



# Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

**Unique Reference Number** 103474  
**Local Authority** Birmingham  
**Inspection number** 286671  
**Inspection dates** 11–12 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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>   | Laburnum Drive           |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary aided    |                         | Walmley                  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11               |                         | Sutton Coldfield B76 2SP |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b> | 0121 3292158             |
| <b>Number on roll (school)</b>            | 209                | <b>Fax number</b>       | 0121 3111387             |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body | <b>Chair</b>            | Paul Murrall             |
|   |                    | <b>Headteacher</b>      | Jackie Deasy             |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 26 February 2001   |                         |                          |

|                  |                         |                          |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b> | <b>Inspection dates</b> | <b>Inspection number</b> |
| 4–11             | 11–12 September 2006    | 286671                   |

## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to a change to the report following a complaint

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are favourable and their attainment on entry is above average in all areas of learning. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The headteacher has been in post for seven days at the time of the inspection.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

At present, the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate and progress since its last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and broadly average by the end of Year 6 but pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory because they do not make sufficient progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils' achievements in reading, speaking and listening are satisfactory, and standards in these areas are well above those expected nationally. Although the results in the 2005 national tests were well above average, they fell significantly in English and mathematics to be broadly average in 2006 and the school is no longer meeting pupils' needs well enough. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress, but other pupils are underachieving and progress is inadequate for these capable pupils.

The main causes of underachievement are weaknesses in the systems aimed at raising standards. Whilst there are pockets of good teaching, there is not enough of it throughout the school to ensure that pupils learn at a fast enough rate. Teaching is therefore inadequate because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low, especially their expectations of higher attainers, resulting from the unsatisfactory use of assessment. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but higher attaining children are not sufficiently challenged to write. The school lacks robust systems to ensure consistency in teaching and learning and to check pupils' progress, although they are being introduced by the new headteacher. Subject leaders and the governing body are not yet playing a strong enough part in improving the work of the school and this aspect of leadership and management is unsatisfactory.

The recent appointment of a highly experienced headteacher has brought a new direction to this school and leadership and management overall are satisfactory. Already, a realistic evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development has been undertaken and appropriate plans are in place to make improvements. Under her leadership, the school has good capacity to improve because action, such as ensuring the health and safety of the pupils, has already taken effect.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, with strengths in attendance, which is above average, and in the contribution pupils make to the community as a result of the liturgy links the school has with the parish church. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are satisfactory, as is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are aware of what constitutes healthy eating and they know how to stay safe. Older pupils look after younger ones well. Reading and playground 'buddies' make a significant contribution to the good relationships throughout the school. Parents are supportive of the school and think that their children are well prepared for secondary school.

Pupils receive satisfactory care, guidance and support but they are not given clear enough guidance about how to improve their school work. Pupils' targets for English and mathematics are not sufficiently well matched to their individual needs and Year 6 pupils did not meet their targets in the national tests in 2006.

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is thereby given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' progress in writing and mathematics, the use of assessment and the role of subject leaders and governors.

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

- Use assessment information more rigorously to increase the rate of pupils' progress in writing and mathematics in all year groups.
- Improve the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating standards in their subjects and in contributing to school self-evaluation.
- Ensure that the governing body hold staff accountable for the standards that pupils attain by asking for relevant information about pupils' progress.
- Ensure that higher attainers in all year groups are given more challenging work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Children start school with skills and experiences that are above those found in most schools. In Reception, the vast majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. The higher attainers are not always sufficiently challenged and, overall, their achievement is unsatisfactory because they are capable of writing more than they do.

The school's performance has declined even though results in national tests have been high. In 2005, standards reached by Year 6 pupils were well above average and pupils' progress was satisfactory overall. However, pupils' progress in English was well below average. In 2006, the results of national tests for Year 6 were broadly average in English and mathematics. School analysis shows that this represents unsatisfactory progress for pupils. Throughout the school, pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is not good enough in relation to their earlier attainment. These pupils are very bright and they are not sufficiently challenged.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to learning. Their behaviour in lessons is satisfactory and often good. However, because the teaching is not always challenging enough, some pupils lose concentration easily and their interest slackens. Pupils like their teachers and say that they are fair. They respond well to rewards such as the 'literacy star of the week' given in Year 3 when pupils have completed good work. Pupils like coming to school, and say that they feel safe and that there is no bullying. 'We care and share in the school' said one Year 5 pupil and 'we don't like our friends to feel

uncomfortable'. Members of the active school council proudly point out improvements to the playground. Pupils take great pride in participating in Citizenship Week and making a donation to the Lord Mayor's Charity Appeal. Pupils care about the plight of those less fortunate than themselves, making donations to the homeless and adopting a child through Action Aid. This enables them to be adequately prepared for their future well-being. However, they are capable of being given much more responsibility such as being responsible for organising their own work. At present, they are too reliant on teachers and are not enjoying and achieving as much as they could.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

There are elements of good teaching in Years 2, 3, 5, and 6 but this is not consistent throughout the school. In their lessons pupils in Years 3 and 6 make good progress. For example, Year 3 pupils understood how to write interesting settings for their story because of the teacher's very good questioning. There are some positive features in teaching, such as the good relationships between teachers and pupils and the checking of pupils' understanding. This enables pupils to feel secure in learning.

