

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	136062
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	382018
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2012
Lead inspector	Frank Carruthers

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	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Melia
Headteacher	Joe Welsh
Not previously inspected	
School address	Upper Essex Street Liverpool L8 6QB
Telephone number	0151 7093672
Email address	holyfamily-ao@holyfamily.liverpool.sch.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Frank Carruthers
Sheila Loughlin
Jean Tarry

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 14 teachers as well as by teaching assistants. The inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6 and observed teaching sessions of letters and sounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' work was inspected and observations were made of pupils' behaviour at play and around school. The inspectors held meetings with staff, a group of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan, records of monitoring teaching and learning, and attendance and behavioural records. Inspectors analysed 67 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those returned by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Holy Family is an average-sized primary school within two miles of the city centre. It opened in August 2010 from the amalgamation of two previously federated schools as well as the closure of two other schools following a rationalisation of school places. Just over half of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is in line with the average of all primary schools. About one quarter of these are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Home languages include Polish, Chinese and French. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is above average. There are two specialist units in the school, each catering for up to eight pupils who come from other schools in the local authority. One supports pupils aged four to eight who have behavioural difficulties and have been excluded from mainstream schools. The other supports pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. The headteacher was head of the two federated schools before amalgamation. The deputy headteacher is currently seconded to the headship of a school in a nearby local authority. The school met current floor standards, which are minimum standards expected by the government. The school achieved Healthy Schools status and the Active School Award in 2010.

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. Improvements to the planning of the curriculum are developing pupils’ skills well and engaging their interest. The school is not yet good because levels of attendance are too low and the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils’ achievement from low starting points is satisfactory. Attainment in the current Year 6 is below average in English and mathematics but rising compared with standards reached by Year 6 pupils last year.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Leadership of teaching is effective and is resulting in an improving picture of teaching across the school. Inconsistent approaches to teaching, evident during the school’s first year, are being addressed but the outcomes are yet to be fully realised. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the two specialist units is good.
- Pupils’ behaviour and attitudes to learning are satisfactory. Some pupils display challenging behaviour and incidents of poor behaviour are handled well by staff. Child protection procedures meet requirements and pupils report they feel safe in school. Levels of attendance were well below average last year and remain so this year, despite robust procedures.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has developed a leadership team, which has a clear overview of and ambition for the school. The leadership team has successfully introduced important strategies to improve the performance of all staff and the achievement of pupils. Middle managers gain a valuable insight into senior leadership roles when they take on the role of duty manager on a rota basis, thus strengthening the leadership of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Pursue the rigorous strategies introduced by the school to:
 - reduce persistent absenteeism so that it is in line with or better than the national average for primary schools by the end of the school year 2012/13
 - raise the awareness of parents and carers to the vital importance of good attendance.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all lessons lead to good or better learning and achievement for pupils by:
 - pursuing consistent and effective approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics
 - consolidating the best elements of practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage in Key Stage 1 classes
 - improving consistency in the marking of pupils' work so that pupils understand how well they are doing and what are the next steps in their learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Most children start in the Nursery classes with skills that are well below those expected for their age, especially in key aspects of communication, language and literacy and in their personal development. A minority are at the very early stages of learning English as an additional language. All children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make particular strides in their personal, social and emotional development, especially skills of independent learning. Progress in communication, language and literacy is good. Nevertheless, by the end of the Reception Year, skills are still below expected levels.

Progress in reading in Key Stage 1 classes was inconsistent last year. This year, a large majority of Key Stage 1 pupils are making expected progress or better. Pupils enjoy reading and talk about their favourite books with enthusiasm. At the end of Year 2, attainment in reading is below average but rising and making up for previous gaps in learning. Past inconsistencies and disturbances as schools closed and pupils moved to a different school building had an adverse impact and led to gaps in the reading skills of pupils in Key Stage 2 classes. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading is below average but it is rising. There is also an improving picture of more Year 6 pupils working at higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics, thanks to small teaching groups based on pupils' levels of attainment. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are making satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is below average and rising. The gap between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not is narrowing.

Pupils' learning is satisfactory. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are pleased with the progress their children make. When teaching engages their interest, pupils show real enthusiasm. For example, pupils in Year 4 made good progress in writing instructions because what they were writing about really engaged them – dragons' eggs. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 thoroughly enjoyed estimating various measurements about giant puppets that many had seen tour the nearby city centre streets the previous weekend. This is not always the case, however. When

teaching is less stimulating, pupils are not as engaged and need the guidance and support of adults to keep them on track. Pupils' ability to work independently and supervise and evaluate their own learning is satisfactory.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and some make good progress, because levels of support from teachers and their assistants contribute well to their learning. Pupils in the behaviour unit make good progress and the overwhelming majority make a successful return to mainstream schools in a short period of time. Pupils in the speech and language unit also make good strides in their communication skills. They spend some of their time in mainstream classes in school and this helps their social development immensely. Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, especially younger ones, make satisfactory progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is benefiting from a concerted effort by senior leaders to develop consistency among staff. Most joined the new school from several others locally. Staff brought with them more than one approach to teaching pupils about letters and sounds. There was no uniform approach to developing pupils' writing in the various genres, for example, report writing or persuasive writing. It became apparent that there were variations in pupils' methods of calculating in mathematics. All these differences are being addressed, though the outcomes for pupils are still to be fully translated into high attainment. A consistent approach to teaching about letters and sounds is now having a strong impact on pupils' progress.

