil can achieve are as high as possible. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and effective, accurately identifying both strengths and weaknesses. The governing body is well led, fulfils all its statutory requirements and supports the work of the school very effectively.

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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?	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	3
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?	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?	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.

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

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school recently. You were very polite and showed us the same high level of respect that you have for each other and those who teach and help you. When new children come to your school, you are very welcoming and supportive which helps them to settle in quickly.

You go to a good school, where all of the teaching is good and teachers go out of their way to make your learning interesting. As a result, you make good progress in your work. Many of you don't make quite so much progress in your writing so we have asked your school to find ways of helping you to do better. Getting to really understand your targets, together with your teachers and parents, will help you to improve.

Pupils that we spoke to told us how much you enjoy going to school, particularly because you feel safe and well cared for. A small number of pupils, however, don't always attend regularly which means that they can't make as much progress as others. We have asked your school to make sure that they and their parents realise how important it is to go to school regularly and that attendance improves.

You are lucky to have such a lovely computer room. You told us how much you enjoy working on computers. They can be used to help you learn in every subject, so we have asked your school to support your teachers in giving all of you these opportunities and particularly in literacy.

Your headteacher, supported by staff and governors, leads your school well. He shows an interest in all of you and has made sure that St Patrick's has continued to improve since it was last inspected. I am confident that with your help, the school will continue to be a happy place in which to learn and that it will improve even further.