

St Patrick's RC Primary and Nursery School

Lee Street, Oldham, Lancashire OL8 1EF

Inspection dates

28–29 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

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| 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

- In this harmonious and culturally diverse school, the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and the diocese have worked tirelessly to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. As a result, outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching are now good.
- Governors hold senior leaders to account and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work together exceptionally well to ensure that pupils from a wide range of backgrounds enjoy learning and make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour in all respects is good. They are courteous and conscientious 'global citizens', who respect and celebrate each other's differences.
- The school has excellent relationships with parents. Parents are of the opinion that their children are safe, well looked after and making good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their appreciation of British values are promoted well.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught exceptionally well. Almost every pupil was secure in phonics skills and knowledge at the national screening check this year.
- All groups of pupils make good and often outstanding progress. At the end of Year 6, in 2015, a much higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils made more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment has improved year on year in all subjects at the end of key stages 1 and 2. In 2015 attainment was the best that it has been for at least the last five years.
- The early years provision, including teaching and children's progress, is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some pupils are not confident and resilient learners.
- In mathematics, some teaching does not deepen pupils' understanding sufficiently to enable them to master concepts.
- In the early years provision, outdoor learning areas are not yet fully utilised to develop children's reading, writing and mathematics skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - developing pupils' resilience and confidence to try out new things and learn from their mistakes
 - deepening pupils' understanding and mastery of mathematics.

- Further enhance the early years provision by:
 - ensuring that outdoor learning areas are fully utilised to develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- This is a harmonious school that works in close partnership with parents, the diocese, the community and the local authority. The headteacher, supported by a capable and effective senior leadership team and well-informed governors, has worked tirelessly to ensure that the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- In this school, all staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils enjoy learning, achieve well and develop the necessary social skills required for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers are set challenging targets. These are linked to the school's priorities and focus on teachers' responsibility to ensure that all pupils make at least good progress. Regular pupil progress meetings help senior leaders identify and provide support to any pupils in danger of falling behind.
- Teachers benefit from high-quality training, tailored to their individual development needs. Teachers who spoke to inspectors, including those new to the profession, were highly appreciative of their professional development opportunities, which they say help to improve their teaching practice.
- Middle leaders responsible for English, mathematics and assessing pupils' performance, play a central role in improving the quality of teaching and learning. They regularly observe teaching, assess the quality of teachers' planning, and check the standard of work in pupils' books. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching in subjects such as history, science and religious education, though much improved since the previous inspection, are not quite as well developed.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned and exciting curriculum, designed to broaden their experiences and engage their interest. Many opportunities are available for pupils to refine their reading and mathematics skills across all subjects. Pupils' writing skills are especially well promoted, particularly in science where they have many opportunities to create experiments and record their findings.
- Senior leaders' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is outstanding. Respect, harmony and understanding are central to the school's values and its aim of ensuring that pupils become upstanding 'global citizens'. Pupils regularly engage in prayer, and have a good understanding of the major world faiths, including Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. They raise money for charitable causes, enjoy the arts, learn French in key stage 2 and play various musical instruments, including the cello, violin, trumpet and trombone. Pupils participate in high-profile cultural events. For example, during the inspection Year 4 pupils participated in a musical concert with the Halle Orchestra.
- British values are reinforced throughout the school in various exhibitions and displays. Pupils are fully aware of the culturally diverse nature of British society and celebrate holy days in various religious calendars. Pupils enjoy many opportunities to understand democracy. They show their maturity when making written applications for posts of responsibility.
- St Patrick's is well known for its sporting excellence as shown by the many trophies, shields and cups on display around the school. The primary school sports fund is exceptionally well spent to train junior play leaders, encourage healthy lifestyles, help children in the early years to keep fit and purchase sports kits. Funding has increased participation in extra-curricular sporting activities, including rugby, football, dance and athletics, and helped to enhance teachers' skills in teaching the physical education curriculum.
- The school's work with parents is excellent. The work of the extended services manager, responsible for engaging parents in school activities and in the education of their children, is highly effective. All parents who completed the school's questionnaire were of the view that their children are safe, happy and making good progress. The school has an excellent record of 'signing' parents up for accredited courses in English, mathematics and acquiring English as an additional language.
- The diocese has brokered effective support from within the local cluster of schools. This has included helping teachers to refine their marking and assessment procedures and improving standards in writing. Local authority support has included brokering specialist advice which has contributed to improving the quality of early years provision.
- **The governance of the school**
 - After an external review of governance a core group, comprising governors and representatives from the diocese and local authority, was set up to develop the skills of governors and improve the governing body's effectiveness. Having served its purpose, the core group has now disbanded, transferring all responsibilities to the governing body's standards committee.
 - Governors now hold the school robustly to account and rigorously challenge any underperformance in relation to both teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors are knowledgeable and trained well; all

have specific skills to bring to their roles, enabling them to ask the right questions and support the school's continuing improvement.

- Governors know that the quality of teaching is good, because they receive regular reports from the headteacher and senior leaders and have a good understanding of data on pupils' performance. In addition to this, they regularly come into school to see for themselves. Governors are prepared to reward teachers for raising standards and meeting their targets.
- Governors know that pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good and outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics and to help pupils to fully participate in all aspects of school life.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's procedures for safeguarding children are stringent. All members of staff are trained well in areas such as child protection. Staff know exactly what to do if they are concerned about the safety or welfare of any pupil.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of pupils' skills and abilities and use data and assessment information on pupils' prior learning to plan activities that ensure that they make at least good progress in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- All teachers take a consistent approach to assessing the quality of pupils' work. Teachers give feedback in line with school policies, typically allowing time for pupils to study their comments and improve their work as a result. As a result of the effective feedback they receive, most pupils can say precisely what they need to do to improve their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together to ensure that pupils of different abilities make good progress. This was exemplified in a key stage 2 mathematics class where pupils were learning about the characteristics of different numbers. Pupils developed their understanding of multiplication effectively because tasks were carefully designed to reinforce and deepen their understanding.
- Specialist support provided for pupils still in the process of acquiring English is exemplary. Teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers help pupils to participate in lessons at their own pace and, when possible, in their first language. This ensures that pupils learn English quickly and make accelerated progress in their learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge in all areas of the curriculum. Their enthusiasm for teaching is often infectious, making pupils want to learn and produce good work. This was exemplified in a key stage 1 English class where pupils were preparing to write an 'interesting story'. The teacher made sure that pupils were clear about the setting for their story, the local park, and that they were familiar with terms such as 'bandstand' and 'ornamental garden'. Once pupils knew what to do, they found it difficult to contain their excitement and were eager to start their writing, which they hoped would feature in the 'exciting writing' gallery.
- Teachers are highly skilled at developing pupils' creativity and love of books. This was evident in an upper key stage 2 English class where pupils were studying *Clockwork* by Philip Pullman. Through discussion, pupils demonstrated their good ability to empathise with the main character and decipher the book's mysterious storyline. Later, in an art lesson, pupils showed their artistic skills in their drawings, which replicated some of the sinister and macabre aspects of the story.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or or disabilities is good. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that work is set at just the right level of challenge to promote good progress. One-to-one support for pupils with complex learning needs is outstanding, delivered by highly trained and caring members of staff.
- Teachers' work to ensure that the most able pupils are fully engaged in their learning is paying off. This was evident in a lively lower key stage 2 mathematics session where pupils were learning about perimeter. While some pupils worked out the perimeter of a football pitch, knowing the length and width of two sides, others had to work out the perimeter of the penalty area using fractions. The most able pupils had to use fractions, whole numbers and centimetres in their calculations.
- Pupils are increasingly challenged to think deeply and master their mathematics skills, but this drive is at an early stage in its development.

