



# Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 118198  
**Local Authority** Isle of Wight  
**Inspection number** 280261  
**Inspection date** 14 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Peter Thrussell

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Millfield Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		East Cowes
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-9		PO32 6AS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01983292885
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	130	<b>Fax number</b>	01983292930
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nigel Blair
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Martin John Lee
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 May 2000		

---

<b>Age group</b> 4-9	<b>Inspection date</b> 14 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280261
-------------------------	--	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

---

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Holy Cross is a smaller than average school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with few from minority ethnic backgrounds. Not all pupils come from Catholic backgrounds. A lower than average percentage are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Holy Cross provides a good standard of education for its pupils. It has some outstanding features. Following the previous inspection in 2000, staff illness and some unrest among parents resulted in a falling roll and the threat of closure. An acting headteacher, now the headteacher, was brought in. He has set a very clear direction for the school, boosted its popularity and worked very diligently to regain the very strong support of parents in both the local and Catholic communities. This work has been very well supported by all staff at the school and a governing body that is now extremely effective. During this time, the school has consistently maintained above average standards. A parent commented that, 'Holy Cross is an excellent school providing a happy, safe and secure environment as well as a high standard of education'. Pupils make good progress throughout the school both in their personal development and academic learning. Outstanding care, which draws on the very close links established both with parents and other agencies, ensures that any particular difficulties met by pupils are effectively identified and supported. A comment from a parent recognises that 'the special needs team have been brilliant with my son'.

Exemplary behaviour and very positive attitudes contribute to pupils' success in school. They greatly enjoy everything about school and, as one said, 'I wouldn't change any of it'. They enjoy their lessons and the opportunities offered through the enriched curriculum. Pupils talk enthusiastically about activities such as an archaeological dig. They know that the many sporting activities help them to keep fit. They appreciate their full involvement in school life. The school council has brought about some changes in uniform and even greater attention is now made to health and safety following pupils' own close inspection. Established links with an urban school and some developing countries help pupils to appreciate cultural and social differences beyond their locality.

Pupils are increasingly involved in their learning. Older pupils discuss their work and progress individually with teachers and are given clear guidance on what they need to learn next. Pupils learn well because their progress is very carefully monitored. The good provision in Reception recognises the importance of carefully assessing and recording the small steps children make towards their different learning goals in order to plan their next steps. Good teaching throughout the rest of the school makes full use of regularly updated assessment information to ensure that work is challenging and well matched to individual ability. In some lessons teachers do not make it clear enough what is to be learned and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have achieved.

