

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108845
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	377827
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2012
Lead inspector	Joy Frost 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Hendy
Headteacher	Gerry Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2010
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joy Frost

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection. She observed five teachers teaching nine lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made short visits to a few 'support lessons' where additional help is provided by trained assistants. The inspector met with three groups of pupils including hearing six pupils read in Key Stage 1. The inspector scrutinised the work in pupils' writing and mathematics books in each year group with the subject leader. Meetings were held with groups of governors and school staff, including senior and middle managers and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, the safeguarding and equality policies, the recently revised curriculum overview and attendance and pupils' progress data. Also, she analysed 91 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is average and rising. Most pupils are of a White British heritage and very few are at the early stages of learning spoken English. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has gained national Healthy School status and has Activemark, Sportsmark and Eco School awards. The school offers breakfast and after-school clubs managed by the governing body.

At the last inspection in December 2010 the school was given a 'Notice to Improve', because it was deemed to require significant improvement. A monitoring visit in July 2011 found that the school was making satisfactory progress against the areas for improvement. Since that time there have been many staff changes, with one teacher moving year groups and one seconded teacher new to the school in January 2012. The senior management of the school has remained stable.

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	3
Achievement of children	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of children	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement.

- This is a satisfactory school. It has made rapid improvement in eradicating the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving due to the senior leaders drive to improve and accelerate pupils' progress in lessons and their rigorous monitoring procedures. Some weaknesses persist in the way pupils are taught phonics (the sounds that letters make) and in pupils' quick recall of number facts. Pupils, parents and carers acknowledge the improvements the school has made to teaching and learning and pupils' behaviour.
- Teaching is satisfactory with an increasing proportion that is good. Improved teaching in Key Stage 2 is accelerating the progress of pupils in Years 3 and 5, who have a legacy of underachievement due to previous inadequate teaching. Extra support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is helping them accelerate their progress and achieve in line with their peers.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally good due to a new system of rewards and consequences. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable or who exhibit challenging behaviour are well supported. Pupils feel safe in school and say that bullying is rare, they acknowledge that some minor incidents occur in the playground but that they are swiftly dealt with. A small minority of parents and carers felt that bullying was not dealt with adequately and these views were taken into account.
- Senior leaders have been successful in narrowing attainment gaps between boys and girls and pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal. Together they have tackled the problems of inadequate teaching and act as good role models for the newly-established team. The governing body have undertaken

professional development to help them improve their ability to challenge the school and they hold senior leaders to account for pupil performance. All senior leaders are aware that more needs to be done to raise attainment and develop the new curriculum further and to refine systems for monitoring and evaluation.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, by:
 - teaching a daily discrete phonics lesson where pupils learn to recognise, write and spell new sounds
 - improving opportunities for pupils to practise their quick recall of number facts and encourage them to use mental calculation strategies in lessons
 - improving opportunities for pupils to read to adults individually, widen the range of books pupils read and improve the frequency that pupils read at home
 - improving the challenge for the more-able pupils in lessons.

- Improve the curriculum further by:
 - developing national and global links so that pupils have a greater understanding of their place in the wider community
 - developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures.

- Refine systems for monitoring and evaluation, by using the good analysis of data to focus monitoring more precisely on the planned actions in the school development plan to identify which actions are having the most impact on pupils' achievement.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' learning and performance in lessons is satisfactory overall and an increasing proportion is good. There are no significant differences between the progress that different groups of pupils make, due to the careful tracking of how these groups are performing. Staff have introduced extra support and intervention for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal. The support has narrowed the gap between the attainment of these pupils, their peers and similar pupils nationally. The progress of identified pupil groups is accelerating in reading, writing and mathematics and most year groups are working at age-related expectations, except in Years 3 and 5 where there is a legacy of underachievement. Due to targeted extra support and improved teaching the progress of these pupils is accelerating rapidly. The proportion of pupils working above age-related expectations is below national average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, but is increasing.

Pupils' achievement in reading by the end of Year 2 is slightly below national expectations. This is because pupils do not develop their knowledge of the sounds that letters make quickly enough to enable them to become fluent readers and confident writers by the age of seven. Although phonics is taught regularly across Reception and Key Stage 1, the work in pupils' books confirms that they fail to apply their phonic knowledge to their reading and writing. Pupils' opportunities to read individually to adults in school are limited and records show that not all pupils read aloud frequently enough throughout the week to enable them to consolidate their learning.

Almost all parents think that their child is well taught and that the school helps them to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils enter the school in the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are broadly average for their age and they make satisfactory progress. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 their attainment is in line with national expectations and they achieve satisfactorily. They enjoy their learning and have the necessary basic skills to be adequately prepared for transition to the secondary phase.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers agree that their child enjoys school and is well taught. Inspection evidence found that teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching developing. Most teachers have good subject knowledge, and use this when planning learning. Subject leaders are beginning to play an active role in improving teaching and learning in their subjects and are willing to observe and share good practice. Regular monitoring of teaching by senior leaders has resulted in weaknesses being identified and tackled. The newly-revised curriculum map is aiding pupils' ability to develop their skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics through the introduction of additional basic skills lessons, but these lessons are relatively new and are not as effective as they could be.

