

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Wednesfield

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104381
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	308586
Inspection dates	10–11 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Rodney Braithwaite

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Aamonn Corduff
Headteacher	Wonda Wozmirska
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2005
School address	Graiseley Lane Wednesfield Wolverhampton WV11 1PG
Telephone number	01902 556451
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Introduction

Two Additional Inspectors carried out the inspection.

Description of the school

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School has an average number of pupils. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than in most schools. The school has an average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A higher-than-average number of pupils speak English as an additional language. When pupils start in the school, most have below-average skills and abilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is an effective school where pupils are well cared for and receive a good education. There is a strong learning ethos in the school, good links with the local church, and very good relationships between pupils and staff. Standards when pupils leave the school are average, but all pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well from the Nursery to the end of Year 6. Parents view the school very positively and many give high praise to the school for the quality of care and learning their children receive. The school is rigorous in the safeguarding it provides for pupils. Since the last inspection two years ago, the school has shown good improvement. Most notable has been the success in working with parents to improve the attendance of pupils, which is now in line with the national average. The school has also made good strides in improving the speaking and listening skills of many of its pupils. In its self-evaluation, though, the school is often unduly cautious in recognising the progress it makes. The leadership knows what the school is doing but is reticent in judging how effective it is.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, feel that they are well challenged in their work, and enjoy the out-of-school activities they have. They are especially appreciative of the sports they play, in spite of the school's lack of a playing field. This helps them to have a good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle. They have good attitudes to their learning, behave consistently well and are prepared satisfactorily for their future lives. Although relationships between pupils of different races are very good, they do not have enough opportunities to learn about other cultures.

The quality of teaching is good. This starts in the Foundation Stage, which is well managed and led and where children have a really good start to their life in school. It continues through all year groups, and all pupils are helped towards improving their skills and learning. Sometimes teachers are not quite sure how quickly pupils are progressing, although they have a good range of assessment data available. Teachers have successfully improved their marking and are now much more consistent in guiding pupils in their improvement. The care, support and guidance of pupils are satisfactory, although pastoral care is good. However, not all pupils are yet clear about their personal learning targets. The teaching assistants are unstinting in their good work to help the learning of pupils, particularly those most in need. The school provides a satisfactory, broad and balanced curriculum for its pupils. The whole school is well led and managed. This is because all staff share with the head and deputy head the vision for improvement of the school. Subject coordinators now play a much greater role in the management of the school, another good improvement, and are positive and enthusiastic in developing their responsibilities. The governors are active and supportive and are making a valuable contribution to the improvement of the school and its environment.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter school with a wide range of abilities. A majority have below-, and some, well-below-average skills for children of their age. An increasing number have English as an additional language. They make good progress during the Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal and social, and physical development, in which they reach the standards expected for their age. They remain below average, however, in some areas of language development and in mathematics. Effective support is in place to help children make the transition to Year

1. Good arrangements for introducing children to school, together with clear routines and stimulating activities, ensure that they feel secure, become confident and settle quickly and happily. Teaching is particularly effective in developing children's personal and social skills where they learn to share, take turns, work, and play harmoniously. There are strong relationships with parents, who appreciate the welcome given to their children. The school has identified accurately that there are two areas for improvement. These are to make the outdoor area more interesting, to use it as a means for promoting children's independence, and to provide more learning opportunities to accelerate children's skills in speaking and listening, and in calculation. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve its self-evaluation and sharpen its judgements on progress, so that it has a clearer picture of its own performance.
- Improve the use of assessment data to give teachers a clearer picture of the progress of all pupils.
- Give pupils more opportunities to learn about other cultures.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards overall are average at the end of Year 6, although in 2007 a greater-than-average number of pupils reached the higher level in mathematics. Many children enter Nursery with low-level speaking and listening skills, but pupils achieve well from this starting point. Children make a good start in the Nursery, developing much greater confidence and a strong motivation to learn. This continues into the Reception class, where progress is maintained and children attain in line with national expectations, except in aspects of writing, speaking and listening, and in calculation.

Pupils continue to make good progress through all years from 1 to 6 because teaching and expectations are consistently good across the school. The downward blip of 2004 has been eliminated, although there are some variations between subjects year on year. Pupils achieved particularly well in English in 2006 and this year achievement has improved in mathematics and science. There have been some fluctuations in the achievement of boys and girls, with boys doing better than girls at the higher Level 3 in reading last year. The school has taken effective action to improve achievement and the school management is already analysing how better consistency, through sharper use of assessment data, can be reached in spite of the very wide variation in the attainment of pupils entering the school. The achievement of the increasing number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, is similar to that of other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy lessons and taking part in activities outside the classroom, because 'it's not a boring school, it's quite fun and you learn a lot'. The school's relentless drive to improve attendance has had a positive effect, and it is now broadly average. Pupils' behaviour both in and outside school is consistently good, and they receive frequent compliments from the public for this. Many pupils take part in a wide range of sporting activities and show a good understanding of the need to live a healthy lifestyle. They appreciate the fruit provided for them and the access to water, which 'helps you think'. They know how to keep themselves safe

and feel they are well looked after at school. They report that any incidents of bullying are taken seriously by the school and acted upon promptly. They are adamant that there are no racial incidents in school because they all get along very well together.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of the need to help those less fortunate than themselves. They raise money for a number of causes, of which they are justifiably proud. Their good behaviour contributes to the positive learning environment. Older pupils feel a sense of responsibility in helping look after younger ones through their role as peer mentors. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community through the links with the church and the work of the school council. School council members are proud of their role in helping to 'organise things for the school and help people'. Senior leaders recognise they need to do more to develop pupils' understanding of the wide range of cultures represented in the school.

