

# St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Consett

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114250
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	338323
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 November –1 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lesley Clark

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	402
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Clive Robson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pat Henson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Stanley Street Consett County Durham DH8 6LN
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and held meetings with the governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding policies, special educational needs and/or disabilities and inclusion documentation, the school improvement plan and questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and parents and carers.

- how well different groups of pupils make progress, especially in Key Stage 1, and the reasons why progress appears to accelerate at the end of Key Stage 2
- the effectiveness of the school's assessment procedures, including teachers' marking and pupils' involvement in assessing their own learning
- whether the care, support and guidance given to pupils and its effect on their well-being are major strengths, as the school believes
- the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to lead their own learning and how well staff use assessment of what children know and understand to guide them when providing learning activities.

## Information about the school

This school is much larger than average. It serves the widespread parish of St Patrick and also takes pupils from elsewhere. Ninety-five per cent of pupils are White British. Five per cent come from Other White or Mixed White backgrounds. Three per cent are Polish and are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language when they start school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average as is the number with a statement of special educational need. The Nursery takes children part-time from the age of three. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and two Reception classes which operate as an early years' unit. The school holds the International Schools, Healthy Schools and Active Mark Gold awards. It also holds an Anti-Bullying Accreditation and has won Durham County sports awards over the past three years.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?****3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

## Main findings

This school takes good care of its pupils and provides a welcoming learning environment. It gives good support and guidance to all and so pupils feel safe, happy and secure. Pupils say the best things about school are 'the teachers' and 'the people in it.' They get on well with each other and feel confident that if they have any worries adults will help them to sort them out. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, especially their spiritual development where pupils show considerable maturity and sensitivity, as exemplified in the prayers they write.

The school makes good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn from an extensive range of highly imaginative and challenging activities which takes their interests fully into account. As a result, they make good progress in their learning and development. Progress slows in Key Stage 1. This is because pupils are taught too formally too soon for their stage of development. They have relatively few opportunities to learn actively and through discovery. The quality of teaching, though satisfactory overall, varies considerably from class to class across the school. Pupils make the best progress in Years 2 and 6 because teachers match work well to pupils' needs and abilities. In these classes, pupils work hard and catch up. In other classes pupils' learning fluctuates. Leaders and managers do not monitor the quality of teaching sufficiently to ensure that all teaching is equally effective.

Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average. They are average in Year 6 and improving steadily, with standards in English above average in the 2009 national tests. This is because the school's strategy to improve writing is effective. It is too soon to see the full impact of initiatives to raise standards to a similarly good level in mathematics, but results in the 2009 national tests continue the upward trend. The school meets its challenging, but realistic targets. Self-evaluation is becoming accurate and the school knows what it needs to do next. The school has coped well with staffing changes and budgetary constraints since the last inspection. The satisfactory governing body is warmly supportive. These factors demonstrate the school has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in Key Stage 1 by:
- - extending the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum into Key Stage 1 and thus giving pupils a wider range and variety of learning experiences with more opportunities for active learning.
- Improve the consistency of teaching quality across the school by:

- - establishing effective monitoring systems so as to carry out more regular and rigorous checks on teaching effectiveness
- - increasing challenge and pace in some lessons
- - improving assessment so that teachers match work closely to pupils' needs
- - involving pupils in setting targets and assessing their learning so that they have greater awareness of how to improve their work.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspections.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Pupils behave well and are very biddable because they like and respect their teachers. Learning is satisfactory overall. Year 6 pupils make good progress in a short space of time. They are very keen to do well and so they really strive to improve their work and to catch up on what they have missed. The pace of learning varies in other classes in Key Stage 2. Pupils learn best in the lessons which challenge and interest them. In less effective lessons, pupils' concentration slackens because the work is too easy or teachers talk for too long. More-able pupils tend to tread water in these lessons as they can do the work with minimal effort. Standards in Key Stage 1 are below average, indicating satisfactory progress from pupils' below average starting points in Year 1. Pupils' progress slows when they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage because teachers expect them to learn from listening rather than developing and practising new skills through practical activities. Pupils' progress picks up in Year 2 because teachers match work carefully to pupils' different needs and abilities, though some pupils struggle to work independently. For example, average attaining pupils found it hard to solve money problems without resources to help them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are new to learning English make satisfactory progress. Those who are eligible for help from external agencies make the best progress because they are given good quality support well matched to their needs.

Pupils confidently say that bullying is rare and that if there is any it gets sorted out quickly. Less confident pupils in particular find the 'worry' and 'sorry' boxes very helpful. Pupils have a strong awareness of right and wrong and readily share and take turns. They speak proudly of their role as 'Pals' and say this system of helping each other works well. Older pupils are trained in first aid and this contributes to pupils' good awareness of safety matters. The school council is active and successfully secured improvements to the toilets, for example, as well as organising charity fund-raising. Pupils help and respect each other and make firm friends. Older pupils help younger pupils with reading or accompanying them to church. Pupils run a healthy school tuck shop and are keen on recycling. They are well aware that it is important to lead healthy lives and lots of pupils take up the many extra-curricular sporting opportunities the school offers. Attendance is a little below average because so many families take holidays during term time despite the school's best efforts to limit this.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching quality varies from good to inadequate. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that pupils build on what they know and understand. Work is well matched to different ability groups with lots of challenges for those who are more-able. Lessons move at a good pace and teachers make sure that pupils fully understand new teaching points. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and to say when they do not understand and teachers ask questions that move pupils' learning on. In the least effective lessons, the work is not well planned and the pace is slow. The level of tasks set is pitched too low and does not take into account pupils' different needs and abilities. In satisfactory lessons, strengths in clear lesson objectives and organisation are counterbalanced by pupils listening for too long on the carpet. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is similarly variable. The best marking gives praise and clear points for improvement, whereas the less effective marking does not show pupils exactly how to improve their work. It is a similar picture with target setting. Some pupils are aware of their targets and others are not. This is because pupils are not sufficiently involved in setting their targets or in assessing their own learning and so they are not fully involved in improving their work.

