

# Holy Souls Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103429
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	286656
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eileen Chadwick

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	401
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Tams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kevin Kelly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2002
<b>School address</b>	Mallard Close Acocks Green Birmingham B27 6BN
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4646780
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 4646826

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 April 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	286656

---

© Crown copyright 2007

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 three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large primary school draws pupils mainly from Catholic families in the local parish. This is a mixed area that is recognised as having some social and economic disadvantage. Children's attainment on entry is below average because, when they start school many, but not all, have limited language and social skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is slightly above average and has risen markedly in the last two years. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The current headteacher took up post at the beginning of this academic year and there has also been a recent change of deputy headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with strengths. Pupils' personal development, well-being and behaviour are good because strong pastoral leadership promotes a sense of family where all pupils feel valued and encouraged to work hard. The school's very caring and safe environment, based in the Catholic faith, promotes a strong sense of security amongst pupils. Good provision in Reception enables children to make a good start to their education. The headteacher encourages strong staff teamwork and a quest for improvement. The school has a secure knowledge of its strengths and clear plans to tackle weaknesses.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in Reception as they are given interesting activities well matched to their learning needs. When they start Year 1, most have achieved the levels expected for their age. By Years 2 and 6 standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' progress is satisfactory but sometimes slows for the lower attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 because reading and writing tasks are sometimes too hard. In Years 3 to 6 more capable pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in mathematics. The school has worked hard to raise the standards of pupils' writing and this is having a positive impact throughout the school on improving handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Pupils can often write fluently for a range of purposes. However, their vocabulary is not as imaginative as it might be and this limits the quality of their written work.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils well and expect them to work hard. However, in Years 1 to 6 teachers' planning for literacy and numeracy is not sharp enough when activities target mainly the average pupils. This leads to work that is either not challenging for more capable pupils or too hard for lower attaining pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad, practically based and encourages pupils to enjoy learning and to develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. A wide range of interesting clubs and outside visits enhance pupils' enjoyment of school. However, there is insufficient planning for the development of pupils' speaking skills, including for those with limited English. Pastoral care is strong and pupils feel they have someone to turn to if they need help. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils make a good contribution to their community. Care, support and guidance of pupils are satisfactory. Assessment systems are satisfactory. Teachers make regular checks and are beginning to take an active role in evaluating the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress. However, the school is fully aware that tracking systems are not as effective as they should be. Systems to assess pupils' progress vary from class to class and recording systems do not give a clear view of the progress pupils make from the time they enter school to the time they leave.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and school leaders have set a clear direction for raising achievement. However, systems for subject leaders to monitor and evaluate their colleagues' work are insufficiently developed.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 in literacy and numeracy by ensuring teaching consistently meets the needs of lower attaining and the more capable pupils.

- Improve opportunities for all pupils to develop their speaking skills in lessons, paying close attention to the needs of those with English as an additional language.
- Make subject leaders more effective in their roles so that pupils' standards of achievement are raised.
- Refine and make consistent assessment and recording systems in order to make better checks on pupils' progress so that action can be taken more quickly where improvements are needed.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Their good progress in Reception leads to standards that are broadly at the level expected by the start of Year 1. By Year 6, pupils reach average standards in English, mathematics and science. In Years 1 to 6 the pupils' rates of progress are satisfactory but not as high as they might be for lower attaining and more capable pupils.

Children in Reception achieve the standards expected, including in literacy and numeracy. By Year 2 standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in Years 1 and 2 lower attaining pupils' progress in reading and writing sometimes slows when their literacy tasks are too hard.

