

Holy Infant and St Anthony RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105219
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	377203
Inspection dates	29 February 2012–1 March 2012
Lead inspector	Barbara Flitcroft

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marguerita Leyden
Headteacher	Catherine Lawton
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2008
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Barbara Flitcroft
Terry Bond

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 16 lessons taught by nine teachers as well as visiting several sessions to observe phonics teaching (the teaching of the sounds that letters make). Inspectors also listened to pupils read. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, the local authority, the diocese, and groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding practices, its self-evaluation and development planning. Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers in 71 returned questionnaires.

Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than an average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals has recently risen to above average.

The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It has recently gained the Activemark award and has achieved Healthy School status.

In the long-term sickness absence of the headteacher, an executive headteacher and an acting headteacher from another Catholic primary school in the same local authority are leading the school. At the time of inspection, this new leadership team had been in place for one month.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The new executive leadership team has made a strong and positive initial impact in improving the school's learning environment. The school's overall effectiveness is not good because pupils do not always make fast enough progress in lessons and because some strategies to improve the work of the school lack refinement.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school; they are engaged in their learning and behave well in lessons. An enduring strength is the positive school ethos which contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- The great majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily but weaknesses in teaching, now largely resolved, and staff absences have slowed the school's efforts to improve further. By the end of both Key Stages attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress from pupils' starting points. Progress in mathematics is slightly weaker than that in English, although satisfactory overall. The progress of boys lags slightly behind that of girls in English and mathematics.
- The new leaders have improved teaching through clear direction and strong partnerships with the governing body, the diocese and the local authority. Consequently, there is an increasing proportion of good practice. However, there remains some variation in the quality of teaching and of assessment. In some lessons, learning tasks and targets are not always clear enough and there is insufficient emphasis on helping pupils to improve their work.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. There is a need for improvement in the consistency of the leadership of teaching and for greater rigour in its management by middle leaders. Management of performance is satisfactory. The acting headteacher and executive headteacher are effectively leading the implementation of actions to bring about further improvements in performance.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress to raise attainment by July 2012 by:
 - providing clear and achievable learning tasks and targets, shared with pupils, that enable them to make good progress in each lesson
 - ensuring that there are considerable opportunities for pupils, particularly boys, to develop their basic skills across all subjects
 - ensuring that the pace of learning is always brisk and that pupils are encouraged to work more quickly
 - developing assessment procedures that involve pupils in evaluating their own progress, provide opportunities for them to improve their work and show them how to make progress in terms of their National Curriculum targets.

- Strengthen leadership and management by December 2012 by:
 - using the monitoring of teaching and learning by middle leaders to set clear targets for improvement, and to check that identified improvements are made
 - ensuring that assessment and tracking procedures are applied consistently across the school so that dips in progress are identified and tackled more quickly.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children make good progress. However, national test data, the school's own analysis of current performance, observations of learning in lessons and sampling of pupils' work confirm that pupils' progress is variable across the school and it is no better than satisfactory. Consequently, pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 6, but varies significantly across the school. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, also make satisfactory progress. This is evident from the assessment system that the new leaders have introduced.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a satisfactory start to their education. They enter the Reception classes with skills which are typical for their age and the majority attain the levels expected by the end of the year. In the main, the youngest pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well. However, they sometimes take a while to settle and lose concentration quickly.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning in lessons although some boys tend to lose concentration on their tasks more quickly than their classmates and this slows these boys' rate of progress. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is average, including in reading. Pupils' writing development is encouraged through good opportunities for collaborative work and enhanced by speaking activities. Whilst attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading is broadly average, girls make faster progress than boys. Some boys in particular find it difficult to build sounds into words and tend to guess when they are unsure.

By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment over recent years in the national tests has been broadly average in both English and mathematics. By the time pupils leave Year 6 pupils'

attainment in reading is average. However, current practice, which includes teaching Year 6 pupils in ability groups, is proving to be effective in accelerating progress. The oldest pupils read confidently, but lower down the Key Stage boys in particular show less interest in books and struggle to work out unfamiliar words. Leaders have increased the stock of reading books and pupils are now enthused to read daily. The pupils' mathematical skills are now improving more rapidly because staff have recently reviewed the way in which they teach calculation.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agree that their children are taught well. Pupils agree that they are well taught all or most of the time. Inspection findings are that overall, teaching is satisfactory; however, there is now some better teaching that has started to accelerate pupils' progress. This is due to the sharp focus for improvement that is being driven by senior leaders. The outside area in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been successfully developed to better promote all areas of children's learning, although too many activities are not linked to the main themes. A new system to improve reading skills ensures that pupils of all ages read to an adult in school each day and to someone at home each evening.

