

# Holy Rood Catholic Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	137074
<b>Local Authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	385900
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Huard

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	182
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Denise Slaght
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Groundwell Road Swindon SN1 2LU
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons, and seven members of staff. Meetings were held with staff, representatives of the governing body and a group of Year 2 pupils. Inspectors looked at the school improvement plan, monitoring and assessment information as well as planning and governing body minutes. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' safety were closely scrutinised. In addition, 145 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed as well as 28 that were returned by staff.

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

- The progress made by pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English.
- How well the curriculum relates to pupils' needs and interests.
- How effectively tracking and assessment systems are used to identify pupils needing additional support or challenge.
- The success of strategies used to improve attendance.
- The impact of new responsibility posts for special educational needs and/or disabilities and English as an additional language on the provision in those areas.

## Information about the school

Holy Rood is similar in size to most other infant schools. Nearly half the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are at early stage of learning English is very high when compared to other schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils in the mainstream school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, but there is a higher than usual proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs and/or disability. The main area of need is that of speech and communication. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been taught in three Reception classes for much of year but are currently taught in two. The school has a number of awards such as Healthy School 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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Its Christian ethos is central to all of the school's work and is at the centre of all it does. This is reflected particularly in the care, support and guidance provided for its pupils not only in their personal development but in their academic development also. Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school and many commented favourably. As one said, 'It rightly has an extremely high reputation in the community not least because there is a lovely Christian ethos that permeates all those within it, but also because of the excellent academic attainment of the children.'

The school is fully inclusive. It has a very high proportion of pupils from a range of minority ethnic groups and the progress they make, particularly those at an early stage of learning English, is exceptional. This is because the school meticulously tracks the progress not only of different groups of pupils, but also of individuals to ensure they are doing as well as they can. However, at the moment, the retrieval of such information is cumbersome and time consuming for staff. A very slight possibility exists that a pupil needing support could be momentarily overlooked. A new tracking system is being installed but is not yet fully functional.

Attainment is high and has been so for the last six years. The school has sustained high standards even though children are entering with lower starting points than at the previous inspection. They make exceptionally good progress because the quality of teaching is consistently high. Teachers know their children well, have high expectations of what they can achieve and, as one child put it, 'They really make lessons fun for us.'

The curriculum motivates and enthuses the pupils, from the Reception class upwards. Whether they are trying to find the pirates' treasure, or enduring a bumpy space journey, they are involved in and excited by their learning. Pupils are attentive in class, learn to share and cooperate well and are polite and welcoming to visitors. The play areas are happy and harmonious spaces. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils celebrate the wide range of cultures represented in the school, have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and are thoughtful of the needs of others. This was illustrated in the books of children's prayers seen around the school containing their personal requests - rarely for themselves, often for others.

The key to the school's success lies in the exceptional teamwork of all adults, led by and inspiring and dedicated headteacher. All staff are committed to making the best possible provision. This, together with careful and accurate analysis of the school's performance and sharply focused development planning, are key factors in the school's success and its excellent capacity for further improvement. This is further demonstrated in the consistently outstanding achievement of pupils over a number of years and their consistently high attainment.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the new assessment system is fully installed and functional in order to facilitate the tracking of individual and groups of pupils' progress.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Pupils tackle their tasks with enthusiasm and really enjoy their learning. Children's starting points are generally a little below those expected for their age. Attainment is high by the time pupils leave. Their behaviour is exceptionally good in lessons because tasks are interesting and motivate them extremely well. Activities are very well matched to individual need so that all pupils are supported and challenged well. As a result, they make outstanding progress in acquiring language, literacy and mathematical skills. In Year 2, pupils were solving multiplication and division problems. Lower-attaining pupils were working with support to set out arrays to help them with problems with the 2, 3 and 4 times tables. More-able pupils were solving problems involving the 7, 8 and 9 times tables independently, often demonstrating their understanding of inverse operations. In a Year 2 literacy session a mixture of activities were taking place. Some pupils were withdrawn for guided reading sessions with another adult. These were extremely well led with skilful questioning showing that pupils gain a good understanding of the texts they read. In the classroom, writing activities were so well organised that pupils were not disturbed when they went to read and could continue with their short-burst tasks when they returned without disturbing others. The whole session fitted seamlessly together to enable pupils to make the maximum progress.

There is no noticeable variation in the progress made by boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who are at an early stage of learning English, benefit significantly from individual and small-group support which contributes well to their excellent progress. Strategies to improve attendance have been successful and the school is now known affectionately in the community as the 'school with no holidays in term time'. Pupils are developing very good interpersonal skills. They have an excellent knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. The school's strong commitment to these aspects of provision is reflected in the Healthy School and Activemark awards. For their ages, they have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community by taking on a wide range of responsibilities and a variety of fundraising events. Their excellent academic progress and personal qualities prepare them well for later learning.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

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

## How effective is the provision?

The lively curriculum appeals to the pupils and really stimulates their imaginations. Teachers are skilled at making excellent links between subjects. The school seizes every opportunity to extend pupils' knowledge and introduces each new theme with a 'wow' experience, so pupils are excited and eager from the first to find out more. Visits and visitors, such as those from mobile science and natural history providers, are carefully planned to support pupils' learning within each theme. The school celebrates the many cultures represented and pupils gain an excellent awareness of cultural diversity. Pupils make very good progress in lessons because teachers carefully assess pupils' learning from day to day and review previous learning at the start of each lesson. Planning is meticulous and ensures that the needs of pupils are met by carefully matching activities and tasks to their individual needs.

