

St Patrick's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105535
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	343612
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Mike Hoban HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim Cahill
Headteacher	Mrs Rosetta Mason
Date of previous school inspection	3 September 2007
School address	Livesey Street Collyhurst Manchester M4 5HF
Telephone number	0161 8349004
Fax number	0161 8391075
Email address	head@st-patricks.manchester.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, parents and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's data records, policies and minutes of governing body meetings, and the notes of the school improvement partner's visits. Parental questionnaires were received from 21 parents or carers.

- pupils' attainment and achievement
- the quality of teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of governors in providing challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled and statutory responsibilities are met
- how successfully the school has tackled the areas for improvement identified in the 2007 inspection and the December 2008 survey visit.

Information about the school

St Patrick's is a smaller than average primary school, whose catchment serves some socio-economically disadvantaged areas in central Manchester. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in its Nursery and Reception classes. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is significantly higher than the national average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

The school has secured the Healthy School award, and in 2007 was successful in reaching the International Schools' Standard for healthy eating.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have not been adequately addressed, and this has contributed to a downward trend in pupils' overall attainment. Some aspects of the school's work, most notably pupils' learning and progress across Key Stages 1 and 2, have weakened since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment remains too low at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2, and pupils' progress throughout the school is only satisfactory. This rate of progress, with few signs of improvement, means that pupils' overall achievement is inadequate. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and plan activities that meet the needs of most pupils. However, in some lessons, insufficient account is taken of the wide range of pupils' abilities, and the pace of learning generally lacks urgency. Lesson planning and the delivery of lessons for higher ability pupils and for pupils with English as an additional language are too variable, resulting in activities not being closely matched to their capabilities. While the school has recently improved some elements of its work, as seen in pupils' increased attendance, leaders and managers have not succeeded in raising the quality of teaching and learning to the levels necessary to improve rapidly pupils' achievement. There are shortcomings in safeguarding, the procedures for which are inadequate, and which impact negatively on pupils' care, guidance and support. Behaviour is good, and pupils also show a keen appreciation of the range of cultures and traditions present at St Patrick's.

St Patrick's is a harmonious school, and the leadership team is dedicated and keen to improve pupils' care and education. However, the school does not possess sufficient capacity to improve. This is partly because the areas for improvement since the last inspection and a more recent survey visit have not all been addressed effectively. For instance, while extra challenge to its most-able pupils has led to better attainment in mathematics, pupils' attainment in English has not improved. In addition, self-evaluation is lacking in rigour and does not effectively support improvement. Elements of the school's provision are weaker than at the last inspection, as are some outcomes for pupils, and governance is inadequate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- In order to raise attainment and improve achievement across the school, the quality of teaching should be improved so that most lessons are good or better by:
 - providing opportunities for staff to develop their skills, share and learn from best practice in a variety of settings
 - ensuring that monitoring of the quality of lessons includes rigorous checking of the progress made by different groups of pupils
 - developing the use of assessment so that planning, questioning and work set are more closely matched to pupils' different levels of skill and ability
 - ensuring that any underperformance is quickly identified and challenged throughout the school, especially that of higher ability pupils and of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - making sure that all requirements for safeguarding are met
 - improving the rigour of the school's procedures for target setting, analysis and tracking of the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils
 - developing and undertaking a programme of training for governors to improve their role in the strategic leadership of the school
 - increasing the involvement of leaders at all levels in monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below expected levels for their age. Unvalidated data indicate that in 2009, overall attainment at the ends of both Key Stages 1 and 2 was below average, and significantly below average in English at the end of Key Stage 2; indeed, the 2009 data indicate that attainment in English has declined further, compared to results in 2008. Inspectors' observations of lessons and their scrutiny of pupils' written work for this academic year found that the picture of low attainment was confirmed. In lessons, while pupils' behaviour is good, the pace of lessons in general remains too slow and as a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they might, given their capabilities and starting points. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make the same rates of progress as other pupils. Well targeted support for pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties means that these pupils also make the same rate of progress as their peers. While there have been challenges to the school in terms of staff changes and a wider range of pupil groups in recent years, a critical mass of good and better lessons is not in place such as would enable pupils to make better than satisfactory progress. Nationally produced data about pupils' progress show that it fluctuates greatly across subjects and years. In 2008, test results showed that pupils' progress over Years 3 to 6 was good but in 2009, it dropped markedly other than in English, and in science it was significantly below average.

Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that concerns on such matters as bullying

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would be addressed effectively by class teachers. This picture is shared by parents. Behaviour is good in lessons. Pupils make visitors feel at home at St Patrick's. They are positive when responding to requests from staff, whether in lessons or beyond. When a pupil was injured during playtime, others sought help immediately and supported her on her way to the First Aid room. Pupils are quick to point to healthy options in the dining room, and pupils and parents are appreciative of the weekly opportunity to join in physical and other activities after school. Pupils were aware of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and eat a balanced diet. 'Guardian angels', junior wardens and the school council contribute to making St Patrick's a friendly and cohesive community. The views of visitors signal that pupils' good behaviour is appreciated beyond the school gates. A recent success at St Patrick's has been the drive to improve attendance. From being well below national averages in recent years, it is now just above the national average for this academic year. Attainment is low in English and just below average in mathematics, but older pupils are keen to hone their skills to prepare themselves for secondary school and beyond. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural and development is good; pupils have a clear picture of other faiths and cultures, work cohesively with each other, and appreciate differences and commonalities. In one class, pupils commented that they had written essays about their families' backgrounds, and shared these with classmates. They expressed pride that they had been able to reveal to other pupils something of their own cultures and their families' countries of origin.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
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	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3

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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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is not, however, enough consistently good teaching to accelerate pupils' progress. Good relationships between pupils and adults help to ensure that classrooms are calm and well ordered. Lessons are characterised by teachers' secure subject knowledge and a sound grasp of individual pupils' social and emotional development needs. This is an important factor when considering the high levels of pupil mobility and the need to support regularly pupils who are new to the school. Teachers plan activities that meet the needs of most pupils, although in some lessons insufficient account is taken of the wide range of pupils' abilities, so that some pupils find the work difficult and others are not challenged enough. Teaching assistants provide satisfactory support for pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers share lesson objectives with pupils at the start of lessons, provide clear explanations and use questioning skills satisfactorily.

The use of assessment to support learning is in the early stages of development throughout the school, reflecting the changes being made to the school's systems to track the progress pupils are making. There are inconsistencies in how teachers mark and assess pupils' work and set their targets for improvement. As a result, not all pupils receive clear guidance on what it is they must do to improve.

The satisfactory curriculum is appropriately matched to pupils' needs and interests. The school funds some external specialist teaching in physical education and in music (currently African drumming workshops) and pupils enjoy these activities. They also value opportunities to engage in the wide range of sporting and other additional activities, for example after-school clubs including Italian, chess, art, computers and gardening. The school places an appropriate emphasis on the core subjects and some cross-curricular links have been established. However, the school is aware that there is more scope for development of thematic work and particularly of opportunities to improve pupils' communication and literacy skills across the curriculum.

The school provides a good level of pastoral care for its pupils. New arrivals settle in well and other potentially vulnerable pupils are well cared for, receiving appropriate support according to their social and emotional needs. The school works closely and effectively with other agencies to promote pupils' regular attendance and emphasises the importance of this aspect. The school is currently unable to provide sufficient specialist support for those pupils learning English as an additional language. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are happy in school and make satisfactory progress in their learning. However, as a result of gaps in the school's effectiveness in safeguarding pupils and meeting statutory requirements, its overall provision for the care, guidance and support is judged to be inadequate at the time of this inspection.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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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	4

How effective are leadership and management?

