

# St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School, Walton-le-Dale

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119640
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313368
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathryn Dodd

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father John Cribben
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Catherine Flood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2003
<b>School address</b>	Higher Walton Road Walton-le-Dale Preston Lancashire PR5 4HD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 555436
<b>Fax number</b>	01772 257322

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, pupils' personal development, the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, plans for further improvement, nationally published assessment data and the school's records of pupils' progress over time. Observations of lessons, assembly and break-time were carried out and discussions were held with staff, pupils and governors. Questionnaires returned by parents were examined. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Almost all the pupils at this average sized school are from White British family backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Investors in People accreditations.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good school has an accurate view of its own effectiveness and provides good value for money. Pupils thrive in the happy, warm and very caring setting, so that they achieve well, reach above average standards by Year 6 and make outstanding progress in their personal development. The support provided resulting from the outstanding partnerships between the school, parents, the church and local organisations, helps pupils to feel a strong sense of belonging to their school and local community and to want to contribute to it. Consequently, the school has a good reputation within the locality and is often oversubscribed. Parents are confident that their children receive a good 'all round education', and many say that this particularly reflects the strong commitment and dedication of staff to their children's achievements and welfare.

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress as a result of good teaching. Teachers' enthusiasm, their good organisation and effective questioning, along with the very positive relationships between teachers and pupils, keep pupils interested in their lessons and on their toes. The above average results in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2006, along with the provisional results for 2007; represent good progress from pupils' starting point when they enter school. Although standards are higher than those reported at the last inspection, recently they have dipped. A significant contributory factor is that the rate of progress between Years 3 and 6 has slowed, particularly for the more able pupils. Leaders and staff have identified this trend, and have taken decisive action to reverse it. Consequently, a priority is to make more frequent checks on pupils' progress and so highlight more precisely when pupils are not making enough progress. Improvements to practices, such as marking and involving pupils in understanding what they need to learn next, are starting to pay dividends. However, it is early days, and teachers do not yet have a consistent approach in all classes or across the various subjects, especially towards matching work to the learning needs of the more able pupils.

Pupils' health and safety and opportunities to make a positive contribution to their community have a very high priority. They enjoy learning because the good curriculum includes a wonderful range of exciting activities, both in lessons and beyond the normal school day, particularly in sport. Carefully thought out links between subjects help to bring learning alive, for example, using the very latest in information and communication technology. Pupils' growing confidence and maturity is seen in the range of responsibilities that pupils of all ages undertake with great enthusiasm. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are especially respectful towards adults and one another. Pupils' outstanding personal development, along with their good academic progress, is why they are well placed to succeed at secondary school and to become responsible young adults of the future.

Leadership and management, including governance are good. At the heart of this is the headteacher's clear vision for ensuring that children are nurtured and achieve well in a very caring and supportive environment. Her belief that 'good' is simply not 'good enough' is the reason why she leaves no stone unturned when it comes to identifying where further improvements need to be made. Making sure that everyone shares her vision with equal determination is very high on the school's agenda. As a result, well-focused improvement plans provide clear accountability for everyone. Subject leaders and governors are keen and enthusiastic and make a good contribution. However, their monitoring skills require further development in order to effectively check the school's performance and influence the way

forward. Nevertheless, this is a school that has an accurate view of its strengths; albeit a modest view of pupils' personal development. This good leadership and management, along with the good improvement since the previous inspection, demonstrate that it has good capacity to improve even further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

When children join the Reception class, their skills are broadly typical for their age. The very warm and caring relationships between adults and children ensure that they settle quickly into school routines and develop an early love of learning. Children make good progress so that, by the time they start Year 1, the vast majority reach and an increasing number exceed the level expected for their age. Children have many opportunities for learning to work independently, take responsibility and get along well with others. Consequently, progress in their personal, social and emotional development is particularly good. Teachers and support staff work together closely to ensure that children always have good support from adults. They assess children's attainment in order to highlight where their learning needs a boost. Although they record the achievements of individual children, this is not always regularly enough to make sure that all learning activities available build sufficiently well on what they can already do. As a result, the more able children could sometimes achieve more than they do. Nevertheless, good leadership and management ensure a lively, stimulating and appropriate curriculum is provided and have secured good improvement in the accommodation for outdoor learning since the previous inspection.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop the role of subject leaders and governors in checking on the schools' performance and in influencing the way forward.
- Make sure that work matches pupils' ability more closely, particularly for the more able pupils.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</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>	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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

12 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School, Walton-le-Dale, Lancashire, PR5 4HD.

Thank you so very much for the really warm and friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You were so keen to talk to me and answered all my questions very thoughtfully. I particularly enjoyed seeing you leading your assembly, singing so joyfully and performing and recording play scripts so confidently. I know that you appreciate the many chances that you have to take part in exciting activities like these. It was easy to see why so many of you told me you enjoy coming to school, and why some of you said that you would even be happy to stay at school beyond home time! Lots of your parents also told me wonderful things about your school. They are, rightfully, very proud of your achievements. Your behaviour was especially good all the time; you are so very kind and caring and extremely polite toward one another. I can understand why you told me that this helps you to feel safe in school.

Your school is a good school. All the adults care a great deal about you. They help you to do well and to grow in confidence, so that you are well prepared for going to secondary school. Although the Year 6, national tests results are better than in many other schools, teachers have started to keep an even closer check on how quickly each and every one of you is learning. Your headteacher and the staff work hard to make sure that your school never stands still and gets even better. For example, they have started to tell you more about how well you are getting on and what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. I have suggested that teachers with special responsibilities and the governing body help the headteacher more with keeping a close eye on how well your school is doing. I have also suggested that your teachers make certain that all of you are set work at just the right level and gives you the chance to show what you are capable of.

You can help your school by checking all the time what you still have to do to reach your targets and, of course, continue to try your very best in everything that you do.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector