

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109250
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	324930
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Ken Bryan

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	203
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	Gregory Grant
Headteacher	Karen Evans
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Blackswarth Road Redfield Bristol BS5 8AS

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Inspection number	324930

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly below average-sized primary school where most pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average and this is increasing year on year. Similarly, the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is also increasing and is currently well above average. Forty-five pupils are at the early stages of English language acquisition. Children start school in Reception as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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 that has improved significantly since the last inspection. At the heart of this success lies the good leadership and management of the headteacher and her senior team. Around them, they have developed a dedicated and committed team that has enabled pupils to thrive. With the assistance of the very supportive governing body, the school's leadership team has set high expectations for the school and they have a clear idea of the school's strengths and areas for development. There is a good capacity to improve further and to ensure that improvements already evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are continued through the school.

Pupils now enter the school demonstrating skills that are well below age-related expectations. For many pupils, English is an additional language and a significant number are at the early stages of English acquisition. This profile is increasing year on year. This has presented the Early Years Foundation Stage with many challenges. Well targeted and timely interventions ensure that pupils make good progress. In addition, the good provision the children receive in Reception ensures that all pupils make a settled and happy start to their school education. Following two years of declining trends in Key Stage 1, the school is able to demonstrate better standards and achievement so that pupils are on course to enter Key Stage 2 broadly in line with national averages. Although the performance of some boys in writing remains an area for development by the time the pupils leave the school, standards are usually well above local and national averages. This represents good progress as a consequence of the good teaching and guidance pupils receive. Whilst many pupils achieve the highest levels, this proportion is declining and the school has correctly identified the need to stem this downward trend, especially in writing. Already, there are good signs of a reversal in this decline, especially in writing and in science.

Pupils achieve well due to the well planned and engaging curriculum they receive. Academic guidance, in the form of targets, is very effective. Through the meticulous marking of pupils' work, the teachers know the pupils very well and each child can clearly articulate what they have to do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those pupils for whom English is an additional language usually make good progress but for some this is slower in Key Stage 2 than at the start of the school. Pupils and adults have developed very positive relationships. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary and pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. Pupils feel healthy and safe and they are well supported by all adults in the school. This nurturing environment has enabled pupils to make good progress in personal as well as academic terms. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional.

The vast majority of the parents are supportive of the school. However, a few expressed some reservations about aspects of the school's work. These were not substantiated by inspection evidence, but in anonymous terms, concerns were shared with the school's leadership.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a very settled start to their school education in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class. The care and safety of the children is carefully managed and they feel secure and happy within this inclusive atmosphere. Children arrive in school with skills and experiences that are well below age-related expectations. This is a declining picture as many children now

start school with limited proficiency in English. The children progress well due to the good teaching and care they receive to achieve below average standards by the time they start Year 1. The staff give high priority to addressing the needs of the children, particularly in encouraging communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. Children enjoy the activities provided for them, especially the newly created outdoor area, which is a major development since the last inspection. The provision of a 'garden centre' stimulated much interest amongst the children. The area is well used in support of the six early years areas of learning. The teacher and her support staff track children's progress rigorously and make good use of this information to plan future work. Very good links have been established with parents, pre-school settings and Key Stage 1 staff to ensure smooth transition and effective communication. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The headteacher and her senior team have a clear understanding of the key priorities for the Reception class through careful monitoring and robust systems to track pupil progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing, especially for boys and higher attaining pupils, particularly with regard to creative writing and the extension of vocabulary.
- Ensure that the good progress made in Reception and Key Stage 1 by those pupils whose first language is not English, is sustained and enhanced throughout Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills that are well below age-related expectations, particularly in relation to communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. Some pupils enter Year 1 still below average despite making good progress. There has been a trend of declining standards in recent years partly due to changing demographics and few pupils achieving higher than average levels. Increasingly, the school's intake includes children who have recently arrived in the country. For these pupils, English is not their first language and many pupils are at the early stages of language acquisition. The school's English as an additional language programmes are effectively arresting and reversing this decline and school leaders are now able to demonstrate good progress towards its challenging targets. Pupils in Year 2, and particularly those pupils in receipt of extra support, are now on course to achieve standards in line with national averages, which demonstrates good progress. Despite some limitations which are the result of gaps in the learning of pupils new to speaking English, progress in Key Stage 2 is good, with standards achieved at the end of Year 6 usually being well above local authority and national averages. Despite the percentage of pupils achieving above average levels being consistently above national averages, the proportion of pupils achieving the highest standards has declined in recent years. However, the school is now able to demonstrate that the current Year 6 cohort is on course to reverse this trend.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils clearly enjoy their education and are very proud of their school. The pupils attend well and they have developed very positive relationships with adults and with one another. Throughout the school, the behaviour of the pupils is exemplary and they speak eloquently in support of St Patrick's. The pupils feel extremely safe and they have a clear understanding of

