

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100739
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	376442
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	David Gosling

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	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Coote
Headteacher	Mary Collins (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2009
School address	Culverley Road Catford London SE6 2LD
Telephone number	020 8698 2675
Fax number	020 8697 7137
Email address	mcollins20.209@lgflmail.org

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 16 lessons and observed eight teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including samples of pupils' work, pupils' records and assessments, school policies and plans, and information relating to safeguarding. Questionnaires from 113 pupils in Years 3 to 6, and 132 from parents and carers were also reviewed.

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

- The attainment in different year groups, to see if the improvements to results in 2011 were reflected throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching and assessment, especially how well teachers are meeting the needs of pupils from different ability groups and backgrounds.
- The impact of having a headteacher and deputy headteacher in temporary positions.

Information about the school

Holy Cross is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school situated near the centre of Catford. The school has a lower-than-average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being those of African origin. Almost half of pupils are from homes where English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and with statements is below the national average. The majority of these need support for speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has received a number of awards, including a Healthy Schools Award and a Sustainable Travel Award at outstanding level. The previous headteacher retired in August 2011 and the current headteacher and deputy are in long-term acting positions.

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 is a good and improving school, highly regarded by parents and carers. It provides good value for money. National test results in 2011 were significantly above average and the highest in recent years. The school has built on the strengths identified in the last inspection very well and the rigour with which the progress of individual pupils and the quality of teaching are monitored and developed is consistent. This enables the rapid progress pupils make throughout the school and demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment in reading has been stronger than in writing and mathematics in recent years but current work and assessments show the gap is narrowing and that progress in all three areas is good. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of lively teaching and a strong focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills.

The pupils' enthusiasm, reflected by their high attendance, is an important contributory factor to their success. Two areas of personal development judged as outstanding in the last inspection report remain outstanding: how safe pupils feel and their adoption of healthy lifestyles. The pupils' contribution to the school and community and their preparation for future economic well-being have improved and are now also outstanding. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a major strength. Pupils reflect on their lives and those of others, exemplified by a letter from a Year 6 pupil to Henry VIII which implored him to 'take pity on the poor'. Pupils have a keen interest in reading and the arts.

Teaching is good throughout the school but slightly stronger for pupils in Years 4 to 6, where some is outstanding. Nearly all lessons are full of vitality, with pupils actively involved in their learning and excellent use being made of resources. The school recognises that the key area for development is more consistency in planning activities which build on what pupils have already achieved. The curriculum meets the needs of the range of pupils very well but the planning of progression through learning skills in some topics is not always thorough enough. The care, guidance and support for pupils, especially for those who are vulnerable, are outstanding.

The high regard parents and carers have for school leadership shown in inspection questionnaires, the progress in pupils' books, and the focus on improving teaching already this term indicate that the drive for improvement is strong despite the temporary leadership posts. This is partly because of an effective governing body

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which supports and challenges the school well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By August 2012, ensure that work set in lessons builds more consistently on what pupils have already achieved by:
 - matching work closely to pupils' ability in all lessons
 - taking more account of learning skills in different subjects when planning topics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment is above average and there has been an upward trend in recent years. Pupils attain particularly well in English, although mathematics attainment is above the national average. An above-average proportion of pupils reach higher levels because teachers have high expectations and meet the needs of the most able well.

Achievement is good. Pupils enter the school with below-average expectations for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and thereafter, although the rate of progress is faster across Key Stage 2 than it is in Key Stage 1. Pupils are very enthusiastic and involved in their learning, two good examples being the work in the Year 6 Tudor and Year 4 Second World War projects. These have led to a range of very lively writing as well as developments in art and technology skills through the designs of Tudor houses and air raid shelters. Pupils make good progress with their basic accuracy in writing, and books in all classes show an excellent and growing control of different styles of writing. By Year 6, pupils produce very good quality and accurate letters, biographies, poetry, stories and information writing. Progress in basic calculation skills is good and Year 6 pupils have made very good progress in their understanding of how and when to use different types of graphs and charts.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of targeted support from well-trained support staff and carefully structured resources. The pupils whose first language is not English progress well because of effective support and also because of the strong focus on speaking and listening in lessons.

Most pupils in the inspection survey thought that behaviour was good and they report that they feel very safe. Pupils are very polite and cooperative and movement around the building is calm and orderly. There is virtually no bullying and different groups mix very harmoniously. Behaviour is good in the classrooms, although occasionally pupils lose focus when working independently. Pupils show an excellent awareness of how to live healthily, as reflected in the Healthy Schools and Sustainable Travel awards. The Sustainable Travel award was at outstanding level and this is a reflection of pupils' appreciation of the value of not using a car to come to school. Pupils willingly take on a wide range of responsibilities in the school and in

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the local community, for example through raising money for a local hospice. Attendance is high and the pupils are particularly well prepared for the future through their attainment in basic skills and their ability to work in teams.

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	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

There is good teaching and learning at all stages, although it is stronger in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2. Pupils' enthusiasm in lessons is partly the result of teachers' skilful use of a range of strategies to engage them. Regular and productive use is made of role play, paired and group work and games. In one very fast-paced lesson in Year 4 after some dramatic role play, the pupils were asked to think of 101 alternatives to the word 'said' and after some intense work some excellent alternatives were generated. Lessons are well prepared and resourced. Teachers convey their enthusiasm for subjects and make them relevant to the pupils' lives. Support staff make a very good contribution to lessons, sensitively making a wide range of teaching points. A notable strength of teachers and support staff is the use made of questions to challenge pupils and target individuals of different ability. Teachers' use of assessment is good. Marking makes next steps very clear and some is outstanding. Teachers and support staff provide regular and valuable advice in lessons on how pupils might improve. In the occasional lesson teachers do not set work for pupils which builds enough on what they have already achieved.

