

Holy Cross Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109244
Local Authority	Bristol
Inspection number	377893
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Fayers
Headteacher	Andrew Newport
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 September 2008
School address	Dean Lane Bedminster Bristol BS3 1DB
Telephone number	0117 3772199
Fax number	0117 3772366
Email address	holy.cross.p@bristol.gov.uk

Age group	Error! Reference source not found.4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons taught by six teachers. They held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at some of the documentation. This included the school development plan, monitoring, tracking and assessment information as well as planning and the governing body minutes. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' safety were closely scrutinised. In addition, questionnaires from 73 parents and carers were analysed as well as eight returned by staff and 77 from pupils.

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

- What the school has done to improve attainment in writing and ensure similar progress by all groups of pupils.
- How well day-to-day assessment enables pupils to understand their learning, how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve.
- The part played by all leaders in monitoring the work of the school and identifying and remedying any weaknesses.

Information about the school

Holy Cross Roman Catholic Primary School is smaller than most other primary schools. It is situated in Bedminster and draws its pupils from a wide area in and around Bristol. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. A wide range of needs is catered for, the most common being speech and language difficulties, but more specific needs such as autism and hearing impairment are also met. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has more pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils who are at an early stage of learning English than most schools. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in the Reception classes. The school has a number of awards including International School, Healthy Schools, and Activemark.

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 Cross provides a good education for its pupils. There are some outstanding features, particularly in the high-quality care, support and guidance it provides for its pupils and in some aspects of pupils' personal development. The pupils are proud of their school and enthusiastically take on a range of responsibilities from house captains to school councillors. They behave well, have a good understanding of how to stay safe and say that there is always an adult they can talk to if they have a problem. They are very thoughtful and reflective, and very aware of the needs of others around them. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and truly reflects the caring and positive ethos and values of the school. These underpin all aspects of the school's life and are reflected in the unswerving dedication and commitment of the headteacher and the whole staff to the academic and personal needs of all pupils.

The school has moved forward well since the last inspection. After a dip in 2009, attainment has steadily risen year on year. Over time, attainment is average and pupils make good progress. Standards in English are not yet as high as they are in mathematics. While reading is above average, writing is a weaker area, particularly for the boys. This is improving, however, because the school has introduced a range of strategies to address the issue. These strategies include a focused phonics programme (the teaching of letters and the sounds they make), which helps pupils to improve their spelling, and a more consistent approach to teaching creative and extended writing. However, both these initiatives are comparatively recent and their full impact has yet to be seen.

Teaching is consistently good; some lessons observed during the inspection were outstanding. Pupils enjoy their lessons because they are highly interactive and teachers seek to actively involve them in their own learning through challenging questions and interesting tasks. The curriculum is good. It motivates pupils effectively so that they want to learn and, consequently, they make good progress. Pupils are gaining a wide understanding of international issues and this is reflected in the International School Award. They have acquired a good knowledge of different religions and have an excellent understanding of the diversity of different faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom.

Staff rigorously monitor the progress of all pupils. Any concerns are identified quickly so that they can be addressed before they become problems. The school is very

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aware of the importance of pupils' personal and emotional well-being as an important factor in their learning. The care, support and guidance that pupils receive, particularly those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, are outstanding and, as a result, pupils pursue their education in a safe and secure environment which ensures they are challenged to reach their full potential in all that they do.

The headteacher ensures that leadership roles are appropriately devolved and all leaders are accountable for the progress made in their areas and subjects. The use of assessment has improved significantly since the last inspection and senior leaders are highly competent at analysing and using the information from data. However, not all staff are as confident at interpreting data and using the information to set appropriate targets for pupils' improvement. As a result, some targets are not measurable enough. The school knows how well it is doing. The self-evaluation is accurate, although occasionally a little cautious. This is because governors and staff always feel they can further improve. The good progress made by pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics, demonstrates that there is a good capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in writing across the school, particularly that of boys, by
 - identifying themes and topics which will inspire boys while sustaining the interest of girls.
 - embedding the use of materials which will inspire pupils to write imaginatively and accurately.
- Ensure that all staff are confident at interpreting and using data to monitor pupils' progress, and using the information to set more precise targets for individuals and groups of pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this prepares them well for learning as they move through the school. By the time they move into Year 1, pupils' attainment is generally a little below average, having started from lower than expected levels for their ages. Pupils throughout the school learn effectively because tasks are usually well matched to their individual needs. Progress in mathematics is particularly good and attainment in reading was above average in 2011. Strategies to raise attainment in writing are beginning to be effective and pupils have made good progress. This was obvious in a Year 3 English lesson where pupils were exploring the story of *Lila and the Secret of Rain*. The task appealed to boys as well as girls, and the lesson challenged the pupils to find different adjectives and recreate the story through role play. As a result, pupils worked very well

