

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Hardybutts, Wigan, Lancashire, WN1 3RZ

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Achievement has continued to improve since the last inspection. Pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their individual starting points. Standards are now above average overall by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching has improved. It has an outstanding impact on pupils' achievement. Staff know pupils as individuals and regular checks on how well they are doing make sure that all pupils are taught in the appropriate reading, writing and mathematics teaching groups. This helps pupils make excellent progress in lessons.
- Disadvantaged and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are extremely well provided for and, as a result, they achieve well.
- Skilful teaching assistants make an extremely strong contribution to pupils' progress. They know exactly what pupils need to learn and support different groups of pupils highly effectively.
- Children, including those who are new to speaking English as an additional language, get off to a great start in early years. Because of the excellent provision made for them they swiftly develop the skills and confidence to learn at a rapid rate.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are immensely proud of their school. They are keen to talk about all that they have learned and achieved at St Patrick's.
- Excellent pastoral care from all staff creates a warm, safe environment where relationships flourish and pupils contribute in many ways to making the school a happy place. As a result pupils thrive academically and personally.
- A lively curriculum captures pupils' interests and motivates them to do well. Pupils are often deeply absorbed in the activities provided and enjoy many opportunities to experience successful learning. All this adds significantly to their confidence and they become enthusiastic, resilient learners.
- The headteacher's outstanding leadership, and the excellent support of senior and middle leaders, staff and governors, has led to strong improvements in all aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders keep all areas of the school's performance under regular review; they are constantly seeking ways to make it even better. For example, they know that a few of the most able pupils are capable of doing even better in writing and have taken firm steps to bring these improvements about.
- Governance is outstanding. Governors are extremely well-informed about the school's performance and challenge leaders effectively.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They observed the teaching of reading skills and talked to pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those they were currently reading.
- Inspectors talked with pupils as they played at break times and visited the dining hall at lunchtime. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils and inspectors spoke to pupils about their work.
- Inspectors met with three governors. They spoke to a representative of the local authority, an external consultant who works with the school and met with members of the school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They took account of a phone call from a parent, 23 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own survey of parents' views. Inspectors also took account of 28 responses to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- Visits were made to the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- During the inspection, leaders were interviewing prospective candidates for the School Direct programme. (A school-led programme that trains new teachers.)
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of evidence, including two external reviews of the school, safeguarding documents, records of current standards, the school's strategic plan and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. Minutes from governing body meetings and reports produced by school leaders were also considered.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Howard	Additional Inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than the average-sized primary school. The school is situated in three buildings on a shared site. Nursery children join the school in the term after their third birthday. There is a higher than average proportion of boys in most year groups.
- Most year groups are organised into mixed-age classes. Nursery is taught in one class. There are three mixed Reception and Year 1 classes, three mixed Year 2 and Year 3 classes and three mixed Year 4 and Year 5 classes and Year 6 is taught in one class. All pupils, except those in the Nursery class, learn reading, writing and mathematics in groups arranged according to ability.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has doubled since the last inspection and is now above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is well-above average. (This additional funding is provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- A number of pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school has experienced some staffing changes since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher retired in September 2013. At that time the leadership team was reorganised and the school is now led by the headteacher and five assistant headteachers.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Before- and after-school and holiday clubs are provided for pupils. This provision is managed by the governors.
- The school holds the Leading Parent Partnership Award and the Arts Mark Silver Award.
- The school is an active member of the local cluster of schools.
- A member of the leadership team has been seconded two days a week to support the school-led teaching training programme School Direct. A member of the leadership team provides some sessions for student teachers at Liverpool Hope University.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable even more of the most able pupils to reach the same high standards in writing as they do in reading and mathematics by continuing to ensure that they have enough opportunities to write at length.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides strong and very effective leadership for a dedicated team of staff, all of whom demonstrate a clear determination to continue to raise standards. Since the last inspection, continuous improvements in the quality of teaching have led to outstanding progress throughout the school.
- Leaders, governors, parents and staff consider a key strength of the school is the 'family' community which exists. Pupils are known as individuals and all staff expect the very best for every pupil. All pupils are fully involved in the life of the school and are treated equally.
- Senior and middle leaders keep a very close check on the quality of teaching and on pupils' learning and welfare. The information they gather from these checks is used to agree precise areas for improvement and staff make any required changes quickly. As a result pupils' achievement continues to improve.
- A well-designed programme of ongoing training for teachers and teaching assistants is effective in keeping skills sharp. Teachers readily share the most effective practice and strive for continual improvement. More-experienced teachers provide very good support for those who are new to the profession.
- Subject leaders make a highly effective contribution to the school's ongoing development. They ensure that pupils experience a wide range of exciting and stimulating experiences. The rich and well-balanced curriculum prepares them very well for life in modern Britain and pupils make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- In response to national changes in assessment, school leaders have developed a very effective approach to checking on pupils' progress. This new system is providing additional information in all subjects to that gained previously from the National Curriculum levels. Teachers keep detailed records of how well pupils are doing and use this information to ensure that all are taught in the appropriate teaching group. Leaders have ensured that a few of the most able pupils now have more opportunities to write at length when they work in their teaching groups.
- The pupil premium funding is used very effectively, for example on additional staffing, so that pupils can be taught in smaller groups. As a result disadvantaged pupils make the same outstanding progress as other pupils.
- The school has taken prompt action in response to the recent national changes to special educational needs and leadership of this area is a strength. Pupils' needs are identified quickly and swift action is taken. For example, the school has the service of a counsellor, and has established the calm and peaceful Rainbow Room, to help support pupils, including those who need a little extra support with emotional development. Pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are supported extremely well.
- The primary sports funding is spent well to enrich pupils' physical education lessons and to extend the range of sporting activities available to pupils during and after school. A variety of resources are available for pupils who want to be active on the playground. Pupils particularly enjoy using the school bikes on the specially designed track, which is provided to test their skills.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They feel well-informed and fully involved in the life of the school.
- The local authority recognises the many strengths in the school. Appropriate 'light touch' support is provided through the local schools' consortium.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths. Detailed reports from staff, regular meetings with leaders of all subjects and frequent visits to talk to pupils and check on the work of the school provide governors with an accurate view of the school's performance. They use this wealth of information to hold leaders fully to account.
 - Governors contribute effectively to managing staff performance, ensuring everyone is held to account for pupils' progress. The budget is managed efficiently so that good levels of staffing support pupils' excellent achievement.
 - The governing body check that the pupil premium is spent wisely to support disadvantaged pupils, not just in their learning but also in enabling eligible pupils to access the wide range of enrichment activities on offer.
 - Governors ensure that procedures to safeguard pupils' welfare are managed well and reviewed regularly. They ensure that equal opportunities are promoted vigorously so that all pupils have every opportunity to enjoy all aspects of school life and there is no discrimination.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The respect shown towards each other and staff makes a strong contribution towards the happy, warm and welcoming environment which exists. Pupils play well together and are kept very safe and happy at playtimes.
- In lessons pupils demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to learn and take great delight in finding things out for themselves. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that clear routines are in place, which lead to smooth movement between activities and teaching groups. Pupils are able to maintain concentration exceptionally well and become well-organised, independent learners.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsible roles, for example, as members of the school council. The foundation members who sit on the council during their time in Key Stage 2 have recently helped change the selection process for the elected members who serve for a year.
- Behaviour is excellent in the before- and after-school clubs. Pupils enjoy the activities provided and the way some links are made to the school curriculum.
- Attendance is now higher than average and continues to rise. Almost all pupils now attend school regularly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe and well-cared for by staff. Clear systems are in place to ensure pupils' safety, including those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable.
- Staff help pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet and mobile technology.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of the different types of bullying but insist that incidents are rare. They feel that they can share any concerns with staff, including the child and family worker, and are confident that these would be dealt with quickly and sensitively.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and much is outstanding. As a result pupils make rapid gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- All staff have high aspirations for all pupils. In the mixed-age year groups all teachers and teaching assistants form extremely effective, seamless teaching teams. During lessons where pupils are taught in ability groups everyone learns together in the open plan learning spaces. During a Year 2 and 3 mathematics session the learning buzz in the 'south unit' learning space was tangible. All pupils and adults were fully focused on ensuring that learning was of the highest quality. As a result the learning that took place was exceptional and excellent progress was made.
- Teachers and teaching assistants establish excellent relationships with pupils which result in a very positive climate for learning throughout the school. A learning culture exists where all pupils are expected to produce work of the highest quality.
- Teachers fully understand what constitutes high-quality teaching and they willingly learn from and support each other by sharing the most effective practices. Teachers new to the teaching profession are supported very effectively and make the same excellent contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' books and lesson observations show that high-quality learning begins with teachers' accurate understanding of their pupils' needs. Teachers plan work which skilfully challenges each individual to make the best progress they can during each lesson. A key feature of learning is the way teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils to make their own checks on how well they are doing. Each lesson starts with adults making clear to pupils what they are to learn. A 'traffic light' check allows pupils to decide how confident they are feeling with the planned learning and enables the adults to adjust the level of challenge presented to everyone. At the end of the lesson the 'traffic lights' are checked again to make sure that enough progress has been made.
- Pupils like the way that activities often link different subjects and topics together. They think that teachers make learning fun. Teachers seek to extend pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills in all subjects. Often pupils are offered the opportunity to write at length but a few examples in the books of the most able pupils show that they could have achieved even more if they had had time to extend their ideas even

further.