- Teachers' work to develop pupils' listening skills and nurture their love of learning is very effective. Pupils' behaviour is often exemplary in class; they follow instructions well, enjoy finding out new things with their peers and listen to each other's views respectfully. However, pupils are not always encouraged to try out new things and learn from their mistakes. As a result, some do not attain as highly as they should.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are exceptionally proud of their school and confident that they can talk to any adult about any concerns they may have.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy. They participate in exercise and sporting activities during lunchtimes and attend after-school clubs in large numbers. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily. They learn about the dangers associated with tobacco and alcohol through personal, social and health education.
- Pupils have many opportunities to show their maturity and develop their leadership skills. They participate in a range of activities through their membership of the school council and in various roles as buddies, play leaders and assembly monitors.
- Pupils have a good understanding of internet safety. They know that they should never communicate with strangers while online and always activate privacy settings when using social media. Pupils are fully aware that they should never post pictures of themselves on the internet, or share personal information.
- Pupils have a good understanding of safe and unsafe situations. Visitors from the police, fire, ambulance and children's services help to develop pupils' appreciation of dangers and risks. Pupils learn about road safety and how to ride bicycles carefully and with consideration for other road users and pedestrians.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good most of the time. They feel that it is not good all of the time because disputes on the playground occasionally happen. However, they are clear that any 'fall outs' are resolved quickly and that people soon 'make up' again.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are of the view that behaviour is good and that their children are safe and well looked after. Governors and teachers are of this view too. The school's well-kept behaviour logs show that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils are very respectful towards each other and adults. They move around the school sensibly and safely and with due consideration for others. Pupils appreciate their school and help to ensure that buildings and playing areas are tidy and well looked after.
- Lunchtimes and playtimes are orderly; pupils enjoy taking turns and demonstrate good sporting conduct. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They take pride in their appearance and enjoy competing for weekly rewards for positive learning, acts of kindness and for being 'smarty of the week'.
- Pupils know what cyber bullying is and say that it can take place on anything connected to the internet. Older pupils who spoke to inspectors agreed that 'cyber bullying is mean' and that 'people do it because they think they won't get caught'. All pupils know that they should report any such bullying to a member of staff.
- Pupils have a good understanding of homophobic bullying and racism, which they say is 'when people are treated differently because of their religion, skin colour or because of where they come from'. They are adamant that there is no racism in school and say that 'we are all one big happy family'.
- Pupils' attendance is improving rapidly and their punctuality is good. They enjoy the friendship and learning opportunities that school provides. The school's breakfast club helps to give pupils a positive start to the day.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Senior leaders' determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning has led to significantly improved achievement since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages 1 and 2 in 2015 was the best that it had been for at least the last five years. Although mathematics was below average at the end of key stage 1 and writing below

average at the end of key stage 2, pupils' overall attainment was in line with the national average. This represents at least good progress from the majority of pupils' low starting points on entry to the Nursery class.

- At the end of Year 6 in 2015, all groups of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, made at least expected progress. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was better than this. The majority made better than expected progress in writing and a much higher-than-average proportion made better than expected progress in reading and mathematics.
- School assessment information and work in pupils' books show that all pupils made at least the expected progress in all year groups in 2015. Pupils are now making good and sometimes outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Historically pupils' performance in phonics has been good, with a slight dip in 2015. However, pupils' performance this year is exemplary. Almost all pupils were secure in their phonics skills and knowledge at the national screening check this year. All pupils were secure at the phonics check in Year 2. Pupils enjoy reading; they are highly curious and enjoy immersing themselves in books of different genres. Teachers are eager to capitalise on pupils' enthusiasm and are introducing them to an increasingly wide range of authors.
- Pupils' progress in writing is good. Senior leaders' investment in training and resources and the good practice they have learned from colleagues in the diocesan school partnership has come to fruition. Pupils' thoughtful and imaginative writing is displayed throughout the school. All pupils aspire to gain one of the school's highest writing accolades, which is to take the 'walk of fame' to see their work exhibited in the writing hall of fame. Pupils refine their writing skills in subjects such as science, history and religious education.
- Almost all pupils are from second and third generation minority ethnic groups. Most speak English as an additional language. Both the school's own assessment information and national data indicate that these pupils perform at least as well as their peers in school and similar groups of pupils nationally. However, the school has an increasingly large number of pupils, mainly from Eastern European countries, with little or no English. Excellent relationships with parents, stringent monitoring procedures and well-trained, conscientious staff ensure that these pupils make rapid progress and are soon able to learn alongside their peers in class.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are nurtured and supported well by caring staff. One-to-one support for pupils with complex learning needs is excellent. This good provision, coupled with the good management of the special educational needs coordinator, ensures that these pupils make speedy progress, often from very low starting points.
- Senior leaders ensure that funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Throughout each year group, all such pupils made at least the expected progress in all subjects in 2015. Good teaching, high expectations of pupils' achievement and well-targeted support helps to ensure that there are no significant differences between the performance of disadvantaged pupils, their peers in school, or other pupils nationally.
- The majority of pupils take great pride in the presentation of their mathematics work. They enjoy being challenged and like to compete to improve their scores during regular assessment activities. Pupils have lots of opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in subjects such as science and geography and have a good appreciation of the importance of good calculation and analytical skills in everyday activities such as shopping and problem solving. Pupils' books show that they are regularly challenged and make good progress. However, additional challenges and 'harder' work do not always deepen pupils' understanding or mastery of mathematics.

Early years provision

is good

- All aspects of the early years provision, including teaching, work with parents and children's progress are good. The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of provision. She has developed an action plan in order to tackle the relatively weaker areas of children's learning.
- Senior leaders' comprehensive data and assessment information indicates that the overwhelming majority of children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities much lower than those expected for their age, in all areas of learning.
- At the time of the previous inspection, although most children made good progress, very few attained a good level of development by the end of Reception. The picture last year showed improvement, with

approximately half of the children attaining a good level of development.

- Children are now making accelerated progress. This is because of the passionate and caring work of teachers and teaching assistants, rigorous tracking of children's progress and excellent relationships with parents. In addition to this, children benefit from a good curriculum, which is planned around their cultural heritage.
- Children learn in a very stimulating indoor learning environment. Here they thrive because teachers and teaching assistants expect great things of them. In addition to this, children have the freedom to decide what to pursue and with whom to engage. Staff are always at hand, assessing children's development and gently directing their learning when necessary.
- Adults have very high expectations of pupils, as was evident during two phonics sessions in the Reception class. In one group children demonstrated their good pronunciation and word recognition skills as they confidently identified and read out words such as 'pool', 'crayon' and 'delay', while in another group children shared their 'beautiful writing' in sentences such as 'The monkey hurt his toe'.
- Children play sensibly and safely at all times; this includes when using the outdoor learning and playing areas. The majority of children in the Nursery class enjoy engaging in independent activities such as measuring, colouring and building various structures. Staff focus on developing children's coordination skills and ability to grip objects in preparation for writing in the Reception class and beyond.
- Safeguarding is given a very high priority in both the Nursery and Reception classes. The school's vigilant staff keep children safe.
- Staff are continually thinking of ways to engage with parents, who have many opportunities to come into the early years provision to see what their children are learning. In addition to this, classes are available to help parents improve their English and to furnish them with the skills to help early years staff by charting their children's progress and development at home.
- Parents are of the view that their children are safe, well looked after and making good progress. Those who spoke with inspectors had a good understanding of their child's progress and appreciated the teachers' work. Senior leaders have taken steps to improve learning by giving children in the Reception class the same continuous access to outdoor provision as enjoyed by the Nursery children. However, while outdoor learning and play areas are used regularly provision is not linked clearly enough to developing children's skills in various areas of learning, including reading, writing and mathematics. Senior leaders are aware of this and improving outdoor provision is a priority area for development.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 105726 |
| Local authority | Oldham |
| Inspection number | 10002163 |

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 | 238 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Philip Sumner |
| Headteacher | Helen Halliwell |
| Telephone number | 0161 633 0537 |
| Website | www.st-patricks.oldham.sch.uk |
| Email address | head@st-patricks.oldham.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 17–18 June 2014 |

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- A much larger than average proportion of pupils is supported through pupil premium funding. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups, and most speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the early years provision attend the Reception class on a full-time basis and the Nursery class on a part-time basis.
- The school meets current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school's website meets requirements for the publication of information.
- The school runs before- and after-school services. These formed part of the inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, three staff have been appointed, including two newly qualified teachers. The governing body has been reorganised and includes three new members.
- An increasing number of pupils enter the school throughout the school year with little or no English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. A joint observation was carried out with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised in class and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 84 responses from parents to a questionnaire administered at the time of the inspection and four text responses. Inspectors met informally with parents at the beginning of the school day and held formal meetings with three parents. Responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by nine members of staff and 23 pupils were also considered.
- Two meetings were held with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. Meetings were held with subject leaders responsible for English and mathematics. Meetings were also held with leaders responsible for assessing pupils' learning and progress, the early years provision and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Meetings were held with a representative from the local authority, a local leader of education and a subject leader in education. A telephone conversation took place with an early years leader from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included information about pupils' progress, the school's reviews of its own performance, development plans, checks on the quality of teaching, safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Peach

Ofsted Inspector

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