

Holy Rood Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106632
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	355991
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Derek Skitt
Headteacher	Mr John Gregson
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons, where eight different teachers were seen. In addition, samples of pupils' work were scrutinised. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, groups of parents and carers, the School Improvement Partner and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the data on pupils' performance, development plans, safeguarding documents and records of the school's own monitoring of its performance. The responses to 59 parents' and carers' questionnaires were considered, alongside responses from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The recent progress made by the majority of pupils.
- The impact of actions taken to improve teaching and learning and standards in writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- How the school measures its effectiveness in securing higher standards through managing the roles of middle managers.
- The impact of teachers' planning to improve and reinforce pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- How far the provision for higher attaining pupils has improved their achievement.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds with very few at an early stage in learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school has Healthy School status, the National Information and Communication Technology Mark and the Football Association Charter Mark. Before- and after-school clubs are managed privately and inspected separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school that gives good value for money. Attainment is broadly average by the time pupils leave Year 6, reflecting good progress during their time in school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well. The school enjoys the overwhelming support of its parents and carers because it works effectively to include them in the life of the school. This is an inclusive school which successfully encourages pupils to make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community. Pupils benefit from teaching that is predominantly good and enables them to enjoy their lessons and achieve well. There are examples of excellent practice in the way some teachers plan their lessons so that different groups of pupils are challenged appropriately. However, not all teachers are sufficiently clear about what they expect pupils of different abilities to achieve in their lessons, nor do all teachers use the information they have about pupils' attainment to plan precisely enough for different groups of pupils. In the best lessons, teachers promote pupils' use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in subjects across the curriculum. However, subject leaders do not incorporate this formally into their medium term planning to ensure a consistent approach.

Pupils have an excellent approach to living healthily and have a good understanding of how to live safely. Their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a strong impact on pupils' behaviour and ensures lessons are characterised by good, collaborative working. Good care, guidance and support are reflected in pupils' positive relationships with each other and their teachers. Pupils' attendance is broadly average, despite the school's concerted efforts to raise levels. The few pupils at an early stage in learning English as an additional language receive further, well-targeted support that helps them make good progress and participate fully in school life. Vulnerable pupils are particularly well catered for in this caring school. The governing body makes an excellent contribution by supporting and challenging the school. Senior leaders monitor closely the impact of actions taken to raise standards and recognise that standards are still not high enough in writing, particularly among boys. The school is well placed to raise standards and has demonstrated that it has a good capacity to improve further and to sustain improvements. Self-evaluation procedures are effective and the school knows well its strengths and weaknesses. For example, past weaknesses in teaching mathematics and ensuring high attainers make better progress have been successfully tackled and levels of achievement by pupils have improved. The good lead given by the headteacher ensures a clear vision that all staff subscribe to, and morale is high.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve writing skills, particularly those of boys, across the school by:

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- using teaching methods and learning materials that more closely meet the needs of boys
- giving pupils more opportunities to practise their writing in subjects across the curriculum
- developing the roles of all subject leaders so they are able to monitor and improve the contribution made by their subjects to reinforcing and consolidating writing skills.
- Improve the quality of teachers' lesson planning by:
 - adopting a more consistent approach to planning that builds on the examples of excellent practice that exist in the school
 - focusing teachers' planning so that they are clear about what they expect pupils of different abilities to achieve in lessons
 - making more effective use of the information teachers have about pupils' attainment levels to stretch and challenge all pupils to achieve the best of which they are capable.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The quality of learning in classrooms is good because pupils behave well and teachers ensure they enjoy their lessons. Pupils have good relationships with their teachers and listen carefully and quietly when required. They also enjoy the frequent opportunities given to share their learning in pairs and groups. They seize the chances enthusiastically and cooperate well, whether solving problems or comparing their answers. As a result pupils achieve well, enjoy their learning and are well equipped and ready for the next stage of their education, particularly in terms of their positive attitudes to school and learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, vulnerable pupils and those learning English as an additional language enjoy their work, make good progress and achieve well because of the good quality support they receive in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants. Many children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those typically expected for their age, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and build on this to make good progress through the rest of the school. Pupils leave Year 6 with attainment that is just above average.

Pupils are open and welcoming to visitors and they appreciate cultural diversity. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, which contributes significantly to the harmonious relationships that characterise the school. The school council plays a good role in putting forward ideas. Pupils eat healthily and have excellent awareness of the need to play sports and keep fit. Many take part in sport before and after school and during break times.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is mostly good, but a little remains satisfactory. Typically, classrooms are well ordered, pupils behave well and relationships are positive. Pupils' targets for improvement are used effectively and are appropriately challenging. Where teaching is most effective, teachers are very clear about what they expect different ability groups of pupils to learn. Here, assessment data about pupils is used carefully to match the content of the lesson to pupils' abilities. This is not consistently the case and so work is occasionally too hard or too easy for particular groups. The school has started to change teaching methods and learning materials to better motivate boys to improve their writing, but these are not sufficiently developed. Information and communication technology is used well to engage pupils and to help convey difficult concepts. Teachers' marking of work is undertaken conscientiously and is invariably helpful and encouraging. Learning is underpinned by teachers' and teaching assistants' very caring relationships with pupils and the targeted support given to pupils who may have extra educational, language or social needs.

