



Holy Cross RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109244
LEA Bristol, City of
Inspection number 278161
Inspection dates 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005
Reporting inspector Hazel Callaghan RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dean Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Bedminster
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Bristol BS3 1DB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0117 3772199
Number on roll	175	Fax number	0117 3772375
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr Andy Newport

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 12 October 2005 - 13 October 2005	Inspection number 278161
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspections

Description of the school

Holy Cross Roman Catholic Primary is an average-sized school. It admits children from the immediate area and from other nearby parishes. Most pupils are of White British decent but about a third come from minority ethnic groups. Twenty-five children have been identified as having English as an additional language, some of which need extra support

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, but the proportion of pupils identified by the school as having learning or physical disabilities is broadly average. There is a lot of movement of pupils entering and leaving the school at other times than is usual. There have been a large number of changes in the teaching staff over the last two years but this has now stabilised.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Holy Cross RC Primary is an improving school that provides a satisfactory quality of education. The school's self-evaluation agrees with this statement and the headteacher and governors have a clear focus on the need to raise standards and achievement. Satisfactory teaching is enabling pupils to make sound progress. Although below average, standards are rising because teaching is becoming more consistent. Teachers' assessments, however, are not sufficiently accurate. This clouds their judgements and expectations, and results in some pupils not doing as well as they could. Systems for monitoring pupils' progress are not sufficiently sophisticated. There is not enough information on how pupils of different abilities and groups are achieving. As a consequence, the school finds difficulty in identifying strengths and weaknesses in their learning. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and enables them to make a good start in their education.

The curriculum is enriched through the use of visits and additional activities but pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills are not sufficiently developed in other subjects. This weakness is recognised by the school and it will be part of their review of curricular planning. The school is now making satisfactory improvement and has the capacity to improve further. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure teachers' assessment of pupils' work is accurate
- refine the use of assessment data to make it easier to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils
- make sure that the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are used across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in the reception class are satisfactory and most children attain the standards expected of them by the time they transfer into Year 1. Children make good progress, especially in their personal development. They are prepared well for their future learning.

Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are not high enough in English, mathematics and science. Standards have fluctuated from year to year but generally, standards since the last inspection have been below average. This is because pupils have not made enough progress as they move through the school. This was largely due to teachers' inconsistent expectations of pupils' attainment.

Pupils have made better progress in the last two years. Standards in Year 6 rose significantly in 2004 and pupils achieved well in English and mathematics. In 2005, despite pupils making satisfactory progress in Year 6, standards dipped once more because of the weak progress pupils had made in earlier year groups. Strategies to

improve achievement over the last two years are now beginning to work. Although below average, standards are rising in Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory overall and most pupils of all abilities, including those with learning and physical disabilities, now meet the targets set for them. Pupils of different minority ethnic groups and those in the early stages of learning English make satisfactory progress. The school recognises that pupils' achievement needs to be good if standards are to rise further. Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory. Provision is good in the reception class where children settle quickly into school routines. Moral development is promoted well throughout the school in assemblies and in class discussions. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, but there is not enough done to introduce pupils to a range of cultures. Pupils are respectful to adults and generally cooperate well in lessons. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection. It is now often good, although a small minority of pupils sometimes interrupt the flow of lessons.

Pupils spoken to say they enjoy school and feel safe and secure. They generally tackle tasks with enthusiasm and are keen to answer questions and contribute to class discussions. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have a satisfactory awareness of a healthy lifestyle. The school council provides pupils with an opportunity to voice their views and make a difference to school life. Pupils' early understanding of citizenship is also effectively promoted by weekly awards, which recognise pupils' contribution to the class. Pupils are enthusiastic about receiving these awards, especially the 'splendid badges' that are worn with pride. Attendance is satisfactory. Grade: 3

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory, overall. Teaching in the Reception is often good. The Reception class teacher and learning support assistant work together very well.

