

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122816
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340220
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Roy Bowers 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	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Clements
Headteacher	Stephen Dent
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited ten lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils, parents and a local authority officer. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including records for the tracking of pupils' progress, the school development plan, individual education plans, headteacher's reports to the governors, health and safety policies, curriculum policies and a range of other policies and plans. The inspectors also took account of the 45 parental questionnaires which were returned.

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

- Pupils' progress in all classes in reading, writing and mathematics
- The degree of challenge in lessons for the more able pupils
- Provision for the most vulnerable pupils
- How effectively leaders at all levels check the quality of the school's work and use the information for future improvements.

Information about the school

This is a small catholic primary school which serves the Bircotes and Harworth areas to the south of Doncaster. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and / or disabilities is above average. The school makes provision for nursery and reception aged children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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.

Over recent years, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been consistently significantly below average. The attainment of pupils in the current Year 6 is exceptionally low. Only a small minority of pupils attain above the levels expected for their age throughout the school.

Pupils' progress is satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. However, it is inadequate in Key Stage 2. The most recent school data show that over the past year, only a very small minority of pupils in Key Stage 2 made good progress, whereas approximately half the number of pupils did not make the progress expected for pupils of their age. Most pupils with special educational needs and / or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they are well supported by skilled and caring teaching assistants.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show positive attitudes to each other and are caring and respectful. Pupils willingly undertake the tasks set by the teachers and cooperate well when required. Most pupils are polite and kind, and say that they enjoy coming to school. During the inspection, the vast majority of pupils conducted themselves well. However, the headteacher reports that a small number of pupils sometimes behave in an unacceptable manner and disrupt the learning of others. Pupils say that there are only rare instances of bullying, and are confident that staff will sort any problems if required. The school works effectively with outside agencies to ensure that pupils, especially the most vulnerable, receive good quality care. Although there was some good teaching seen during the inspection, too much teaching over recent years has been inadequate. Information from the school shows that teaching has improved since the last inspection. However, there is still not sufficient good teaching to raise pupils' attainment quickly enough. Learning in the majority of lessons is only satisfactory. This is because teachers are not clear enough about what they want the pupils to learn and the small steps which build on pupils' levels of skills and knowledge are not planned carefully enough. The more able pupils in most classes are not challenged sufficiently because teachers' expectations are often too low, and the work given to them is too easy.

The recently revised marking policy is beginning to have a positive impact on academic

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guidance. However, the quality of marking is still inconsistent and often fails to provide pupils with advice on how to improve. Although many pupils are aware that they have targets for improvement, they do not know how to achieve them because they are not yet embedded as a regular aspect of pupils' learning. Consequently, they have little impact upon pupils' achievement.

The curriculum provides a wide range of enrichment activities including many visits to places of interest. Although some teachers take opportunities to reinforce pupils' basic skills through subjects other than literacy and numeracy lessons, it is inconsistent.

At the time of the last inspection, the school received a good level of support from the local authority. Pupils' attainment began to rise and their progress improved. However, intensive support for the school was reduced in 2007 and the rate of improvement slowed significantly. Improvement was also hindered by staff instability. The staffing is now more stable and the local authority support has recently resumed. The school has introduced an improved tracking system which gives leaders a clearer understanding of pupils' progress. However, leaders are aware that the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school is not currently sufficiently rigorous to bring about rapid and sustained improvement. This lack of rigour, and reliance on the local authority, shows that the school has not yet demonstrated the capacity for sustained improvement.

Although the quality of the provision for the children in the Nursery is satisfactory and is overseen by a teacher, the school is required by legislation to have a teacher present with the children during the normal teaching time. Currently, this is not the case.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement by:
 - raising pupils' attainment and improving progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2.
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who exceed their age related levels in reading, writing and mathematics in all key stages.
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that the majority of teaching is good or better and, as a matter of urgency, ensuring that all inadequate teaching is eliminated.
 - ensuring that all teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and the small steps which build on pupils' levels of skills and knowledge, are planned carefully.
 - ensuring that teachers have higher expectations of the more able pupils and their work is carefully matched to their capabilities so that they receive sufficient challenge.
 - improving the quality of the academic guidance given to pupils.

