

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Smith Street, Ryhope, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR2 0RQ

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| Inspection dates | 18–19 November 2015 |
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The resolute and determined leadership of the headteacher has ensured that an uncompromising drive to improve is evident in every area of the life of the school.
- Recent and continuing actions have ensured that the quality of teaching and assessment has improved, accelerating the rates of progress that current pupils make in their learning. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Governors know the school very well, and share the ambition to drive forward further improvements.
- Outcomes for pupils are now good. Pupils clearly enjoy their work, tackling learning with determination and a strong desire to succeed.
- Current pupils' progress is good and improving across all year groups in school.
- Children in the early years develop skills that allow them to play and learn happily together. They make a fast start in their reading, writing and understanding of number.
- Teaching is now good. Pupils learn quickly and show enjoyment in well-planned lessons that allow them to apply their skills across all subjects.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are extremely polite, friendly, courteous and have good manners. They display positive attitudes when working in class.
- Pupils' consideration of others and pride in their work ensure that their personal development and welfare are outstanding. They value each others' contribution in lessons, showing great respect for other people.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in their learning over time is not yet consistently rapid enough.
- Occasionally, not enough is demanded of some pupils, especially the most-able pupils. As a result, the pace of learning slows.
- Sometimes, pupils do not always read, understand or act upon the feedback given by teachers on how to improve their work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress, and reach the highest standards of which they are capable, by:
 - making sure all pupils are consistently stretched and challenged in their learning, especially the most-able pupils
 - ensuring that the pace of learning always allows pupils to be consistently engaged in lessons and maintain their concentration so that not a moment for learning is lost
 - ensure that all teachers consistently apply the school's marking policy, for the benefit of all learners.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The well-respected headteacher has worked tirelessly to eliminate underperformance and secure a talented and settled teaching team, and has succeeded. As a result, progress has accelerated and standards have been raised. The school has greatly improved since the last inspection. Teaching has significantly improved, good behaviour flourishes and the rates of progress that current pupils make in their learning are accelerating quickly. This is not yet reflected in national test data at the end of Year 6.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of what the school does well as a result of ongoing, extensive and highly detailed monitoring of the school's performance. They have clear-cut priorities for those areas that require further improvement and are relentless and rigorous in their pursuit of excellence. They communicate a sense of drive and urgency to continue to move forward quickly.
- Procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning are tightly timetabled and very effective, and involve subject leaders as well as the senior leadership. All leaders are skilful in ensuring that their analysis and interpretation of information about pupils' progress leads to actions that address any areas of concern. These actions include effective use of the pupil premium, ensuring that good support is given to the small number of disadvantaged pupils in school.
- Staff performance is effectively managed. Teachers have challenging objectives for their own professional development, linked closely to school priorities. The school's provision of training opportunities for staff is good.
- Pupils benefit from a lively, broad and rich curriculum. Themes and topics are brought to life by an exciting range of visits and visitors to school. Subjects are linked together very well, pupils having many opportunities to develop their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers work closely together to regularly review the curriculum, checking that it meets the needs of the pupils in the school and reflects their interests. It is extremely well planned, ensuring that there is no repetition of topics when mixed age classes change year on year. Pupils have the chance to participate in a number of extra-curricular clubs, such as cookery, hockey and other sports.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very strongly. It reinforces traditional British values, which were used to underpin the recently rewritten school and class rules. St Patrick's is a caring, outward-looking school, typified by Year 6 pupils each having a Reception child buddy. It also has good links with the local community and further afield.
- The views of all pupils are valued, and many have an opportunity to play a part in the life of the school such as being a play leader, a sports' leader, a member of the school council, or as a digital leader – assisting pupils and staff alike with all matters related to information technology.
- Links with parents are very positive and their views are regularly sought and valued; nearly all parents responded to the school's own questionnaire in June this year. Many parents took part in a mathematics lesson alongside their child during the week of the inspection, and the lesson was enjoyed by all.
- Parents appreciate that the school gives all children an equal opportunity to succeed and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. Nearly all parents who completed the online questionnaire agreed that their child was happy at school.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used very well to raise staff expertise in the teaching of PE. Specialist coaches work alongside school staff and pupils have the chance to participate in a number of inter-school sports' competitions organised by local secondary schools.
- The school has benefited from good support and training from the local authority, and from the expertise of staff from the St Bede's Deanery Teaching Schools' Alliance.
- Senior leaders ensure that marking of work is thorough and regular, and it is of a very high standard in upper Key Stage 2. Pupils show that they clearly understand the school's strategy, which shows them what is good and what needs to be improved. Pupils are usually given time to read the feedback given by teachers and the time to respond and act upon the guidance given in line with the school's policy, but this is not yet consistent across the school.

■ **The governance of the school**

- The governing body is very effective. It is extremely well informed, benefiting from detailed reports and participating in a number of strategies to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. It is incisive in its approach to school improvement, and closely analyses all performance information. Performance management procedures for teachers are robust and rigorous.
- Governors are individually linked to a curriculum subject, and visit school regularly to meet subject leaders and examine pupils' work in books. They are adept at helping to set priorities for development, and hold leaders and teachers to account for the quality of teaching and learning in school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils benefit from the culture of safety and security that has been established in St Patrick's and are confident that the school will continue to keep them safe. The school knows its pupils well, and parents report that their children feel safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is now consistently good and has improved since the last inspection. The impact of this good teaching on learning has resulted in current pupils making good progress and reaching higher levels of achievement in their work in every year group in school.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and usually ensure that the pace of learning and level of challenge enable pupils to concentrate and be fully involved in their learning. Opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their skills in a variety of ways and in a number of different subjects.
- Teachers question pupils skilfully and regularly check their knowledge and understanding. This allows them to change or modify the next steps in pupils' learning to secure maximum progress.
- In mathematics, basic skills are taught well and regularly consolidated through innovative problems set by teachers. In the Year 5/6 class, pupils worked cooperatively to try to solve the problem of making a total of 37 from any combination of 10 different single-digit odd numbers. Pupils were able to reason and conjecture about a rule that would solve the problem, looking for patterns in the numbers. This approach to the teaching of mathematics is well established in school.
- Pupils write enthusiastically and with great imagination, often because the purpose for writing is linked to the topic they are studying, firing their interest. Pupils in the Year 4/5 class were writing a newspaper report around the arrest of the three pigs for killing Mr Wolf, using complex phrases and exciting vocabulary. Pupils in Year 2 were creating their own patterned poem, beginning to use alliteration. Pupils in the Year 5/6 class wrote a very moving persuasive letter to try to secure the release of a boy from a prison camp during the Second World War.
- The younger children make an excellent start in their early reading because of a systematic and rigorous approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) in order to make sense of words. Some Year 1 pupils who read aloud to the inspector were fluent and expressive, clearly enjoying their book. Pupils continue to enjoy and make progress in their reading as they move through school, with many reading regularly at home.
- Teaching assistants and teachers work closely together to ensure timely and constructive advice is given to pupils, including those with special educational needs or who are disabled. The quality of support is high, whether adults are working with a group or an individual pupil, resulting in good academic progress, as well as strong emotional and social development.
- Occasionally, the progress of some pupils is not fast enough or is too variable as a result of insufficient challenge, especially for the most-able pupils. As a result, the pace of learning slows and pupils lose concentration. This variance over time has resulted in pupils' rates of progress not accelerating quickly enough, especially at the end of Key Stage 2.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident, sociable and very caring, including for those less fortunate than themselves in the school, the local community and further afield or abroad. During the inspection, a very large number of gift-filled shoeboxes were donated for Operation Christmas Child, run through the Samaritan's Purse charity.

- Pupils report feeling extremely safe at all times. They are aware of the different types of bullying that they may encounter, including cyber bullying. They were adamant that no bullying now exists in St Patrick's, and that they have full confidence in the adults in school to deal effectively with any minor incidents of misbehaviour.
- In their responses to the online questionnaire, nearly all parents indicated that their children were safe in school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They strive to succeed, are usually engaged and motivated to learn, and value highly the contribution of their classmates.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff set high standards to which pupils respond well. Pupils' behaviour in the playground, in the dining hall, in breakfast club and as they move around school is excellent. They are polite, courteous and friendly, displaying excellent manners at all times.
- Pupils respond well to the exciting learning environments. The school is tidy and well ordered, with high quality displays of key information, pupils' work and topics studied.
- Occasionally, a few pupils can become disengaged from learning, lose concentration or are too slow to respond to instructions from the teacher, which is why behaviour is not outstanding
- The school has worked hard to raise the levels of attendance. This has resulted in an increase in the percentage of pupils attending school, although levels are still just below average.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Progress and attainment have improved since the last inspection. Assessment information, the school's own sophisticated and detailed tracking information, and the quality of work in books clearly indicate that current pupils in every year group are now making consistently good progress. This is the case in both English and mathematics, as well as other subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils start Key Stage 1 with skills that are slightly below average. Achievement has improved since the last inspection and evidence gathered during this inspection shows that current pupils in Key Stage 1 are making good progress. Pupils in Year 1 have achieved very highly in the national phonics check in recent years, although there was a dip in 2015.
- Progress is accelerating significantly in Key Stage 2. Current pupils are now making good and often outstanding progress in their learning from their individual starting points. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for secondary school, both in terms of their achievement and in their knowledge of how to be a successful learner.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Staff then make effective provision for them either within the class, in small groups, or individually. This includes those pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. These pupils make good progress from their starting points because teachers give them activities that are well matched to their ability and needs.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is too small to make any reliable statistical comparisons between their progress and achievement and that of their classmates and other pupils nationally. As a result of the effective use of the pupil premium funding, such as through targeted support for individuals or groups of pupils, this small number of pupils make good progress and achieve well across the school in both English and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils make similarly good progress to their classmates, although sometimes opportunities are missed to add further to the level of challenge and to stretch pupils' thinking. This is why the most-able pupils do not always move on at an even faster rate.

Early years provision

is good

- Children make a strong start to their education at St Patrick's. Most start the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are just below those expected for their age. As a result of good teaching, excellent provision and a vibrant and safe learning environment, children make good progress. The proportion of children who leave the Reception class with a good level of development has improved and is now broadly average. Children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children quickly learn essential social and emotional skills. They are able to share, take turns, concentrate and apply themselves to tasks. They already have good levels of maturity, even though the majority of the class have summer birthdays.
- There are highly positive relationships between staff, children and parents. This helps children to quickly become confident learners and have a positive attitude to school. During the inspection, children worked happily and cooperatively together, with some organising themselves into a game using a dice.
- Confident and experienced staff encourage children to experiment and become independent through well-established and consistent routines. Activities are organised so that there is an effective balance of activities led by adults and those chosen by the children to explore and practise the skills as they play.
- Interactions between adults and children are good and help to develop children's speaking and listening skills. A range of thoughtful questioning designed to extend children's vocabulary and responses was observed, as adults worked and played alongside children to extend their learning.
- Basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are promoted very effectively. Activities and topics are carefully planned to take account of children's interests. During the inspection, children accessed many activities linked to *Harry and the dinosaurs go to school* by Adrian Reynolds. Opportunities to write, mark-make and count are plentiful around the Reception class area, with children working with the teacher to write a sentence about what they had done that day.
- All groups of children make good progress in the early years, including the most able, disabled children and those with special educational needs. The work and activities provided spark imagination and enjoyment.
- All children are kept very safe and secure in the early years setting, and their behaviour is excellent.
- Links between home and school are very strong. Parents are kept up to date about the progress of their children through bright and informative learning journey books.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. Staff are constantly refining their practice in order to maintain high standards of provision. They accurately measure the progress children make from their individual starting points.
- Staff have well thought-through plans to make further improvements, and are committed to secure the very best outcomes for all children.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 108845 |
| Local authority | Sunderland |
| Inspection number | 10002033 |

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| 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 | 131 |
| Appropriate authority | Local authority |
| Chair | Michael Hendy |
| Headteacher | Gerry Kelly |
| Telephone number | 0191 5536255 |
| Website | www.stpatricksryhope.co.uk |
| Email address | st.patricks.primary@schools.sunderland.gov.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 13–14 November 2013 |

Information about this school

- St Patrick’s Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language are well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium funding is below average. (This is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Early years provision is full time in the Reception class.
- The school provides a breakfast club each day for its pupils.
- The school meets the government’s floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of the St Bede’s Deanery Teaching Schools’ Alliance.
- There have been significant changes to staffing since the last inspection and, most recently, a newly qualified teacher was appointed together with a new leader responsible for English.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in lessons, including two jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to some pupils read and reviewed a sample of their work alongside the headteacher. The inspector also made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The inspector held meetings with different groups of people involved with the school. These groups included pupils, a number of governors, the headteacher, other members of the teaching staff and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector viewed a range of documents, including information on pupils' achievements, the school's data on current and recent progress and attainment, and the school's view on how well it is doing. The inspector also viewed the school's improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector took account of the 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and 10 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff. There were no responses from the pupil questionnaire available. The school's website was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Philip Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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