



# St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124362  
**LEA** Staffordshire  
**Inspection number** 292972  
**Inspection dates** 26 June 2006 to 27 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Marion Thompson AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Marston Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Stafford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Staffordshire ST16 3BT
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 356685
<b>Number on roll</b>	193	<b>Fax number</b>	01785 356689
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Joan McKinlay
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 January 2003	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Ann Goodison

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 26 June 2006 - 27 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 292972
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This primary school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average, as is the children's attainment when they start school. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils are at the early stages of learning English. During the current year, there have been major staffing shortages, mainly affecting Years 3 and 5 and premises related problems. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2005.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Satisfactory leadership and management by the headteacher, staff and governors and satisfactory teaching ensure that the school provides a sound standard of education for its pupils. The school has accurately evaluated its provision and ensures it provides satisfactory value for money. Very good, caring relationships between adults and pupils, based on Christian values, are key to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Because of good attention to their welfare, pupils know how to live a healthy lifestyle, and they work safely. They take a full part in the interesting extra activities the school provides. Achievement is satisfactory overall, and pupils enjoy their learning. They make faster progress in classes where lesson planning is based on pupils' previous achievements and a close knowledge of their individual learning needs and where they are provided with good guidance on how to improve their work. The quality of education and pupils' progress is particularly good in Reception and Year 2. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and pupils make good progress in reading. However, the highest attainers do not achieve as much as they should in science in Years 3 to 6, and in mathematics in Year 1, because work in these subjects sometimes lacks challenge. The writing of more able boys is in need of improvement throughout the school. Currently subject leaders do not monitor the quality of teaching, to ensure best practice is disseminated and shared with all teachers. This leads to differences in the quality of teaching and consequently pupils' achievement in different subjects and year groups. However, further training is already organised to address this. Slow, but satisfactory, progress has been made since the previous inspection and this demonstrates the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of the highest-attaining pupils in science in Years 3 to 6, mathematics in Years 1, and in writing, especially for boys, in all years.
- Promote greater consistency in the quality of teaching through the dissemination of best practice across all classes.
- Ensure that in all classes' assessment information impacts more strongly on pupils' understanding of how to improve their work and on lesson planning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

The pupils' satisfactory achievement has resulted in their reaching above national average standards in English, mathematics and science consistently over several years. Children get off to a good start in Reception, with most exceeding the standards expected for their age by the end of the year, as a result of well-planned provision and good teaching. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 2, although higher-attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they should in mathematics in Year 1. Well-planned teaching leads to very rapid progress in Year 2, although standards achieved by pupils currently in Year 2 appear

to be lower than in previous years. This does not represent a real fall, but reflects a more accurate assessment of pupils' attainment than in the recent past when assessments have been over-generous. In Years 3 to 6, whilst standards are above average overall, a minority of higher-attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they should in science, because work is not consistently demanding, especially in Year 5. Writing is not as good as it should be for higher-attaining boys in all year groups. Reading is a strength throughout school, because it is taught well. Pupils meet their challenging targets, except at the higher levels. In the current year, despite the school's best efforts, progress has been disrupted in Years 3 and 5 by severe staffing difficulties. These should be fully resolved by next term. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress, in part because of support from learning assistants and in part because of specific support for targeted groups of pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good personal development contributes to their enjoyment of school and is appreciated by parents. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, effectively promoted by the school's Catholic ethos, is good. Pupils take part and lead in prayer, reflecting on their actions. They have a good understanding of right and wrong. They participate in a range of artistic activities, such as the well-attended orchestra, which promotes good cultural development. Because the school provides good opportunities through religious education and other lessons, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of cultures and beliefs within our society. Attendance is average and punctuality to classes is good, except in morning registration. In the lower years, pupils show good attitudes and are keen to learn, concentrating well. Older pupils, especially boys, occasionally slow the pace of learning through low-level disruption, or misbehave in the playground. The school is addressing this well. Most pupils are considerate of others and feel safe in school, because they can turn to an adult if they have problems. They have a good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle, because of good provision for physical activities, such as swimming and dance, and the availability of healthy food and fruit snacks. An effective school council and participation in activities of the adjacent church help pupils develop a good sense of responsibility towards the community. The effective promotion of basic and social skills prepares pupils well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but the quality varies across the school and this contributes to the differing rates of progress pupils make. Good relationships motivate pupils to learn, and teaching assistants are effectively deployed, especially to support pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. In some lessons, the pace of learning is rather slow. Pupils chat while they are working or do not listen attentively,

