

Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Benfleet

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115158
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	379025
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Davidson
Headteacher	Peter O'Kane
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2009
School address	Kents Hill Road South Benfleet Benfleet SS7 5PX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons as well as small teaching groups out of class. Inspectors observed a total of eight teachers. They met parents and carers informally during the inspection, and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised samples of pupils' work, the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, management and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning and safeguarding documents. In addition, inspectors took account of questionnaire responses from 155 parents and carers, 15 staff and 116 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How successful are the measures in place to raise attainment for all pupils, especially boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, in English in Key Stage 2?
- Is good teaching and robust use of assessment information consistently improving achievement in English to match that in mathematics?
- How rigorous and effective are leaders and managers and members of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school to ensure that achievement is improved consistently?

Information about the school

Holy Family Catholic Primary is an average-sized school primarily serving two attached parishes. Most pupils are White British. A few pupils are of minority ethnic heritage and a few of these speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than found nationally. There is one Reception class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Holy Family Early Learning Centre provides pre-school experience for children between the ages of three and four years each morning. The provision is managed by the governing body but is subject to a separate inspection. The school holds the Activemark award and has achieved national Healthy School status.

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

Holy Family provides a good quality of education. Pupils show very good attitudes to their learning and are well taught so they make good and sometimes outstanding progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress because their needs are quickly and accurately assessed and they receive well-targeted learning support. Pupils enjoy school, as shown by their above-average attendance. A significant feature of the school is the outstanding care, guidance and support that pupils receive from staff, and so they grow in confidence. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and is underpinned by their excellent spiritual, moral, and social development which flows from the strong and caring ethos that permeates the school. Pupils' cultural development is good and improving with the developing links to other schools in large urban areas and also overseas. Pupils know how to keep safe, and they have a good understanding of what is involved in leading a healthy life and join in sports activities eagerly. Links with parents and carers are good and they are pleased with all that the school provides. One parent, typical of many, said, 'I could not have found a better start for my child's education and journey through life.'

Children settle quickly into the Reception class, make a good start to their learning and enter Year 1 with skills and abilities that are similar to those expected nationally. They are provided with a good range of learning experiences but staff plan fewer opportunities in the outdoor area that are as exciting as those in the classroom. Pupils make good progress through the school and at the end of Year 6 their attainment is above average in English and high in mathematics. Progress made by pupils in English in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing, has not been as strong as in mathematics because an earlier initiative to improve literacy skills, when monitored closely, was found to be ineffective. As a result of a recent sharp focus on making writing tasks more interesting, especially for boys, and providing good opportunities to develop the full range of literacy skills in other subjects, pupils' progress has accelerated. There are clear signs that older pupils in Key Stage 2 are on track to achieve high standards in English, to match those in mathematics, by the time they leave Year 6. Teachers monitor the progress of individual pupils carefully. Some use this information well to set work that provides challenging activities that meets the needs of pupils of different ability, but this is not consistent, especially in writing.

The headteacher works in close partnership with the deputy headteacher and other senior staff. Together they provide committed and ambitious leadership that is

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securing continuing improvement in all areas of the school's work. They identify priorities for improvement accurately and monitor initiatives to raise attainment rigorously to ensure they are effective. Members of the governing body have improved their skills rapidly, share monitoring responsibilities with senior staff and offer strong challenge and support to the school in equal measure. Development points from the previous inspection have been robustly addressed. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Community cohesion is promoted well so pupils develop an appreciation of their own and the wider national and international communities. Sustained good-quality teaching, continued development based on secure self-evaluation and the setting of clear and ambitious targets mean that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in English, particularly in writing, by extending good practice in using assessment information to plan work which consistently challenges all groups of pupils.
- In the Reception class, improve the range of activities in the outdoor learning area to make it as stimulating as the indoor classroom.