Teaching in Years 1-6 is satisfactory with good practice evident in some classes. The school has worked effectively to identify ways in which teaching can be further improved so that standards rise, especially in English and mathematics. Positive strategies have been developed to promote pupils' good behaviour and attention and these are used effectively in most classes. Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is not sufficiently accurate, as a result pupils are not always challenged and their knowledge and skills successfully extended. Teaching assistants show good levels of expertise. They are used well to support different groups, such as those pupils who are in the early stages of learning English, so they are able to take an active part in the lesson. Pupils with learning disabilities are also well supported so they know how

to tackle new work or to reach the targets in their individual education plans. Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. It is now broad and balanced. Teachers make good use of the national guidance for teaching literacy and numeracy and this is helping to raise standards. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their reading, writing, mathematics and ICT skills in different subjects. This is one reason why pupils do not make as much progress as might be expected. The school is aware of this and is developing lesson planning, but the improvements have not had time to make a difference.

The curriculum has been successfully enriched over the last two years. Pupils are benefiting from a good range of educational visits and visitors to school as well as the introduction of a comprehensive programme of lunchtime and after school clubs and activities. These effectively develop pupils' social skills and their understanding of how to keep healthy. The school has satisfactory links with other schools and outside agencies to promote pupils' greater awareness of how to contribute to the wider community. Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils work and play in a caring and supportive environment. Procedures for child protection are effective and there is a good range of policies and procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils. Behavioural incidents and minor accidents are recorded carefully. Most parents are confident that their children are well cared for, but a significant minority of parents expressed their concern about the rigour with which some of the school safety procedures are applied.

Teachers provide good personal support and guidance for all the different groups of pupils in the school. They know their pupils well and relationships between staff and pupils are good. The new system of targets in English and mathematics provide pupils with a good focus on what to do to improve their work. Teachers' very thorough marking also helps guide pupils' progress. Pupils are not, however, involved enough in evaluating their progress towards these targets. In some cases, targets are not sufficiently challenging and this slows progress. Grade: 3

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear focus on raising standards and pupils' achievement. He has created an enthusiastic team of staff who are eager to improve their professional skills and to provide a good standard of education. The school has benefited from the help provided by the local authority.

The variation in teaching is now being tackled. Subject leaders are now better prepared for leading and co-ordinating subjects, especially in English and mathematics, and this is also giving a stronger focus to improving standards.

Satisfactory systems are in place to monitor pupils' attainment and achievement. The data has enabled the school to identify where pupils' progress is too slow. It does not, however, look at groups of pupils of different abilities so that strengths and weaknesses in their achievement are identified and strategies for improvement developed. The progress of higher attaining pupils, for example, is not sufficiently identified so that their underachievement is recognised and rectified.

The school's evaluation is successful in identifying what the school now needs to do in order to improve in terms of raising standards through more consistent teaching. The headteacher and governors have started to seek parents' views about the school and have improved its systems of communication. Parents are now kept well informed about their children's progress and what they are learning each term.

The governors are very supportive of the school and carry out their responsibilities appropriately. They are now more involved in school improvement. Following the previous inspection, improvement was slow but it is now increasing. The school has the capacity to improve further. Grade: 3

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Holy Cross RC Primary School Dean Lane Bedminster Bristol BS3 1DB

14th October 2005

Dear Children

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we found out about you and the school.

What we liked about the school:

most of you are happy at school and enjoy your lessons

most of you try hard and listen carefully to your teachers

Mr Newport and the teachers want you to make good progress in your work and are looking at different ways to help you do well

there are interesting clubs for you to enjoy after school and visits make your lessons more interesting.

What we have asked the school to do:

teachers should make sure your activities build on what you already know and can do, and expect you to make good progress

teachers should look carefully at the progress you make and find out what it is that helps you do well and who needs to do better

teachers should give you more opportunities to use your reading, writing, mathematics and computer skills in other subjects so you get lots of practice.

Thank you for helping us find out about your school.

Best wishes

Hazel Callaghan Inspector