

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY FAMILY RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Barrow in Furness

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112366

Headteacher: Mrs. K. Waplinton

Reporting inspector: Dr. B. Blundell
23868

Dates of inspection: 19 - 20 February 2001

Inspection number: 192033

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ostley Bank
Barrow in Furness
Postcode: LA13 9LR

Telephone number: 01229 894624

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Dr. C. Hall

Date of previous inspection: 10 February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is a school for boys and girls aged four to eleven, situated in Barrow in Furness, Cumbria. The school is about the same size as other primary schools, with 213 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils having English as an additional language is low. Both the proportion of pupils having statements of special educational needs and the percentage of pupils with special needs are below the national average. The nature of pupils' special needs includes specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and speech or communication problems. The ethnic make-up of the school is nearly all white.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is very good; standards over the last three years for pupils aged eleven have been nearly one year ahead of pupils nationally in English, mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching is very good and leadership and management are excellent. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- In national tests over the last three years for pupils aged eleven, standards have been nearly one year ahead of pupils nationally in English, mathematics and science; standards in the work seen during the inspection are well above average in these subjects.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher and deputy headteacher are excellent.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good.
- Provision for pupils in the foundation stage is very good.

What could be improved

- Tracking of pupils' progress, whilst having good features, could be improved.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997. Standards for pupils leaving the school aged eleven have improved from being above average to well above average in English, mathematics and science. The key issue to provide greater curriculum continuity and progression in mathematics at Key Stage 2 has been appropriately addressed. Schemes of work have been appropriately developed. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have been provided with more opportunities to read challenging texts, and are given effective guidance in the choice, and use of such texts. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	B	A*	A
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	A	A	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Over the years 1998 to 2000 taken together, pupils have left Holy Family nearly one year ahead of pupils nationally in English, mathematics and science. Results in 2000 for pupils aged eleven were well above the national average in mathematics and science, and very high in English, being in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Compared with schools having a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, results in 2000 were well above average in English, mathematics and science.

Standards for pupils aged seven at the end of Key Stage 1 over the years 1998 to 2000 have been just above the national averages in reading and writing, and in line with the national average in mathematics.

The school's results are rising in line with the rise observed nationally.

The school's targets are ambitious and on course to be met.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged eleven. By the time pupils leave school, standards in art and history are above national expectations. Standards are in line with national expectations in information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education, music and geography.

Pupils at Holy Family achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good. They are courteous and polite.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good, both in class and around school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is very good; levels of unauthorised absence are well below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
lessons seen overall	very good	very good	very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is very good. In all the lessons seen, teaching was at least satisfactory. Overall, 8 per cent of lessons seen were excellent, 42 per cent were very good, 46 per cent were good and 4 per cent were satisfactory. Strengths in teaching include the manner in which most teachers share the learning objectives for lessons with their pupils. The overall quality of teaching in English and mathematics is very good, and the skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught.

The school meets the needs of all its pupils well.

Strengths in pupils' learning include their concentration and their own knowledge of their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are good throughout the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and effective.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Additional provision for the two pupils with English as an additional language is not currently required.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. It is very good for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies are appropriately spiritual occasions. Cultural provision has improved since the last inspection, with appropriate contributions in subjects such as art and geography.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils. Child protection procedures are appropriate.

All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. Whilst the school cares well for its pupils, procedures for tracking their academic progress could be improved.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management by the headteacher and deputy headteacher are excellent. They are both very able classroom practitioners, they complement one another very well, and have carried out appropriate monitoring of teaching through the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is very good.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of resources is very good and their use supports pupils' learning effectively.

The school applies the principles of best value well. Financial routines overseen by the bursar are efficient. Secretarial, caretaking and other staff help the smooth running of the school. The quality of displays throughout the school is very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has high expectations. • The school is well led and managed. • Teaching is good. • Their children like school. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like to see a greater range of extra-curricular activities. • Some parents would like more information about their child's progress. • Some parents are not happy with the amount of homework.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Inspectors judge that the range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Homework levels and information for parents are appropriate overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

In national tests over the last three years, standards have been nearly one year ahead of pupils nationally in English, mathematics and science; standards in the work seen during the inspection are well above average in English, mathematics and science

1. Over the last three years, pupils have left Holy Family nearly one year ahead of pupils nationally in English, mathematics and science. In the year 2000 national tests, pupils' performance was nearly four terms ahead of pupils nationally in English, and these pupils obtained results that were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Their attainment in mathematics was two and a half terms ahead of pupils nationally, and in science they were over one term ahead. The performance of boys was better than that of girls overall, which is different to the picture nationally.
2. In the work seen during the inspection, standards for pupils aged eleven were well above average in English, mathematics and science. Year 6 pupils, for example, are able to write coherently, putting arguments for and against capital punishment. Their writing conveys clear reasons for their opinions. Extended writing covers a range of controversial issues, such as the bombing of Iraq. Pupils' work is well presented, and they use a wide range of effective vocabulary.
3. In mathematics, pupils aged eleven can draw and label a range of acute and obtuse angles accurately. They are very competent when estimating the size of angles. Pupils are keen to show off their mathematical expertise and do not merely choose easy options. When asked to give a pair of numbers that multiply together to give, for example, sixteen, they volunteered 1.6×10 or 0.25×64 . They are not afraid of "big numbers".
4. Pupils are knowledgeable about a wide range of scientific terminology. For example, when discussing changes of state, Year 5 pupils showed that they understand the concepts of evaporation and freezing and realise that these changes are reversible. Pupils in Year 6 understand that food goes to each cell in the body. They have very good knowledge of the roles of viruses and bacteria, and are familiar with terms such as plankton, amoeba and algae. The pupils are making very good progress.
5. Pupils aged seven are reaching above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Over the last three years, pupils have left Key Stage 1 just ahead of the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. In the year 2000 national tests, standards were well above average in reading, above average in writing, and average in mathematics.

The overall quality of teaching is very good

6. The overall quality of teaching in the lessons seen during the inspection was very good throughout the school. In every lesson seen in every class in the school, teaching was at least satisfactory. Overall, 8 per cent of lessons were excellent, 42 per cent were very good, 46 per cent of lessons were good and 4 per cent were satisfactory.
7. Teachers at Holy Family set high expectations for their pupils, both in terms of academic standards and of behaviour. Class management is very good. Teachers plan their lessons well and often share the learning objectives for lessons with their pupils.

This means that pupils know exactly why they are in a particular lesson, and what it is that they are expected to learn.

8. In a very good numeracy lesson for children in the foundation stage, there was an effective introduction by the class teacher on counting forwards and backwards in tens, fives and twos. The teacher had very good techniques for interesting her children; support assistants worked well with the teacher and the lesson was very well planned.
9. An excellent Year 6 science lesson had been meticulously prepared, with very well thought out worksheets on microbiology to enhance pupils' learning. The teacher had very high expectations.
10. Pupils in a very good Key Stage 1 art lesson made very good gains in their learning of the work of Pieter Brueghel. The work was pitched at exactly the right level to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of sketching.
11. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are taught separately for one lesson every week. This extra lesson rotates appropriately between providing extra tuition in English, mathematics and science and extends pupils' learning well.

Leadership and management by the headteacher and deputy headteacher are excellent

12. The leadership and management of Holy Family school are excellent. The headteacher has set a very clear educational direction for the school. She shows very good insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and has a clear vision of how she wants it to develop. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are both accomplished teachers. When they monitor teaching in the school, they are able to offer relevant pointers for further improvement to staff.
13. The school development plan is a useful working document. The staff have a copy displayed on the wall in the staffroom, and write on appropriate comments as and when they complete parts of it.
14. The governors know their school well and bring an appropriate range of expertise to the running of this school. They meet their statutory responsibilities very well.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; relationships are very good

15. Both in and out of the classrooms, pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes. They demonstrate very good relationships both with other pupils and with adults. Pupils' learning is enhanced because of these factors.
16. For example, in a science lesson for Year 2, pupils displayed very good attitudes throughout. They showed great interest in their science when designing circuits incorporating a pressure pad to warn a shopkeeper that someone had entered his shop. Pupils were keen to discuss exactly where a flashing light should be placed in a rear storeroom, to alert the shopkeeper. Pupils in Year 6 were very well behaved in a literacy lesson. Relationships were also very good. They were keen and interested to participate in all the activities in the lesson.
17. In assemblies and at break-times, pupils are very well behaved and talk positively of their time at school. They enjoy coming to school.

Provision for pupils in the foundation stage is very good

18. When children enter Holy Family, their attainment is below average overall. By the time they leave the Reception class, they have made very good progress, and are nearly all up to nationally expected standards.
19. Children are regularly assessed during their time in Reception, to see what they can and cannot do in each of the required areas of learning. The classroom has a warm and welcoming atmosphere, and all the adults work well together to bring the best out of the children.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Tracking of pupils' progress, whilst having good features, could be improved

20. The school has put in place a system to track pupils' progress, from when they start in the Reception class to the time that they leave in Year 6. This system gives the school an outline of each pupil's attainment in relation to national standards in English, mathematics and science.
21. Whilst the system being used provides a good "skeleton" outline of pupils' developing attainment, it does not, as yet, pinpoint this with sufficient precision. For example, the school has yet to adapt its assessment regime to track pupils' attainment in terms of "broken down" National Curriculum levels. The school will assess a pupil as a level 3, or even a good level 3, but does not yet formally track its pupils as they go through the school. Additionally, it does not yet set formal targets in terms of these levels.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

22. In order to improve the school further, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body should:
 - improve the system it uses to track pupils' progress as they go through the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	10	11	1	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	213
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		44

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	13	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	12	12
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	30	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (100)	91 (94)	90 (87)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	12	13
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	30	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (97)	91 (84)	94 (94)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	12	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	12
	Girls	17	13	17
	Total	29	24	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (86)	83 (89)	100 (89)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	15	12	15
	Total	25	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (89)	76 (93)	90 (93)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	184
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	23.0

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	346927
Total expenditure	352286
Expenditure per pupil	1678
Balance brought forward from previous year	22847
Balance carried forward to next year	17488

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	213
Number of questionnaires returned	182

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	32	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	41	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	43	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	48	10	1	1
The teaching is good.	68	31	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	45	15	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	26	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	27	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	38	48	10	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	69	29	1	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	38	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	37	21	3	15