



Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119600
LEA Blackpool
Inspection number 280608
Inspection dates 3 October 2005 to 4 October 2005
Reporting inspector Keith Oglesby

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Seacrest Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Blackpool
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lancashire, FY1 2SD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 354496
Number on roll	200	Fax number	01253 595765
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Vivien Pickup
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2003	Headteacher	Mrs Helen Moreton

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 3 October 2005 - 4 October 2005	Inspection number 280608
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Holy Family is a Catholic primary school with 200 pupils aged between 4 and 11. It serves an area of North Blackpool which has a mixture of privately owned and rented accommodation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. A very small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds or are learning English as their second language. Pupils' attainment when they join the reception class is slightly above average. The number who enter later than the reception year is unusually high and by Year 6 only about half have been there from the beginning. A temporary headteacher has been in post since May 2005, but a new head was appointed for the start of the current year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which gives good value for money. The inspectors' judgement agrees with the school's assessment of itself. It is popular with parents who know that their children are happy in school and are looked after well. Standards have risen since the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and standards are well above average by the time they leave for secondary school. The only exception to this is in writing, especially of the boys. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and achieve the expected standards by the time they start Year 1.

Pupils' personal development is good. Most pupils enjoy all that the school offers and are keen to learn. They feel safe and well cared for and all pupils, including those with learning and behaviour difficulties are well supported. Teaching is satisfactory overall but pupils do not always understand what is expected of them in lessons. Leadership and management are good and the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement are rigorous. The school has proved its ability to improve in the past and its capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, especially for the more able boys, through better teaching and higher expectations of writing in all subjects.
- In lessons in every subject ensure that pupils understand clearly the quality and quantity of work which is expected of them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good overall. The children enter the school with attainment slightly above that typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and achieve the expected standards by the time they start Year 1. Pupils make good progress throughout key stages 1 and 2 and standards are well above average in Year 6. The only exception to this is in writing, especially of the boys. In the most recent tests, the boys' results were well below those of the girls and also below the national average. Standards in subjects other than English, mathematics and science have improved since the last inspection and are now average, mainly owing to better subject leadership, teaching and curriculum.

The proportion of boys and girls in Year 6 who achieve high levels in reading, mathematics and science is well above the national average. In sharp contrast, not one of the more able boys achieved the higher level in writing that they managed in the other subjects. Steps to improve this are now in place but they are not yet consistently applied by all teachers or in all parts of the curriculum.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress as a result of the well organised support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also good. In making this judgement, inspectors agree with the school's own assessment. Pupils are keen to learn and do well and their behaviour and consideration for others are nearly always good. Attendance is good and reflects parents' and pupils' satisfaction with the school. A high proportion of pupils join the school after the reception class but the assessment system shows that these pupils make the same good progress as the other pupils, indicating that the arrangements to help these pupils settle in are working very well.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and the local community. They respond to the needs of others and eagerly set about raising funds for charities. Some pupils in Year 6 said that this was their favourite activity. Pupils love taking on responsibilities. The school council has helped to bring about improvements, for example, to the outside areas, which benefit everyone.

Pupils know about healthy living. The school cook is a popular figure who is working with pupils to improve their eating habits. Pupils use equipment sensibly and safely. Their good social skills, confidence with adults and competence in literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare them well for future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Although there are some good features, there are also some features to improve and the school agrees with this. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It is not of a consistently high standard because it gives too little attention to the national early learning goals and to ensuring that the curriculum matches the interests and needs of very young children. In the rest of the school the teachers plan lessons well. Teachers' marking has generally improved since the last inspection. They now give pupils more advice, not only on how good a piece of work is, but what they should do to improve it. Effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants makes a very good contribution to learning. A weakness in some lessons is that teachers do not fully engage or motivate pupils. Sometimes this is because the teacher gives pupils insufficient chances to contribute or to show what they can do. In other lessons the pace is so busy that pupils don't have enough time to practise new skills. In some lessons, pupils are not clear about what is expected of them and this adversely affects progress, particularly in writing.

