

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School, Thornaby

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111695
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	325434
Inspection date	17 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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)	358
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	Mr Gary Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Swinhoe
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Thornaby Westbury Street Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6NE

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	17 March 2009
Inspection number	325434

Telephone number
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01642 676724
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects:

- pupils' standards and progress across the school, with a particular focus on pupils currently in Years 2 and 6
- the extent of pupils' spiritual and moral development in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the use of marking and assessment information to promote learning.

The inspectors collected evidence from: lesson observations; scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment information and other documents; interviews and discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and a governor.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found much evidence to confirm that the school's own evaluations are justified, and these have been included in the report.

Description of the school

This larger than average size primary school serves mainly Catholic families in Thornaby on Tees, which is an area where there is significant social and economic disadvantage. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average and a small number have a statement of special educational need. Most pupils have a White British heritage; a few are from Traveller families. A small number of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in a Nursery and Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Patrick's Primary School ensures its pupils achieve outstandingly well. Excellent progress and very high levels of personal development and well-being lie at the heart of the exceptionally inclusive education the school provides. The headteacher and her new senior team provide outstanding leadership and management. They very effectively ensure that the whole staff successfully uphold the school's Christian values. They successfully realise their philosophy that every child matters and that pupils should achieve as well as possible. The school works tirelessly to provide very high levels of pastoral care and to give pupils a very rich experience. Extensive partnerships with parents, the church, local services, heritage and outdoor centres and with schools abroad make a huge contribution to community life. A great majority of parents hold the school in the highest regard. One parent's comments reflect their confidence in it; 'St Patrick's is a wonderful school. Staff are very kind and caring, both for pupils and families. They work hard to make sure pupils are given every opportunity to attain levels they are able to achieve'.

An exciting curriculum contributes substantially to the pupils' excellent levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies and dedicated weeks, such as in the arts, science and enterprise, and residential visits to outdoor centres and venues in Europe play a key part in enhancing learning and developing a sense of awe and wonder. This high quality provision is one reason why attendance is above average. The last inspection noted that, 'Wonderful things happen in St Patrick's', and this remains the case now. Excellent teaching inspires pupils to outstanding achievement. Teachers provide well-suited activities which strongly motivate pupils to be industrious and present their work very well. The 'Rainbow Groups' initiative is exemplary in the way it ensures inclusive education. Intensive, closely targeted sessions for pupils in small groups complements the very effective partnership between teachers and assistants in classes. This initiative very successfully promotes excellent progress by all pupils, including the gifted and talented, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not fully exploit marking as a means for giving pupils clear pointers towards how to improve their work.

From very low starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage children enter Year 1 having made excellent progress in all areas of learning. This rapid progress continues in Key Stage 1. Results in all subjects in the Key Stage 2 national assessments have been significantly above average every year up to 2007 which is an impressive record. Many pupils in Year 6 in 2008 had learning difficulties and/or disabilities but they made exceptionally good progress to exceed their targets, especially in English. Pupils presently in Years 2 and 6 are making excellent progress. Boys and girls do equally well as a result of a consistently well implemented initiative to improve writing. Given their well below average starting points pupils' achievement is excellent and many leave school with above average standards.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils know the importance of diet, personal hygiene and physical activity. Many enjoy taking part in sports and other physical activities. The school deservedly holds both the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. Pupils are considerate and polite in and out of lessons and closely follow well organised routines. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and work hard. They develop very positive attitudes and show confidence, maturity and respect for others. The school works hard to promote good attendance and except for a few families, pupils attend well. Pupils behave impeccably. They

take justifiable pride in their contribution to school life as members of the 'Children's Forum' which supports other pupils, minimises bullying, and enhances their local environment. Pupils willingly support charitable work to help worthy causes both locally and farther away. The 'One World' initiative and studies of their own community, other countries and of other faiths reflects their good awareness of life locally and of global perspectives. Together these aspects represent an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. Pupils' advanced social development, experience of enterprise, strong basic skills and links with local secondary schools prepare them really well for their future.

Governors have a clear view of the school's work from their first-hand involvement in review and evaluation. Senior leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and a well thought through strategy for improving facilities and raising standards further. Taking pupils excellent achievement and outstanding personal development into account, they obtain the best of value from resources. Governors ensure the school meets all responsibilities and current government requirements to safeguard the welfare of pupils and successfully promote community cohesion and prevent discrimination. The school has continued to develop since the last inspection which reported outstanding provision in all areas. Together with an excellent track record of sustained high standards and achievement, the senior leaders and governors have the expertise and determination to give the school an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children begin their Nursery education with abilities and skills that are well below typical expectations for their age, particularly in their use of language and social skills. The children's spiritual and moral development is rapid. Children soon form excellent relationships with each other and very positive attitudes to learning. They socialise, share equipment and play with each other very productively. Staff are very successful in improving children's speech and language and their social and emotional development as these are very weak aspects. Activities to help children's grasp of letters and sounds are proving to be very successful. Children thoroughly enjoy making very effective use of both indoor and outdoor facilities to explore and investigate which stimulates their interest and imagination. Reception children's participation in assemblies contributes well to their spiritual and moral development. Teachers draw on information from their comprehensive records of children's accomplishments to provide carefully planned activities that foster play and social interaction. The standards when children move onto Year 1 vary according to the nature of each cohort. Even when standards are below average on leaving Reception, the children have made excellent progress. In 2008 almost all children reached the early learning goals. A great majority exceeded them, with many doing exceptionally well in language and mathematical development. Many made particularly good progress in their personal and social development. Excellent leadership and management has overcome the effects of changes in staff and ensured children benefit from skilful teaching and a rich range of opportunities. Children's welfare is excellently promoted. Adults know children well, and ensure they are safe and well cared for. The school places a much emphasis on fostering strong links with parents and local services to promote children's welfare. Parents are delighted about how well their children have settled, enjoy school, and make such rapid progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers' make more use of precise targets and give pupils clear feedback and pointers to improvement.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

18 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 6NE

Mrs Buller and I really enjoyed our recent visit to inspect your school. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms and assembly to see you at work. You were very polite and helpful and we did enjoy talking with those of you whom we met. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy taking part in lessons and activities, how you value the help you get and the friendships you make. You are very well behaved and polite to others in lessons and outside. We were pleased to see how you contribute to life in school such as through your Children's Forum and how you help others who are less fortunate than you. I know the headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you.

Your school is outstanding. All the adults in the school look after you very well and that is why you feel safe and happy. Many of you are making outstanding progress to reach high standards. When I spoke with some of you, you clearly value the help your teachers give you. I was especially pleased that those of you in need of extra help do really well.

We were delighted to see how you take care to make your work neat. When your teachers mark your books they always tell you how pleased they are with the work you are doing. On occasions they suggest ways to help you improve. Whenever they mark your books we have asked all your teachers to help you be clear about what they expect you to do to improve your work

You have a huge number of excellent opportunities at St Patrick's to learn about life and these should stand you in very good stead for the future. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector