

Inspection of a good school: St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Lingfield Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 7PL

Inspection dates:

15–16 January 2020

Outcome

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this vibrant, welcoming school. Leaders and staff expect pupils to behave well and work hard. Pupils rise to these expectations. Christian values weave through all aspects of school life. This encourages pupils to care for one another and collaborate well in lessons.

Pupils relish their roles, such as school councillors, eco warriors, head boy and head girl. Pupils who are sports leaders organise and deliver daily training sessions. Pupils who take part listen and follow instructions well.

Pupils say that they feel safe. They learn how to stay safe when online, cycling or swimming. Pupils behave well. They say that bullying is rare. Pupils learn how to deal with the slightest sign of bullying. They put this into practice by making sure they share worries with an adult. Pupils say that the actions that adults take stop any unwanted behaviour.

Parents and carers describe the school as 'happy', 'caring' and 'welcoming'. They give high praise to the teaching staff for their 'hard work and dedication'. Many say that this is why their children 'flourish'. Some parents shared concerns about the high number of staffing changes since September.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils receive a good-quality education. Senior leaders and some staff are new to their temporary roles. They work well with governors, the local authority and diocesan officers. Pupils achieve well across all key stages.

Leaders have a clear rationale for all subjects across the curriculum. All subjects have plans with sequential coverage and progression across each year group. Teachers use

these plans to identify what pupils need to know and remember. Some plans for foundation subjects are clearer to follow than others. How teachers identify vocabulary, knowledge and skills varies from plan to plan. Leaders' plans for English and mathematics are ambitious for pupils to achieve well. Plans for foundation subjects do not include goals for pupils to reach greater depths of learning.

The leader of reading and phonics ensures that teaching plans are effective. Teachers and teaching assistants are trained to deliver these plans well. Children make a rapid start to learning phonics in Nursery and Reception. Pupils in the earliest stages of reading receive appropriate support. This ensures that they keep up with their peers. Books that pupils read in school and at home match the phonic knowledge pupils have gained. As a result, pupils become confident readers. Across the whole school, staff are strong models who inspire a love of reading in pupils. Pupils' attainment in phonics at the end of Year 1 is above the national average over time.

The new leader of mathematics has secure subject knowledge. Long-term plans set out the exact mathematical content for each class, every term. The mathematics leader accesses the mathematics 'hub' with other local school leaders. They have increased pupils' use of practical resources. Pupils can recall facts and knowledge. For example, pupils used their previous learning to draw shapes 'to scale'.

Pupils do well in physical education. Pupils can apply the skills they learn in competitive sports and performances. Skills pupils learn in previous years help them to learn new techniques. For example, pupils use knowledge of rolls and balances to master new shoulder rolls. Pupils articulate the importance of values in sport. They talk about values such as teamwork and honesty being values for life as well as sport.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils. These pupils access demanding work across the curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for all pupils.

Pupils take part in a wide range of enriching curriculum themes and activities. This supports their personal development. The majority of pupils take pride in their work. Leaders are swift to support pupils who may find this difficult.

New leaders, including governors, have recently started to review the school improvement plan. Milestones to measure the impact of the actions leaders have taken are not precise enough. This does not help leaders and governors to make exact checks on how well the school is performing. Staff appreciate that leaders, including governors, are considerate of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They make sure that the school is a safe environment. There is a culture of keeping pupils safe.

Leaders ensure that staff access relevant safeguarding training. Despite this, some staff cannot recall some of the information they receive in training. Some staff are unsure about recognising child criminal exploitation or peer-on-peer abuse. Leaders' systems to check that staff are vigilant in their day-to-day practice are not as thorough as they should be. A small number of staff are not fully confident in recording safeguarding concerns. Senior leaders have recently arranged upcoming training to refresh this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Plans for reading, writing and mathematics are well established. However, some wider curriculum subject plans are clearer than others on what knowledge, skills and vocabulary should be taught, and when. Leaders should review curriculum plans to ensure that they do not vary in clarity, so that teachers are clear on how to deliver all plans with consistency across each subject.
- Leaders' planning of sequential units of work for all subjects includes identifying the end points that pupils are expected to achieve. In reading, writing and mathematics goals are set for expected and higher standards. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, end points are set for the expected standard only, with no clear goals set for pupils to attain the higher standards. Leaders should review their foundation subject plans to make sure that they fully identify the end points which the most able pupils can be expected to achieve.
- New leaders and governors have recently started to review the school improvement plan so that priorities are more aligned with the school self-evaluation. The actions and milestones to measure the impact of leaders' actions are not precise enough. Leaders should ensure that they sharpen the improvement plan, so that the milestones are measurable and precise. Leaders, including governors, should then monitor the impact of the actions they take against precise milestones.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff have accessed a wide range of safeguarding training. However, there is variability in how well the staff remember the knowledge gained through this training to focus their awareness of identifying or recording potential safeguarding risks. Leaders, including governors, should sharpen their systems to check staff awareness and knowledge of safeguarding issues to ensure that staff are confident in applying the information gained through training, on a day-to-day basis.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School to be good on 15–16 March 2011.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	111687
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10110788
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chris Wilson
Headteacher	Steven Williams (Acting Headteacher)
Website	http://www.stockton.schoolgrid.net/3316/
Date of previous inspection	February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher took up temporary posts in September 2019. For two terms prior to this, the acting headteacher was in role for two days a week. The mathematics leader is also new to her leadership role.
- Some staff are new to the school since the previous inspection. This includes two newly qualified teachers.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received a Section 48 inspection on 24–25 May 2016.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, the leader of SEND, the early years leader and governors, including the chair of the governing body. I had telephone conversations with officers from the local authority and the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- During this inspection, I looked in particular detail at early reading and phonics, mathematics and physical education. During these activities, I met with curriculum

leaders and visited lessons. I met with pupils and staff. I listened to pupils read and, with leaders, viewed examples of pupils' work in books.

- I scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, curriculum plans, reports from the local authority and minutes of the full governing body meetings.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, I spoke with pupils, staff and leaders. I reviewed how leaders check on the suitability of staff who work with children. I scrutinised safeguarding documents, including staff training records and the single central record. I looked at attendance information, behaviour logs and how safeguarding concerns were recorded. I also evaluated information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- I considered 41 responses to the online survey Parent View, including 39 free-text responses. I also considered 22 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey, but I gathered pupils' views during the inspection.

Inspection team

Alison Aitchison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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