In some lessons for older pupils, the use of questioning frequently challenges pupils' thinking and moves them forward in their learning. Teachers carefully plan different learning tasks to match the range of pupils' abilities in the main part of the lesson, but sometimes all pupils receive the same level of introductory activity. The use of information and communication technology (ICT), such as the laptops or the interactive whiteboard, to support learning is variable in quality. The use of effective marking to inform pupils about their achievement against National Curriculum targets and to advise them of the next steps in their learning is not always evident. Generally, support staff and other adults are used well to support learning in lessons for pupils with specific learning needs. However, these pupils tend to make the best progress in especially arranged small intervention groups.

Teachers organise educational visits, such as to the local museum, to enrich pupils' learning and to support the planned curriculum. However, opportunities to use basic skills in recording their work in more interesting ways are not used to further motivate some pupils, particularly boys. Teachers develop pupils' social skills by encouraging them to work together and reflect on what they are learning. Much of this was evident in a Year 4 mathematics lesson where pupils worked collaboratively on a shopping task, adding up different amounts of money. The school organises a range of effective additional learning opportunities and interventions to complement classroom teaching and help all pupils make better progress, particularly those who have special educational needs. Throughout the school, teaching successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Opportunities to develop pupils' cultural understanding are limited and inconsistent across the school although upper Key Stage 2 pupils were enthused about researching life in Kenya.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is generally good in some lessons and satisfactory in others. Behaviour rarely disrupts learning in class. In their replies to the inspection questionnaires, a few parents and carers indicated that they had concerns about behaviour, although the very large majority felt behaviour was good. Inspectors explored these issues, as well as making focused

observations. The school's procedures for dealing with incidents, and practices for supporting good behaviour were judged to be rigorous. Pupils very much like to receive family points as rewards. Incidents of bullying are rare but dealt with swiftly. Discussions with pupils indicate that they understand that there are different kinds of bullying and that they are confident that, when such incidents occur, they know they will be dealt with appropriately.

Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep safe and of the risks that they face. In some classes, pupils know about internet safety and the dangers of social networking sites and younger pupils understand about 'stranger danger'. Almost all say they feel very safe in the school and their parents and carers agree. They welcome visits from the Road Safety Team to help them learn more. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle but are not sufficiently aware of the dangers of alcohol, smoking and drugs. Pupils' increasing enjoyment of school is confirmed by their attendance which has risen in this academic year; attendance is now high.

Leadership and management

As a result of a declining trend in the school's performance and the headteacher's continuing long-term absence, the school governors, with the help of the local authority and diocese, brought in an executive senior leadership team, which was challenged to secure school improvement rapidly. A plan was drawn up and actions started immediately. The unceasing effort of the new leaders has already had a significant impact. This has resulted in improved planning, better teaching and learning, a brighter and more effective learning environment and a higher quality of work produced by pupils. A new enthusiasm has been generated which is shared by many who are associated with the school.

The executive leaders have a clear, shared view of how to build on the school's strengths while identifying areas for improvement. The drive for improvement by the majority of staff and the governing body shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Recent training for all staff on teaching has led to some improvements, but some have embraced the techniques better than others. The leaders have forged good partnerships with parents and carers who appreciate the way the school is improving outcomes for their children. Regular communication between home and school enables parents and carers to air any concerns they may have.

Data are now used well to evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils and identify those who are underperforming. This has prompted a good action plan for improvement in the school's work. More books have been provided to encourage pupils to read for pleasure at home and school. There is an increasing focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills while providing many opportunities for pupils to enhance their artistic talents. The curriculum is enhanced by visits and visitors to make learning interesting. The recent focus on encouraging pupils to use their literacy skills in all subjects is helping to accelerate the pace of progress in some classes. However, pupils have a limited knowledge of the world beyond their local area.

The governing body supports the school well, and is committed to supporting the executive leaders to take it forward. There is a strong commitment to safeguarding systems and all statutory requirements are met. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The members of the governing body use their skills satisfactorily to challenge the school's leaders and hold them to account.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



2 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Infant and St Anthony RC Primary School, Bolton BL1 6QJ

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you about your work and hearing some of you read. I found that your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that I found some good things in the school, but also some things that need improving.

Here are some of the things I found out about your school.

- You said in discussions and in the questionnaires that you enjoy school and I could see that you all try hard in lessons. Your attendance has improved, which tells me that you really do enjoy learning.
- Although there is good teaching some of the time, this is not always the case and this means that your overall progress is satisfactory, rather than good.
- You rightly told me that pupils are well-behaved most of the time; I was very impressed by your confident conversation in our discussions.
- You feel you are kept safe and I could see that you take good care of each other.
- All adults in school are caring and they give you suitable help when you have problems with your work.
- Leaders are doing the right things to move the school forward and are clear about what still needs improving. They have good plans for making the school even better in the future.

I have asked the school leaders to:

- make sure that teachers always provide you with the right level of work, expect you to work quickly all of the time and mark your work with useful advice
- check that teaching is always good enough and use all of the information about your learning to ensure that you are all making good progress.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and trying your best all the time.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Flitcroft
Lead inspector

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