



Inspection report

# Holy Family Catholic Primary School

**Better  
education  
and care**

Unique Reference Number 132830  
LEA Swindon

Inspection number 274690  
Inspection dates 27 and 28 April 2005  
Reporting inspector Mrs S Kara HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of School	Primary	School address	Marlowe Avenue
School category	Voluntary Aided <i>Diocese of Clifton</i>		Park North
Age range of pupils	4 to 11 years		Swindon
			Wiltshire
			SN3 2PT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01793 521933
Number on roll	249	Fax number	01793 521932
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr T Ward
Date of previous inspection	January 2004	Headteacher	Mrs M Barnard

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Age group  
4 to 11 years

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## Introduction

When Holy Family Catholic Primary School was inspected in January 2004, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on two occasions to monitor its progress, and reinspected the school in April 2005

### Description of the school

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is an average sized primary school situated very close to the centre of Swindon. The pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average although none have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Seventy seven per cent of the pupils are of white British heritage; the remaining pupils come from a range of other ethnic groups. Fifteen per cent of the pupils, a higher proportion than most schools, speak English as a second language. When they enter the school the pupils' attainment levels are varied, but overall are typical of those seen nationally. Four of the teachers are employed on temporary contracts; the school has appointed a complement of well qualified, permanent teachers for September 2005.

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## Overall effectiveness of the school

In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

Holy Family Catholic Primary has improved considerably; it is a good school with a strong focus on raising the achievement of all pupils. It is very effectively led and managed by the headteacher. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations for the pupils' academic attainment and their behaviour; along with the support staff they work together as a strong team and morale is high. Standards remain below the national averages but they are rising because the teaching has improved and is good with many strengths. Improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) have the potential to lift standards in the subject but are too recent to have had much impact. The pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn; their attitudes and behaviour are much improved. However, little emphasis is given to helping the pupils understand and value our multicultural society.

### Improvement since the last inspection

The inspection of January 2004 required the school to address issues concerned with raising standards in English and science; improving the quality of teaching and learning and teachers' planning; and improving the pupils' behaviour and levels of attendance. There has been good progress in relation to all of them.

### Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to improve is very good. The headteacher is strongly focused on raising standards and improving the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work. She has been well supported by the staff, the local education authority (LEA) and the Diocese of Clifton. A strong sense of educational direction and teamwork have developed in the school. The good programme for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance is thorough and accurate. Although there is a small budgetary deficit, which has been agreed with the LEA, the budget is well managed; appropriate account has been taken of future staffing needs.

### What the school should do to improve further

The key priorities for the school's development plan are to:

- continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning;
- fully integrate the use of ICT into the pupils' learning;

- further develop the multicultural aspects of the curriculum.

## Achievement and standards

Across the school the pupils are making satisfactory and often good progress because the teaching is well planned and often of high quality; consequently standards are rising at an increasingly rapid rate. The pupils in the Foundation Stage are on target to reach the standards expected of their age. However there is a legacy of underachievement in the school. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 the results were below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, continuing the declining trend of the previous three years. In the 2004 end-of-Key Stage 2 tests the results in English improved and were in line with the national average, exceeding the school's target. The results in mathematics also improved and bettered the school's target but remained below average. The science results were below average and were similar to those of the previous year. The pupils' progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was in line with that seen nationally.

Standards in reading and writing are improving rapidly. Speaking and listening are improving more slowly but the pupils are increasingly confident in using the appropriate technical vocabulary, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. For instance, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 selected the correct strategy to analyse data and described the process fluently. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 identified similes and alliteration in a poem and explained why they were effective. In all year groups, the increased opportunity for practical work in science has enabled the pupils to develop confidence in and enthusiasm for this aspect of the subject. The school has developed a very good support strategy for those pupils with speech and language difficulties. Until the recent installation of the computer suite the pupils have had limited opportunities to use ICT and, consequently, standards are below average.

The pupils in the booster classes for those on the borderline of achieving the nationally expected level in end-of-key stage tests, are making very good progress. The pupils who have special educational needs are making good progress. The school's tracking of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English lacks detail. The school has developed a policy for able pupils and this is in the early stages of implementation.

## Personal development

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved and are very good overall; they are a strong feature of the school's provision. Their behaviour in and around the school is very good; the pupils work and play co-operatively. The staff are excellent role models for the pupils. The system of rewards and sanctions is well understood by the pupils and they particularly value the rewards they can achieve. The measures to promote good behaviour have been particularly effective in the playground. There has been a significant reduction in the number of disruptive incidents recorded by the school and also in the number of exclusions. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were at least satisfactory in all of the lessons and in nine out of ten of the lessons they were good or very good. The recording of

attendance and measures to reduce absence are good. Attendance has improved from being unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection to being broadly in line with the national figure.

The provision for the pupils' personal development is good. The older pupils are enjoying the opportunities to take responsibility in the school; for example, as playground buddies, reading with the younger pupils or running the fruit bar. They have the opportunity to join a range of clubs. The good promotion of a healthy lifestyle is acknowledged by the healthy school award.

Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The principles of social and moral responsibility within the context of the Catholic faith are given a high priority in all aspects of the school's work. Assemblies are thoughtful and uplifting and frequently involve the pupils in presentations. They exemplify the school's philosophy and its Catholic ethos. However, multicultural education is underdeveloped and there is little evidence of the pupils understanding and valuing the multicultural society in which we live. There is no curriculum audit or scheme of work to support this aspect of the curriculum.

## Quality of provision

The quality of the teaching has improved and is good overall. It was satisfactory or better in nine out of ten lessons and in three quarters it was good or very good. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning either when supporting within the classroom or when withdrawing individuals, or small groups, for targeted programmes. Planning is a strength of the school, including the teachers' daily lesson plans. The very good teaching was characterised by a fast pace, high expectations, a range of teaching and learning styles and work which was well matched to the abilities of the pupils.

Marking has become much more detailed and constructive, and combined with the good target-setting procedures for groups and individual pupils, is helping the pupils to understand exactly what they need to do in order to make progress. In particular the tightly focused and very well taught 'booster' lessons in English, mathematics and science are making a significant contribution to the progress of the pupils in Key Stage 2.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements, with an appropriate emphasis on core and foundation subjects and due attention paid to the national strategies. Accommodation is significantly improved since the inspection of January 2004. Good classroom and corridor displays, combined with the additional spending on resources, have created a pleasant and stimulating learning environment.

Effective links are developing with other schools in the area including the pre-school and local 'leading edge' school. The pupils take a key role in the readings in Masses held in church; the local community is regularly invited to celebration Masses in the school. The school has good links with parents who are kept well informed about the school and their children's progress.

## Leadership and management

The headteacher is providing excellent leadership and management; the school is very well organised and managed with clear lines of accountability. Communication throughout the school is excellent. The headteacher has a very clear vision and a determined focus on raising standards. She has managed a number of challenging staffing issues very well. The deputy headteacher has provided loyal support and members of the recently expanded senior management team work well together. The middle managers are increasingly effective as their understanding of their role within the school increases.

A rigorous pattern of monitoring of teaching, lesson planning and book reviews has been established which is making a major contribution to raising standards. The procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and tracking their progress are developing effectively. The use of assessment information to inform the next steps in the pupils' learning is good; the school has well-judged plans to improve this further. The senior leadership team has systematically assessed the impact of the comprehensive range of initiatives introduced to raise standards and appropriately revised some of the initiatives.

The governing body fulfils its role very effectively in supporting and challenging the school; it is well led. The LEA has provided good support across a variety of services and the school has also been well supported by the diocese.

## Appendix – Information about the inspection

Holy Family Catholic Primary School was inspected in January 2004 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in December 2004 and in February 2005 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of January 2004.

In April 2005, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Twenty part lessons, a session with the speech and language therapist and one assembly were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed around the school and on the playground at break and lunchtimes, and samples of their work were inspected. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, two recently appointed teachers, two of the teaching assistants, and, informally, with other staff and pupil representatives from both the infant and junior sections of the school. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was taken of the evidence and discussions from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and areas for improvement in the inspection report of January 2004 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those areas for improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet 'Complaining about HMI-led Ofsted inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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