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- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the work of the school more rigorously to: identify clearly the priorities for improvement; set challenging targets; monitor the progress made by all groups of pupils and hold staff to account for pupils' progress.
 - Ensure that the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets statutory requirements.

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

Although pupils' attainment rose rapidly from 2005 to 2007, mainly due to improvements in mathematics, it fell in 2008 due to pupils' exceptionally low test results in English, with only one-third of pupils reaching the expected level in writing. In the 2009 end of Key Stage 2 tests, although pupils' attainment in writing and English improved from 2008, attainment in mathematics fell sharply. Test results consistently show that only a very small minority of pupils attain the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key stage 2.

Progress and learning is inadequate because pupils fail to make sufficient progress in Key Stage 2. During the past year, in one year group in Key Stage 2, no pupil achieved the expected progress in mathematics and only one pupil achieved it in writing. In most classes throughout the school, very few pupils make better than expected progress. Pupils' lack of attainment in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics means that they are not prepared well enough for the next stages of their learning.

Pupils feel safe and cared for. They say that instances of bullying are rare and they are confident that teachers will deal with them well if necessary. Pupils of all backgrounds get on well with each other and are usually courteous and polite. Pupils enjoy eating healthily at lunchtimes and understand what constitutes a balanced diet. They enthusiastically join in with sporting activities.

Pupils have a good awareness and understanding of different cultures and backgrounds. Their awareness of helping others is heightened by raising money for a number of charities and through the good links with the local community organisations such as the hospice. Pupils are keen to express their views through the school council and are proud of their contributions to school improvement, such as the resurfacing of the play area. Pupils' attendance is broadly average and has risen in recent years due to a number of initiatives put in place by the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school reports that, over recent years, staff instability has resulted in a number of different temporary teachers working with the pupils. The varying quality of this teaching has contributed to the pupils' achievement being inadequate. Currently, although there is some good teaching, too much is only satisfactory and some is still inadequate. In too many lessons, teachers are not clear about what they want pupils to learn and do not guide pupils sufficiently through the small steps which help ensure effective learning. Teachers' expectations of the more able pupils are too low and work given fails to challenge them sufficiently. The strong relationships between adults and pupils help ensure that most lessons are orderly and calm. Skilled teaching assistants often provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and / or disabilities. In a few instances, the care and support provided by the teaching assistants for the most vulnerable pupils and their families is outstanding.

The curriculum provides effectively for pupils' personal, moral and social development. Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss their feelings and to be aware that others may have different views and beliefs which must be respected. Good induction arrangements when pupils first enter into the Nursery and strong links with local secondary schools help pupils settle quickly into their new surroundings and feel part of the school community.

Assemblies and a range of other activities such as Continental week, Asian week and African week contribute to pupils' good understanding of people and traditions from other cultures. Pupils enjoy taking part in activities out of school, such as the residential experience on Lindisfarne where they engage in a variety of activities covering many

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areas of the curriculum. There are several after-school clubs which provide additional opportunities in activities such as tennis, tag-rugby and music. Although some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to practise their basic literacy and numeracy skills in other curriculum subjects, it is inconsistent. All areas of the curriculum are covered in all key stages, but in many subjects there is no structure which allows teachers to build progressively on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
	4
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?