During the inspection, more lessons were good than satisfactory and none was inadequate. However, this is not a consistent picture across all year groups. The school's own monitoring records show that teaching and learning have not been good enough in previous years, but have improved since the start of the current school year. Parents and carers are pleased with the teaching their children receive and a number say they have seen an improvement this year. Overall, the quality of teaching promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Where teaching is good, pupils are engaged well, interesting resources, including new technology, are used imaginatively and teaching assistants have a high profile. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are effectively catered for, often in smaller groups. Small group sessions also benefit higher attainers. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children become confident and independent learners and benefit from good interactions with staff to move their learning on.

Where teaching is satisfactory, activities lack an effective purpose. For example, in some Key Stage 1 lessons when pupils choose activities, there are missed opportunities by staff to promote pupils' skills of speaking, listening, writing and playing together imaginatively. At other times, pupils do not engage with the lesson enthusiastically. This is because the pace of the lesson is slow or the pupils fail to sustain concentration when the teacher is introducing the lesson. In addition, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent across classes and subjects. At its best, for example in some classes in English, marking tells pupils how well they are doing and gives advice on next steps. This is not evident in every year group or in mathematics.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very rarely less than satisfactory and is often good. Incidents recorded of minor disruption in lessons have reduced significantly in the last two terms. Pupils are polite and friendly. They say bullying is rare. They understand and do not tolerate racist or homophobic bullying and are aware of its serious consequences and impact on victims. They understand the school's behaviour code and know what to do if they feel threatened. Outside of lessons, behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils report that behaviour is better in class than around school. Almost all parents and carers responded positively in their views on behaviour.

Attendance and punctuality to school have been and remain a concern for the school. The headteacher and senior staff promote a policy of zero tolerance. The deployment of staff has been purposefully directed towards tackling persistent absenteeism and to get the message to parents and carers that poor attendance has a significant, adverse impact on pupils' achievement. The school's breakfast club is a further method the school has used to promote better attendance and punctuality. Outcomes are yet to be realised, however, in terms of improved attendance.

Leadership and management

In its first full year, the school overcame significant barriers and gained the approval of parents and carers, some of whom doubted the feasibility of the amalgamation. The headteacher led a full review of the school's provision and context. A wider senior leadership was established. The headteacher made valuable use of external consultants and local authority support teams to bring about improvements to teaching. Through his drive and ambition for the school, high quality training and professional development for staff is having an impact. Consistency of approach to achieving a broad and balanced curriculum was initiated. For example, the curriculum is planned so that a number of subjects contribute to developing pupils' writing skills in a structured manner. This helps pupils to recognise the purpose of learning such skills in literacy lessons. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well, for example, the cultural experiences of the pupils by making good use of diverse talents of different ethnic families. In addition, the headteacher has begun developing the management skills of all staff, not only senior teachers but middle managers, school officers and administrators. The outcomes of these positive initiatives are yet to be fully realised over time and this is why leadership, management and the school's capacity to improve are satisfactory rather than good.

School self-evaluation is based on accurate measures, including detailed tracking of pupils' progress, and this means staff know how different groups of pupils are doing. In this way, targeted support for any under-achievers helps promote equal opportunities for all pupils. The school is rigorous in tackling discrimination and takes all appropriate measures to safeguard the pupils' welfare, including the safe recruitment of staff and child protection procedures. The school gives high priority to pupils whose circumstances mean they may be more vulnerable, for example, through the effective work of a designated manager. The governing body, with a wide range of expertise among members, is well led by the Chair and provides a good level of challenge to and support for the school.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



25 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L8 6QB

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. You were all friendly and helpful and we enjoyed finding out from you how you are getting on. As you know, your school has not been open very long. This is its second year. So it is a good time for inspectors to visit and see what progress the school is making.

Holy Family is providing you with a satisfactory education. This means that some of its work is good but other things need to be improved. For example, the children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Also pupils who find school difficult, perhaps because they find it hard to behave themselves or because they find speaking or reading difficult, get good support from staff. You reported to us that behaviour in school is satisfactory and we agree. You know how to keep safe.

However, although you make satisfactory progress in school subjects, we want the school to help you to do even better. We want the teaching you receive to be always good. For example, your teachers need to make sure they teach you how to read, write and do maths using the same teaching methods and in the best way possible. When they mark your work, they need to make sure you know how well you are doing and what are the next steps you need to take to improve.

Your headteacher and senior staff are doing a lot to help you improve your skills and knowledge but this will not be achieved if you do not attend school as many days as possible. Most of you do your best to attend every day but there are some of you who are absent too often. The staff want you all and your families to realise how important school is for your future. We inspectors feel the same. So please do your very best to attend regularly and work hard in school.

I send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Frank Carruthers
Lead inspector

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