

Holy Name Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103996
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	286831
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Pritchard
Headteacher	Andrew Brenan
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002
School address	Cross Lane Great Barr Birmingham B43 6LN
Telephone number	0121 3573216
Fax number	0121 3585523

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The attainment of the majority of children on entering Nursery is in line with that expected. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils whose first language is other than English is below average. The senior management structure was reorganised in September 2007.

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 that is improving and has good features. Pupils' personal development is good, with pupils behaving well and being courteous and respectful of others' views. Spiritual development is excellent, being very effectively supported by the Christian ethos that pervades the school. The vast majority of parents are appreciative of the good care, guidance and support, provided for their children. As one parent commented, 'I see a good balance between academic work and teaching children to care for each other and themselves.' There are strong links with others, such as the Church, to promote pupils' well-being.

In recent years there has been a steady upward trend in the progress that pupils make. As a result, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and most of them attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave Year 6. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make satisfactory progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, most of them are working within the expected levels for most areas of learning, and beyond them in personal, social and emotional development. This satisfactory progress is maintained through the school, though at times the level of challenge for pupils, especially the more able, is not high enough and so they do not achieve as well as they could. Achievement in mathematics is relatively weaker than in English and science. This stems from pupils not having sufficient opportunities to practise and refine their basic mathematical skills, for example by being involved in problem solving activities. Boys, particularly the older ones, do not show the same level of interest and engagement in their writing activities as girls. Consequently, they do not achieve as well as the girls in this aspect of English.

The satisfactory curriculum is enriched by the broad range of out of school clubs pupils can join and the many visits to places of educational interest. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been much improved since the previous inspection. This has led to pupils gaining skills in this subject at a faster rate and being able to use them well to enhance their work in other subjects. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and are characterised by the very good relationships between staff and pupils. This results in classrooms being friendly and calm places in which to work. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning between classes, which means that some pupils make better progress than others.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with the headteacher having played a central role in the effective action taken to make improvements since the previous inspection. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and has enabled it to identify the priorities for development, such as raising achievement in mathematics and the performance of boys in writing. Strategies for improvement have been put in place but the impact on learning is not checked rigorously enough. As a result, senior leaders do not have a sufficiently clear view of the effectiveness of the steps taken to bring about improvement. The school's recent track record, such as in the continued increase in the rate of pupils' progress, shows there is good capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning so that pupils, particularly the more able, are effectively challenged and make the progress of which they are capable.
- Raise achievement in mathematics and boost boys' skills in writing.

- Evaluate more rigorously the strategies introduced to bring about improvement and take action accordingly. A small proportion of schools whose 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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From their starting points on entering school in the Nursery, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make steady progress which enables them to reach average standards by the end of Year 6.

In the Nursery and Reception classes there is strong emphasis on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and, as a result, they achieve well in this area of learning. Though satisfactory progress is maintained through the rest of the school there is recognition by senior leaders that some pupils, especially the more able, could do better. There is also acknowledgment that achievement in mathematics and the performance of boys in writing requires improvement. Some strategies to bring about these improvements are in place, for example the school has worked closely with the local authority to develop a staged programme to help teachers more effectively develop pupils' problem solving skills in mathematics. The school is also actively exploring ways of more effectively engaging boys in their writing activities to improve their performance. The full impact of these strategies has yet to be felt.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Whilst the spiritual development of pupils is excellent, overall their social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils show a good awareness of the needs of others and are very caring towards each other. One pupil said that their school is special because of 'the way people are treated with respect by teachers and other pupils'. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their enthusiasm for all aspects for school life. Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils make a good contribution to school life by willingly taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council. They also contribute to the wider community, for example by raising funds for local charities. Pupils have a good understanding about the importance of a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. They know how to stay safe, as is seen in the responsible way they move around inside school and on the playground. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have sound subject knowledge and so are able to explain new ideas and demonstrate new techniques in a confident manner. The management of lessons is effective in maintaining pupils' concentration and ensuring their behaviour is good. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and show enjoyment in their work, especially when engaged in practical activities. This was evident in a good science lesson for pupils in a Year 3/4 class in which they were investigating the habitats of a range of creatures in nearby Red House Park. In some classes the level of challenge is not always high enough, especially for more able pupils. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they are capable of doing. The marking of pupils' work

is not used consistently to show pupils how they might take the next steps to improve their performance. Teaching assistants give valuable support for all pupils, particularly for those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In the Nursery and Reception classes, the curriculum is planned effectively to enable children to make choices for themselves and develop their skills in becoming independent learners. Through the rest of the school, extra-curricular provision is good and effectively extends pupils' learning. There is a good variety of musical experiences, sporting activities and visits by artists, poets and theatre groups that enrich the experiences the pupils receive. Effective links with other local schools have improved physical education and drama opportunities and also developed the modern foreign languages curriculum to include Year 3 pupils. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to be involved in problem solving opportunities in mathematics and other subjects. There are also limited opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects such as history and geography. The programme for pupils' personal development is good, which is reflected in the effective progress they make in this aspect of their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults foster the highly caring ethos of the school very well. Teachers know their pupils' individual needs and, as a result, they are looked after well and feel happy, secure and valued in the school. They are strongly encouraged to make their own contribution to this happy and inclusive school. Pupils also say that if they have a problem, then there is always someone who will help them. One parent commented, 'All the children are so friendly and the teachers listen to them, which is so important.' Comprehensive health and safety and risk assessment procedures are in place. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet requirements. There are good links with other agencies to provide extra support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school has improved its systems for tracking the progress that pupils make and these are now satisfactory. However, the information collected is not used consistently by teachers to set challenging targets for pupils to improve their performance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Staff share the headteacher's clear vision for school improvement. A strong team ethos has been forged, with all involved in the school committed to pupils achieving as well as they can. The recent restructuring of the school leadership team has enabled more staff to play a more active role in promoting school improvement. As some roles are relatively new, the school acknowledges that further training is required so that senior managers can carry out their responsibilities effectively. The performance management of staff is linked well to their own professional development and identified school priorities for improvement. The evaluation of the impact of strategies introduced to bring about improvement is not robust enough and necessary adjustments to make them more effective have not been made. Governors are very supportive of the school and are developing their role in holding the school to account for its performance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

23 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Name Catholic Primary School, Sandwell

Thank you so much for the really warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You were very friendly and told us you were proud of your school. We enjoyed our time with you and consider your school to be a satisfactory one.

Your personal development is good and you behave well. Your spiritual development is excellent and so you show a very good awareness of the needs of others and are very caring towards each other. Teaching is satisfactory, as is your achievement, and you reach average standards by the end of Year 6. All the adults in school take good care of you, which really pleases your parents. You feel safe and secure in school and as one of you said, 'Everyone is so friendly in this school.' You told us you enjoy the curriculum, especially the many sporting activities you can take part in. The adults in charge of managing the school do a satisfactory job and are helping the school to improve.

We would like to set you all a challenge. What are the names of the four saints displayed in the entrance area and why did they achieve sainthood?

A special word of thanks must go to the school council who gave their time to talk to one of us. You are a credit to your school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Make sure that you are always given work that makes you think hard and gets the best out of you.
- Help boys to improve their skills in writing and all of you to achieve better in mathematics.
- Check more closely if recent improvements are helping you to achieve better and reach higher standards.

I hope you all keep enjoying your learning and showing care for everyone you meet.

Best wishes

Melvyn Hemmings Lead Inspector