

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104660
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	308643
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Janette Corlett

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	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms S Conway
Headteacher	Mr T Kirwan
Date of previous school inspection	September 2003
School address	Upper Hill Street Liverpool Merseyside L8 5UX
Telephone number	0151 7091062
Fax number	0151 7079367

Age group	3–11
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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: achievement and standards; care, guidance and support; teaching and learning. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data; the school's own assessment records and policies; observations of the school at work; discussions with staff and pupils; parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but there is no evidence to suggest that the school's own evaluations were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school is situated in an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. At St Patrick's 55% of the pupils are eligible to receive free school meals, which is very high compared with the national picture. Children's attainment levels on entry to the Nursery are very low. There is a rich variety of cultures and heritage in the area. Almost 40% of pupils are from families belonging to minority ethnic groups. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is 16%, and this is increasing. Many of these pupils are in the earliest stages of learning English. The number of pupils entering and leaving the school at other than the usual times is higher than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The school holds an impressive variety of awards, including:

- Investor in People status
- National Healthy Schools Award
- Activemark Gold
- Artsmark Gold
- ICT Mark
- Dyslexia-Friendly School Award
- Fairtrade School Award
- Basic Skills Quality Mark
- International Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Patrick's is an outstanding school. It accepts pupils from a wide range of cultures and abilities and quickly settles them in to its calm and purposeful learning environment. Parents speak highly of the school. They say, 'It has an exceptionally caring attitude towards children', and that children want to, 'get up very early as they like coming to school so much'. There are well established routines and high expectations, and the care, guidance and support offered to pupils is excellent. As a result, pupils make exceptional progress in their personal development.

The great majority of pupils make outstanding progress academically. Well qualified teaching assistants and learning mentors effectively support individuals, small groups of pupils and their families. This results in confident learners who thoroughly enjoy coming to school and achieve very well. Pupils' progress in writing, while good throughout the school, is less rapid than that in reading, mathematics and science, and not enough more able pupils reach the highest levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. The standards achieved by the school fluctuate from year to year, depending upon factors such as pupils' skills and levels of development on entry. Nevertheless, overall standards are consistently in line with the national average at the end of Year 2, and above average at the end of Year 6.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They demonstrate a very good degree of mutual support and understanding. For example, Friendship Stops in the playground ensure that no pupils are left out of playtime activities, and a strong buddy system encourages older pupils to look after the younger ones. There is very little bullying and few racist incidents occur because pupils have learned to treat one another in the way in which they would like to be treated. All adults have high expectations of good manners and behaviour. Their kind and courteous approach means that pupils respond with exemplary behaviour, very positive attitudes to learning and high self-esteem. Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of how to keep healthy, both within and outside the school. They contribute to the local and worldwide community in a number of ways and talk confidently about the school's role in improving things. For example, pupils take part in the international project to 'Make Poverty History' and have undertaken a local transport study to improve traffic conditions in the area. Strong international links ensure pupils' awareness of social and cultural diversity, and they particularly enjoy opportunities to sample food and learn about traditional dances and art from all over the world. In this rich and nurturing environment pupils love coming to school, have great trust in their teachers and take pride in their achievements. Attendance rates are satisfactory owing to a variety of outside factors affecting the welfare of a small number of pupils and their families. The school does everything it can to promote good attendance, and the great majority of pupils are rarely absent because school is so much fun!

Teachers establish very good relationships with pupils and manage their classes very well. The working atmosphere is relaxed and purposeful. Teaching and support staff have an excellent understanding of pupils' changing needs as pupils improve, and adapt their approaches in class accordingly to maintain the pace of progress. Teachers use assessment and marking well to ensure that work is well matched to individual and group needs and that pupils know what they need to do next to

improve. The school has a wealth of data on pupils' progress. It analyses this well to identify where pupils need additional help or challenge, and to support planning for school improvement. It sets challenging targets.

The curriculum is enriched and enhanced by a very wide range of additional activities, both within school and through out-of-school clubs. Excellent whole-school planning ensures that a wide range of teaching strategies is built into the curriculum to suit pupils' different needs. For instance, teachers use practical and visual learning to motivate pupils and add to their enjoyment. The school provides many creative opportunities in performing arts and specialist music teaching. Similarly, it makes very good use of interesting and exciting visits and visitors to expand pupils' knowledge and experience of the world. The outstanding provision for physical education promotes pupils' health and fitness, while encouraging those with exceptional ability to develop their skills and participate in local events. Pupils learn Spanish and some older pupils participated in a recent visit to Barcelona. The school has worked hard to ensure effective links between different subjects, and this is helping pupils to improve their writing skills. Information and communication technology is used widely and supports pupils in developing excellent skills for their future in education and as adults in the workforce.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher is a strong leader who ensures that the school continually evaluates and improves its provision for pupils. He is ably supported by enthusiastic school leaders, and by a committed and positive staff team. The school regularly seeks and acts on the views of parents and pupils, and works effectively with a wide range of partners both within and outside the local community. The governing body is very well informed about the school and can challenge it on curriculum areas and pupils' progress. The school's combination of support for pupils and ambition for their future makes a real difference to their chances in life. It provides excellent value for money and has an outstanding capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. On entry to Nursery, many children have exceptionally low levels of skill and experience. They make good progress in most areas and outstanding progress in their language, social and physical development, although reading and writing skills are less well developed. This pattern of good progress continues in the Reception class, with the result that by the end of the Foundation Stage most pupils have skills which are only just below those levels expected for their age. The exceptionally well planned activities and structured play areas both indoors and outdoors encourage children to become independent learners. Children play happily together, and this is particularly effective in helping those who are only just beginning to speak English to acquire fluency in the language quickly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in writing, particularly for the more able pupils.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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



12 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L8 5UX

Thank you all for giving me such a warm welcome to your school. You were all exceptionally polite and helpful, and I really enjoyed talking to you and finding out how much you enjoy coming to school. Thank you especially to those of you who gave up your lunch break to show me some of your work, and explain how well you care for one another and for the environment. I was amazed at how involved you are in looking after the world and helping other people.

Your school is outstanding. That means that it is one of the best in the country and you are right to be so proud of it! You make very good progress in your lessons and behave exceptionally well. Your teachers work very hard to make learning exciting and fun. You told me how much you enjoy the visits they arrange, and that they are all friendly and kind. You also said that they are always willing to give you extra support if you find things difficult, and that no-one ever feels bad about having to ask for help. During my visit I saw many of you using computers and could not believe all the complicated things you can do so quickly and efficiently. The displays around the school and in your classrooms were excellent, and show how good you are at art and presenting your work in unusual and interesting ways.

I have asked your teachers to help you become even better at writing. You can help them by continuing to work hard, listening to their instructions and helping each other.

All the adults in your school put you at the very centre of everything they do and make it a wonderful place for you to learn and play. Each one of you is very special to them, and I wish you well for the future.

Best wishes

Jan Corlett
Lead inspector