The school is accurate in the evaluation of its performance and good improvement has been made since the last inspection. Any action taken is well planned and carefully monitored to help to guarantee its success. The leadership and management have identified the need to improve achievement in writing, particularly for the more able pupils. Given its record of success, the school has a good capacity to tackle this issue and make further improvements.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure improvements in the standards attained in writing, particularly for the more able.
- Ensure that teachers make it clear to pupils what they are going to learn and provide them with opportunities to discuss their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well and standards overall are above average. When children start school in Reception they have skills which are appropriate for their age. They make good progress and when they enter Year 1 most have achieved the learning goals expected at this age. A significant number have exceeded them. Throughout the rest of the school pupils continue to make good progress. By the end of Year 2 and when they leave the school in Year 4 standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has identified that pupils, especially the more able, do not do quite as well in writing as in reading and mathematics. It is starting to address this through even closer attention to the work and progress of the more able pupils. In addition, there is a whole school programme that promotes writing opportunities, pays close attention to improving handwriting, and encourages pupils to talk more about their work both to the class and with each other.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. With their good level of basic academic skills, including using computers, they are prepared well for their future life and learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. All pupils value the Catholic ethos of the school and the opportunities it provides for prayer and quiet reflection and working for the good of others. They enjoy the quiet garden and like to spend time here. Attendance is above average and reflects pupils' tremendous enthusiasm for school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and know the right things to eat. One pupil said he 'helps mum to choose healthy food'. Another recognised that 'we need to be healthy to live longer'. They feel extremely safe in school and know that any problems are quickly sorted out. Their participation in local events and competitions demonstrates their excellent involvement in the local community.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Good use is made of teaching assistants who work closely with teachers. They confidently supported groups, for example in Reception where phonemes were being taught and in a maths lesson where one worked with pupils in the computer suite. Their good support ensures that pupils with learning difficulties, along with all others, make good progress. High quality relationships result in pupils being very attentive learners. They quickly settle to well planned activities so that learning moves forward at a good pace. Computers linked to white boards are starting to be used well as an aid to learning, particularly for demonstrations at the start of lessons. Lessons mostly have clear learning intentions but these are not always discussed sufficiently with pupils to ensure that they fully understand what they are to learn. At the end of lessons, pupils often show their work to others with teachers commenting on how well they have done. However, there are not always opportunities for pupils themselves to discuss the lesson and to say, for example, what they have found easy or what they have not fully understood.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Planning in Reception ensures that there is a good balance between directed learning and opportunities for children to choose and explore for themselves. Satisfactory provision is made for outside play and considerable improvements are now in hand. The provision for different subjects is well planned and matched to the learning needs of all pupils. The school is developing links between different subjects so that pupils can use and develop their different skills in more relevant and purposeful settings. There is very good provision for pupils' personal development. Visits by the emergency services, topics on healthy eating and good provision for sport, using specialist coaching, help to develop healthy and safe lifestyles. Links with a local high school provide further good opportunities for art, music and drama. There are also good links with other local schools that are used well both to share and take a lead on curriculum development. Good use is made of visits, including a residential visit for Year 4, and visitors to the school. These provide good first hand learning experiences. A good range of clubs is provided. They are well attended and add to pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal and social development.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Parents and pupils wholeheartedly agree that this is an extremely happy and caring school. Pupils are all known individually and recognise that adults have their well-being at heart. Older pupils continually look out for younger ones to ensure that they are settled and happy.

Staff provide very good role models and children's confidence and self-esteem are nurtured throughout the school. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place and conscientiously observed. Necessary checks are made on all adults working in the school. Assessment is used extremely well to check pupils' progress and to quickly identify where further support is required. It is used to set challenging targets, which are fully shared with older pupils. They know their targets and understand that they provide guidance on how to improve their work and do even better, but this isn't consistent through the school. Teachers keep in mind targets for younger pupils. They refer to them when giving reminders of the content and quality of work expected in lessons and when marking work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has very effectively steered the school through difficult times so that it now promotes an extremely high quality of care alongside a good standard of education. Since the last inspection, a strong team has been built up that ensures all areas and subjects are well led and managed. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored and areas for improvement identified. Good opportunities for further professional development and performance management targets ensure that consistently good teaching and learning are sustained. Regular assessments are used to keep a close check on pupils' progress. Planning is monitored to ensure that activities are both appropriate and challenging. The provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties has improved significantly. A growing number of pupils entering school with speech and language needs are well supported. Governors now are extremely supportive of the work of the school, have an excellent understanding of its performance and are fully involved in its self evaluation. They do not just rely on what the headteacher tells them, wanting as much to find out things for themselves, often by asking searching questions. Links with parents are very strong. They are fully encouraged to play their part in the learning and well-being of their children.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
---	-----------------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
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

I am writing to let you know what I found when I visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. I spoke to some of you during my visit and you were interesting to talk to, extremely polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. Holy Cross School is a good school with some outstanding features.

I liked these things the most:

- you behave extremely well, work hard and enjoy your lessons and playtimes
- the school provides outstanding care and pupils who need extra help are extremely well supported
- the school provides you with many interesting things to do which may inspire some of you to become archaeologists
- you understand the importance of eating the right things and taking plenty of exercise
- the school listens to you when you suggest how things could get even better
- well done for spotting the health and safety issues around school and getting something done about them
- your parents are keen to help you and give very good support to all that the school does
- your headteacher does a very good job and is very well supported by the staff and governors.

I have asked the school to work on these things:

- help you to do even better in your writing
- provide you with more guidance at the start of lessons and opportunities to discuss your work when you have finished.

Thank you again

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector