



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**St Patrick's R.C. Primary School
Fairfax Road
Newport
NP19 0HR**

Date of inspection: September 2011

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Context

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school for pupils from 4 to 11 years of age, which is situated in the City of Newport. The school is closely linked to the Parish of St Patrick's. Most of the 156 pupils come from the surrounding districts of Somerton, Lliswerry and Maindee, all of which contain areas of deprivation.

The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has risen steeply from 7% to 26% over the last 18 months. The school identifies 25% of pupils as having additional learning needs (ALN). About 15% of pupils come from an ethnic minority background and about 13% of these pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). On average, almost 12% of pupils enter or leave the school during the academic year.

The school budget per pupil for St Patrick's R.C. Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,112 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Newport is £7,916 and the minimum is £2,647. St Patrick's R.C. Primary School is 31st out of the 48 primary schools in Newport in terms of its school budget per pupil.

The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, is at stage 3 of the Healthy Schools Scheme and has been awarded the Green Flag as an Eco School for the second time.

The last school inspection was in October 2005 and the headteacher has been in post since October 2004.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The current performance of St Patrick's R.C. Primary School is good because:

- most pupils make good progress and achieve good standards;
- the behaviour and attitudes to learning of most pupils are good;
- the quality of teaching and assessment is good as are learning experiences;
- care, support and guidance are good; and
- leadership and management are good.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement in St Patrick's R.C. Primary School are good because:

- senior leaders and governors provide effective leadership and share a strong vision for improvement;
- thorough self-evaluation processes lead to accurate judgments about performance;
- improvement planning focuses sharply on the most important priorities; and
- the school has made good progress since its last inspection.

Recommendations

In order to improve, St Patrick's R.C. Primary School needs to:

R1 improve the performance of boys, especially in literacy;

R2 match work consistently to learners' needs and abilities;

R3 continue efforts to improve the provision and accommodation for older pupils in the Foundation Phase; and

R4 ensure that support staff are deployed to always have maximum impact on pupils' learning and progress.

What happens next?

St Patrick's R.C. Primary School will produce an action plan which shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Many pupils enter the school with skills below those normally expected for their age. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils achieve good standards. Most pupils with ALN make good and occasionally excellent progress in relation to their targets. Generally girls do better than boys, particularly in the Foundation Phase and lower key stage 2. Although the gap between the attainments of boys and girls has reduced, a significant minority of younger boys do not write as well as they should. Younger pupils who are more able do not always achieve as well as they might.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, nearly all pupils read well in line with their age and ability. They use a good range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words. More able pupils read fluently and with good expression.

By the end of key stage 2, many pupils write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences. Pupils who are more able spell words accurately. However, a majority of pupils do not spell accurately enough and present their work untidily. Most older pupils read well. They enter into lively discussions about characters and the plot of a story.

Most pupils in key stage 2 show their numeracy skills effectively in a range of subjects. Nearly all pupils have good information and communication technology (ICT) skills which they use confidently in lessons. Throughout the school almost all pupils work well together in groups and many use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well across a range of subjects.

Pupils with EAL and those who are potentially vulnerable make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. In lessons, pupils across the school make good progress. Many pupils recall previous learning accurately and develop good thinking skills when acquiring new knowledge. They use their speaking skills well in lesson introductions and in activities such as 'hot-seating' and role play.

Nearly all pupils make good progress in Welsh language lessons and standards are good. The oracy skills of most pupils show a steady improvement, and writing skills are developing well. Pupils at the end of the Foundation Phase identify rooms in the house, use a range of sentence patterns in Welsh, and know colours and numbers to 10. Pupils in key stage 2 know a good variety of question and answer sequences and use connective words competently to make more complex sentences. Pupils' reading skills are less well developed. The school is addressing this issue in its improvement planning. All pupils use Welsh greetings with enthusiasm. They also use Welsh vocabulary and dialogue confidently in a range of situations outside lessons, including registration.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils are well motivated, have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school life. They engage readily in their work and show high levels of concentration. These attributes contribute effectively to their taking part in and enjoying lessons. Pupils' understanding of how much they achieve and what might improve their work is developing well. They make a valuable contribution to planning their own learning through writing mind-maps.

The behaviour of most pupils in lessons and around the school is good. They are courteous and considerate. They relate well to each other and adults and show concern for those less fortunate than themselves. A very small minority displays challenging behaviour but the school deals with this well. Pupils have confidence in adults to support and care for them. Most pupils feel safe within the school and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Attendance, at around 94%, is above the all-Wales average for primary schools and well above that for schools in a similar situation. Nearly all pupils arrive on time in the mornings and very few are regularly late.

All pupils are encouraged to take an active part in the life of the school. Older pupils show responsibility for others in their role as peer mediators. The school council is actively involved in decision-making, such as the planning of improvements for the school yard. Members of the council support the school's application for Fair Trade status. The eco council is proactive in promoting a wide range of initiatives including waste control monitoring systems. Pupils' involvement in the community and parish is well established, and has a good effect on the quality of their learning. They take part in events such as the Year of Catholic Education and the Maindee Festival, and have sung in support of St. Anne's Hospice.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The quality of long term and medium term planning is good. Topic plans which follow a two year cycle provide a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum. There is clear continuity and progression through the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. Learning experiences across the school are stimulating and interesting, and ensure pupils' active engagement and enthusiasm. The school's use of strategies such as 'Philosophy for children' and 'Drama for learning' has a positive effect on pupils' learning and achievement. The school's identification of boys' literacy as an area for improvement has prompted the use of materials that appeal particularly to boys. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, which include sports, music and art, enhance pupils' learning further.

Work is generally planned to present an appropriate degree of challenge for pupils of different abilities, including those with ALN or EAL. However, this provision is not consistent, especially for more able pupils.

The development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is well planned to ensure clear progression through the school. In the Foundation Phase teachers use the 'skills ladders' effectively to plan the development of skills in each area of learning. The philosophy and strategies of the Foundation Phase have been developed well in reception and Year 1 and are being adopted increasingly in Year 2. Access to the outdoor environment in Year 2 is limited but the school has good plans in place to improve this in the next six months. In key stage 2 teachers ensure that key skills are taught thoroughly before they are applied across the curriculum. Planning for the development of Welsh language skills is based on a progression of sentence patterns which increase in complexity from Foundation Phase through key stage 2. Teachers' use of Welsh is good, and sufficient time is allocated in lessons and short practice sessions. Speaking Welsh in registration is well established through the school, and most teachers use Welsh phrases and commands incidentally in lessons. Pupils have opportunities to write in Welsh for a range of purposes. The school is helping them to develop their reading skills in Welsh by introducing new book and ICT resources. This is a part of the group reading strategy. The school's Eisteddfod reinforces the Welsh dimension in the curriculum effectively in addition to elements in English, geography, history and music lessons.

Teachers help pupils to understand the importance of acting sustainably. However, the curriculum does not do enough to enhance their appreciation of why they are carrying out such activities. Pupils are given a good grounding in how others live in the wider world.

Teaching: Good

Most teaching ensures that pupils are motivated and engaged. Teachers and other adults have good subject knowledge and use a range of approaches and activities to inspire and challenge most pupils. They also share clear learning objectives which show pupils not just what they are about to learn but why they are learning it. Adult support is mostly focused well and usually makes a good contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

In those few sessions where there are shortcomings, some pupils are insufficiently challenged, and classroom activities do not consistently meet their needs. There is not enough balance between child-led and teacher-directed activities and access to outdoor provision is limited. Occasionally, support staff are not deployed effectively enough to assist learning.

Pupils' wellbeing and progress are monitored effectively throughout the school. Teachers use a good range of assessment methods and maintain detailed records about pupils' achievements. Assessment for learning is developing well throughout the school. Staff provide pupils with clear oral feedback on their achievement and progress. Pupils are developing skills in assessing their own and others' progress. Overall, staff use assessment information well to inform the planning of new learning experiences. However, while most marking is undertaken regularly, it does not consistently include constructive comments to show pupils how to improve. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's achievements through parents' evenings and annual reports.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Pupils are cared for and supported well. They receive good guidance when it is needed, for example from the school counsellor. The school has effective arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing. These arrangements contribute well to their learning and personal development. Provision for pupils' healthy lifestyles including their physical development is good, despite the limitations of the outdoor environment. Staff do much to support pupils' emotional wellbeing.

Attendance and punctuality are monitored and analysed well. Prompt action is taken to address any identified concerns. The school has good working relationships with a range of specialist agencies which support the individual emotional and educational needs of pupils well. The procedures for dealing with behavioural issues and harassment of any kind meet requirements well.

The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The provision for pupils with ALN and those with EAL is good. Staff diagnose learning difficulties appropriately and provide pupils with appropriate and timely support. There are strong links with specialist external agencies. Pupils' individual education plans are well written. They are evaluated and updated regularly. Parents are kept well informed and fully involved. Support staff are used extensively and good training has helped them become more effective. The school counsellor provides a good service for pupils who have social or emotional needs. Referrals to this service are timely and assessments are shared regularly.

The school has procedures and has an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school is a fully inclusive community where diversity is recognised and celebrated well. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs and values as well as those of others. Diversity and equality are successfully promoted through the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme, collective worship and a range of visits and visitors to the school. The school actively promotes equal opportunities and all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. It is a school where every child really does matter. Effective policies to counter bullying and for assertive discipline are in place. Any incidents of oppressive behaviour are dealt with promptly and sensitively.

The building is in good condition although there is a shortage of space in some classrooms, which leads to cramped conditions on occasion. Good use has been made of the outside areas to create a rural-like environment within this inner-city school. Overall, there is a good supply of learning resources, such as for ICT, and book resources are very well organised. However, access to outdoor provision for older pupils in the Foundation Phase is limited.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
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Good

Leadership: Good

The headteacher, staff and governors share the vision of “together we are one” and this is reflected very well in the school’s ethos. Leaders communicate the priorities for improvement such as the need to raise the standards achieved by boys. The school has a clear sense of its educational direction and its mission for pupils. Staff show a strong team spirit and have a clear idea of the school’s strengths and areas for development. They feel valued and all have specific responsibilities to develop a range of initiatives to raise pupils’ confidence and self-esteem. As a result, the school has been successful in sustaining improvements.

Leaders challenge staff to improve their teaching and raise pupils’ standards. They are also very conscientious in analysing data to monitor performance. Performance management processes are in place and are systematic and carefully planned. The focus is clearly set on improving learning outcomes and developing staff to meet new priorities. This work has a positive impact on the school as a learning community.

Governors have taken positive measures to increase their involvement with the school’s daily life and their awareness of how well it is doing. They get good, detailed information about progress and priorities. They act wholeheartedly as critical but positive friends of the school.

Policies and initiatives, including those that meet national and local priorities, are implemented consistently. The school is making appropriate progress in introducing the Foundation Phase. It achieves sustainable improvements in following the School Effectiveness Framework.

Improving quality: Good

The school has effective procedures for self-evaluation. The senior management team has a clear understanding of the school’s performance, its strengths and areas for development. There is a good range of monitoring activities, including the scrutiny of planning, of pupils’ work and the observation of lessons. In these activities, curriculum co-ordinators work together effectively with the senior management team. The self evaluation report produced for the inspection is a useful and comprehensive document. The school makes good use of assessment information to identify underperforming pupils and set targets for improvement. The school seeks the views of parents and carers, pupils and the community appropriately.

All the information gathered in the process of self-evaluation is used to produce a detailed school development plan. This is an effective working document which outlines action plans, together with timescales, responsibilities, success criteria and expected costs. It has a clear focus on raising pupils’ standards. Effective leadership has moved the school forward since the last inspection. This is shown by the improvement in standards in ICT across the curriculum.

Staff are closely and successfully involved in various networks of professional practice, for example in leading the moderation of pupils' assessed work in English.

Partnership working: Good

The school has very effective links with a wide range of partners, including St Joseph's High School. These partnerships make a strong contribution to improving learning resources and outcomes for pupils, particularly in Welsh and in developing their skills across the curriculum. Effective partnerships with the local authority help improve the quality of assessment and moderation.

The quality of transition plans with Saint Joseph's High School is very good. They are used very effectively to improve outcomes for pupils, especially at the end of key stage 2. This partnership work also involves the Diocese and other local schools. The network of partnerships between St Patrick's and other local schools has provided pupils with particularly valuable first-hand experiences of literacy in a skills-enriched curriculum.

Resource management: Good

The school employs a sufficient number of qualified teachers and support staff who are generally deployed effectively. Senior managers identify and meet the training needs of staff well through regular appraisal and good performance management procedures. Teachers use their planning, preparation and assessment time effectively.

Although some of the accommodation is cramped, every space is used effectively. There are a good range of resources for teaching and learning. The school manages its budget appropriately through regularly monitoring expenditure.

When the good outcomes achieved by pupils and the effective management of the budget are taken into account, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

At the end of key stage 1, pupils' performance has been good for two of the last three years. Standards in 2011 were in the upper 50% of those for similar schools for English and in the top 25% for the core subject indicator (the expected level 2 in English, mathematics and science in combination). Results in mathematics and science were also in the top 25%. Girls achieved better than boys, especially in English. When compared to the results of other schools in its family (a group of schools that face similar challenges), pupils' performance was good in the CSI, English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was below those of other schools in the family.

At the end of key stage 2, pupils' performance in attaining the expected level 4 has been above the all-Wales average in English and science but below the local authority and all-Wales average in mathematics and the CSI. However, there is an upward trend in all three subjects.

At the end of key stage 2, the performance of pupils is generally above the family average for the CSI, as well as for English, oracy, reading and, to a lesser extent, writing. Pupils' attainments were in line with those in the school's family in mathematics and above average in science. In 2011, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 5 was the best in the family. Pupils' attainment improved this year.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Seven parents or carers attended the parents meeting and eleven parents or carers completed the questionnaires. This latter was a very low response. Overall, all of these parents express positive views about the school. They state that their children are settled and happy and they are very satisfied with their achievements and progress. They were especially positive about the success their children experienced in learning English as an additional language. Most parents feel that their child feels safe in school and that staff are very approachable if they have questions or concerns. A minority of parents consider that the school does not deal well with pupils' behaviour. Parents feel well informed about their children's progress through regular meetings with teachers and annual reports.

Inspectors also talked to individuals and a wide range of pupils across the school. Overall, pupils state that they are happy and enjoy school very much. They all know whom to talk to if they are upset or worried. A small majority in the questionnaire responses reported that they are concerned about standards of behaviour in classrooms and at break times but no evidence was found during the inspection to support those concerns. Pupils, in discussion, say that they feel safe and happy and have good opportunities for keeping fit and healthy.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Robert Isaac (Additional Inspector)	Reporting Inspector
Rhiannon Harris (Additional Inspector)	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Susan Roach	Peer Inspector
Stephen Dunford (Headteacher)	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11