Pupils build satisfactory skills for their future lives through the average standards achieved.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning has been sustained since 2005, and remains good. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are helped to settle into school well. They benefit from the wide range of opportunities provided because of the good teaching.

Pupils are taught consistently well throughout all years in the rest of the school. Relationships with pupils are good. All teachers have good expectations of what their pupils can achieve, and set challenging targets. As a result, more able pupils usually reach the standards of which they are capable and some pupils of average ability perform better than anticipated. In spite of increasing numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and with English as an additional language, the school's improving provision enables these pupils to make good progress.

Teachers give pupils many opportunities to discuss their work. An example of this was seen in Year 5, where many pupils made excited efforts to create playlets about an 'alien invasion'. As a result, a recognised weakness in speaking has rapidly improved. Teachers consistently encourage pupils to do their best in their written work, and almost all books are well presented and indicate good progress is made in learning. The quality of marking has also improved since the last inspection, and all teachers now offer helpful guidance to pupils on what they need to do next to improve. Nearly all lessons have good pace, and are well planned but sometimes there is a tendency for some teachers to be over directive. Consequently a few pupils do not have the opportunity to clarify their learning tasks with their teachers during lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, with some good features. Children in Nursery and Reception benefit from a well-planned curriculum that provides an effective blend of adult-led and independent activities carefully tailored to their needs. Throughout the school, there is a clear focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum has been adapted to provide opportunities for pupils to develop good speaking and listening skills, with the aim of improving their writing skills.

Extensive sporting activities, including input from sports professionals, enrich the school's curriculum and encourage healthy exercise. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their physical education lessons which 'help you get fit' and provide opportunities to try out new sports such as hockey. The award of Activemark this year fully recognises the school's work in physical education. Although pupils' information and communication technology skills are satisfactory, a few pupils would like to use computers more often. New interactive whiteboards have been introduced, which are benefiting learning. The school has rightly identified that pupils need more opportunities to take part in music.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Adults know the pupils well and give them a high level of care and pastoral support. Parents praise the care shown by staff. Children are well guided in making the transition from home to Nursery and from Reception to Year 1. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety are robust and understood by staff. The needs of vulnerable pupils are known well and support is put in place to help promote their personal development and to help them achieve to the best of their abilities. The school has formed strong partnerships with outside agencies in order to promote the care and support given to individuals. Pupils value 'Praise Assembly' where good work and behaviour is rewarded.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school recognises that the assessment of pupils' progress needs to be more rigorous and the information used to identify any groups or individuals who are underachieving. Marking has improved since the last inspection and pupils report they find the comments helpful in informing them how they can improve their work. Some pupils are aware of the targets set for their group or class, but this is not consistently embedded across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management in the school is good overall. This is because, in the time since the last inspection, leaders and managers have demonstrated good improvement. They provide a consistently good quality of pastoral care and education for pupils. Because of actions taken, the school now has much-improved attendance, an active and positive team of subject coordinators, and teachers are marking work much more consistently and helpfully. In addition, challenging targets to raise standards are being set, with good results in, for example, reading, mathematics and science. The school does particularly well in helping more able pupils and boys to reach demanding targets. Achievement is good in a school where equal opportunity is promoted well. The school management recognises, though, that this can be improved further, and work is planned to give teachers a clearer understanding of what the considerable bank of assessment and tracking data is indicating for every pupil. The school has good capacity to make the necessary improvements in the future.

The headteacher, deputy head and senior management team have a shared vision for continual improvement in the school. Subject coordinators agree with this vision and all leaders and teachers are involved in regular observation and monitoring of teaching. This has enabled greater consistency of teaching, learning and achievement to be established across the school.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. Leaders have a good knowledge of what is happening in the school and of school priorities. However, they are very cautious in their judgements on how they are doing, even in the many areas where the school does well. The school governors are supportive and challenge school managers, as, for example, in their quest for an improvement in the longstanding issues of attendance in the school. Financial resources are used effectively and teachers and support assistants are deployed to the best effect throughout the school.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

12 October 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton WV11 1PG

We would like to thank you for making us so welcome to your school this week. I lost count of the times some of you said to me, 'Good morning, Mr Inspector.' We think you are very well looked after in school and that you all work hard and make good progress in your learning. We were pleased to hear that you get on happily together, and how much you think all the sport you enjoy makes you healthy. It was good to hear that your parents like the school and the staff, and think you do your best here. We are delighted that you have all worked successfully together to improve your attendance in the last year. Keep it up!

Since inspectors were last here, only two years ago, your teachers have really helped you to improve your speaking skills. We saw many of you giving good answers and enjoying drama when the aliens invaded Class 5! We think nearly all of you make good progress. Your books are a pleasure to look at and your teachers are very helpful in their comments on your work. We would now like you to work with them to get to know and understand the targets to help you improve. Your teachers are going to try to give you even more information on how you are doing in school. We have also asked them to teach you more about how other people in the world live. As quite a number of you come from different countries, you will be able to help in this learning.

Your school is well led by your headteacher and deputy head. We also think that all the other teachers are helping them to make your learning even better. They are being helped well by your teaching assistants. Sometimes, though, the school leaders don't think the school is doing as well as it is. You can help by telling them!

Recently, you and your school have shown how good you are at improving all sorts of things. Do continue to do this, so your school becomes even better.

Best wishes to you, and keep enjoying coming to school.

Rod Braithwaite Lead inspector



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Lead inspector