

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Huddersfield

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107750
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	324645
Inspection date	22 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Ann Sharpe

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	405
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Ian Smith
Headteacher	Mr H Rowan
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	George Avenue Birkby Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD2 2BJ

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	22 October 2008
Inspection number	324645

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: performance in writing for the more able pupils; the school's procedures for assessing pupils and tracking their progress; and quality and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, plans for further improvement, nationally published assessment data and the school's records of pupils' progress. Brief observations of pupils in some lessons and around the school were undertaken. Discussions were held with staff, pupils and a governor. Questionnaires returned by parents were considered. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in as much detail.

Description of the school

Most of the pupils attending this large school live outside the immediate locality. Although the majority of pupils are of White British heritage, about a third are from a wide range of ethnic heritages. Since the previous inspection, there has been an increase in the number of pupils who have recently arrived from Poland and do not speak English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average, and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school makes provision for the EYFS in the form of classes for Reception aged children. The refurbished Reception unit opened in January 2008. Since the previous inspection, there has been a considerable amount of staff absence and changes. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006. In March 2008, St Patrick's federated with another local Catholic primary school, and the headteacher became executive headteacher of both schools. The school holds the Kirklees Healthy Schools Award and the Sportsmark Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Patrick's Catholic Primary is a good school. It has some outstanding features. It is a friendly, welcoming and purposeful school, where pupils from all ethnic backgrounds enjoy coming. They work and play together in harmony. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The school has maintained, and sometimes improved, pupils' achievements, against a background of considerable staff absences and changes, including a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior staff, large-scale building works and a constantly changing intake of pupils. During this time, good leadership, management and governance have ensured that pupils have continued to receive a good quality of education and achieve well from their varying starting points.

Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and often well above average by the end of Year 6. When children start in Reception, their skills are broadly typical for their age. Pupils from all ethnic heritages, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress. This is because of good teaching and learning and good quality care, guidance and support, which help pupils to overcome barriers to their learning. Teachers and support staff are hard working and committed to doing their best for the pupils. The increasing numbers of pupils who are learning English as an additional language often do particularly well. Polish pupils, for example, often make outstanding progress because of sensitive and well organised support to help them to settle into their new surroundings and learn to speak English.

The progress of the more able pupils in Year 6 is also often outstanding in reading, mathematics and science. However, Year 6 pupils have not performed as well in national writing tests as they have in other subjects. The school has recognised this and taken firm action in order to bridge any gaps, including a gap in performance between girls and boys. The current method of teaching pupils in Years 5 and 6 of similar ability together, in English and mathematics, is helping to raise standards even further, particularly in writing.

Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to meet their challenging targets. The engaging curriculum, combined with some skilful teaching, plays a part in this. In literacy, for example, girls and boys of all abilities say that they enjoyed their recent visit to the theatre as part of a study of a Shakespearean play. They respond with great enthusiasm and maturity to very challenging questioning by teachers about the characters in the play, using advanced vocabulary, such as 'mournful' and 'ashamed'.

Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being has a particularly strong impact on their academic achievement, and prepares them exceedingly well for their next school and future lives as adults. They say that they enjoy a wide range of subjects and activities at school. The curriculum includes outstanding opportunities for enriching their learning through educational visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Links with local organisations, such as accepting the invitation to take part in the Miss Dorothy.com project, greatly increase pupils' understanding of the community in which they live. The curriculum also effectively enables pupils to learn about belonging to the wider community. They celebrate One World Week, for example, by thinking about pupils less fortunate than themselves in Peru. They know a great deal about how to stay healthy and safe, as is demonstrated by so many enjoying eating broccoli at lunchtime. Pupils' behaviour is almost always excellent, and their attendance is good. They know that bullying is unacceptable and that staff are always there to turn to if they are worried at school.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior teachers pull together as a strong and united team. They forge good partnerships with others in their efforts to ensure that all pupils achieve well. Pupils' learning needs are first priority, and there is always a senior member of staff available to keep the school running smoothly and to deal with any unforeseen emergencies. Since the previous inspection, the school has greatly improved procedures for assessing pupils and tracking their progress. Leaders and managers use this information well in order to identify where improvements can be made. They quickly set about the task of dealing with any weaknesses. In mathematics, for example, standards have improved because of a stronger focus on calculation, and there is clear evidence of improvement in writing for boys and for higher attaining pupils. The strength of the senior leadership team, along with evidence of improving standards, gives the school good capacity to continue to improve in the future.

Many parents are delighted with the school's response to their request to start a breakfast club, and an increasing number of pupils now have an enjoyable and healthy start to their day. The school tackles important issues, for example concerns about road traffic and parking in the area at the start and end of the school day. The school's travel plan has involved much consultation with stakeholders, including parents. However, consultation with stakeholders, including parents, has not recently extended to any wide-ranging gathering of views about the quality of education on offer. Consequently, not all stakeholders feel that they have sufficient voice in determining how the school might improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the EYFS, including those who do not speak English, make good progress because of good teaching and learning. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most children achieve nearly all the national learning goals and some are working beyond them. Staff work as a team to ensure that children have continual opportunities to learn to get along well together, talk with different adults and increase their confidence. Leadership and management are outstanding. In the short time since the unit was completed, excellent direction and organisation has ensured that new national guidance is securely in place, so that children have regular planned contact with adults, as well as chances to select their own activities. There is a strong commitment to children's welfare and, as a result, children make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Staff take careful note of what children can already do, and plan 'next steps' in their learning very thoroughly. As a result, children make good progress in communication, language and literacy and in problem solving, reasoning and number. Boys often start Reception with weaker writing skills than girls, but they quickly develop enjoyment of writing because of recent efforts of staff to capture their interest. Since the previous inspection, improving curriculum provision for children to learn outdoors has been restricted by the building project and by staffing changes. However, the school has this aspect of development well in hand.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend consultation with stakeholders, including parents, so that everyone contributes towards school improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Huddersfield, HD2 2BJ

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school, I thoroughly enjoyed my day with you. You answered all my questions very thoughtfully and politely, and I was impressed with how well you behaved and listened to teachers in lessons. There are more children in your school than in many others, and it was good to see you all getting along so well together, and making new children feel settled and happy. You know a lot about how to keep yourselves healthy and safe, and you are very well prepared for going to secondary schools at the end of Year 6.

I judge that you go to a good school. Teachers and other adults care about you a great deal and work hard to make sure that you do as well as you can. This is why you have extra help if you need it, and all make good progress. I can see why you told me how much you enjoy school. You have such a lot of interesting and exciting things to do, such as visiting the theatre and a mosque, and taking part in One World Week. The Year 6 work about 'The Milliner's Shop' looks fascinating, Reception children's writing about super heroes looks exciting and the clay fruit and vegetables that you made with a visiting artist made me want to reach out and eat them!

Many of you love the breakfast club, and taking part in Miss Dorothy.com is a wonderful opportunity for you to learn about other people in your community.

Your headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior teachers lead the school well. They work hard to make sure that it keeps on getting better all the time. They are pleased that your writing is improving, but are doing everything to make sure that it gets even better still. There is one important thing that the school could do more of – that is asking people in the school community what they think about your school, and how they think it might improve even more. You can help by continuing to make sensible suggestions through the school council. Congratulations on gaining the Sportsmark for your suggestions about improving outdoor play.