

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100045
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	307284
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Maria Coles

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 on roll	
School	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Margaret Harvey
Headteacher	Mr Sean Cranitch
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2003
School address	Holmes Road London NW5 3AH
Telephone number	020 7267 1200
Fax number	020 7485 4691

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Patrick's is a popular, one form entry school with 26 place nursery. The school serves an area with some pockets of social deprivation and has a higher than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. There is a very high percentage of ethnic minority pupils mainly of Black British and African, White British and White Irish heritage. There are high numbers of pupils with English as an additional language. There are above average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD), the majority of who are slow learners or have behavioural problems. The vast majority of children follow the Catholic faith. There are more girls in the school than boys. The school is one of the oldest Catholic schools in the city of London. The school has been through difficult times in the last three years with several changes of headteacher and high staff turnover.

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 is a good and improving school. In a short time, the headteacher has brought stability to the school. He is ably supported by the acting deputy headteacher and the newly appointed senior leadership team. This is enabling the school to continue with its development programme, and gives the school a good capacity to improve.

Children enter school with skills in language and communication well below those expected for their age. Many are at early stages of English acquisition. However, standards are average by the time pupils leave the school and achievement is good. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage but not all reach the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1 because of their very low starting points. The rate and consistency of progress is uneven, being less secure in Key Stage 1. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 as pupils become more proficient and fluent in English and teachers match work better to pupils' varying abilities. Consequently, greater numbers of pupils achieve in line with nationally expected levels in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in writing for boys had been an area of underachievement in the past but current interventions are raising standards.

Although teaching is good overall with some outstanding teaching in classes for older pupils, it is inconsistent. This is because teaching is more clearly focused on ensuring it meets all pupils' needs in Key Stage 2 than elsewhere. Higher attainers are challenged to tackle more complex and open tasks, whilst lower attainers have work set that enables them to succeed. During good lessons, the teaching assistants are involved in lesson planning. Consequently, they make an effective contribution to pupils' learning, and in these classes pupils make faster progress. However, where these factors are not in place the pace of learning slows and pupils' progress slows. The school's analysis and use of its performance data are only just beginning to be used to track pupils' progress more effectively. The school recognises that to improve standards further this is an area needing development. Pupils know their individual targets. However, analysis of data, use of marking and year, class and school assessments are not sufficiently developed.

Curriculum provision is good. It provides a solid academic grounding for pupils and seeks to enhance their enjoyment in learning. The curriculum is adapted well to link subjects together in topics so that time is freed up to provide greater opportunities for sporting and musical activities. The Foundation Stage curriculum is limited in its provision of independent learning opportunities.

Pupils' personal development is good. The headteacher is the driving force behind eradicating poor behaviour. Pupils now clearly enjoy school and demonstrate very positive attitudes to work. They understand the importance for their futures of doing well. As one commented, 'If you get a good education, when you grow up, you get a good job'. Spiritual and emotional well being is ably promoted through the Catholic ethos and gives the school a great sense of unity. Care and welfare of pupils is supported well through effective and carefully maintained systems. Parents are confident that their children are safe. As one parent commented, 'I know my children are in a safe environment and are well cared for. I have peace of mind'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The majority of children start in the Nursery with literacy skills and personal development well below that expected for their age. Over half of the children start with little or no English. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. By the time they start Year 1, around half have achieved their expected goals because of a strong focus on improving literacy and children's personal development. Teacher's planning and assessment do not always take account of children's individual needs although all the areas of learning are adequately covered. The range of activities offered is narrow and children do not have sufficient opportunities to make decisions for themselves. For example, all materials were given to them to make pictures of skeletons with little opportunities to choose their own designs. The outdoor area is not consistently used to extend the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement through improving teaching, the curriculum and the use of the external area in the Foundation Stage.
- Raise the quality of teaching to that of the best by improving the use of marking, assessment and tracking data, and the effectiveness of teaching assistants.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter school with levels below that expected for their age. By the end of Year 2, the standards that pupils reach are broadly average and achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, standards are average, with many pupils reaching higher levels in English and mathematics. Achievement is good, includes those pupils who are lower attainers or who have behavioural problems. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress in line with their peers. Pupils requiring specific help benefit from detailed steps for learning which are reviewed regularly and supported well in classes so that their progress is maintained. The school recognises it needs to extend this support for the more able and gifted and talented pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

