



Holy Innocents Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101661
Local Authority Bromley
Inspection number 276566
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Sheena MacDonald HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mitchell Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Orpington
Age range of pupils	4–11		BR6 9JT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01689 813040
Number on roll (school)	225	Fax number	01689 813050
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Michael Bollan
		Headteacher	Mrs Kathleen Kerr
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2000		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	6–7 February 2007	276566

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Holy Innocents has reduced in size since the last inspection from two to a one-form of entry and is now similar in size to most primary schools. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds and fewer than average are eligible for free school meals. The proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly above average, mainly with White other than British, and Black Caribbean heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language. A small proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Holy Innocents is a good school where pupils achieve well both academically and personally. One parent, who represents the views of many, said, 'The children are happy, thriving and motivated'.

Pupils achieve exceptionally high standards and make good progress throughout the school, particularly in English and mathematics. Most children come into school with above average skills, particularly in communication, language and mathematical development. They get off to a good start in the Reception class due to consistently good teaching allied to interesting and practical learning experiences. Standards in Key Stage 1 have improved since the last inspection and remain well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Key Stage 2 pupils attain exceptionally high standards and all groups make good progress. The school's very good systems for analysing assessment information and tracking pupils' progress are used well to focus successful additional support for pupils who are in danger of falling behind or those with particular needs.

A key factor in pupils' achievement is their good personal development and well-being. Care, guidance and support are good and a high priority is placed on ensuring that all pupils feel safe, well cared for and valued. As a result, relationships are good and pupils respond by behaving exceptionally well both in lessons and in the playground. Pupils feel confident that their concerns will be dealt with quickly and parents appreciate the care and personal attention their children receive. One of the governors described the school as, 'warm and welcoming' and pupils agree with this saying that everyone behaves very well indeed, makes good friends, and there is no bullying. The strong focus on this aspect ensures that children develop exemplary behaviour, confidence, care and respect for themselves and others. Pupils come to lessons keen to learn.

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. All teaching staff work hard to provide well structured lessons with clear objectives, and teaching assistants provide well planned support particularly for pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave and what they can achieve, particularly in English and mathematics. However, sometimes an over reliance on published schemes and worksheets limits the challenge and opportunities for independent learning. The curriculum is good with a wide range of well-attended clubs. A particular strength is the opportunity given to pupils to learn Spanish throughout the school.

The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership and there is a shared commitment across the leadership team, staff and governors to strive for continuous improvement. Despite the consistently high standards, this is not a school which rests on its laurels. It has accurately identified those areas that could be even better. However, the lack of strong links between the school development plan and other priorities means that the implementation of changes is sometimes too slow. The school has successfully addressed the key areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection and subsequent improvements in standards demonstrate good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills.
- When school leaders identify areas for improvement, ensure that changes are quickly put in place and regularly evaluated.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and by the end of Year 6, standards are exceptionally high. Children have skills that are above national expectations when they join the Reception class. They have good attitudes and are eager to learn. They make good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, almost all achieve the early learning goals expected for their age and many are working at levels which are in advance of those expected for their age. Since the last inspection, standards have risen in Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2 standards are higher than average in reading and mathematics. The more able are particularly successful writers.

This good progress continues through the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils attained exceptionally high standards in English and mathematics in the tests in 2006. Standards in science were above average although fewer than average achieved at the higher level. Evidence from pupils' work and assessment indicates that standards and progress, particularly in English and mathematics are still high. The school has thorough systems to assess and track progress and ensure that pupils achieve their goals. Good intervention and support programmes ensure that pupils with learning difficulties make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress. Areas of relative weakness and differences in achievement between boys and girls, particularly at Key Stage 1, have been identified and are being tackled effectively.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children get off to a flying start in their social development in the Foundation Stage. By the time they leave school, pupils are confident young people. They get on very well with each other. An outstanding feature of the school is the exceptionally strong mutual respect with which pupils treat each other. This includes respect for pupils' different social and ethnic backgrounds. Paradoxically, though pupils benefit from many opportunities to learn about an unusually broad range of Western artists, they have fewer opportunities to learn about and celebrate the diverse cultural tapestry that makes up modern Britain and indeed the school.

Behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is good. They are attentive and often enthusiastic in lessons. They relish responsibility when they are given it, and would welcome more such opportunities. School councillors point with pride to their achievements over the past year in contributing to improvements in the school environment. Pupils are also

justifiably proud of the contribution they make in raising funds for international charities. Because they are very confident that if bullying occurred it would be dealt with quickly, pupils feel exceptionally safe. Outings and visits from the emergency services help them to learn well how to keep safe, for example, when crossing roads. Pupils have a good appreciation of the need for healthy lifestyles through maintaining a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. Their good progress in developing key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology prepares them very well for the next stage of their education. However, the overdependence, in some classes, on teacher direction and worksheets limits the opportunity for pupils to develop their skills as independent learners.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers know their pupils very well and relationships are very good. Pupils work hard in lessons because they like their teachers and are eager to please them. Classes are very well managed so pupils settle to work quickly and without fuss. Good planning means that pupils have a clear understanding of what they should be learning. Teachers' expectations are generally high, both of standards of behaviour and of the work that pupils can do. Wherever this is the case, pupils of all abilities are keen to rise to the challenge. Teachers generally know their subjects well but, despite the school's recent focus on creating more speaking opportunities for pupils, some lessons are characterised by quite a lot of teacher talk. These lessons are effective, but coupled with the over reliance on worksheets in some classes, they limit opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners. Teaching assistants provide good support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties, but they are sometimes underused when teachers are talking to the whole class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is notably improved since the last inspection. It offers children interesting and lively activities and helps them to learn the orderly routines that stand them in good stead for the rest of their education. An outstanding feature of the curriculum has been the introduction of Spanish, which is taught regularly throughout the school from the Reception Year onwards and which is drawn on when learning in other subjects, such as physical education. As a result, pupils develop a growing confidence in oral and written Spanish as they progress through the school. The curriculum is enhanced through occasional themed days and weeks, including an art week. Pupils, of all ages, are enthusiastic about the very good range of extracurricular clubs and take-up is remarkably high. Personal, social and health education is given a prominence in the curriculum that is contributing to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world and, in particular, of how they can keep

safe and healthy. The time for some other subjects has been squeezed by the school's emphasis on English, mathematics and religious education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents confidently describe Holy Innocents as 'a very caring school'. Pupils are looked after very well. Child protection procedures are understood by staff and the school ensures that its arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety fully meet legal requirements. Minor injuries are dealt with well. There are good systems for keeping parents informed, for example, over the targets for pupils with learning difficulties. However, the school does not routinely telephone parents on the first day of a pupil's unexplained absence. In addition to further boosting attendance, this would offer parents greater reassurance and encourage take-up of the popular walk-to-school scheme. As a result of careful tracking of pupils' progress, staff have a very good understanding of how well their pupils are doing in all subjects, not just English and mathematics. Pupils have individual targets to help them improve, although many pupils do not know what their targets are. Often marking does not give pupils enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is providing strong leadership and clear direction. She has been instrumental in sustaining and improving high standards and ensuring a climate where each child is valued. The senior team undertake a rigorous monitoring programme involving lesson observations, scrutiny of planning and pupils' work. This is followed by useful feedback and targets for improvement. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The school has an accurate picture of how well it is doing and what it needs to do to improve. Arrangements for staff training are well linked to performance management and school development priorities. The systems for school self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning each have good features but the links between them are not always as effective as they should be. For example, the school has identified that worksheets are sometimes overused and the need to improve marking, but action to bring about changes has been slow. The leadership team are certainly not complacent and show determination in ensuring the school improves still further. The governing body supports the school well and was particularly influential in ensuring a smooth transition from two classes to one in each year group. It is well informed and is developing its ability to provide informed challenge although currently its role in evaluation and improvement planning is limited.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know I visited your school recently with other inspectors to find out how well you were doing. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us. Your teachers, your parents and you told us that Holy Innocents is a good school and we agree with you. Here are some of the main things we liked about your school.

- You come into Reception raring to go and you carry on making good progress so that by the time you leave Year 6 you reach exceptionally high standards, especially in English and mathematics.
- Your teachers keep a very close eye on how well you are doing and make sure you get extra help if you need it. That means that those of you who find learning difficult make good progress too.
- You get on very well together, show each other respect and your behaviour is excellent. Well done!
- Everyone works hard to make sure you are safe and very well cared for and you showed us that you know how to keep safe and healthy.
- Your teachers make sure your lessons are good. They expect you to do very well both in your learning and your behaviour and you rise to that challenge.
- You have great opportunities to take part in lots of clubs and you told us how much you enjoyed all the different activities.
- Every one of you can speak Spanish, some of you can write it and we even saw some of you using it in a PE lesson. ¡Estupendo!
- Your headteacher, the other leaders and the governors lead and manage the school well; they make sure that everyone is working together to give you a good education and become confident, mature young people.

Even though your school is good, your headteacher and the other school leaders are determined to make it even better so here is what we have asked them to do.

- Give you more opportunities to take more responsibility for your learning and use your initiative.
- When school leaders decide that something should be improved make sure that the changes take place quickly.

Thank you again for making our time in your school so enjoyable and interesting.

Yours sincerely,

Sheena MacDonald HM