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

The school has an extensive range of partnerships which enrich the curriculum. These are supplemented by clubs in school. Sport in particular is a strength, as is the provision for modern foreign languages and linking spirituality to art. The provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory but more variable for information and communications technology (ICT). The school has made a start on linking subjects together so as to enliven and enrich pupils' learning. A wide range of educational visits are used well to extend pupils' knowledge of history and geography. The curriculum in Key Stage 1 does not take into sufficient account the needs and readiness to learn of the youngest pupils, despite a six-week transition period.

Pastoral care and support and guidance are significant strengths of the school. These aspects are given a high priority and pupils know that help, support and guidance are always available. The school makes good use of its links with external services to support its good care for vulnerable pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given good support and guidance, as are those who are new learners of English. Transition arrangements to the local secondary school are well established and help pupils feel confident about the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

Many initiatives taken by the leaders and managers to improve the school are in the early stages and have not had time to have full impact on achievement. The signs are hopeful, with standards rising over the past two years especially in writing, where 'the Big Write' initiative has had a marked impact, and in mathematics this year. Extensive building works, staffing difficulties and budget constraints have conspired to take the senior management team away from monitoring sufficiently closely the quality of teaching across the school. Performance management is used effectively to hold staff accountable for the standards their pupils reach. However, additional checks on the quality of teaching have not been sufficiently rigorous or regular enough to give useful points for improvement to ensure consistently good teaching and that teachers follow the school's marking policy. Governors are keen supporters of the school and take their duties seriously, but are not rigorous enough in ensuring safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly updated. Safeguarding is satisfactory and all staff have been suitably trained and vetted. The school has good links with the local community and extensive links across the Catholic community. It has good and developing links with

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

communities overseas, but has yet to promote community cohesion beyond the school in this country and to evaluate the impact of initiatives. The school is a cohesive and inclusive community with no racial or gender discrimination.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children get off to a good start. They learn rapidly because activities are enthralling. They cannot wait to start playing because there is so much to do. Outside, children discovered what happened to the water when they added the brightly coloured frozen hands they had made. Others draped covers over the climbing frame, inspired by the snow to make an igloo. From making magic potions by adding glitter to water, to role play in the huge cardboard castle indoors, to planting and labelling bulbs, children's learning comes on apace as they 'write', reason and solve problems without realising the new skills they are acquiring. From well below expected starting points, especially in communication, language, literacy and personal development children make good progress to reach below expected levels at the start of Year 1. A sizeable minority reach expected levels in most areas of their learning. This is because they are well taught and the setting is well managed. Planning is a major strength, with recent developments ensuring that children's interests are taken fully into account. Assessment is very good indeed because staff use observations of what children know and can do to help them plan the next steps in their learning. As a result, children have a large say in what goes on and their progress accelerates. All welfare requirements are fully met

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## **Views of parents and carers**

Almost all parents and carers have very positive views and fully appreciate what the school does for their children. A very small number expressed individual concerns which the school has in hand. This report agrees with many of the positive views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Consett to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 402 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	66	31	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	71	26	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	52	39	43	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	57	36	40	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	57	36	40	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	50	43	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	53	39	43	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	49	54	36	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	50	40	44	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	47	42	47	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	43	45	50	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	54	37	41	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	58	36	40	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



01 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Consett, DH8 6LN

Thank you very much for your warm and friendly welcome when my colleagues and I visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting so many of you. I should like to say a special thank you to the Year 6 pupils who shared their work with me and to the members of the school council who spoke with my colleague. Your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means it does some things well and there are some things it needs to improve. This is what it does well:

- your school takes good care of all of you and so you feel happy, safe and secure
- you behave well, get on well with your teachers and are good friends with each other
- you do lots of sports and have interesting educational visits which make learning fun
- Year 6 pupils and children in Nursery and Reception make the best progress because they are well taught.

This is what I have asked your school to do next:

- to help children in Years 1 and 2 learn in the same way as children in Nursery and Reception so that they make faster progress. At the moment, some of them are struggling because the work is not at the right level for them and they do not have enough times to learn through finding out for themselves
- secondly, I have asked your headteacher to keep a very careful check on lessons to make sure that every teacher sets work that is at the right level for everyone in the class. Some of you know your targets and others are not so sure. So I have asked teachers to involve you in setting targets and in checking your learning so you know what to do to improve your work.

You can help by making sure you attend regularly, asking lots of questions and saying when the work is too easy or too hard for you. I hope you have fun and enjoy setting your own targets and seeing how quickly you can reach them!

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lesley Clark

30 November –1 December 2009

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Lead Inspector

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