The curriculum is broad and meets pupils' personal needs as well as raising their academic achievement. However, curricular planning is not precise enough to ensure that pupils consistently develop basic skills such as writing in all subjects. The effective partnerships developed with other schools and agencies enhance the curriculum. They help to provide a wide range of additional activities in sports, the arts and music. These are popular with

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pupils and enrich the life of the school. They make a good contribution to pupils' personal development as do the many visitors and educational visits and residential experiences.

Pupils feel safe in school. There is a very strong and effective partnership established with parents and carers early in the pupils' life in the school so that any concerns are dealt with quickly. The school takes a rigorous approach to encouraging good attendance, but is unable to convince a few parents not to take holidays during term time. The school's good quality care, guidance and support and the effective links between the school and outside specialists ensure pupils' well-being and general good development. As a result pupils learning English as an additional language, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils feel secure and, along with their peers, make good progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's clear vision is used effectively to set the pace and direction for the school's development. The governing body makes an excellent contribution and together with senior staff ensure confidence in the direction in which the school is heading. Staff throughout the school share in the ambition to succeed and all contribute to ensure good quality teaching and learning and a drive to improve further. English and mathematics subjects are led well, but coordinators are less effective in other subjects. The school knows well its strengths and where it needs to improve further. Self-evaluation is based appropriately on measuring the impact that actions taken and changes made have on pupils' attainment and progress. Targets are challenging. They encourage pupils to aspire to higher achievement and are mainly met. Productive partnerships with other schools ensure a flow of expertise into and from the school. The result is a successful school where pupils achieve well. The governing body makes sure the safeguarding of its pupils is effective and all recommended good practice is observed. It also meets well its responsibility to ensure equal opportunities for pupils in all aspects of their school life and that the school tackles any form of discrimination assiduously. As a result, for example, the more-able pupils now make faster progress in mathematics. Financial control, planning and accountability are good and have resulted in significant improvements to the school environment. The provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils from different backgrounds interact positively and there is a harmonious atmosphere in and around the school. However, senior managers are at an early stage in formally monitoring and evaluating the impact of the strategies put in place to promote community cohesion.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle very quickly into the Nursery because of the good induction procedures in place and the calm, purposeful learning atmosphere engendered by the staff. This is reinforced by the good quality care and welfare provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents and carers are encouraged from the very start to be full partners in the education of their children. On entry, children's skill levels overall are below those expected, particularly in language and mathematical skills. They make good progress in relation to their starting points in all areas of learning. Staff are particularly successful in developing children's personal and social development. The few children who are at an early stage in learning English as an additional language receive good support and make good progress. Vulnerable children, too, benefit from the good care, guidance and support and achieve well. By the time pupils enter Year 1, their skill levels are much closer to those expected, although still behind in aspects of literacy and numeracy. The coordinator provides good leadership and management, ensuring a well-structured curriculum that builds children's learning systematically. Teachers' planning ensures exciting learning experiences through which children learn many new skills and pieces of knowledge in the same activity. Children enjoy going to the 'Vet's room' where they use toy animals and puppets to reinforce their language and their number skills and where their creative development is promoted. Children work well with their teachers and other adults and respond well to the good opportunities they are given to choose their own activities, both in the classrooms and outside. Both environments are well planned to provide exciting stimuli for children. A comprehensive assessment procedure is in place where observations are carried out and recorded to build a full picture of each child's achievement and progress. However, the assessments are not used consistently well to focus planning on the needs of different groups of learners.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Around a quarter of parents and carers returned the questionnaire, which is a below average response. The returns indicate that the very large majority strongly support the school and this was confirmed in interviews with parents and carers. They value the safety and security provided and approve the approaches taken to ensure pupils behave well and live harmoniously in the school community. Almost all parents and carers say they are aware of their children's progress and are satisfied with their children's achievement. The comments, 'The school makes me feel special as a person.' and 'My children love their time here.' encapsulate parents' and carers' positive views about the school and which are reflected in the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holy Rood Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 212 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	75	15	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	69	18	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	51	27	46	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	47	29	49	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	54	27	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	53	25	42	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	56	26	44	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	27	46	25	42	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	47	27	46	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	42	28	47	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	49	25	42	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	51	29	49	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	68	19	32	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Rood Catholic Primary School, Barnsley S70 6JL

I would like to thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when my colleagues and I inspected your school recently. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters and for taking the time to talk to us. We enjoyed watching and listening to you in your lessons, reading your work and talking to you. We found that yours is a good school.

We like the way you take responsibility, and how well you are taught to take a pride in your surroundings and make things better, seen, for example, in the interesting displays of your work around the school. The contributions you make to the school and wider community are outstanding. We particularly enjoyed the way you participate so enthusiastically in assembly time and during music lessons when you sing as well as you do! You obviously enjoy coming to school and this shows in your good behaviour in classrooms and around the school. We appreciate how your school helps you in learning to live healthily and safely so that you develop into mature young people, ready to progress to the next stage of your education.

The teaching you receive is good. This means you achieve well and the standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are just above average. You say that you like your teachers and the way they take good care of you and you were very positive in your questionnaire responses. To make things even better, we have asked your headteacher and teachers to help all of you, and particularly the boys, to improve your writing. We have asked teachers to help by providing you with more opportunities to develop your writing skills. We have also asked them to change some of the ways they plan lessons so that all of you achieve the best you can. You can help by continuing to work hard.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Bernard Jones

Lead inspector

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