Teachers are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and are working hard to improve it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory although the school rates it as better than the inspectors do. The reason for the difference between the inspectors' judgement and the school's own evaluation is that the curriculum is not always relevant enough to pupils' experiences and interests. A splendid example of what can be done when the school gets it right was a film that pupils made to promote the attractions of Blackpool. Celebrities who have links with the school were involved, and local history and geography were brought to life. Pupils loved the work and gained a lot in skills and self confidence.

Although it is not yet good, the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection; it is now well organised and meets all statutory requirements. It is more flexible and longer lessons can be planned to allow pupils to work in more depth, for example, in practical subjects. Specialist teaching features regularly in music and pupils in all classes enjoy lively lessons in this subject. There is a reasonable range of clubs that are popular and well supported. The curriculum is also enriched by outings, visitors and events in the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school evaluated this aspect of its work as good, and inspectors agree. The children are very well cared for and there are good procedures for health and safety. They enjoy school and feel safe. Support for vulnerable pupils is given a high priority. Teachers have detailed information on individual pupils' progress and use this effectively to set targets. When pupils have the chance to reflect on what they have learned in lessons they generally achieve what is expected, but this is not always the case. Pupils' views on school life are sought through informal discussions, questionnaires and the school council and pupils say they that the school listens to their opinions. There is good, innovative support for pupils with learning or emotional needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school believes this to be good and the inspection team agrees. There are strengths in leadership at all levels which are resulting in improvements to some aspects of teaching, leading to a sustained rise in standards. The new headteacher and deputy work together very well; with the governors they have made a high quality school improvement plan. The school's evaluation of its overall effectiveness is realistic and includes a thorough analysis of pupils' progress, which is used effectively to set priorities. For example, some measures have been introduced to raise standards in writing, though these need more time to take effect.

Subject leaders have been working together well since the last inspection to improve the curriculum and standards in their subjects. There has been some useful monitoring of teaching with teachers given written feedback and points for improvement. Consequently, teaching is better than it was, though the school knows there are still things to work on.

Leaders listen to parents and pupils' views in reviewing the school's performance. Governors are also closely involved and supportive, though they do not hold back from asking challenging questions. Financial management is good. Good teamwork, communication and a desire to do well for its pupils are evident in all parts of this school. It has proved in the past that it is capable of change. For these reasons, the inspection judges the school to have good capacity to improve further.

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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?	2	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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	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?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

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Holy Family Catholic Primary School
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5th October 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. You could not have been more friendly and polite. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. Lots of you told us that Holy Family Primary is a good school. You were right; we agree.

What we most liked about your school

The way all the adults work so hard to look after you, especially when you are not feeling too happy. (We all have days like that.)

You nearly always get on well together and help each other.

The school arranges lots of extra things, like the clubs, trips out of school, and the plays and musical productions. We know you enjoy these.

Your new headteacher, other teachers and the governors, know what to do to make the school even better for you.

We are pleased that you are learning how to lead healthy lives. You are lucky to have your wonderful school cook and her team to help you.

You mostly try hard in lessons and are doing well.

There were lots of other things of course, but we don't want to go on and on.

What we have asked your school to do now.

First, you really have to improve your standards in writing. This includes the way it looks, as well as how organised and interesting it is. We have never been to a school like this, where the reading is so amazingly good, but the writing is completely different. I know, girls, that it's mostly the boys who can't get their act together, but while you're working on it let's see everyone going for gold.

We've also asked your teachers to make sure you have enough quiet time in lessons in all subjects to really concentrate on the work you have to do. You may not finish everything in one lesson, of course, but if your teachers show you exactly what they expect and you have enough time to get on with it, then you should have books to be even more proud of.

We had a really enjoyable two days in your school. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Oglesby, Anne Yeomans. The Inspection Team.

Annex B