

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119583
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339474
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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 of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Alderson
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Hind
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2006
School address	Littledale Avenue Heysham Morecambe LA3 2ER
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 16 lessons or parts of lessons. Inspectors observed eight teachers and held discussions with governors, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, records of meetings, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 80 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether pupils in Years 3 to 6 make sufficient progress
- the effect of high mobility on pupils' attainment
- how successfully the school is working to improve attendance
- the impact of strategies introduced to promote improvement.

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average size school has gained a number of awards, including the Artsmark and Healthy School status. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of educational needs, is above average. There is a high level of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than the usual. The percentage of pupils from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community is well above average. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education, firmly based on Christian principles. The school is improving strongly. The headteacher has been the driving force behind the good improvement made since the last inspection. She has overseen a range of initiatives that have been introduced to improve progress and raise standards. These include working closely with local authority consultants to improve the quality of teaching and learning and strengthening efforts to improve attendance. Consequently, attainment is improving strongly and learning and progress are improving securely and quickly. Attendance, though low, particularly amongst pupils from the Traveller community, is improving rapidly. Self-evaluation is accurate and enables leaders to have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs improving. For example, leaders, rightly, acknowledge that better guidance could be given to parents and carers to help them support their children's learning. Target setting related to pupils' progress and attainment is realistic and challenging and is based on good quality data. As a result, leaders have been successful in making and sustaining improvements and the capacity for further improvement is good.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve well from their skill-levels on entry, which are generally below those expected for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Years 1 to 6 and increasing numbers are making good progress. Though attainment is low in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, it is much improved since the last inspection and drawing nearer to the national average. High numbers of pupils joining or leaving the school have a dampening effect on standards, particularly when pupils join classes having had little or no previous schooling. Pupils' limited vocabulary inhibits their writing and there is insufficient opportunity for them to consolidate and refine their skills by writing in a variety of styles across the curriculum. A weaker aspect of pupils' performance in mathematics is their ability to solve real-life number problems.

Improvements to teaching mean that staff have higher expectation of what pupils can achieve and planned activities are successful in engaging the pupils in learning. Nonetheless, not all teachers match work to meet the needs of pupils of different ability consistently. The involvement of pupils in evaluating what they need to do to improve is limited. Pupils have a positive attitude to learning, showing interest and enjoyment in their activities. Curricular planning does not indicate sufficiently how links between subjects can be made to provide further interest and increase opportunities to apply skills.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - extending pupils' vocabulary to enliven their writing and providing further opportunities to write purposefully in different styles across the curriculum
 - improving pupils' ability in applying their mathematical calculation skills to solve real-life number problems.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by:
 - ensuring that teachers are more consistent in matching work in lessons to the needs of pupils
 - involving pupils fully in assessing for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve
 - developing stronger links between subjects.
- Strengthen the school's engagement with parents and carers in order to better help them support their children's learning.
- 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 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils show interest in their work and are keen to learn. They work well together in pairs and small groups and particularly enjoy practical activities. This was evident in a science lesson for pupils in Year 2 when they were investigating the function of a snail's shell. Improvements to the quality of guided reading sessions have led to pupils now having secure reading skills and enjoying books. Pupils, generally, have a limited vocabulary that restricts their ability to write creatively in a variety of styles, including poetry, instructional and narrative writing. A whole-school approach to improving pupils' mathematical calculation skills has proved successful and these are now satisfactory. Pupils are not adept at using these skills to solve real-life number problems. There is no significant difference between the achievement nor the quality of learning of different groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English make similar progress to other pupils because of the well targeted extra support they receive. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is below average, but shows improvement on that of pupils in previous years.

Pupils are polite and appreciate the ideas and views of others. Most pupils behave well. If there is a problem, pupils say that, when this happens, staff deal with the situation promptly. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council, and carry out their responsibilities diligently. Pupils have a good awareness of the traditions and beliefs and cultures different to their own. Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles and talk knowingly about the need to take regular exercise and to eat a balanced diet. They have a good understanding of what might be an unsafe situation and say they feel safe and secure in school. Pupils' learning of basic skills is improving quickly and their attendance is also improving rapidly, showing they are satisfactorily

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prepared for the next stage of education and their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are able to explain new ideas clearly and confidently. They manage lessons well so that pupils are usually engaged in their work and little time is lost. Not all teachers set challenging work consistently that matches the abilities of different groups of pupils. Pupils are informed about their progress and how to improve through marking and by talking to adults. They are not fully involved in assessing their own progress and how they might improve. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support all pupils, in particular, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English. Of particular note is the way in which staff work diligently to ensure that the high numbers of pupils who join classes during the year, many of whom have limited previous schooling, are supported well to ensure that their progress is the same as other pupils.

The curriculum has been improved since the last inspection so that it is more relevant and interesting to pupils. Extra-curricular activities, which are well attended and include

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

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sports, Irish dancing and music clubs, enrich the curriculum. Visits to places of educational interest, including Morecambe Bay for an ecological study, and opportunities to work with a variety of visitors extend pupils' skills and widen their horizons. Planning does not sufficiently emphasise how skills developed in one subject can be used to support learning in others. There are limited opportunities for pupils to practice and extend their literacy skills by writing purposefully in different styles across the curriculum. Good links with a local College develop pupils' French language skills effectively. The school's commitment to providing a variety of good quality experiences in the arts is reflected in it gaining the Artsmark.

The school provides a safe learning environment. Staff know the steps to take if they have any concerns about the well-being of a pupil. The support for pupils needing additional help is well targeted and effectively supports their development and learning. A good example of this is the 'Stars' nurture group, which successfully promotes pupils' well-being and self-esteem. Transition arrangements are good throughout the school, which is important, taking into account the high mobility of some pupils. Concerted action taken by leaders over the last year has led to a rapid improvement in pupils' punctuality and attendance, particularly from the Traveller community. This has had a positive impact on their progress and attainment. Established links with outside agencies ensure extra support for individual pupils is readily available.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders establish ambition and drive improvement well by focusing the school on priorities. They motivate staff by communicating high expectations about securing improvement. As a result, pupils' learning and progress are improving strongly. Governors are fully involved in evaluating the school's performance and influencing its development. They ensure that safeguarding requirements are met and staff and pupils are safe whilst in school. The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination well. Leaders have detailed information about different groups of pupils and regularly check on their performance and their contribution to school life. There are some general strategies to help parents and carers support their children's learning but these are not specific enough to have a significant impact on pupils' learning. Leaders promote community cohesion well in school and this leads to it being a harmonious community, with pupils from different backgrounds getting on well together. There is

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good engagement with a range of community groups beyond the school and its immediate community. The school works effectively with a variety of agencies to support specific groups, for example, the Traveller education service.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Improvements made since the last inspection mean that children now make good progress and achieve well. Teaching is more focussed on developing learning, with adults working well as a team to meet children's individual needs. They provide activities that are interesting and practical and often based on children's own experiences. Consequently, children are fully engaged in their work and well motivated. They are encouraged to make choices for themselves and this contributes to their development as independent learners. Children behave well and work and play happily together. They enjoy their role play activities especially, as was evident when they were lost in a world of their own in the Pirate Ship. Relationships between adults and children are good, which has a positive impact on the progress children make. The curriculum is enhanced by an interesting range of enrichment activities, such as seasonal walks around the school environment and a visit to a local farm. Effective leadership has improved the way in which assessments are made of how well children are doing so that they provide an accurate record of progress and achievement. Children are cared for well in this calm and happy setting and support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Children have access to the outdoor area throughout the day but the activities provided do not always link sufficiently to learning that has taken place

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indoors. Relationships with parents and carers are good and they are kept fully informed of their children's progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Just over 44% of parents and carers completed questionnaires. The very large majority of these were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical of many, 'I think St Patrick's is a lovely school. My children are well taught and looked after' and 'My children have been made very welcome and they are so happy.' A very small minority did not agree that their children were making enough progress. Inspection evidence shows that pupils make satisfactory progress and increasing numbers are making good progress. A few did not agree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. There was no such behaviour during the inspection and pupils say it is dealt with promptly if it occurs. A few parents and carers did not agree that the school helped them to support their children's learning. Inspectors judge that the school could strengthen this aspect of its provision.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Patrick's Catholic Primary School 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 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 180 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	54	35	44	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	39	49	36	45	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	43	39	49	2	3	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	45	33	41	9	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	44	39	49	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	39	42	53	6	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	40	41	51	5	6	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)	27	34	47	59	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	43	38	48	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	38	41	51	4	5	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	39	43	54	3	4	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	35	44	38	48	5	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	45	37	46	4	5	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



7 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Heysham, LA3 2ER

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that:

- children get off to a good start in the Reception class
- the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do better
- you behave well and enjoy working together
- adults look after you well and make sure you are safe
- many of you take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities
- in your questionnaires, you say you enjoy school and learn a lot in lessons.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- raise your standards in writing and mathematics by giving you more opportunities to write in other subjects, in addition to English, and also improve your ability to solve mathematical problems
- make sure that teachers always give you work that makes you think hard and involve you fully in deciding your next steps in learning and also develop stronger links between subjects
- give your parents and carers more guidance on how to support your learning when you are away from school.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities and by coming to school regularly and on time.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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