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collaboratively, shared ideas and were confidently able to move on to creating a mind map about the different senses they used to explore an African hut. Because tasks were set at different levels, all pupils were appropriately challenged and consequently, they made good progress and achieved well. Older pupils, too, are challenged well and problem-solving activities are an integral part of the mathematics curriculum. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were involved in solving money problems. Higher-attaining pupils needed all their skills to solve two- or three-step problems, while those who find mathematics more difficult were receiving very good guided support to work their way through one- or two-step calculations. All groups of pupils achieve well, including the most able, those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because their progress is carefully tracked to ensure they are making the progress they should. If problems arise, they are quickly spotted and action taken to address them.

Pupils thrive in the nurturing atmosphere of the school. They have an excellent knowledge and understanding of what living a healthy lifestyle entails, and this is reflected in the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. They are thoughtful and reflective, assertive and confident. The few pupils who find it more difficult to manage their behaviour are given very good support by the school to ensure that they do not disrupt the learning of others. The school has worked particularly successfully to improve attendance and this is now good. Pupils' very good personal and social skills, together with good information and communication technology skills, and good numeracy and improving literacy skills, ensure they are getting a good grounding for the future.

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	2

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 extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan meticulously to ensure that pupils are enthused and well motivated in lessons. Pupils know what they are going to learn and teachers use resources, such as interactive whiteboards and individual laptops, skilfully to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to discuss and compare their thinking with partners. Teachers use questions proficiently to challenge pupils' thinking and encourage them to develop their ideas. Tasks are carefully devised to meet the learning needs of all pupils so that they are appropriately challenged or supported. Teachers use feedback sessions at the end of lessons well to evaluate how well pupils have understood their learning and to plan what the next steps will be. In this way, pupils always know what their learning is going to lead on to. The good marking policy is applied consistently and pupils are given time to respond to teachers' marking at the start of lessons. Consequently, pupils understand just how well they are doing and exactly how to improve their work.

The school is working on making its already good curriculum even better. It is developing themes and topics which will secure improvements in key areas such as writing. The gardening project particularly appeals to boys and is linked to learning in literacy, sciences and mathematics. There is already some evidence that boys' writing is improving as a result. This themed approach means that effective links are made across a range of subjects including mathematics and English. This has a particularly good impact on progress because pupils have various opportunities to practise many of their skills. The school's links with the community result in many exciting projects, such as the construction of a magnificent horse emerging from the sea for the local festival of light procession. A wide range of visits and visitors, as well as a good variety of out-of-school activities, provide pupils with many additional opportunities to enhance their learning.

The breakfast club gives an excellent start to the day for up to 30 pupils who regularly attend. The school knows its pupils extremely well. The ethos and culture of the school is such that every child's needs are individually known and catered for. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The school works extremely closely with parents and carers and a wide range of outside agencies to enable it to make the best possible provision. Transition arrangements into and out of the school are very effective. Pupils receive particularly strong support for their personal development and are very well cared for.

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

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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 is totally committed to his pupils' learning and development, and effectively drives forward the ambitious, but realistic, programme outlined in the school development plan. Leadership roles are devolved effectively and all staff have some area of responsibility. Equality of opportunity for all pupils is promoted well. For example, the progress of all groups of pupils is carefully monitored to ensure that boys, girls, pupils at an early stage of learning English, those eligible for free school meals, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those with gifts and/or talents all make good progress. The school's tracking system ensures that the progress of all children is checked closely to identify any patterns that might be developing. Short, sharp interventions are often put in place to alleviate any short-term problems. In this way, the leadership is driving forward improvements in pupils' learning.