Inspection shows standards in Year 6 are similar to those reached in the 2006 national tests. Compared with their starting points, pupils' overall progress is satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in reading in Years 3 to 6, including the significant minority of pupils who joined the school with limited English in Years 5 or 6. However, inconsistent challenge for more capable pupils in mathematics sometimes slows their progress. Strategies for raising standards in writing are improving pupils' handwriting, punctuation and their ability to write fluently for different purposes. However, their vocabulary choices are often unadventurous and this prevents pupils' achieving standards in writing that match those in reading. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. However, the variable opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills limit their spoken English.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils and staff successfully create a caring community based in the Catholic Christian values. Pupils enjoy school and develop into responsible and enthusiastic learners, steadily growing in confidence. Relationships between pupils from all backgrounds are very good and there is good understanding of cultural diversity. The buddy system is very effective. It enables pupils to take responsibility for helping new arrivals, both in Reception and as later entrants, to settle quickly into school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is very good, although occasionally there is some boisterous behaviour in the playground. Pupils develop a good understanding of personal safety and learn to look after one another very well. Pupils say that they feel safe and free from problems such as bullying and discrimination. Pupils contribute well to the community by raising funds for charities, including for children in Rwanda. The school council plays an important part in involving pupils in decision making. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Their satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy, and the development of teamwork and enterprise prepare pupils soundly for their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some outstanding teaching in Reception. In Reception, thorough planning ensures children of all abilities make good progress. Exciting practical work underpins the very systematic teaching of the basic skills. Throughout the school, teachers develop warm relationships with pupils and manage them well which results in classrooms being calm where pupils are expected to work hard. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboard technology and practical resources to bring learning alive. However, teachers' planning does not always cater for the needs of pupils of differing ability. Reading and writing tasks are sometimes hard for lower attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 and there is inconsistent challenge for more capable pupils in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Teaching assistants support pupils with severe learning difficulties well.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

In Reception provision is good. There is a good balance between teacher-directed activities and purposeful play, with high quality opportunities for pupils to learn through talking. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is broad and good features include the wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport. These help to promote pupils' healthy living and good personal development. Visits, visitors and links with other schools enrich pupils' learning well. Cross-curricular links are developing satisfactorily with some high quality links between writing and religious education. However, there is not enough planning to make sure pupils systematically widen their spoken and written vocabulary in their subjects. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported during specialist language teaching time but provision for their language development is inconsistent in other lessons.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school's good partnership with parents successfully promotes pupils' well-being and helps them settle, including the later entrants who are often new to the country. Close liaison with nurseries and other pre-school providers eases the transfer into Reception. Strong links with outside agencies help staff to provide good support for pupils with severe learning difficulties and disabilities. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and ensure pupils are kept safe.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Good systems have recently been put in place to assess pupils' levels of attainment each term. However, recording systems are inconsistent across the school and there is no single tracking document which shows pupils' progress from entry to when they leave. This restricts the checks staff and school leaders can make on how well pupils are doing. Target setting is satisfactory but pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

In the short time that he has been in post, the headteacher has accurately evaluated the school's needs and set a clear direction. He is building on the school's strengths and taking the right steps to address the most pressing priorities. School leaders work in close partnership to create strong staff teamwork and a common sense of purpose.

Self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory. The process of self-evaluation is beginning to involve other staff but the school is fully aware that systems for evaluating the impact of provision on pupils' achievement are not yet consistent. The monitoring of teaching is satisfactory, although the school realises there is a way to go before all subject leaders have a secure overview of their subjects. Some leaders monitor the quality of teaching but checks on lessons do not provide a sufficiently clear analysis of how pupils of different abilities are learning. This prevents the school from rigorously identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching so all groups of pupils can equally achieve well.

Governors provide good levels of support and are adopting measures to provide greater challenge. However, some new governors are still receiving training for this role. In partnership with the headteacher, the governing body has managed the finances and resources well in the past year. The school is now running on a sound financial footing and the deficit budget has been eliminated. Satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection shows the school has sound capacity to continue to improve.

**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).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<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>	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	3

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

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

25 April 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Holy Souls Catholic Primary School B27 6BN

Thank you for taking part in the inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting you and the staff. Your contributions helped us to get to know your school in a short time. You told us that you like your school. We liked it too. It gives you a satisfactory education. These are some of the good things about your school:

- Those of you in Reception get off to a good start.
- You behave well.
- You really enjoy school and get on very well with each other.
- You have really good opportunities to learn through visits, visitors and clubs.
- Teachers make sure you are cared for well and you are kept safe.
- Your headteacher and teachers are working hard to make the school better.

Here are the things we are asking the school to change:

- Make sure that the work you are given is neither too easy nor too hard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Give you more chances for discussion to help you learn new words.
- Make better checks on how well you are learning.
- Help teachers in charge of subjects to be more involved in checking up on how well you are learning.

You can help your teachers by making sure you continue to work hard at improving your reading and writing and mathematics.

Thank you again for being so helpful.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick Lead inspector