

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122816
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380541
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Kevin Sheldrick 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	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Woods
Headteacher	Stephen Dent
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 9 lessons taught by 5 teachers, and held meetings with governors, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation relating to planning, monitoring, safeguarding, and communications with parents and carers. Inspectors analysed the responses to questionnaires from 34 parents and carers and 37 pupils.

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

- Are learning and progress improving quickly?
- How well have improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage supported its overall effectiveness?
- What is the school's track-record of improvement, particularly since the last monitoring visit?

Information about the school

This school is smaller than average in size. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average. The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds, although a small minority are from minority ethnic heritages. Following its last full inspection in September 2009 the school was judged to require special measures.

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

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school has improved substantially in the last two years to the extent that achievement, teaching and leadership and management are now satisfactory. The large majority of personal development outcomes are good. Behaviour has improved and is now good. The school's provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage has notably improved and is also now good. In the rest of the school pupils are making much better progress than at the time of the last inspection, particularly in mathematics and reading. Attainment remains low because of underachievement at the time of the previous inspection. However, progress is improving quickly and securely because of major improvements made to teaching and the use of assessment. Inadequate teaching is rare and a majority of teaching is now good or better. Teachers are increasingly skilled at adjusting their lessons to meet the needs of the full ability range. A good variety of activities generally keep pupils engaged in their learning and marking consistently identifies strengths and areas for improvement. Discussion in lessons is often used well to clarify how pupils can improve their work. However a small minority of teaching is less effective because these positive attributes are not consistently apparent.

Parents were strongly of the view that their children feel safe in the school. The school is living up to its mission of being a community 'where everyone can feel valued, confident and secure'. There are strengths in the care provided by the school and in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum contributes well to the development of pupils' understanding of how to live a healthy life and also to the development of workplace skills. However, opportunities are missed to use all the subjects of the curriculum to promote pupils' communication skills. Significant weaknesses in leadership and management were identified at the last inspection but there are now notable strengths. Governance is good because exactly the right questions are asked and, as a result, the school's leaders are being effectively held to account by the governing body. The school is realistic about its strengths and weaknesses. Although there have been significant improvements, monitoring has not consistently resulted in better practice being uniformly adopted. Some lesson observations do not give sufficient attention to the progress made by different groups and various plans are not always sufficiently tailored to the school's specific needs. Although there are strengths in the school's engagement with parents and carers, the school has identified the need to involve parents more in supporting their child's learning. Even with these relative weaknesses, a long list of

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improvements confirms that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvements.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment so it at least matches the national average by ensuring teachers:
 - identify and communicate learning outcomes for the full ability range in all lessons
 - plan a wide range of task at different levels, including opportunities for pupils to make choices so they can opt to undertake more challenging work
 - involve pupils more effectively in identifying the criteria they can use to assess how successful they are in their learning
 - check regularly to ensure pupils are making good progress during lessons and give feedback on how they can improve their work
 - involve pupils more in self-assessment and peer assessment
 - improve pupils' organisation of their writing
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their communication skills through the subjects of the curriculum.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by
 - ensuring monitoring is always focused on the progress that different groups of pupils are making in lessons
 - following up monitoring and evaluation to ensure all teachers make improvements in their practice
 - ensuring all planning and policies accurately reflect the school's current situation and are more focused on addressing identified weaknesses
 - engaging with parents more effectively, particularly to help them to support their child's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enter the nursery with skill levels that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and now enter Year 1 with attainment that is close to average. However, in the recent past pupils entered Year 1 with below-average attainment. Their satisfactory progress throughout the rest of the school means that their attainment by the time they leave in Year 6 has been low. The better rates of progress now evident throughout the school means attainment is rising quickly. This improvement is not yet fully reflected in the results at the end of Year 6, particularly in writing. There are

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weaknesses in how pupils organise their writing to communicate extended ideas.

Pupils generally work quickly in lessons and take a pride in their work. They know their targets but a minority are uncertain about how well they are doing. Pupils were observed responding with great enthusiasm, particularly where teachers use an element of competition. For instance, younger junior-aged pupils enjoyed working with great haste when trying to 'beat the teacher' in identifying the characteristics of an effective report linked to their topic on Africa. In the most effective lessons pupils could make choices so they could more quickly engage with work that they found challenging. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress at a rate similar to their peers, largely because of the effective support provided by teaching assistants. This support is sensitively delivered so these students are able to participate fully in all activities. Where teaching is less effective, too few adaptations are made in order to maximise the progress made by high-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are no differences in the progress made by different ethnic groups. Effective interventions are being made outside of lessons to improve reading for those pupils with below-average reading ages.

Workplace skills are much better because there are important improvements in how pupils are now gaining the knowledge and skills they need to be successful when they transfer to secondary schools. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to live healthy lives and the majority make choices accordingly. There are particular strengths in students' cultural awareness as a result of the opportunities pupils have to interact with those that are different. In addition, pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility and participate in a range of enterprise challenges that develop important skills that they will need for the future, for instance when planning a sponsored balloon race. The school council plays a generally active part in improving aspects of the school, such as enhancing the activities available at lunchtime.

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

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 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
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of lessons are effectively planned with activities designed for the full ability range. More confident teachers are actively involving pupils in identifying and using criteria that will help them assess how well they are learning. Pupils' awareness of what they must do to improve their work is reinforced through marking that consistently identifies strengths and areas for improvement. In the better lessons pupils develop an in-depth awareness of their targets for improvement because there is regular discussion about how well they are doing. There are signs that pupils are being more involved in self-assessment and peer assessment but not enough of this kind of activity is used to increase pupils' understanding of how they can improve their learning.