- Marking is very effective. It provides guidance for pupils to make improvements in their learning. Teachers use highlighters to provide 'orange moans' to show what needs correcting or improving on and 'golden glows' to celebrate what has been done well. The marking system is used consistently and understood by all and corrections and improvements are made at the start of each lesson.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The school has taken effective action to speed up the rates of progress made by pupils since the last inspection. As a result achievement is now outstanding.
- Pupils make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move up through the school. As a result standards are rising consistently and progress rates in all subjects are now high compared to those of other pupils across the country.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014, pupils reached above-average standards overall in reading, mathematics and grammar, spelling and punctuation. In mathematics over a fifth of the pupils reached the higher Level 6. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards in reading, writing and mathematics have also risen each year since the last inspection and are now at least similar to the national average. Gains in writing have been made year-on-year across the school but standards are not yet quite as high as those in the other subjects.
- The overall attainment of disadvantaged pupils in 2014 in Year 6 was similar to that of other pupils nationally who are not eligible for the pupil premium. In comparison to other pupils in the school, their attainment was around a term behind. They have achieved very well because they are skilfully supported.
- Those who speak English as an additional language, also achieve very well in relation to their individual starting points because of the expert support they receive.
- The most able pupils are well-challenged in almost all aspects of their learning. They are highly motivated to do their very best, often in small groups which focus on higher-level work. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations and pupils' own pleasure in seeing just how well they can do promotes tremendously positive attitudes to learning. For example, the most able pupils are able to write at length and use mature vocabulary and writing styles in written work. Occasionally, some could achieve even more and reach even higher standards if they were allowed more time to write independently.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who meet the required standard in the national screening check on phonics (the ability to identify letters and the sounds they make) is consistently higher than average. This is largely because excellent teaching of phonics begins in the early years. Pupils reading skills are developed extremely well across the school. From a young age, pupils read with interest and enjoyment.
- Pupils become fluent readers and teaching ensures that they are able to develop their preferences for reading. Year 6 are immersed in learning about some of Shakespeare's plays at the moment and talk knowledgeably about the plot lines and interactions between different characters.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- A high proportion of children join the Nursery class with skills that are weak, particularly in communication and language. There is an increasing proportion of children who start school speaking little or no English. They settle well and acquire the English language quickly owing to the extremely skilled adults in the setting.
- By the end of Reception, many children in 2014 made rapid progress from their individual starting points and the proportion who reached a good level of development was much closer to the national average than in previous years. Reading, writing and number skills in particular were developed well and so the majority of the children who joined Year 1 were well-prepared for this next stage of their education.
- Currently, children's progress is continuing to accelerate rapidly because the quality of teaching is outstanding. Adults skilfully ask questions and demonstrate new ideas very clearly for the children, checking regularly to ensure that they understand what they are doing and moving learning on quickly, particularly for the most able.
- Throughout the early years, children learn to take turns to share and to help each other. They become increasingly confident in using language through frequent play in the role play and outdoor areas. Children are able to work alone and with others in small groups and show that they are able to concentrate on an activity for increasingly longer periods of time.
- Children in the Nursery particularly enjoy playing in the wooded area. As they learn to build dens, they are

encouraged to do so safely, to learn new vocabulary and to work in pairs. In Reception, children spend more time working together in small friendship groups, often with Year 1 pupils. They also focus on independent activities that capture their imagination. For example, during the inspection pupils were busily writing letters and successfully creating paintings in the style of Van Gogh.

- The early years' leaders have an extensive knowledge of every child in the setting. They use this information to plan exciting, creative and stimulating learning opportunities which meet children's individual needs and interests. A good balance of activities is provided. Children work directly with an adult at times and spend appropriate amounts of time exploring activities independently or with others. Leaders ensure that teaching meets the needs of all Reception children and Year 1 pupils as they learn alongside each other in the mixed-age classes.
- Safeguarding procedures are in place and all necessary steps are taken to keep children safe at all times.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the care provided for their children in the early years. They are made to feel very welcome and many share with staff the things their children achieve at home.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106460
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	448901

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	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzanne Davies
Headteacher	Susan Bruen
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2010
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