



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Corby

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122045
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 295780
Inspection dates 8–9 November 2006
Reporting inspector Linda Killman HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Patrick Road
School category	Community		Corby
Age range of pupils	3–11		NN18 9NT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01536 744447
Number on roll (school)	227	Fax number	01536 744447
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Gerard Mallaghan
		Headteacher	Chris Latimer
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2005		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a voluntary aided Catholic school in Corby, an area with higher than average unemployment. Higher than average numbers of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The majority of pupils are White British although recently some families have moved to the area from Eastern Europe and, for the first time, the school has some pupils learning English as a new language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory with good and improving features. The school is an harmonious and inclusive community. Staff have created an ethos where relationships are good, where pupils are safe and well cared for, and where the majority of pupils share a mutual respect for each other's cultures and traditions. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave well, attend regularly and feel supported. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development and pupils' personal development is good. Strong in their resolve that the pupils deserve the best, the previous headteacher and his successor have clearly communicated their vision for the school's development, ensuring that everyone is working towards common goals. The whole school is united in the quest for improvement.

Leadership and management are now good and all the issues from the previous inspection have been tackled successfully. However, the senior management team has a very heavy work load. Regular monitoring by senior leaders provides an adequate basis for self-evaluation. However, the information gathered is not yet analysed rigorously enough to measure the effect of actions taken on provision. The school's focus on raising standards in literacy, mathematics and science has been well led by subject leaders leading to improvement. Leaders of other subjects are not involved sufficiently in monitoring and curriculum development. The improvements made since the inspection in June 2005 and the developing strength and skills of the senior leadership team indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve.

Pupils of all ages make steady progress and standards are now average. In the Foundation Stage, a well planned curriculum enables children to develop their learning through play. The rest of the curriculum is adequate and the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. Teachers respond well to changes suggested as a result of the monitoring and evaluation of their work in literacy and mathematics. Nevertheless, in other subjects work for pupils is not consistently matched to pupils' needs and this limits their achievement. Pupils requiring additional support are helped to make satisfactory progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Evaluate the outcomes of monitoring by placing a greater focus on the effect of actions taken on progress and achievement.
- Reduce the number of responsibilities undertaken by the leadership team by developing the leadership skills of other staff.
- Ensure that the good practice in improving the curriculum and teaching of English, mathematics and science extends to all other subjects.
- Provide a range of tasks in lessons that closely match the needs and abilities of all learners.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Throughout the school standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. Standards and progress are better now in Key Stage 2 than when the school was inspected in June 2005. Most pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress because of effective support. In the Foundation Stage, children make adequate progress in an atmosphere of care where they feel valued.

National test results for seven-year-olds have been above average for five years. However, in 2006, results plummeted because the school did not respond quickly enough to meet the needs of pupils learning English as a new language or to remedy weaknesses in teaching. These weaknesses have now been rectified and pupils are on track in the work to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2.

Key Stage 2 results have improved since 2004. Compared with national figures, results were broadly average in 2005 and 2006 and pupils made satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good and much better than at the last inspection. Pupils behave very sensibly and think well of their teachers and of each other. The Catholic ethos of the school creates a caring and principled community which supports pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is much improved and pupils say they enjoy coming to school. They enjoy the majority of their lessons too, although their enjoyment is sometimes diminished when the work does not match their needs closely enough. They respond very positively to the many opportunities to take responsibility whether as playground monitors, buddies to younger children, or as members of the school council. Pupils make a positive contribution in the community, for example through links with parishes, the Corby Youth Forum, and the local hospice.

St Patrick's has recently received the Active Mark Gold and the Healthy Schools awards. Pupils participate enthusiastically in physical education lessons, team games and various outdoor pursuits. Through regular exercise, the fruit and milk scheme and the quality of school meals, pupils develop their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They play sensibly and safely and have the knowledge and skills to avoid danger or seek help when necessary. Pupils develop satisfactory workplace skills with the support of various local businesses.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are now satisfactory with some significant and developing strengths. Relationships in all classes are good and pupils behave well.

In English, mathematics and science, lessons are clearly structured, activities are well planned and pupils find them interesting. In the better lessons, a brisk pace and challenging work sustain the interest of pupils of all abilities. Detailed and encouraging marking also shows pupils how to improve their work. Teachers use a good range of systems to monitor progress and to identify any underachievement. Assessment information is frequently analysed to judge how well pupils are learning. In other subjects, teachers do not always match activities to pupils' needs and introduce too few independent activities in their lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It has recently been revised to develop skills and confidence in literacy, science and number more consistently. The school recognises that the next step is to focus on other subjects in order to challenge pupils in everything they are asked to do. Since the last report, significant developments have taken place in the provision for pupils learning English as an additional language. They receive well judged tuition so that they make progress similar to that of their classmates. The same level of support is replicated for those pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities. However, resources for outdoor activities in Reception are inadequate.

The good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, is taken up by substantial numbers of pupils. Links with outside agencies promote drugs awareness, road safety and concern for the environment. These arrangements support pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy and safe and contribute greatly to pupils' enjoyment. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 are part of the Young Enterprise Initiative in which local firms contribute to a programme about industry and employment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care guidance and support are satisfactory overall although, considered separately, the care that pupils receive is of high quality. Teachers know their pupils well and have their interests completely at heart. Pupils appreciate and trust them and consider the school to be a safe and happy place. Arrangements for child protection and risk assessment are robust and effective.

The support pupils are given to help them improve the quality of their work is satisfactory at present and is a focus for development in the school. In English,

mathematics and science, there is clear, practical advice about raising standards but this useful guidance is not found across all areas of the curriculum.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Since the school was put into special measures in 2005, leadership and management have improved significantly and both are now good. The clear vision of the headteacher has been instrumental in improving the school. He is building a successful team to take the school forward. The leadership team have a secure understanding of what needs to be done and how to achieve this. The team regularly observes lessons and gives feedback on the quality of teaching. This helpful and constructive monitoring has led directly to improvements in teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science. However, senior managers are overstretched as there is insufficient delegation of responsibilities. The governors are well informed and actively involved in the school's drive for improvement. They are adept in providing challenge as well as support.

Shrewd financial planning, together with a much needed injection of finance from the diocese, has enabled refurbishment work to be completed. This has dramatically improved the working environment and has raised the morale of staff and pupils. Communication with parents has been considerably improved through regular meetings and the launch of an interactive school website.

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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	3
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	3

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	3
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?	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?	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	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	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 making us welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were pleased to find that the school has improved considerably since the inspection in June 2005 when it was decided that urgent improvements were needed. It no longer needs special attention from Ofsted.

Your new headteacher, the deputy headteachers and governors are doing a good job making sure that you are taught all that you should. You are making better progress in lessons because you are being taught better. Your behaviour is good and we are impressed that you are all trying hard not to miss so many days at school. Now that it has been redecorated your school building is looking attractive and cared for on the inside.

This is what we would like the school to do to improve still further.

- Think more carefully about the effect that new ways of working have on your learning.
- Spread the work of adults in the school so that everyone shares the load.
- Make sure that the improvements you have made in English, mathematics and science extend to all of the other subjects you study.
- Make sure that you all make as much progress as possible in every lesson.

Your teachers, governors and other staff have worked extremely hard to improve things for you. You have also played your part by making sure that you that you attend school regularly and work hard. I am confident that your school will continue to flourish.

Mr Saunders and I wish you all every success in the future.