

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Corsham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126431
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315544
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Ferries
Headteacher	Kieran Loftus
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Lacock Road Corsham SN13 9HS
Telephone number	01249 713125
Fax number	01249 701670

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Inspection number	315544

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated the following aspects: achievement and standards; personal development and well-being; teaching and learning; the curriculum; care, guidance and support; and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies, minutes and other school documentation. Observation of the school at work, interviews with members of the teaching staff and pupils, and parental questionnaires also provided evidence. 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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is a slightly smaller than average primary school. Most pupils come from a White British background, and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. During the past year, there have been considerable changes to the teaching force.

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 is a good school with outstanding aspects to its work. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a stimulating curriculum. A very positive school atmosphere and excellent pastoral care lead to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Parents hold extremely favourable views and are very pleased with the care and education provided. They praise the school's ethos, the good teaching, the progress their children make and the leadership. Typical parental comments include, 'Children are thriving both in their learning and socially' and 'We are very pleased with the teaching and care given.' Good leadership and management are key factors contributing to St Patrick's effectiveness and success. An enthusiastic and experienced headteacher provides outstanding leadership and direction. He is very well supported by senior staff. One parent correctly remarked, 'Inspirational headteacher, brilliant deputy, backed up by capable staff.' Some leaders are new to their posts and are being provided with good training and support so they can be fully effective in monitoring and improving performance. Self-evaluation by senior staff is accurate and the findings are used well to guide planning for improvement and to set challenging targets. The governing body are actively involved in the life of the school and have a good understanding of the school's performance. Good appointment procedures and a positive professional climate help to ensure that new teachers are supported and quickly become effective members of the organisation. Strong leadership has led to recent improvements in standards in Years 1 and 2, and in mathematics standards by Year 6. These improvements alongside rigorous self-evaluation demonstrate a good capacity to improve. Good care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development. The school has effective systems to assess and track pupils' attainment and so teachers have a good overview of how well each pupil is doing. This has been particularly successful in writing. Assessment and tracking in mathematics do not provide the same detail to help teachers plan lessons to ensure tasks meet individual needs. Pupils are set challenging individual targets in literacy, numeracy and personal skills so they know what they are working towards. The school has highly effective procedures to ensure that all pupils are safe and secure. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's motto of 'Live, Love and Learn like Jesus' is securely embraced by pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected by their well above average attendance and enthusiastic participation in all school activities. High expectations by staff, outstanding relationships and positive rewards lead to exemplary behaviour. Pupils show an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating, taking regular exercise and keeping safe. They thrive on additional responsibilities. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and have made valuable contributions to the behaviour policy and to improving the playground equipment. Pupils contribute extremely well to the wider community by raising funds for charities such as CAFOD and Banardos. Skilled and enthusiastic teaching contributes to pupils' consistently good progress. A pupil remarked, 'Learning is fun and the teachers make lessons exciting.' Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships and high expectations. Teachers' instructions, demonstrations and explanations promote learning well. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively by teachers and pupils to illustrate key learning points. Pupils are keen to do well and their responses to teachers' challenging questioning are often articulate and well thought out. They work extremely well in pairs and small groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive. Higher attainers are challenged and extended. The curriculum is well planned and exciting, and this contributes to pupils' interests and enjoyment. However, there

are minor weaknesses to outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage which the school has identified. While there is strong emphasis on English, mathematics and science, art, drama and music are also strengths. A highly successful 'Art Week' was taking place at the time of the inspection. Every class studied the works of different artists such as Picasso and Velazquez. Pupils developed art skills extremely well, acquired an appreciation of remarkable works and applied evaluation skills when expressing opinions and views about different paintings. Other themes such as 'History Week' and healthy living provide enjoyment and opportunities to develop independent study, group work and problem solving. Popular clubs include football, basketball, dance, golf, choir, French and recorder. Spanish is an exciting addition to the curriculum and is taught by specialist teachers. Pupils of all ages learn this language. They make good gains in acquiring a new language and a good understanding of Spanish culture. Achievement and standards have improved in Years 1 and 2 over the past few years. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' performance in mathematics has improved by increasing practical investigation and problem solving activities. Standards in this subject have risen from average to above average by Year 6, and now match those in English. A strong emphasis on practical investigation and on understanding scientific vocabulary leads to well above average standards in science. With excellent social skills and good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), pupils at St Patrick's are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills a little above those expected for their age. The school's positive atmosphere and strong partnership with parents enable children to settle very quickly. Good leadership contributes to good teaching and a stimulating curriculum which give children a good start. Teachers and assistants provide a good blend of direct teaching and opportunities for children to explore and work creatively and independently. During the inspection, children were developing basic writing skills well through clear instruction and demonstration by the teaching assistant. They were also exploring colours with enthusiasm after being inspired by the work of Miro. Opportunities for children to develop physical and creative skills are hindered by limited outdoor facilities. Children are enthusiastic learners and make good gains in all areas of learning. Excellent progress is made in personal, social and emotional development. Standards in language, literacy and number skills are securely above expectations by the end of Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the outdoor learning equipment and facilities for children in Reception to provide a wider range of learning activities.
- Sharpen the tracking of pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics to match the high quality of that in writing.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	1
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

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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- 17 October 2007 Dear Pupils St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Corsham, SN13 9HS Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed the visit and would like to tell you what I have found. St Patrick's is a good school with outstanding features. This is a school you can be very proud of. You were clearly enjoying 'Arts Week'. These things are strengths of the school:
 - You enjoy school and take part in activities with enthusiasm.
 - The school is a very friendly, caring and pleasant place to be.
 - Children in Reception get off to a good start.
 - Teaching is good, which is why you learn so much.
 - You are making good progress in English, mathematics and science.
 - Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school.
 - A good range of exciting activities is provided for you.
 - Your headteacher leads the school extremely well and other senior staff provide very good support.
 - You show care and respect for other pupils and adults.
 - Staff know you very well; they take very good care of you and give you excellent support.
 - Your parents are very pleased with the school. There are two areas that the school has been asked to improve:
 - Provide a better range of outdoor learning equipment and facilities for children in Reception.
 - Keep very clear and detailed records of your progress in mathematics just like those in writing.
- Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the best for the future. With kind regards Derek Watts Lead inspector

17 October 2007

Dear Pupils



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Corsham, SN13 9HS

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed the visit and would like to tell you what I have found. St Patrick's is a good school with outstanding features. This is a school you can be very proud of. You were clearly enjoying 'Arts Week'.

These things are strengths of the school:

- You enjoy school and take part in activities with enthusiasm.
- The school is a very friendly, caring and pleasant place to be.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start.
- Teaching is good, which is why you learn so much.
- You are making good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school.
- A good range of exciting activities is provided for you.
- Your headteacher leads the school extremely well and other senior staff provide very good support.
- You show care and respect for other pupils and adults.
- Staff know you very well; they take very good care of you and give you excellent support.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school.

There are two areas that the school has been asked to improve:

- Provide a better range of outdoor learning equipment and facilities for children in Reception.
- Keep very clear and detailed records of your progress in mathematics just like those in writing.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the best for the future.

With kind regards

Derek Watts
Lead inspector