Although there have been improvements in pupils' attendance levels and the management of teaching and learning is satisfactory, leaders and managers have not secured overall improvements in pupils' achievement, in some other outcomes, and in elements of provision. While there is now assessment of pupils' progress in key areas, assessment data are not rigorously analysed and acted upon in order to develop relevant support for pupils, including for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Target setting is too variable. In the last two years, the school has not met the majority of its targets to raise pupils' standards of attainment. Safeguarding and governance are inadequate. The governing body has not developed oversight of a training and development programme for staff on safeguarding, or on safer recruitment. There are other safeguarding matters that the school needs to move swiftly to rectify. Most parents are supportive of the school's work. St Patrick's took into account parents' views when switching to mixed-year classes, although this development still causes concern amongst some parents. The dedicated headteacher's open door policy means that parents are able to seek advice on pastoral and academic issues, and parents also value their relationships with individual class teachers. Partnerships with agencies, charities and other stakeholders have assisted in areas such as healthier lifestyles and the Creative Partnership initiative, which is helping now to make the curriculum more exciting and interesting for pupils. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have a generally clear appreciation of the attainment of groups of pupils; however, the analysis and use of this information by staff to plan and deliver lessons is more variable, thereby affecting pupils' progress. The school has considered carefully the socio-economic, religious and cultural contexts within which it operates, and pupils from all backgrounds work together and value differences. Some work is now underway to involve the wider local community in the school's activities. Given the inadequate outcome in relation to pupil's achievement, value for money is unsatisfactory.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
	3

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children start in both the Nursery and the Reception groups with skills, knowledge and understanding that are well below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, but most finish with skills that are typically well below average for their age. A high proportion of children have additional learning needs, such as those in the early stages of learning English. Induction arrangements and good relationships with parents and carers help children to settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Effective team work between teachers and teaching assistants provides children with a good level of support for their individual needs. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of children's learning and development, and all welfare needs are met at this stage. Ongoing assessments and the deployment of staff support learning activities that are appropriately challenging for most children. Activities are organised so that children make satisfactory progress in each area of learning, with clear signs of increased progress in the last year.

There is an appropriate range of both child-initiated activities and those that are adult-led. Children work and play well with each other and are developing self-confidence and an understanding of consideration for others. Good relationships with adults are evident. The learning environment has recently been improved and extended. Staff are aware of the need to review the organisation of some areas both inside and outside to fully meet the planned learning needs for individuals and groups of children. There are some good quality resources, but some, particularly in the outdoor learning area, are less attractive and in need of improvement.

Daily lessons with an increased focus on teaching letters and sounds take place in small groups and enable children to make satisfactory gains in this area.

At times, there are missed opportunities for promoting children's speaking and writing skills during the school day within other group activities. There are also times when

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more attention could be paid to improving children's social development, for example during registration and snack times. Staff are aware of this, and plans are in place to develop the key worker system further, extending opportunities to improve children's speaking and listening skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Twenty one questionnaires were received from parents and carers of pupils attending St Patrick's. Their views about their children's education and care at the school were mainly positive. Written comments received reflected that picture.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Patrick's RC 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 164 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	71	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	57	9	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	52	10	48	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	43	12	57	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	33	12	57	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	52	10	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	38	13	62	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)	9	43	11	52	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	24	15	71	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	38	10	48	0	0	1	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	24	14	67	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	43	11	52	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	67	7	33	0	0	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">■ 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.



16 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's RC Primary School, Manchester, M4 5HF

You will remember that I visited your school with other inspectors to see how well St Patrick's is supporting your education and your care. Thank you for making us feel very welcome!

We found some good things at your school. For instance, your behaviour, the improved attendance levels, and your commitment to healthy lifestyles and appreciation of other faiths and cultures are all commendable.

However, we did also encounter some areas of concern. In particular, overall attainment at St Patrick's is too low, and some lessons observed by us were not as interesting as they could be. Your teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. In many lessons they plan activities that meet the needs of most of you. In some lessons, not enough account is taken of the wide range of abilities in the class so that the work is too easy for some of you and too hard for others. While school leaders have worked diligently, not all the areas for improvement from the last inspection have been dealt with effectively. We believe the school requires some more external support so that your achievement and arrangements for safeguarding can be improved much more rapidly. Inspectors will visit St Patrick's regularly to check how things are going.

We have asked the school to improve the quality of teaching in order to raise your attainment. We have also asked that work to ensure your well-being and to strengthen the school's leadership and management is put in hand.

When we were at St Patrick's we met many of you and were impressed by your behaviour and your welcome. We hope that you continue to behave well, come to school regularly and achieve to the best of your abilities and talents.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Hoban

Her Majesty's Inspector

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