The governing body has an excellent overview of the school's direction and the priorities which it is instrumental in formulating. Regular visits, reports and meetings with staff mean it is able to monitor the performance of the school effectively. Procedures to safeguard pupils are extremely thorough and well understood by staff. There are very careful checks on all adults who work in the school, and health and safety checks, as well as risk assessments, are carried out rigorously. The school has wide-ranging links with a range of outside agencies and organisations which promote pupils' learning and well-being effectively. The school promotes community cohesion extremely well and plays a pivotal part in the local community. Its links with schools in contrasting areas mean that pupils' knowledge of the differing cultures represented in the United Kingdom is outstanding.

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

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Reception class. Children are eager to learn and make good progress because teaching is lively and exciting. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. There are many opportunities for children to pursue their early literacy and numeracy skills. Questioning skills of all staff are good and these encourage children to explain their thinking and reasoning so that they fully understand their learning. The curriculum is well planned. Interesting themes make the curriculum and learning relevant and exciting, and many stimulating activities are planned for children within the current theme or topic. For example, to support their learning about the *Gingerbread Man*, children could create their own large picture, match numbers and buttons using the interactive whiteboard programme, sequence the story or re-enact the story introducing new characters. Children learn to share, take turns, and develop independence and the ability to make choices. However, children’s learning is sometimes restricted by the lack of resources, particularly for role play and imaginative play. The school is aware of this and new equipment is in the process of being ordered.

The care and attention given to children’s welfare are excellent. Children’s individual needs are known and acted upon, and children feel very safe and secure. Induction processes are excellent, and there are very good relationships with the local pre-school and with the other settings from which children attend. Leadership and management are good. Ongoing monitoring of the progress children are making ensures that activities are well matched to their needs on a day-to-day basis. Observations are made that carefully record children’s progress, and these carefully identify how children’s learning can be further extended to inform future planning.

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

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There was an above-average response to the Ofsted questionnaire, with 73 questionnaires returned, representing nearly half of the families attending the school. A very large majority of parents and carers are very pleased with all that the school has to offer. This was reflected in the comments made both on the questionnaires and in person to the inspectors. Most parents and carers are very confident that their children are safe and well cared for. They also express confidence in the leadership and management of the school. A few parents and carers raised concerns and the inspection team investigated these carefully during the inspection. Nevertheless, a very large majority are happy with the experiences their children are receiving and this was reflected in the many positive comments that were made. One example sums them all up, 'The school provides a very caring and supportive environment that really helps our children to grow and progress.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holy Cross Roman 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 169 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	67	20	27	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	37	51	27	37	5	7	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	33	45	33	45	5	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	55	28	38	2	3	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	40	55	27	37	3	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	36	49	32	44	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	45	32	44	4	5	2	3
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)	30	41	27	37	2	3	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	36	49	28	38	5	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	40	33	45	6	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	42	31	42	5	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	38	52	26	36	5	7	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	37	51	30	41	2	3	1	1

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.

28 November 2011

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Holy Cross Roman Catholic Primary School, Bedminster BS3
1DB**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside. You showed us how much you enjoy your school and how pleased you are with how well you are doing. You are right to be pleased, because it is a good school!

Here are some of the highlights.

- You really enjoy school and make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- You behave well, both in class and out in the playground.
- You are reflective, thoughtful and are very proud of your school. You take very good care of each other.
- You have an interesting and exciting curriculum.
- You understand well how to stay safe.
- The headteacher and governors are good at running the school and understand well how they could make it even better.
- Your teachers are doing a good job. They work hard to plan interesting lessons and involve you as much as possible.
- All staff take very good care of you and keep you safe.

There are some things the school could do better and we have asked the headteacher to:

- Ensure that writing improves, especially that of boys, by choosing themes and topics that will appeal to both boys and girls, and by giving you lots of opportunities to write creatively.
- Ensure that the teachers are confident in using the information from data to set more precise targets for improvement in the areas for which they are responsible.

All of you can help by taking care to be accurate when you are writing and using the strategies you have been taught to work out the correct spellings.

With very best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard

Lead Inspector

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