



Holy Family Catholic High School, Carlton

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121718
LEA North Yorkshire
Inspection number 281091
Inspection dates 16 January 2006 to 17 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Douglas Thorburn HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Longhedge Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Carlton
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Goole DN14 9NS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01405 860276
Number on roll	440	Fax number	01405 860311
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr D Fagan
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Headteacher	Miss A Dews

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Holy Family Catholic High School is a small voluntary aided 11-16 school situated in North Yorkshire but also serves young people from two neighbouring authorities. The majority of pupils rely on school buses to travel to school. About half of the pupils are from Catholic backgrounds.

Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion eligible for free school meals is much smaller than is the case nationally. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with the national picture but the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is larger than average.

The school works with a cluster of local schools to provide extended facilities and community education tutors work on-site. The school has recently acquired specialist status for mathematics and computing.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Holy Family Catholic High School is a good school, with some outstanding features. The school has a very clear sense of purpose, strongly supported by pupils and parents. It puts great emphasis on enabling the pupils to achieve high standards and on promoting every pupil's personal development, sense of responsibility and ability to contribute to the community. Pupils enjoy school; their standards of attainment are above average and steadily rising; they make secure and often good progress.

Relationships in the school are very good, and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect between staff and pupils, deriving from its strong, Christian ethos. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those that are particularly vulnerable are supported very well indeed.

The school provides a good range of courses to suit pupils' needs and is steadily improving this provision, sometimes making use of good links with other local bodies. Much of the teaching is good; some is outstanding.

Under the outstanding leadership of its headteacher, the school is highly self-critical and takes well considered action to make any necessary improvements. Overall, there are very few aspects of the school which are less than good. Plans are rightly in place for further improvement, such as the enhanced use of information and communication technology (ICT) skills in all subjects and to develop the capacity of middle managers to contribute fully to the school's monitoring and evaluation of its performance. The school capitalises on the advantages of being a small school and minimises the disadvantages. It provides good value for money. It has responded well to the recommendations of the previous inspection, and is improving rapidly. In some respects the school's own self-evaluation modestly underestimates its quality.

The school has recently acquired specialist school status and is in the process of acquiring a significant improvement to its accommodation. This gives it the opportunity to enhance its links with the local community, and thereby to enter a new, more ambitious phase of development. It now has the capacity to become an outstanding school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop the skills of middle managers so that they can ensure that all of the teaching is at least good.
- Continue to improve the use of ICT across the curriculum.
- Use the improvements in accommodation to further enhance links between the school and the local community.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, pupils' standards of attainment are above average and steadily rising. Pupils make secure and often good progress.

Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with standards that are broadly at the national average. By the end of Year 9 their standards in the core subjects are above average, with science achieving consistently the highest results. In general, pupils make very good progress from Year 7 to 9, particularly in science and mathematics. The rate of progress made by pupils has increased over the last three years.

The standards achieved at the end of Year 11 are, in general, also above average, particularly in English. Standards are steadily rising and data suggest that the school has achieved some of its 2006 targets a year early. Recent improvements have led to pupils making more rapid progress in Years 10 and 11 than previously, although their progress is still not as good as in Years 7 to 9.

A significant feature of this picture is the consistency across the school. No groups of pupils make progress that is significantly worse than the school average, and there is very little under-performance by any particular subject. Boys make enough progress between Years 7 to 11 to narrow the attainment gap with girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make secure progress; those with the greatest needs make strong progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being is a major strength of the school. Pupils behave according to a firmly established moral code that is based on Christian principles and they show admirable respect for others. They appreciate the intimacy of a small school, which they feel enables them to get on very well with one another. They feel safe, knowing where to go for help if they experience difficulties.

Their enjoyment of school is reflected in above average attendance figures, extremely positive attitudes to learning, and enthusiastic participation in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities including sport, music and drama. A high proportion of pupils continue their studies at a variety of post-16 institutions.

The work experience programme, and some lessons and activities in Years 10 and 11, prepare pupils usefully for working life.

The school successfully promotes a healthy lifestyle by offering a range of dining options and through many sports activities. An active school council enables pupils to make their views heard. Their opinions have been sought and acted upon in matters ranging from the curriculum and teaching styles to dining arrangements. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take on responsibility through their involvement in the junior sports leadership programme, peer mentoring, and buddy systems that help younger pupils to settle quickly into Year 7. They take part in many fund-raising events and give good support to a number of charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

This inspection confirms the school's evaluation of teaching as being good overall, and throughout the age range. The school has invested time and energy in developing teaching and learning styles and this is having a positive impact in lessons. There is clear evidence of the successful application of the national Key Stage 3 strategy and the use of assessment in promoting learning.