A parent remarked, 'My child loves school and cannot wait to go to school everyday'. Pupils confirmed that, 'We love school because school helps us to learn new things, we do hard work, get good education and meet friends.' Relationships are very good and pupils know that they can talk to staff if they have any personal concerns. They feel very safe because they know that if any bullying occurs, adults are there to support them. Behaviour is good. Learning mentors effectively support pupils and their families to improve attendance and their behaviour. Attendance is now average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils celebrate different faiths and cultures well. They show great respect and tolerance towards the needs of others. Pupils are developing a strong commitment to healthy lifestyles through the school's specific emphasis on healthy eating and sporting activities. Pupils' contribution to the school community is good. They take responsibility seriously and discharge their duties as councillors effectively. Opportunities for pupils to initiate and take a lead on projects are limited. However, strengths in pupils' personal development and well-being combined with academic skills equip them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The lessons observed during the inspection were good overall with some satisfactory and some outstanding lessons. In the best lessons, teacher delivery was exciting, stimulating and maintaining pupil interest. Questioning is used well to reinforce teaching points, and tasks were very well matched to meet the varying needs of pupils. Where work was not well matched to pupils' varying abilities or when the same worksheet was given to everyone, progress was limited. Teaching for those pupils with LDD is good. Individual targets for pupils are appropriately set in English, mathematics and in supporting emotional and behavioural development. These are tracked well and modified to meet changing needs. Marking is not consistently effective in helping pupils to understand what they already know, and to tell them what they have to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

All statutory requirements are met, and the curriculum is fully responsive to the needs of pupils in this multicultural community. For example, in history, pupils have been exploring the African culture through music, dance, and art. An appropriate focus is given to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Music provision is strong, and opportunities to play instruments, sing and perform, add significantly to achievement and motivates pupils. The new topic approach ensures that pupils' learning is made more meaningful and enjoyable. The curriculum is further enriched by visits to local places of interest as well as receiving visitors to school. Celebrations such as Black History Month, Christmas and Book Weeks bring the curriculum to life. Year 6 pupils take part in a residential visit where they learn about a contrasting environment and develop well their personal skills such as teamwork and co-operation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care and support for pupils is a high priority for the school. Staff respond to pupils' concerns promptly. The school makes good use of outside agencies to support and guide pupils. The needs of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who at the early stages of acquiring English are identified early. Strategies and interventions to support their learning and progress are effective. Risk assessments and child protection procedures are firmly established and staff have received training. Pupils know their targets for improvement in English and mathematics and the school provides good support for them to attain these. Systems for tracking individual pupils' progress are recognised by the school as an area for improvement. They are used better in Key Stage 2 but this is not consistent practice in all year groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has responded well to the many difficulties that the school has faced and has enabled it to improve. His accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses has meant effective monitoring systems are in place that have successfully secured higher standards

and improved achievement for all pupils. The reorganisation of the leadership team has enhanced the school's capacity for improvement by enabling all involved to have a clearer view of required changes. Key stage and subject leaders have taken up new responsibilities and now successfully monitor learning in order to ensure pupils' progress. The experienced governing body supports the school's work well and effectively promotes the school's profile within the local parish. However, they have still to develop their strategic role in terms of focusing on changes and challenging their impact.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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?	3

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, London, NW5 3AH

Thank you for making us feel so welcome at your school. We were very impressed with your positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. We agree with your parents that the school is a safe, happy place where all the adults take good care of you. A special thanks to the school council for their letter. It made us feel at home.

We think your school is a good school. Most of your teachers make sure your lessons are interesting and help you to do your best so that most of you are now making good progress in your learning. We enjoyed your singing and drama activities. I don't think I am good enough to join the fife players though!

Mr Cranitch and the staff have worked hard to make this all happen and we think that his leadership is good.

There are a few things that we would like to see improved. These are:

- a wider range of learning opportunities for children in the Nursery and Reception, so that everybody gets a good start to their school life
- more use and better quality of marking in your books so that it helps you to understand what you need to do next to improve your work
- where the teaching assistants help you it makes a real difference and we have asked the school to make sure they are working more closely with you in lessons.

We wish you all the best for the future and hope you continue to do well.

Best Wishes

Maria Coles

Lead Inspector