Staff and pupils make good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning and maximise enjoyment. Teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and academic achievement. Staff maintain an atmosphere in lessons which promotes exploration and enjoyment and which is highly conducive to good learning. Teaching assistants are skilled and support pupils, especially those at an early stage of learning English or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, extremely well. As a result, all these pupils make the same excellent progress.

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The school cares for and supports all of its pupils highly effectively. Induction arrangements are comprehensive and ensure that children settle into the school quickly and happily. Transition between key stages and on to junior school is excellent and very well handled to ensure that it is accomplished smoothly. The care for pupils whose circumstances have made them more vulnerable is exceptional. The school relentlessly pursues its goal to secure for them exactly the right support.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher is the driving force within the school. She has a very clear vision for its future development and works extremely closely with her senior leadership team, middle leaders and all staff to achieve this. She has created a climate where all feel responsible and committed to their part in school improvement. The promotion of staff to lead special educational needs and/or disabilities and English as an additional language has been particularly beneficial. The additional time for staff to carry out their responsibilities ensures that provision for these pupils can be more rigorously monitored to ensure that it fully meets their needs. This means that these pupils make the same excellent progress as their peers.

The quality of the school's self-evaluation is excellent. It is well focused on sustaining high standards and even accelerating pupils' progress based on the results of rigorous monitoring. Governance is outstanding. The governing body has an extremely good knowledge of the school and its strengths and weaknesses. It plays an active role in the school's strategic development and monitors its work extremely thoroughly and conscientiously. Governors work hard to ensure parents and carers are fully involved in their children's education. At the time of the inspection, governors have ensured that all safeguarding procedures are robust and the safety and security of the pupils are of high priority.

Equality of opportunity for all pupils is promoted extremely well and discrimination is not tolerated in any form. This is evident in the way in which the school works hard to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils very carefully in order to ensure that the correct provision is made for all. The school has a very good understanding of, and participation in, the local community. The school promotes community cohesion well. The school has strong links with other establishments nationally and internationally. It has not yet fully completed its plans to link with a school in a contrasting area of the country to further extend pupils' knowledge of different communities in the United Kingdom.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are presented with a wide range of activities and teaching which reflects all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. They enjoy learning because interesting themes make the curriculum relevant and appealing and teaching is lively and exciting. There is a particular emphasis on developing children's speaking skills, particularly for those at an early stage of learning English. Tasks are often linked to the topic in progress and hold children's attention and motivate them very well. As part of the pirate theme, children enthusiastically role played on the pirate ship, excitedly discussing their quest for hidden treasure. They helped to measure out ingredients for cookies on the scales, and stickily mixed skull and crossbones icing decorations for biscuits. The outdoor environment is used extremely well. It presents children with a wide range of learning opportunities reflecting the quality of the indoor learning area. Children enthusiastically laid a trail to find treasure, close by the cave, and around Crocodile Island. Children learn to share and take turns. They develop independence and the ability to make choices.

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. Leadership and management are excellent. The decision to teach children in three groups for the majority of the year has helped them to make excellent progress. Ongoing monitoring of the children's progress ensures that activities are well matched to their needs on a day-to-day and longer-term basis. Assessments are comprehensive and children's activities are recorded methodically and conscientiously. The involvement of parents and carers in children's learning is excellent. The report that each parent or carer receives at the end of the year is of an exceptionally high standard giving a full, illustrated picture of the child's progress.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

One hundred and forty-five parents and carers returned completed questionnaires, which is a very high return for this size of school. Almost all are very happy with the school. The overwhelming majority of those parents and carers who returned questionnaires say their children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe. The vast majority consider that their children's needs are met and that the teaching is good. The large majority think that the school is well run. Comments such as, 'I couldn't be more sure of my child's well-being and happiness at Holy Rood,' and, 'Her confidence has blossomed and she has never complained about a school day,' reflect the views that many parents expressed to inspectors.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holy Rood Catholic Infant 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 145 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 182 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	102	70	40	28	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	118	81	26	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	85	59	56	39	2	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	84	58	56	39	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	100	69	43	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	86	59	54	37	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	85	59	54	37	1	1	1	1
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)	77	53	60	41	3	2	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	47	71	49	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	50	60	41	3	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	37	80	55	2	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	83	57	54	37	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	105	72	37	26	0	0	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



18 July 2011

Dear Children

**Inspection of Holy Rood Catholic Infant School, Swindon, SN1 2LU**

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 told us you are pleased with how well you are doing. You are right to be pleased, because it is an outstanding school!

What we found out about your school

- You really enjoy school and make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You behave extremely well in class, which helps you to do really well in your learning, and out in the playground, which makes it a very happy place to be.
- Your headteacher and teachers are exceptionally good at running the school and understand well how they could make it even better.
- You understand extremely well how to stay safe.
- Your teachers work very hard to plan interesting and exciting lessons.
- You have some exciting activities to follow; I wonder if Reception ever found the pirates' treasure, and if Year 2 survived their bumpy space journey?
- All staff take extremely good care of you and keep you safe.
- All the children in the Reception classes get a wonderful start to their school life.

We have now asked your school to:

- make sure the systems to help your teachers monitor your progress are fully installed so that it is easier for them to keep an eye on how well you are all doing.

Best wishes for the future. You can all help by continuing to try as hard as you can in your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard  
Lead inspector

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