

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100173
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	323239
Inspection date	26 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Gordon Ewing

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	340
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs K Elliffe
Headteacher	Mr O P Folkes
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Griffin Road Plumstead London SE18 7QG

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	26 November 2008
Inspection number	323239

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Age group 3-11

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated the impact of leadership, including governance, on the personal development and well-being of pupils, the standards they attain and their achievement. The inspectors also investigated the effectiveness of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They met with staff, governors, parents and pupils. Parts of lessons were observed, 91 parents' questionnaires were analysed, samples of pupils' work were examined and information provided by the school, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised.

Description of the school

St Patrick's is a larger-than-average primary school with a Nursery as part of its EYFS provision. The school serves a community with a broad range of social backgrounds. The majority of pupils are of Black British heritage and the diverse ethnic mix of the school is characteristic of the local community. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high. Almost one in seven pupils is eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is similar to most schools. The most common additional need relate to speech, language and communication difficulties.

The school hosts a private daily breakfast and after school facility, Sasoma Out of School Club, for up to 34 pupils aged 5-11 years, during term time.

The school has received a number of national awards including Investors in People, Inclusion Charter Mark and Artsmark Silver.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the application of safeguarding procedures as part of the staff recruitment process. Although St Patrick's school provides a satisfactory education for the pupils, its overall effectiveness is inadequate because its leaders have failed to ensure that all government requirements relating to safeguarding children are followed. Consequently, care, guidance and support, and leadership and management are inadequate.

The school's general care and concern for the pupils results in good personal development and well-being. The day-to-day support for vulnerable pupils, for example those with social or emotional difficulties, has a profound impact and improves their attitudes, self-esteem and achievement. Pupils and the vast majority of parents hold the school in high regard. As one parent wrote, 'I'm so glad that my son is going to this school.' Pupils really enjoy school, display positive attitudes to learning and behave well, even when some lessons lack pace and challenge. Their attendance is good.

Achievement is satisfactory. Many children do not have the range of skills expected for their age when they enter the EYFS, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development. They make satisfactory progress through the EYFS and to the end of Year 2, where standards are below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. In Year 6 standards are broadly average in English and mathematics. Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall. They do well in reading, but in writing their progress is slower and standards are below average. Standards are gradually improving because teachers are making better use of the information the school collects about each pupil's progress. 'Big Writing', a recent initiative introduced to improve writing, is beginning to have a positive impact, though the rate of progress is variable across the school and more needs to be done to develop pupils' independent writing skills. Pupils of Black British origin attain standards higher than similar children nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress as they are well motivated and effectively supported.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school has recently taken a number of steps to improve teaching through additional training for staff and a focus on the components of what makes a good lesson. There are some early signs that these steps are beginning to bear fruit. However, the quality of teaching is still variable. Where teaching is good, pupils are well motivated, behave very well and make good progress because activities are challenging and well matched to their needs. In less effective lessons opportunities are missed to extend pupils' learning, for example through targeted high order questioning and by listening to how their peers solve a problem. As a result, rates of progress are variable because the level of challenge is inconsistent for pupils of all abilities. The school runs smoothly and staff morale is strong. The headteacher, supported well by the deputy headteacher, communicates the school's vision calmly and effectively. Senior leaders are held in high regard by parents and pupils. The school improvement plan identifies some appropriate targets, but there is a lack of incisiveness in measuring the impact of the school's actions on outcomes for pupils. Subject leadership is good. Governors are supportive and committed, though their involvement in monitoring the

school's performance and in holding the school's leadership to account are not sufficiently rigorous. Given the success in improving teaching and raising outcomes for all pupils, and the effectiveness of the middle leadership, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The friendly, calm atmosphere in the school and the good relationships developed with parents and carers help children to settle quickly and develop positive attitudes to learning. Many children do not have the range of skills and abilities expected for their age, particularly in their language and social development. Staff focus on developing pupils' language skills but, at times, there are missed opportunities for children to be more involved in making links between letters and sounds. Children make satisfactory progress across all areas of learning, although many do not reach the levels expected by the time they enter Year 1. Their personal development is given a strong and effective emphasis, particularly for children who experience difficulties. The outdoor area has been improved since the last inspection, but the adults make too little use of it to extend children's learning and develop their independence. Consequently, opportunities for children to learn through outdoor play and stimulation are lost and this slows their progress. There is currently no permanent leader of the EYFS and, although it is being managed satisfactorily, observations and assessments of children's progress are not informing planning consistently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the school complies fully with current government requirements for safeguarding.
- Improve the level of challenge for pupils of all abilities so that they can achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure that the teaching of writing is consistently good across the school, so that pupils become increasingly effective and independent writers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In recent years, standards achieved at the end of Year 2 have been below average in all subjects. Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve similar standards in reading and writing and average standards in mathematics. Recently, standards achieved by the end of Year 6 have been broadly average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve comparable standards this year. This picture masks inconsistencies in the progress made by older pupils, as they achieve well in reading but less well in writing. Consequently, standards in writing are consistently lagging behind those achieved in reading, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is clearly committed to developing the whole child and this is reflected in pupils' enjoyment, behaviour and attitudes. They are considerate, polite and sensitive to others' cultural and social backgrounds. Pupils know that they are valued and encouraged to contribute to improving their school. They have a strong awareness of the school as a community and accept responsibility with enthusiasm and vigour. The school council plays an active part in improving the provision for all pupils, for example in raising funds for classroom equipment and gaining

funding for improved playground facilities. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and gave an inspector good advice on healthy choices for a three-course meal. The school's focus on developing the pupils' basic skills, boosting their self-esteem and reinforcing their positive attitudes to learning prepare pupils well for their future adult lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships between pupils and all adults are good. As one pupil commented, 'My teacher is lovely.' Pupils' positive attitudes to learning boost the impact of the teaching. The quality of teaching, though variable across the school, is gradually improving as the influence of recent training takes hold. Teachers' planning is becoming more focused and better matched to pupils' needs. However, information from assessment and marking is not being used to full effect. Consequently, the pace and challenge of learning activities are inconsistent and opportunities are missed to positively channel pupils' eagerness to learn. Teaching assistants are deployed to good effect and their close support for pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enhances the teaching further. Their emphasis on developing pupils' communication and thinking skills increases pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum is broad and balanced with a wide range of enrichment activities including music, sport, the arts, local educational visits and an annual residential trip to Dorset. The curriculum increasingly matches the needs and interests of the pupils, contributing to their positive attitudes and achievement. The focus on developing basic skills, pupils' confidence and self-esteem is a strength, though the lack of progress in developing pupils' writing skills limits their capacity to communicate effectively. Special event weeks, for example in science, provide good opportunities to build links across subjects and to reinforce the teaching of key skills. The use of information communication technology and interactive whiteboards helps to motivate pupils and sustain their interest. However, opportunities are missed to reinforce and extend learning that takes place in lessons, for example by getting pupils to explain how they solved a particular problem. The monitoring of pupils' response to the curriculum by all leaders is developing, but there is insufficient focus of the impact on the standards pupils reach.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Care, guidance and support are inadequate because steps to safeguard pupils do not meet statutory requirements. However, pupils are supported well to help them engage with the curriculum and learning. The impact of the 'Place2Be' provision and the support from the learning mentor are particularly effective. Links with other agencies are strong in drawing on additional support, for example speech and language development. These links significantly improve the degree to which vulnerable pupils can access the curriculum. Procedures for ensuring regular attendance are rigorous and attendance continues to improve. Targets are provided in some subjects and these help to set out learning expectations and allow pupils to track their own progress. Though teachers' marking is improving, it lacks the detail and consistency to extend the pupils' learning and accelerate their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school's vision that 'all members of the school community will be equally valued and respected' is evident in the strength of its provision for pupils' personal development. Senior leaders have a satisfactory grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they consult the views of stakeholders to help shape the future of the school. Specific action to address weaknesses in teaching are beginning to bear fruit and the school's leadership recognises that further work needs to be done to increase the pace and challenge of lessons. The school's evaluation of its work is, at times, generous and though improvement planning is comprehensive, strategies to monitor the impact of the school's actions lack precision and clarity. Subject leaders are effective and are increasingly involved in monitoring how well pupils are progressing and in improving the quality of teaching in their subjects. Their annual curriculum reports to governors are detailed and comprehensive, but they lack precision and are not sufficiently focused on impact. The school actively promotes community cohesion, for example through multicultural weeks, and learners have regular opportunities to participate in the wider community. Pupils are active in working with a range of different groups and they are developing a good understanding of their place in the global community. Governance is inadequate because the school's procedures do not fully comply with statutory safeguarding requirements. The governing body has experienced significant changes in membership recently and new governors are still familiarising themselves with the school. Monitoring strategies at all levels of leadership are not always sufficiently focused on tracking the impact of the school's actions on outcomes for pupils.

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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?	4
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 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?	4

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

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

05 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, London, SE18 7QG

You will remember that I and another inspector visited St Patrick's for one day to see how well the school was working. We both would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome. We especially enjoyed talking with so many of you, looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and meeting the staff and some of your parents. You were extremely polite, confident and expressed your views very clearly.

St Patrick's provides you with a satisfactory education. These are some of the things that we particularly liked about your school.

- You get off to a good start when you join the school.
- You and your parents think highly of St Patrick's.
- Your behaviour is good and you show good attitudes to learning.
- Your attendance is consistently good.
- The support you receive to help some of you overcome any learning, social or emotional difficulties is good.
- Your school councillors are keen and enthusiastic. Their actions to improve the playground and to raise funds for charity are impressive.

To improve St Patrick's even more, we have decided that your school needs something called 'A Notice to Improve'. Although most things are satisfactory and some are good, the headteacher and governors must make sure that they obey all the government rules that apply to how well we look after children in schools. We think they can do this quickly and that they should soon have all the paperwork in order. This means that you and your parents should have nothing to worry about if the school takes swift action. In addition we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to:

- help you to improve your writing in all lessons, so that you become confident and independent writers
- increase the challenge in your lessons, so that you achieve as well as you can.

We hope that you will continue to play your part in helping to make St Patrick's an even better school.

Yours faithfully

Gordon Ewing

Lead Inspector