Staff and governors share a genuine desire to improve pupils' life chances and have successfully established a caring ethos. The pastoral care given to all pupils, especially the most vulnerable, is strong and shows the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. Following the last inspection, and with substantial support from the local authority, the emphasis began to be placed more firmly on improving pupils' academic progress. Initially, this was successful and attainment and progress started to rise. However, once the support from the local authority was reduced, leaders were unable to sustain the momentum. Staff absence also hindered improvements. Although the headteacher was aware that systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school were not sufficiently rigorous, improvements have only recently been instigated, again with local authority support. Consequently, they are not yet fully developed or embedded and are having only a limited impact on raising pupils' achievement. This lack of rigour in monitoring and evaluation means that leaders and governors have not accurately identified the priorities for immediate improvement, set challenging targets, monitored the progress made by all groups of pupils or held staff to account for pupils' progress.

Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's progress. Their views are canvassed and valued. Commitment to community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has a good knowledge of the pastoral needs of its pupils and their families and provides a good level of support when necessary. The school is aware that the links with the communities outside of the local area could be developed further. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding and health and safety procedures were in place and met requirements.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
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	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

Although children's attainment on entry into the Nursery is varied, the majority enter with skills that are below those typical for children of that age, especially in literacy and communication. Children make satisfactory progress but, because of their low starting points, by the time pupils enter Year 1 their attainment remains below average. Children's safety and welfare are promoted well. Good links with parents ensure that children's emotional and welfare needs are identified and accommodated from the start. The caring relationships between the adults and children is evident and gives the children confidence to join in with all activities. Children are happy, enjoy coming to school and most behave well. Good induction programmes and clear daily routines help children settle in quickly. The small number of children in the Nursery enables the adults to provide close individual support and guidance.

Planning reflects the main areas of learning and staff provide a wide range of activities including access to the outdoor area. The school is aware that lesson planning does not detail well enough what children are expected to learn from the activities and children's next steps in learning are not always evident. Consequently, opportunities are not always taken to extend children's learning, especially for the more able.

Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Although provision in the Nursery is overseen by a teacher, the school is required by legislation to have a teacher present with the children during the normal teaching time. Currently, this is not the case. The teacher and Nursery leader often use skilful questioning to develop a child's understanding and encourage them to express their thoughts through talking. However, some of the teaching assistants do not have such highly developed skills and opportunities to extend children's language are not always taken.

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Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader and Nursery leader work together well and are developing the assessment system so that it provides even more detailed information about children's progress in their learning.

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

Almost all of the parents who responded to the questionnaire and who spoke to the inspectors were very positive about the school. Very few concerns were raised by parents.

Although there were only a few comments on the questionnaires, many of those who spoke to the inspectors commented on the quality of care that the children receive in school. Parents also say that their children enjoy school and like their teachers. The findings of the inspection reflected these views.

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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 86 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	71	13	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	73	11	24	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	42	25	56	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	56	18	40	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	62	15	33	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	58	17	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	51	20	44	2	4	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)	25	56	15	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	56	16	36	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	36	26	58	0	0	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	33	28	62	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	24	53	20	44	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	62	16	36	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.



1 October 2009

Dear Children

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

Thank you for making our recent visit to your school such a pleasurable experience. It was a delight to talk to you and hear all about your school. You told us that the adults in the school work hard to take care of you. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy coming to school and were impressed with your attitudes to your learning. Well done!

We have decided your school is not doing as well as it should and needs some extra help. Other inspectors will be visiting your school regularly to check its progress. Having looked closely at your work, we have judged that many of you are not making enough progress and reaching high enough standards. We have, therefore, asked your headteacher and governors to:

- help you all make better progress and reach higher standards, especially in Key Stage 2
- provide you with even more opportunities for you to practise your skills in reading, writing and mathematics
- make sure that there is more good teaching throughout the school and the guidance you receive to help you improve is even better
- make sure that teachers plan carefully those small steps which help you learn well
- make sure that, for those of you who are already doing well, teachers expect even more from you and set you even harder work
- make sure that those teachers with special responsibility for ensuring that you achieve well keep a careful eye on how well you are doing and help you learn even better.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and coming to school as often as you can.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers

Her Majesty's Inspector

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