

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132835
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	341355
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs R Edge
Headteacher	Mrs E Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 12 lessons and observed the work of 10 teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and had a telephone conversation with a School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including monitoring and assessment records, minutes of the governing body's meetings, the school's improvement planning and curricular and lesson plans. A limited number of pupils' books were available to be seen because most had been taken home at the end of the summer term. Eighty three completed questionnaire returns from parents and carers were analysed.

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

- It looked at how well pupils are progressing currently and the level of their literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- It judged the degree to which assessment is used to set suitably challenging learning activities in lessons for all groups of pupils.
- It reviewed how much pupils understand about how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve.
- It looked at how much impact extra-curricular provision has on pupils' enjoyment of school and on their personal development.
- It considered how able leaders and managers are to sustain and build upon recent improvements in the school's performance.

Information about the school

The school is average in size for a primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The school has a number of awards, including the Activemark and Artsmark Gold, and is a National Support School.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is a good school. Overall, standards are average and the levels at which pupils achieve is good. The quality of learning and progress seen in lessons was good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make exceptional progress and often exceed their performance targets.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a risk to their safety and that of others, including that associated with technology. They say they feel secure in school and that rare instances of unkindness or harassment are dealt with promptly and effectively. Their understanding of health issues is likewise exceedingly well developed. They are knowledgeable about the factors which promote physical, mental and emotional well-being. They eat healthily in school and take plenty of exercise. Behaviour is good. The older pupils play their part in helping to care for the younger ones and with general routines. All are actively involved in the life of the local community through links with the church and through charitable work. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good overall. They understand that they live in a multicultural and socially diverse society but opportunities for them to experience those differences first hand are limited.

Teaching is good and some is outstanding. In the lessons seen, the guidance pupils received on how to improve their work was excellent. The limited amount of marking seen was outstanding, as was the monitoring of learning in the classes visited and the advice and encouragement given when difficulties arose. There are occasions when teachers provide insufficiently challenging problem-solving activities for the highest attaining pupils in mathematics. Some opportunities are missed to promote high-quality class discussion that would challenge the more-able pupils. The school has plans in place to address these issues. Recently formulated curriculum plans are outstanding. They are already having an impact on pupils' ability to apply their basic skills flexibly across subjects. The school is aware that the environment and the local community are insufficiently exploited as a learning resource to promote independent learning and foster initiative.

Ambition and drive have brought major improvements in the quality of pupils' education over the last two years. Teaching has become more challenging and standards have risen significantly. The school has an excellent capacity to sustain the impetus because of outstanding aspects in leadership and management. Attainment targets are realistic but challenging, progress towards them is rigorously monitored and timely support is highly effective. Improvement plans map out clearly the way forward.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of the most able pupils in mathematics by providing more challenging problem-solving activities and improving the quality of class discussion.
- Give more substance to pupils' understanding of diversity by extending the opportunities for first-hand experiences of the similarities and differences of their own and others' cultures.
- Develop pupils' leadership potential by extending opportunities for them to learn and take on responsibilities in the local and wider communities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their work and participate enthusiastically in a wide range of activities outside the classroom which contribute well to their personal development. Key Stage 2 attainment in English and mathematics this year was above the level expected nationally, representing an improving trend over the last two years. When compared with pupils' below average skills on entry to the school, this represents good progress. It was at the higher Level 5 in mathematics that pupils did less well. The pace of learning seen in the lessons observed shows that pupils continue to make good progress. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities progress rapidly and make outstanding gains academically and in their personal development. Pupils have good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and they apply these well across subjects. Their speaking and listening skills are highly developed, evident from the interchange of ideas when they work with learning partners or in small groups, and from the clarity and depth of their answers when questioned about what they know. The same high level of oral competence was not evident in the very limited amount of class discussion seen. Pupils' spiritual and moral awareness is excellent and their social and cultural development good. Attendance is average and punctuality to school and lessons is good. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and are keen to learn. They work well collaboratively and independently. They have an excellent understanding of the level at which they are working and how to improve. Their preparation for the next stage in their education is good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has improved significantly over the last two years, particularly in the use of accurate assessments to set suitably challenging, pacy and varied learning activities for all groups. Working relationships are mutually respectful, created by teachers' and teaching assistants' encouraging and supportive approach. More demanding work is being given to stretch the higher attaining pupils in mathematics, but it is too soon to assess the impact of these measures. Early identification of need, a range of prompt and highly-effective support mechanisms and rigorous monitoring of progress account for the excellent gains in learning made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The curriculum provides a good balance between provision for developing pupils' skills and their understanding of the world around them. Coordinated planning across subjects gives coherence to pupils' learning and accounts in large measure for the continuing improvement in attainment. The personal, social and health education programme promotes pupils' health, well-being and safety exceptionally well. Pupils feel understood and respected because of the excellent care and support they receive. Teaching assistants are highly skilled in working with pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable in any way, guiding them to achieve beyond expectations and building their confidence and self-esteem.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2

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	
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The rise in attainment, the increasing rate of progress and pupils' good, and in certain aspects outstanding, personal development all reflect the drive and ambition of the staff. The inspiration for this stems from the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, particularly of teaching and learning. The guidance and training provided to staff underpins the improvements and its impact is ongoing, evident from the pace and rigour of learning in the lessons seen. Christian values and a commitment to equality of opportunity for every boy and girl are at the heart of the school's work and are particularly apparent in the outstanding leadership of the school's inclusion manager. Governors are equally ambitious for the school's success, closely monitoring performance and supporting and challenging the school to improve further. Self-evaluation is accurate. Excellent forward planning is grounded in a good understanding of the religious, ethnic and social characteristics of the community the school serves. As a result, this harmonious school's work has a positive impact on the cohesiveness of the local community. This is seen in the excellent partnerships formed with parents and carers to help them to support their children's education and with other schools and agencies to broaden provision and provide specialist support. Safeguarding procedures are effective and safe working is evident in the school's day-to-day routines. Rigorous risk assessments are carried out for practical activities and trips away, and health and safety audits are undertaken on a regular basis. The school gives good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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

<p>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</p>	
<p>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</p>	<p>2</p>

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start in the Reception class their skills vary but overall they are below that expected for children of their age. Good induction procedures and close links with parents and carers mean that children settle quickly and are soon happy and secure. They make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 their attainment is average. They achieve particularly well in their physical development and in the development of their dispositions and attitudes. They have learnt to play and learn on their own and collaboratively and to understand that others have feelings and ideas as well as themselves. They talk confidently and enthusiastically with each other and adults about what they are doing. Teachers and teaching assistants provide a wide range of stimulating activities, appropriately balanced between adult-directed play and learning and that which allows children to make their own choices. There is good use of ICT for learning, seen in a literacy lesson where the interactive whiteboard was used to show why spaces are needed between words. Children laughed with pleasure at manipulating the technology to create the finger spacing. The provision for indoor and outdoor activities is good, allowing children to move freely between the two. Good leadership and management ensure that children are well cared for, that their safety is paramount and that they start Year 1 confident and highly motivated.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

A small minority of families returned completed questionnaires. Almost all were fully supportive of the school. The very few concerns recorded related to individual problems and no pattern of dissatisfaction was apparent. The inspection endorsed the overwhelming view that the school is providing exceptionally well for its pupils.

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 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	71	24	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	70	25	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	58	29	35	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	63	25	30	4	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	55	66	27	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	55	33	40	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	55	37	45	0	0	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)	41	49	35	42	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	61	30	36	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	46	41	49	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	52	38	46	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	59	71	23	28	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	71	20	24	3	4	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



20 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Cleator Moor, CA25 5DG

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when we inspected your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you and only wish we had had more time to see all the interesting things you are doing.

Yours is a good school. It has many outstanding features. Your understanding of health and safety issues and what you need to do to stay fit and well is excellent for your age. Those pupils who find difficulty with some parts of learning receive exceptional support and guidance and make rapid progress. The leaders and managers of your school are doing a first rate job in raising standards and making sure that improvements will continue. They already have plans in place to tackle the issues we have asked them to address.

We have asked that more is done to give you experience of working in the local and wider communities. Those pupils who find learning easier than most have made significant improvements in their writing and we have asked that they reach the same impressive standards in mathematics. Lastly, we have suggested that more is done to give you first-hand experiences of the differences and similarities of life in multicultural Britain.

Many of you made a valuable contribution to the inspection by telling us the many good things about your school and suggesting how things could be even better. It is clear that you have the personal qualities to be successful in your future lives. You work hard, are sensitive to the needs of others and support one another.

Our best wishes to you for the year ahead and we hope that you have an interesting and enjoyable three terms.

Yours sincerely

Mr Brian Dower

Lead Inspector

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