The main weakness in teaching is the lack of use of information from assessment to match tasks to pupils' differing needs. Teachers teach to the middle of the ability range and insufficient notice is taken of pupils' previous work. Expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough and too often there is a lack of variety in activities and approaches to learning. This results in higher attainers having work that is too easy or not moving on rapidly enough. These pupils are not challenged to work independently often enough. There are weaknesses in the teaching of writing and mathematics throughout the school, an area which the new headteacher with her deputy is tackling robustly. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is consistently satisfactory, and has some good features when they are taught by the special needs co-ordinator, the Year 6 teacher and teaching assistants. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall although expectations of higher attaining children are too low.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and is broad and balanced. It is enriched by a satisfactory range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities, especially sports and music. Satisfactory attention is given to pupils' personal development and well-being, especially in relation to staying safe and being healthy. There is a sound focus on personal, social and health education. This begins in Reception with pupils being given satisfactory opportunities to talk about their feelings. Sound use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning. There is however, no formal identification of literacy and

numeracy skills in other subjects. This results in a lack of consistency in planning, with pupils repeating work that they already know.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The warm, caring, Christian atmosphere does much to nurture pupils' personal development. Pupils feel safe and are confident they have adults to whom they can turn should they need support. Child protection procedures are in place and staff have been trained to deal with these issues.

Guidance to pupils on how to improve their academic work is a weakness. Although used well in the present Year 6, the use of targets is inconsistent throughout the school and they are not always accurate, especially in English and mathematics.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The dynamic and very well informed new headteacher has done a lot in the very short time she has been at the school. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate because of the professional insight of the new headteacher. She has already tackled some of the main issues facing the school, such as improving the safety of children. Systems for tracking pupils' achievement, regular monitoring and evaluation of provision, rigorous performance management and school improvement planning are underdeveloped. The involvement of teachers as leaders of subjects with accountability for standards of pupils' work is unsatisfactory but is being tackled.

The senior leadership team shows satisfactory capacity for improvement through their support for the new headteacher's vision and by accepting accountability for raising standards. The new headteacher has gained the confidence of staff, pupils and parents. Her actions have started to improve systems to raise standards, such as monitoring and making accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and learning, but these developments have not yet had enough time to raise standards and achievement as she has not been in the post long enough.

Governance of the school is unsatisfactory. Although governors are committed to the school, they do not have systems for holding the school to account and, therefore, do not have a rigorous grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. They know that changes are necessary and are very supportive of the new headteacher.

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## 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> | 4  |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 3  |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage  | 3  |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3  |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 2  |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | No |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 4 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 |
| 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>                           | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 3 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 3 |
| 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>          | 4 |
| <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.

## 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 | 4   |
| 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  | 4   |
| 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?  | Yes |

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school. You clearly love your school, are happy and confident children and have satisfactory attitudes to learning. You know about the need to eat healthily and how to keep yourselves safe. You also make a good contribution to the community through your participation in the liturgy at church.

At present, we judge that your school is not as good as it could be. You are doing well in reading, and you speak and listen well. However, we think that you are capable of doing better than you are currently doing, especially in writing and mathematics, and that you can learn at a much faster rate. For example, we think your teachers can give you more challenging work and use information from your test results to help plan lessons so that you get better. Your new headteacher knows what needs to be done to improve the school and, with the support of the governors, is already making changes to ensure that you make faster progress.

We have asked your headteacher to put systems in place that will help all teachers to check how well you are all doing. Teachers who are responsible for different subjects need to look more closely at how well you are doing and the standards you reach so that they make sure that you get the right sort of work. Children in your school need to have more opportunities to write about what you learn and to have work that is more challenging, so it is not too easy for you. We have asked the governors to look more closely at how you are getting on so that they can make decisions on whether the school is doing well enough.

You can play a big part in making your school better. We would like you to continue to be attentive in lessons and tell your teachers if you find the work is too easy for you.

We have enjoyed our two days with you and we wish you all the best for the future.