Although improvement is clear, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are apparent. There is highly effective teaching that is very well adapted to the full ability range. For instance, in an outstanding mathematics lesson pupils were very quickly able to concentrate on appropriately challenging work related to the calculation of angles. All pupils worked at an impressive pace and showed a commendable desire to choose more challenging work. This practice was in marked contrast to other lessons where the organisation and resources were not always suitable for the full ability range in the class.

The curriculum contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school and their cultural development. Pupils spoke positively about the trips they undertake that reinforce their learning, and older pupils are looking forward to a residential experience with pupils from backgrounds that are different from their own. The curriculum does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunity to systematically develop their communication skills through the full range of subjects.

Strengths in the care, guidance and support have improved behaviour and attendance. The more effective use of assessment information is allowing early interventions to support learning. Effective links with external agencies help ensure effective care for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Young children in the Early Years Foundation Stage appreciate the older pupils who act as buddies to them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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?

The governing body is now taking a much stronger lead on school improvement. Governors are providing an effective blend of support and challenge to the school's senior leaders. They have insisted that new initiatives are evaluated so that their strengths and weakness are apparent. For instance, governors have sought clarification of the benefits associated with staff visiting other schools. As a result, the school has taken great care to ensure the partnerships it has developed are effective. Senior leaders act as effective role models to other staff. The school has generally managed well a large number of temporary changes in staffing that had the potential to destabilise the school. Assessment information is used reasonably well to monitor the effectiveness of teaching.

The school's self-review is self-critical, and monitoring is generally leading to improvements across the school. Leaders have used the development of a teaching and learning policy to improve consistency. Although this policy is comprehensive it lacks detail in some important areas; for instance, not enough attention is given to ensuring teachers adapt lessons to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. A minority of teaching has been slow to improve because leaders have not yet succeeded in ensuring full adherence to agreed policy and practice.

There are strengths in the actions the school has taken to promote community cohesion in all areas. These include the steps the school takes to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to interact with those from different backgrounds. The school is highly committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling any discrimination, a fact reflected in the attention given to ensuring improved outcomes for all groups of pupils. For instance the school has improved the outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who are gifted and talented.

All the government's safeguarding requirements are met and the very positive feedback from parents endorses the effectiveness of all that the school does to keep children safe. Training of all staff, in particular in child protection, is extensive and has resulted in staff being very knowledgeable about this aspect of the school's work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and	3
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Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
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

Children make good progress as a result of effective teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The majority of children leave the Reception year with skills around those expected for their age because of the effective provision, particularly in improving their communication and language skills. Parents are understandably very happy about how much their children enjoy their time in this part of the school. Children from a very young age willingly select activities and they play well with each other. They reflect willingly on their learning and some are willing to talk about their experiences to other children. They behave well and accept the class rules. These skills mean they are well prepared when they move to the next phase.

Adults provide a wide range of interesting activities. This includes the use of interactive whiteboards. For instance, children use these to indicate that they have arrived in school. The curriculum is particularly effective when activities are linked through a topic such as the 'pirates'. At such times students enjoy being immersed in a different world, particularly when role play is used. There is an appropriate blend of adult-led and child-initiated learning experiences. Questions are used very well to promote children's spoken language, challenge children's thinking and extend their learning. Children experience regular short sharp sessions that promote their understanding of letters and sounds. These are very effectively taught by both the teacher and teaching assistant.

Leadership has been very effective in ensuring major improvements in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a relatively short time. There is a highly consistent approach across this phase because of the detailed planning that is undertaken. This planning is highly influenced by the ongoing assessments that regularly take place. The leader has accurately identified further improvements such as the need to involve parents further and the greater use of stimulating topics that ensure children are constantly excited by their experiences.

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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

The response of parents and carers in the questionnaires was very positive. A few parents and carers made comments on the questionnaires. These were varied so no overall patterns were identifiable. The very large majority of those who responded to the questionnaire agreed with all the statements. A very small minority did not feel that the school meets the needs of their child and a similar number considered that the school did not deal well with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors explored these issues and took parents' views into account. Inspectors found that more could be done to meet pupils' individual needs, and this point features in the section 'What the school should do to improve'. In respect of the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, inspectors decided that, overall, the school has strengths in this area.

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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 88 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	59	14	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	68	11	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	12	35	19	56	3	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	44	17	50	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	50	15	44	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	19	56	15	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	56	13	38	2	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)	17	50	12	35	4	12	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	17	50	12	35	4	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	32	18	53	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	32	18	53	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	44	15	44	3	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	17	50	16	47	1	3	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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



9 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Doncaster, DN11 8EF

I would like to thank you all for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. A special thanks to those of you I interviewed for the views you expressed, which influenced the conclusions we reached.

Your school is improving quickly and as result you are achieving more. The gap between your school's test results at Year 6 and the national average is reducing. Teaching is a lot better than it was at the time of the last full inspection. Teachers are working hard to ensure you experience interesting lessons that allow you to work at the right level. They mark your work really well and they ensure you experience a wide range of activities so that you do not get bored. We were impressed with your impeccable behaviour, particularly when you all participated in the advent mass. All of these positive findings led us to conclude that your school could be removed from special measures.

We think more could be done to ensure the school's results match the national average. We have asked the school to improve further by ensuring you have even more opportunities to choose work that you find challenging. We think that you will be clearer about what you must do to improve if teachers devote more time to discussing your progress in lessons and if you have more opportunities to mark each other's work. We think that the monitoring of lessons should result in improvements to all the lessons you experience. Different subjects could contribute more to your achievements, for instance through giving you opportunities to improve how you organise your writing.

You can help improve your school by continuing to give your opinions about what will make your school better. In addition, you can choose to undertake the more challenging work when you are given a choice in lessons.

I hope those of you involved in organising the balloon race are successful in raising lots of money for your chosen charity. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector

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