Relationships between pupils and adults in lessons are good and support pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils listen carefully to adults and follow instructions well. Most pupils are eager to answer questions and are confident to discuss their learning with the teacher and each other. Teachers' increasing ability to use assessment information is leading to lessons where activities are more closely matched to pupils' abilities. In some lessons the more-able pupils could be challenged even further. Regular marking, a new and effective marking scheme, clear feedback and individual targets for improvement are helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work, but this is not yet used consistently across the school.

Classrooms are lively and pupils understand what is expected of them. A spirit of cooperative learning is developing well and is aiding pupils' progress. In the better lessons teachers move learning forward at a fast pace, give very clear instructions and have high expectations of what pupils should achieve by the end of the lesson. In a mathematics lesson for the older pupils the teacher revised the learning throughout the lesson in response to pupils' understanding of coordinates, resulting in pupils making improved progress.

Teachers and pupils are improving their ability to use information and communication technology as a tool to support learning. Pupils were using computers confidently in all lessons observed, which added to their enjoyment of the lesson.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of pupils and parents and carers think that pupils are safe in school. The school has systems in place to eliminate all forms of harassment and to ensure that pupils develop a respect for and courtesy towards the views of others. School records show that incidents of bullying, when they occur, are infrequent and well resolved. A recent anti-bullying week has heightened pupils' awareness of different types of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, race, religion and disability. However, pupils have less understanding of cyber-bullying and the risks associated with modern technology, for example social networking sites, although the recently developed e-learning policy does include these risks. Pupils have adequate knowledge of the risks associated with substance misuse, water, fire, railways and road safety.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally good and it is rare that poor behaviour disrupts learning. Pupils say that the new rewards and sanctions are effective in helping pupils to develop the strategies necessary to moderate their own behaviour. Older pupils enthusiastically take on extra responsibilities around the school and act as role models to younger pupils as buddies and playground leaders. Pupils say that sometimes arguments occur at lunchtimes but that they know who to go to if they have a problem. Lunchtime supervisors and Year 5 pupils are about to undergo specialist training to act as mediators.

Attendance has declined recently and the school has raised the profile of above average attendance with pupils, parents and carers through class rewards, assemblies and certificates for good attendance. The school keeps this high profile in fortnightly newsletters and contact with individual families who are in danger of becoming persistent absentees. This has resulted in attendance rising rapidly to be in-line with national levels.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, ably supported by his two senior teachers and the governing body have rigorously tackled the identified weaknesses in the school. They have developed effective systems to tackle underachievement, promote equality and tackle discrimination through rigorously tracking pupils' attainment. As a result the gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils are narrowing rapidly or have closed altogether. The headteacher has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and has communicated his vision to teachers and pupils and parents and carers. The robust monitoring systems adopted have been effective in eradicating inadequate teaching and learning, raising attendance and accelerating pupils' progress, demonstrating a good capacity to sustain these improvements. However, the systems need refining to ensure that senior leaders use the analysis of data to focus more precisely on the specific actions in the development plan so that they know which actions are having the most impact.

Senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning has led to improved practices closely aligned to the continuous professional development of staff. The school has formed a close working relationship with a local outstanding school which is effective in sharing and modelling good practice. Senior leaders have undertaken accredited national training to improve the effectiveness of their ability to coach and mentor staff. This has resulted in a complete revision of the procedures and systems for the identification and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A complete revision of the curriculum has taken place. It is broad and balanced and includes many more opportunities for pupils to visit places of local interest. It is enriched through many exciting extra-curricular clubs which include a good range of sporting and musical opportunities. Extra basic skills lessons have been added to the timetable throughout the week, for example 'early bird' mathematics lessons, but these have yet to be evaluated for their effectiveness. While the new curriculum underpins pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well through assemblies, class liturgies, and personal, social, and emotional education, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop a good understanding of different faiths and cultures and their own place in multicultural Britain and the wider world.

Procedures to safeguard pupils are secure and the school provides a valuable community service through their provision of well run wrap-around care in the breakfast and after-school clubs.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



13 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Sunderland SR2 0RQ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school again recently. You will be delighted to hear that I was very impressed with the improvements I saw. Because of this I have decided that your school no longer requires significant improvement because it is now offering a satisfactory and improving standard of education. You helped me enormously in making my judgement by your willingness to tell me what your school is usually like. I would also like to thank the pupils who came and read with me. This is what I found.

- Your behaviour has improved because of the new rewards and sanctions. You told me that you feel safe in school and that bullying and harassment are rare.
- Teaching and learning are better and you are all making at least satisfactory progress and many of you are making good progress with your learning.
- Your teachers are planning lessons which help you learn at the right level and include more opportunities for you to use computers to support your learning.
- Senior leaders are checking very closely how well you are doing and they are making sure that you get extra support and help if you need it.

I think that there are still some things that the school needs to improve to help you make even better progress and these are to:

- make sure that the younger pupils learn their letters and sounds more quickly so that they can use them to become better readers and writers
- give you all more opportunities to practise your quick recall of numbers so that you can use them to work out calculations
- give you more opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures so that you have a better understanding of your place in the wider world.

You have played an important part in the improvements to your school and I hope you continue to do so. Some ways you can do this are by attending school every day, practising reading aloud and continuing to take an active part in your lessons.

Yours sincerely
Joy Frost
Her Majesty's Inspector

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