The curriculum has a number of strengths. There is strong provision for basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The

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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topic curriculum is engaging considerable enthusiasm and improving learning, and an excellent range of well-attended clubs is provided after school. Although there has been some mapping of skills in the topics, planning does not take enough account of progression through National Curriculum levels in some subjects.

The outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils explain why attendance is high and behaviour is good. Pupils have high levels of trust in adults’ ability to guide them through key stages in their education. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high levels of support, including those with speech, language and communication difficulties, who receive targeted support from trained staff as well as from a therapist.

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?

In recent years, leaders and managers have made a positive impact on attainment and teaching. A sharp focus on writing and mathematics has led to considerable improvements in these areas throughout the school. There has been a strong drive for improvement from the current temporary leadership team and targets are ambitious for 2012. The acting headteacher has made the improvement of teaching and learning a high profile and has already observed all teachers teach English and mathematics this term. The leadership team and subject leaders have a good grasp of strengths and weaknesses in pupils’ progress and there is rigorous follow up of any pupils who do not meet the school’s high expectations. A clear and ambitious vision is in place, shared by staff and governors. All staff in their inspection questionnaires strongly agreed that they knew what the school was trying to achieve. Planning is well focused on improving teaching and learning and raising attainment.

The governing body is closely involved with the school. It is ambitious and actively contributes to the school’s vision and planning. The governing body challenges the school well and has a sound grasp of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. The safeguarding of pupils is rigorous and almost all parents and carers in questionnaires thought the school kept their children safe.

Communication with parents is excellent and they have been involved well in their children’s learning, for example through workshops in mathematics. Parents have had some impact on whole-school decisions such as about the school uniform.

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Partnerships with a wide range of groups have been used extremely effectively to support learning, especially to provide sports coaching and help vulnerable pupils. There is a particularly effective partnership with the parish over-60s 'Diamond Club', which provides reading support for about 60 pupils each week as well as being involved in a number of school activities and projects.

The school monitors the progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds closely and takes robust action if any groups are not achieving as well as others. Policies on equal opportunities are clear and they are reviewed annually. Different racial groups mix extremely well and there is no evidence of racist incidents. A wide range of activities provide very good education about different cultures and religions. This includes links with a parish in Grenada and a school in Uganda and an annual International Evening. Community cohesion is supported well by these activities, as well as links with a range of social groups in the local community. The school has analysed the local community and has a short-term plan to build bridges with different groups.

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	1
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 make good progress and reach broadly average levels by the end of Reception. Attainment in writing is slightly lower but a focus on developing children's early writing has been effective in improving progress. Good progress in understanding letter sounds through some lively teaching, for example through the use of puppets' names, is leading to good attainment in reading. Children enjoy their learning and cooperate well. They have a good grasp of basic health issues and work and play safely.

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Teaching is good, with staff especially strong at providing activities which are relevant to children’s interests. An example of this was a trip to a local supermarket, followed by the cooking of a Christmas cake with the ingredients they had bought. Some very imaginative language is generated by role play, for example in the ‘doctor’s surgery’. There is a good balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities. The latter are used well to develop language but the planning of outdoor activities does not take enough account of all areas of learning. Some aspects of numeracy are developing well but progress in problem solving is slower because the curriculum is not providing sufficient opportunities in this area.

Leadership and management are effective. Assessment is rigorous and the leader has a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Planning is thorough, with weaker areas being addressed well. There is good collaboration between the Nursery and Reception class staff and a collective responsibility for the care of children. Relationships with parents are strong.

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

An above-average number of parents and carers returned the pre-inspection questionnaire. Almost all are happy with the school. They show a high level of satisfaction with all areas, with the overwhelming majority satisfied with leadership, teaching, the promotion of health, the safety of their children and how much their children enjoy school. Inspection evidence supports these views. A few parents and carers think that the school does not meet their children’s individual needs. Inspectors found that the school has an excellent knowledge of individual pupils’ progress and needs and that the school meets their needs well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holy Cross 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 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 260 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	95	72	36	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	100	76	30	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	73	55	52	39	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	48	64	48	3	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	72	55	57	43	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	70	53	60	45	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	82	62	48	36	2	2	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)	56	42	63	48	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	55	42	62	47	9	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	70	53	53	40	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	61	46	58	44	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	77	58	51	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	84	64	46	35	1	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.



4 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, London SE6 2LD

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We are especially grateful to those of you who took time to talk to us about your work and tell us what you thought about the school.

We can see why you said you liked the school in your surveys. Holy Cross is a good school and the best things that really stand out are:

- You make good progress, especially in English.
- Teachers make their lessons very interesting and have an excellent knowledge about how well you are doing.
- The school is keen to do well and is well led.
- Your attendance is high and you enjoy school, behave well in lessons, and feel very safe.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy.
- You make an excellent contribution to the running of the school and to charities and events in the local area.
- You are very well prepared for the future.

To improve, there is one thing, especially, that the school could do better:

- Teachers could plan lessons for you a little more carefully, especially in topics, so that the work set builds more on what you have already achieved.

You can help the school even further by continuing to work hard and always concentrating in lessons.

Yours sincerely

David Gosling
Lead inspector

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