Teachers plan and prepare lessons very thoroughly. This, together with the excellent relationships between teachers and pupils, results in lessons being conducted in a productive and harmonious atmosphere. Teachers know their pupils very well. Some teaching is outstanding and is characterised by challenging pace, an imaginative variety of approaches, infectious enthusiasm and strong involvement of pupils. In good lessons the pupils are actively involved in the development of ideas. Skilful questioning by teachers leads to pupils having a good understanding of their work and making rapid progress. In less effective lessons teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to make a contribution and confine their questioning to too few pupils.

Teachers analyse each pupil's performance carefully, set helpful targets for pupils in each subject and regularly track their progress towards these targets. Most pupils are aware of their targets, how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This process contributes to the good quality of pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. Pupils study a broad range of subjects and a sensible amount of time is given to each. The school gives good attention to encouraging pupils' overall personal and social development.

The school's managers have planned the curriculum and the organisation of teaching groups well. This ensures that pupils are not disadvantaged by the small size of the school. Staff review the curriculum regularly and ensure that changing national requirements are met. Plans are rightly in place for further improvement, such as the enhanced use of ICT skills in all subjects.

There is a good range of courses in Years 10 and 11, enabling pupils to follow programmes that meet their particular needs. Effective links with a local college provide a useful range of vocational options. The acquisition of specialist school status has encouraged an increase in the range of ICT courses.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, support and guidance to pupils. Child protection arrangements are secure. Pupils, including the most vulnerable, feel safe in an orderly

and caring environment. Very good careers advice and guidance prepare pupils well for education, training and employment opportunities at the end of Year 11. In recent years the school has admitted an increasing number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and provides a highly impressive level of support and care.

The family atmosphere that the school prides itself on providing is there for all to see. Excellent management of this aspect, coupled with the commitment and skill of teachers and teaching assistants, creates an environment in which pupils mature and learn well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership to the school, strongly emphasising its focus on enabling pupils to achieve high standards. She also sets the tone of the school, which puts great store on encouraging respect for others. Strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, she leads a rigorous programme of self-evaluation and together they manage a very good system of continuous monitoring and evaluation. A programme is in place to develop the capacity of middle managers to collaborate fully in this work. As a result of this approach the school knows itself very well. It consults well with parents and pupils, and has been influenced by their views in making some improvements. When the leadership is aware of weaknesses in the school's provision action is taken to make improvements.

The governing body gives a clear steer to the school and has made successful bids for additional funding to become a specialist school and to make significant improvements to the accommodation. The school's current emphasis on collaborating more strongly with the local community is well conceived and planned. In some instances improvements to the school's provision have already drawn well on links with other institutions or organisations. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for any that are particularly vulnerable is extremely well managed, both in what the school itself does and in its collaboration with other bodies. The well-managed implementation of the national Key Stage 3 strategy has led to impressive improvements in pupils' progress in Years 7 to 9; however, improvements in progress in Years 10 and 11 are not yet as great.

The school manages its resources well. A good professional development programme is tailored to the emerging needs of the school. The development of a large team of teaching assistants is proving effective; other non-teaching staff have clear and relevant responsibilities. Care is taken to ensure that any significant innovations are properly resourced. Appropriate action was taken in response to the recommendations of the recent auditor's report.

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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	NA	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	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?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We would like to tell you the findings of our recent inspection of the school. But first we want to thank those of you who spoke to us during our visit. We realise that you enjoy school, and you appreciate the teaching and support you receive. We know that you are rightly proud of the school.

We think Holy Family is a good school. In fact, we think some aspects of it are outstanding.

We think that you behave in a very responsible and mature way and are generally developing excellently. We have seen that you treat each other with respect, and we think relationships between staff and pupils are very good. We saw that you take your lessons seriously and we think you generally have a very good attitude to school work.

Many of you are involved in extra activities, such as sports teams or dramatic productions, despite the transport problems this can create. Some of you get involved in representing your class or year group, or help younger pupils; we think this is good. Well done!

We also think you make good progress in most lessons and your assessment and examination results show that you are doing well, especially in Years 7 to 9. The credit for this should be shared between your teachers and yourselves. We saw much good teaching and some that was excellent. We think that the school should now make sure that all of the teaching is that good.

We think that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities get very good support from teaching assistants. We also think that individuals with particular problems get good help from staff. We believe that the school plans your curriculum well, so that all of you can do courses that suit you, and it makes sure that you get good careers advice. We have noticed that very many pupils continue with education or training after they leave Holy Family, and we are impressed by that.

Much of the quality of the school is the result of outstandingly good leadership by your headteacher. We think she encourages you, and all the staff, to do their best and to continually improve. Now that it is a specialist school, and will shortly have greatly improved premises, we think Holy Family has some new opportunities. We think, in particular, that it should make sure that all of you make more continual use of ICT at school, and that it should work a little more with local people - for instance, using the new sports hall or getting involved in adult learning.

We are sure that Holy Family will go on to become an outstanding school in every way.

Good luck to you all!