

St Patrick's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105535
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308882
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim Cahill
Headteacher	Mrs Rosetta Mason
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Livesey Street Collyhurst Manchester M4 5HF
Telephone number	0161 8349004
Fax number	0161 8391075

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school is close to the city centre. The area has high levels of social and economic deprivation. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals or who join or leave the school other than at the usual times are very high. The school population has changed considerably in recent years. About half the pupils are of White British heritage. About 5% of the pupils are Travellers and attend when in the area. A much higher proportion of pupils than in schools nationally speak English in addition to their home language, and about half of these pupils are at a very early stage of learning English. Fifteen different home languages were represented at the current inspection, and many pupils have arrived in this country very recently. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils of many different cultural backgrounds learn and play together happily and harmoniously. The inspection confirmed the school's view of its effectiveness. Strong leadership by the headteacher, supported well by staff and governors, has established a culture of improvement based on the school motto, 'Always do our best'. Parents are very happy with the school and all it offers to their children, and several commented that their children were making good progress.

Achievement is good. The great majority of children start school with attainment well below that usually seen at their age. They enjoy their lessons, work hard and make good progress because the quality of teaching is good. By the time they leave the school, most pupils reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. However, few pupils reach higher levels in English and mathematics. The increasing proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language means the development of speaking skills is always a priority. Support for these pupils, for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for the Traveller children is good. As a result, they progress well.

The school provides well for pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils are happy in school, behave well and say they feel safe and secure there. During their time in school, pupils acquire the basic academic skills necessary for their future economic well-being. The school helps them mature into caring, responsible individuals who are keen to make a useful contribution to the community. The curriculum is good. As well as providing well for pupils' developing academic skills, it offers a good range of activities that effectively broaden and extend pupils' experiences beyond the classroom. Great attention to health, safety and welfare ensures that all pupils are cared for well. The staff know the pupils and their families well and have high levels of regard for their well-being. Arrangements to monitor and track pupils' academic progress are good, but do not fully involve pupils so they know what they are aiming for or what they need to do to improve their work.

Staff and governors work well together as an effective team. They successfully ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to take part in all activities in a cohesive, supportive environment. Honest checks on how well the school is doing give the leadership a clear view of what needs to be done to keep moving forward. Issues from the previous inspection have been tackled thoroughly.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that the youngest children make good progress in all areas of learning. The warm atmosphere and high level of care and concern ensure that children settle into school happily because they feel safe and secure. Good teaching and exciting learning activities build on children's natural inquisitiveness so they want to explore: they love learning outside. Most children start school with very limited language and social skills. Staff take every chance to broaden and develop their vocabulary. Children respond well to the simple routines and soon begin to share, take turns and care for each other. Progress is carefully monitored and extra help directed where needed. Children cover a lot of ground in Nursery and Reception classes but few reach the levels usually seen at their age when they move to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide extra challenge for those who learn quickly so that standards rise in English and mathematics.
- Extend the assessment systems to involve pupils and give them clear guidance about what they have to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From well below average starting points, pupils achieve well throughout the school because they are taught well, and as one said, 'We like learning'. In Year 1, pupils build well on their early experiences so they make good progress. Standards are just below national averages in all subjects by the end of Year 2. The school's most recently published results in 2006 showed that at the end of Year 6, pupils exceeded their targets for English, mathematics and science. Work seen in lessons and in pupils' books indicates that these standards are being maintained. The proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels at Year 2 and Year 6 in English and mathematics is lower than in other schools. More pupils reach higher levels in science because they enjoy the practical investigations in particular. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well and receive extra help in lessons, so they make good, and sometimes very good progress in understanding and speaking English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also progress well because they receive good support in class.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, is good. It is seen in good behaviour and friendly relationships throughout the school, although some boys can be a little too boisterous at playtimes. Pupils are keen to say how much they enjoy school and they have a very good attitude towards learning. As one said, 'This is the sort of place you just want to come to.' They adopt safe practices, seen in their sensible behaviour in and around the school. The emphasis on tolerance and understanding between all pupils, combined with the diversity of cultures in the school, enriches the development of the pupils. Those learning English as an additional language are well supported by experienced and skilled staff. The great variety of responsibilities that pupils take on, such as becoming 'guardian angels' and 'school wardens' contribute well to the school community and to their own personal development. They actively support their school and local community through the lively choir and regular fundraising activities. A small number of families do not bring their children to school in good time despite the school's best efforts to overcome the problem. Consequently, their children miss the beginnings of lessons and lose valuable learning time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The vast majority of lessons are of good quality because the teachers know how to grasp and hold the pupils' attention right from the start. In the occasional lesson where they are not fully involved by the lesson, pupils soon lose concentration and their progress slows down. Pupils behave well in class, enjoy learning and work enthusiastically on the tasks they are set. Teachers

are confident and knowledgeable in their delivery of lessons, so for the majority of pupils progress is good, but there is room for greater challenge for the more able. Pupils have insufficient guidance through marking to know how to improve their learning. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed. They provide skilled and well-organised support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those still learning to speak English. Links with parents in this regard are good and adds much to pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum successfully equips pupils with the necessary skills in literacy and numeracy. Suitably adapted programmes of work for pupils learning English and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities meet their needs well and make sure they have full access to the curriculum. Pupils use their literacy, numeracy and skills in information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects, for example when reporting science investigations, using the Internet to create personal profiles or to make international links with other schools. A good programme for personal and social development gives pupils valuable opportunities to think about their feelings and emotions and those of others. The curriculum is enriched well, for example with specialist teaching in physical education, music, and Italian, all of which increase pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Very good use is made of the extensive cultural resources of the city centre. Visits out-of-school extend pupils' experience beyond the locality, and visitors from different professions help prepare them for future work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe and happy in school because they are well looked after by dedicated staff at all times of the day. Robust arrangements to protect and safeguard children meet requirements. From the earliest stages, staff ensure that pupils are ready and eager to learn, particularly those who begin school with little or no English. Carefully planned arrangements ensure that the youngest children start school happily. Good links with the local high school ensure that older pupils move on with confidence. The school has increased pupils' awareness of the need for healthy eating and regular exercise and of the dangers of drug abuse and smoking. Systems that track and monitor progress are thorough. A relative weakness is that pupils receive limited guidance to help them understand what they are aiming for or what they need to do to improve the standard of their academic work. Rewards and incentives promote pupils' regular attendance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well placed for further improvement because leaders have set a clear education direction which is well supported by all staff. Their strong dedication and commitment ensures that pupils make good progress and enjoy school. The well informed governors have a thorough understanding of pupils' needs, so they are confident to challenge and question the school. Good relationships between home and school help pupils feel confident and secure. Strong partnerships with external support agencies are valuable, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English. Careful monitoring of the quality of teaching forms the basis for staff development and rigorous performance management. Cooperative working links with local school networks are used for staff and

curriculum development. The school sets challenging targets for improvement in most areas but pupils that are more able are not always asked to aim high enough. Carefully directed resources, including finance support learning and improvement well. The school gives good value for money.

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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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Inspection of St Patrick's RC Primary School, Collyhurst, M4 5HF

Thank you all for making the inspectors very welcome and helping us complete our work. We really enjoyed visiting your school because you were all very polite and friendly. All the children we talked to told us how much they like St Patrick's School, and your parents told us they are happy with the school. We saw you working hard in class and it was good to see you all playing together happily outside. One thing that really impressed us was the way you care for each other. It was also good to see you moving around the building sensibly and carefully. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You go to a good school where you enjoy learning, try hard and make good progress in your work.
- The school is led well and you have good teachers.
- You feel safe and understand how to keep healthy.
- Some of you who work quickly thought harder work would challenge you even more.
- The school provides lots of interesting activities, takes good care of you and makes sure everyone gets the help they need.

We have asked the staff to improve standards by helping more of you to reach the higher levels. They are also going to make sure you know what to do to improve your work.

You can help them by working hard and always doing your best and your parents can help by making sure you arrive at school on time so that you do not miss the important beginnings of lessons. We hope you will continue to enjoy school and we wish you well for the future.