how to treat each other, including those from different backgrounds and cultures. Consequently, bullying and racist incidents are extremely rare. The school council is an effective group that supports the pupils and staff in numerous ways, such as the provision of play equipment for playtimes. The use of peer mediators and monitors positively contributes to the smooth running of the school. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of right and wrong, they demonstrate acute spiritual awareness and they have a good understanding of different cultures reflected in their diverse community. The school's well structured personal, social, health and citizenship programme ensures that pupils lead healthy and active lifestyles and the Healthy Schools Award has been achieved. Pupils are particularly well prepared for future study and for life in general.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching is good with some outstanding features such as the use of assessment for learning and aspects of provision for pupils for whom English is not the first language. The effective tracking of each pupil's progress and the marking of work clearly sets out the next stage of learning. Increased rigour, careful monitoring of classroom practice and the use of collaborative planning have resulted in greater consistency and improved outcomes, especially in Key Stage 1. The use of support staff significantly enhances the learning experiences of the pupils and positively promotes inclusion in this diverse community. The teachers have developed good relationships with the clear majority of parents to support learning. In addition, the consistent use of behaviour management strategies has resulted in the pupils' excellent behaviour. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities thrive as a result of well targeted and timely interventions. The school's leadership has correctly identified that improving pupils' writing across the school, and especially amongst boys and potentially higher attaining pupils, is a key priority.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school is justly proud of its broad, balanced and engaging curriculum. The school's wide-ranging programme of enrichment activities contributes to a high level of interest and high standards. One parent commented that, 'the curriculum is well planned' and that 'the teachers enable the children to smell the flowers along the way!' Enrichment activities include numerous visits, the use of visitors, clubs and sporting and church activities. These encourage the pupils to succeed and enjoy their time in and out of school. Many activities reflect the school's diverse setting which enhances each pupil's understanding of multicultural Britain. There is excellent provision for literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology, and links between subjects are effectively embedded to provide stimulating and challenging programs. The school's skills-based curriculum ensures there is excellent progression in the way skills are taught throughout the school and this is carefully monitored by Lead Learners.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's atmosphere is warm, nurturing and calm, which results in the development of positive relationships. Systems are in place to ensure the good physical care of the children. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and procedures are rigorously followed to ensure that the children are safe and cared for. Many parents agreed with this, one summing up the feelings of the majority by stating, 'the school feels like you are part of a community', and another adding that, 'the staff are friendly, approachable and caring'. Systems for the tracking of pupils' progress are particularly strong and the excellent marking of work enables pupils to understand the next steps in their learning and make good progress. The teachers know the children very well and the pupils are well aware of their targets and the next stages in their learning. The support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to those pupils for whom English is an additional language is particularly effective, enabling them to make good progress. The fact that enhancing and sustaining progress rates at Key Stage 2 is an area for development highlighted in this report is the result of new initiatives not yet having had time to have full effect.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and her senior team have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This effective leadership team has significantly contributed to the school's improvement since the last inspection. Senior leaders and subject managers carefully monitor the quality of teaching and the curriculum, and the provision of interventions, for example to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those pupils for whom English is an additional language, is both timely and effective. All pupils are fully included in all activities. The school very effectively gathers and analyses pupils' progress data. The headteacher is well supported by the governors who have a clearly defined monitoring role in relation to the curriculum and achievement and standards, which results in increased accountability. The school's work to encourage community cohesion is effective. Significantly, one parent commented that, 'as a non-Catholic family we feel included'. The school actively promotes good partnerships with support organisations and with parents. Although a few parents disagree with this, the very large majority are happy with the school's measures to promote high standards. One parent stated that, 'St Patrick's School is an example of how schools should be managed.' The headteacher and her leadership team have recognised the need to revisit policy and self-evaluation documentation to ensure clarity and rigour.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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?	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
The extent to which 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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

6 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Bristol, BS5 8AS

Thank you for such a warm welcome to your school and for helping us during the inspection. It is a good school that has improved a great deal since the last inspection. You are obviously very proud of your school and you are happy and very well supported by all of your teachers and other adults. We liked the excellent way you behaved and the way that you help one another.

Here are some of the highlights we found:

- The teachers provide interesting lessons and, as a result, you enjoy learning and make good progress as you move through the school.
- Your behaviour and attitudes in class are excellent, which helps you to learn. Your attendance is good.
- You are very caring to one another and you are well supported by the adults.
- You clearly enjoy the wide range of clubs, school visits and other activities provided by the school.
- You clearly know how to eat healthily and lead healthy lifestyles.

The school runs very smoothly. The headteacher, her staff and the governors make a very good team. They have a clear idea about how well the school is doing and what needs to be improved. We have asked them to work on two things to make the school better:

- Help you to be better writers, especially boys and those of you who are capable of reaching the highest standards.
- Make sure that the good start made by pupils who find speaking English a challenge continues throughout the school.

You can help to make these things happen by continuing to care and by working hard.

Yours faithfully

Ken Bryan

Lead Inspector