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

Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school and meet the very high expectations set for them. They enjoy their work and want to do as well as they can. One pupil encapsulated this saying, 'We do lots of really interesting work so we love our lessons and our teachers make learning fun.' They enjoy discussing ideas, both in groups and with their learning partners. Pupils have good opportunities to extend their writing skills through other subjects, and boys especially are enthused by exciting topics. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 6 pupils acted as junior reporters using what they knew about the London blitz in 1940 to write a newspaper article. Pupils of different abilities were well challenged and the writing task was particularly exciting to boys so all pupils made good progress in writing lively reports. In another Key Stage 2 class pupils worked with enthusiasm because they were interested in writing instructions which involved robots, but activities were not structured well enough to provide challenge and this limited the progress made by all groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language contribute well to lessons because work is matched well to their needs.

The school's ethos of respect, care and working side by side as a family is strongly embedded. Pupils show courtesy and kindness to all adults and to each other. All elements of pupils' personal development are fostered extremely well. Pupils reflect deeply about many issues, making good use of spaces provided for quiet reflection in their classes and the library. Pupils show pride in the responsibilities they carry out in school as councillors, house captains and monitors and their roles are respected and

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valued. They also contribute well to their local parishes and the wider community, especially with charity fund raising. Pupils understand clearly about being safe, including through safe use of the internet. Healthy School status and Activemark exemplify pupils’ good awareness of what is important for a healthy lifestyle. Pupils’ above-average attainment and their love of learning ensure they are well placed for the next stage of their education and later life.

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	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to assess pupils’ understanding and promote lively discussions. The pace of learning is good and the objectives of lessons are made clear so pupils are involved well in their learning. The progress pupils make is carefully assessed and underachievement is quickly identified so that well-targeted support can be provided. The planning of challenging tasks for all groups of pupils, especially in writing, is inconsistent. Pupils are encouraged to assess how well they are learning and they discuss with their teachers their own targets to improve their progress in both literacy and numeracy. Pupils find targets helpful, and one said, ‘You set your mind on what you need to do and you improve.’ Pupils’ work is marked well, identifies strengths and where work can be improved and contributes to pupils’ good progress. Teaching support staff are deployed well in classes and in small groups out of class. This ensures all pupils, especially those who find learning difficult and those with English as an additional language, receive good support and make good progress.

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

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The school’s strategies to improve literacy are generally used well by teachers and are proving successful in raising attainment but have not yet had full impact in writing to bring attainment in English closer to that in mathematics. Pupils reading skills are well developed. Speaking and listening skills are well developed throughout the school so pupils join in discussions confidently and explain their ideas well. The links developed between subjects are very effective in providing more interesting opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, especially writing skills. Learning is enriched well by a good range of well-attended clubs and trips which help to bring learning alive. The jujitsu club is very well attended and is also open to other local schools to attend.

Pupils show great confidence in the staff who care for them, and so they confide their worries. The quality of care is of a high standard and excellent pastoral support is match by extremely well planned academic guidance. Teachers work with each pupil to assess their progress and help them set targets for improvement which pupils are encouraged to assess for themselves to see how well they are doing. Transition arrangements at all stages are sensitively organised so pupils are confident about moving to the next stage of their learning. Good care is provided in the Holy Family Early Learning Centre and children are safe and happy in a lively well-resourced setting.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides clear and ambitious leadership for the school. Careful assessment of the school’s strengths and areas of development has led to the successful implementation of a range of important improvements. Mathematics has shown rapid improvement following a successful programme which links mathematics to information and communication technology. English is now showing clear signs of accelerating pupils’ progress through careful selection of interesting writing tasks which engage their interest and inspire their writing. All areas of the work of the school are closely monitored by the senior leaders and members of the governing body, and especially in helping to drive forward literacy which has been slower to improve. This rigorous monitoring process led to the comparatively recent change of initiatives to improve literacy. Incisive leadership has united staff, regular monitoring of classroom practice underpins good teaching across the school, and ambitious targets are set for further improvements. The governing body has a secure committee structure and, through governors’ links with classes and regular visits, it is

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well informed.

The promotion of community cohesion is good. Pupils are helped to develop an understanding of the world beyond school to help shape their future role as local, national and global citizens. The strong partnerships established with local schools, local authority advisers, and a range of valuable support services underpin both pupils’ good achievement and excellent care and guidance they receive. The school promotes equal opportunities well, ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve as well as their peers. Pupils are known and valued as individuals, and the school is free from discrimination. The learning environment is stimulating and well resourced. The safeguarding of pupils’ welfare is good. There are clear policies that are efficiently integrated throughout the school and all staff receive regular update training to ensure they are alert to all safeguarding and child protection matters.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children develop a love of learning because they are provided with a range of well-resourced and stimulating learning experiences. Less well-developed and exciting are activities planned for the outdoor learning area, which is still developing. All areas of learning are covered and activities are quickly adapted to take account of children’s interests. Children are well taught and all staff provide outstanding care for them. They are encouraged to be independent and also to play together and share. For example, the theme of Winnie the Witch, inspired by a story led to four girls eagerly filling small pots with soil. One said, quietly, ‘We are making potions. They are magic things and I can also make really good spells like Winnie.’

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Well-focused teaching sessions ensure all children make good progress, whatever their individual starting points. Staff also intervene well in children’s games, gently encouraging them to share their ideas and develop their speaking skills. Speaking, reading and writing skills are developed through guiding children well to blending letters and sounds and there is a close focus on extending number skills. By the time children enter Year 1 their literacy and number skills and abilities are similar to those found nationally. Reception is led well and staff work as an efficient and energetic team. Staff monitor children’s development carefully both informally, whilst they are playing, and in more structured learning sessions. Good links between school and home mean parents and carers are kept fully involved in their child’s development.

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

A much larger than average proportion of parents and carers replied to the questionnaire and of these a very large majority were pleased with what the school provides. They were pleased with many areas of the school’s work, and especially that their child enjoyed school and was well prepared for the future. Parents and carers felt that the school is well led, they were well informed about their child’s progress and also guided to support their child’s learning. They valued their child’s experience at school. Inspection evidence supported these positive views. A few parents and carers felt that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and that their suggestions and concerns were not taken into account. This view was not supported by inspection evidence, and the inspectors judged behaviour as outstanding and the links established with parents and carers, including reporting on pupils’ progress, as good. One parent said, ‘Holy family is an extremely good school in terms of behaviour, learning, and listening to children and parents. I would highly recommend the school.’

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Benfleet 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 155 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	112	72	40	26	2	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	122	79	28	18	4	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	82	53	62	40	7	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	85	55	58	37	7	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	75	48	71	46	4	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	89	57	54	35	8	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	94	61	56	36	4	3	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)	89	57	52	34	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	82	53	63	41	4	3	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	91	59	47	30	9	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	75	48	62	40	12	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	85	55	56	36	9	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	105	68	45	29	2	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



21 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Benfleet SS7 5PX

Thank you for being so helpful and polite to us when we visited your school. We were very privileged to join your assembly when the Bishop of Brentwood, Thomas McMahon, came to say goodbye before his retirement. It was a very special occasion and we know you enjoyed it.

We were impressed to see how much you enjoy your lessons and you told us you find learning fun because teachers make your lessons interesting. You get on well together, are kind to each other and behave extremely well. You know a lot about being safe and healthy. We found that you make good progress in your time at school. You are extremely well cared for by all adults and your personal development is promoted in an outstanding way. You make a good contribution to your community and are learning a lot about the world in which you live. Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body work well together to make your school a happy place in which to learn.

You told us yours is a good school and we agree with you. We have asked the school to do two things to make sure you make better progress than you do now and help make your school even better.

- We have asked your teachers to use what they know about your progress to always plan work for you that is not too easy or too difficult, but makes sure you try as hard as you can.
- We have asked that the activities planned for Reception children in the outside learning area are made just as exciting as those in the classroom.

You can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best at school. It was a great pleasure to visit your school and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball
Lead inspector

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