especially when teachers' presentations are too long. Work is occasionally pedestrian, based on books or worksheets, rather than on first-hand experience. In a minority of lessons, planning lacks challenge for higher-attaining pupils and opportunities for individual research and extended writing are missed. By contrast, the key feature of the good teaching often found in Reception, and Year 2, and also in Years 3, 4 and 6, is planning which is based on what each individual pupil needs to learn in order to make rapid progress. Tasks are challenging, and skilful questioning leads pupils to elucidate and develop their ideas. In some classes, for example in Year 2, teachers' marking is perceptive, helpful and closely related to pupils' targets. As a result, pupils are very knowledgeable about what they need to do to improve. However, assessment practice such as this is not consistent across the school.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Within the satisfactory curriculum that the school provides, religious education is a particular strength, promoting prayer and reflection as well as knowledge. In most subjects the programmes of work are built on what pupils have previously learnt, but occasionally they are not sufficiently flexible to adapt to the identified strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievements. This is particularly the case for higher-achieving pupils. Provision for science is constrained by a lack of opportunity for investigational work in some classes. A good range of enrichment activities, including clubs, visiting speakers and trips, enhance the provision and pupils participate in these enthusiastically.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Systems to ensure children's health and safety, including child protection, operate effectively in the main. Levels of staff care and commitment to pupils' welfare are high and there is good liaison with a range of services to support children, especially those who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Guidance given to pupils on their progress, whilst satisfactory, is inconsistent. Pupils are not always told how well they are achieving in each subject and details of their progress are not always used to plan lessons and evaluate the school's effectiveness. Setting pupils targets for improvement is inconsistent from teacher to teacher. Parents are regularly kept informed of pupils' progress through reports and meetings. Good procedures are in place for helping pupils settle into school, move between years and adapt to secondary education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Satisfactory leadership and management by the headteacher, senior staff and governors have ensured that pupils' standards remain above average and their achievement is satisfactory, despite the major staffing and premises-related problems this year. The

school's overall evaluation of its work is broadly accurate. Strategies to raise attainment have recently been introduced, such as a focus on improving writing, but the impact is limited as yet. Reception is well led and pupils achieve well. Monitoring of teaching by subject leaders is in its early stages and as a result, the best teaching practice is not being disseminated to others. Plans are in place to provide training to address this. Parents are supportive of the school and have been consulted on important aspects of development, such as the school's vision statement. Governors fulfil their roles and responsibilities conscientiously, but do not have a clear enough view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Financial management is sound. The school has made slow, but satisfactory, progress since the previous inspection and has satisfactory capacity to improve 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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	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	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

27 June 2006 Dear Pupils Thank you for making us so very welcome in your school. It was a delight to talk to you and to find out how well you are doing. You told us how much you enjoyed school because of the way the staff care for you. These are some of the things the school does well:

- You make good progress in Reception because you are taught well.
- You read well, because your teachers and other adults teach reading well.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourself safe and of why it is important to keep fit and healthy.
- You enjoy school and the other activities school provides.
- You show consideration for others and know the difference between right and wrong. You think about those less fortunate than yourself.

• Staff take good care of you. We have asked your school to:

- Help all of you do even better in writing and in some of your classes help you improve in mathematics and science, especially if you are quick to learn.
- Make sure that all teaching is equally good throughout the school.
- Make sure you get good guidance on how to improve your work in all classes.
- Help subject leaders with all the work they have to do.

Best wishes Marion Thompson (Lead inspector)  
Alexandra House 33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE T 0207 421 6800 F 0207 421 6707  
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