



Holy Family Roman Catholic School Boothstown

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106504
Local Authority Wigan
Inspection number 287531
Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector Suzi Clipson-Boyles HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Kendal Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Boothstown, Worsley
Age range of pupils	4–11		Manchester, Lancashire
			M28 1AG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7902123
Number on roll (school)	193	Fax number	0161 7038378
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr G Bartholomew
		Headteacher	Mrs Anne Farrell
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school and has seven classes, one for each year group including Reception. The school is proud of its strong Catholic ethos. The headteacher has been in post for two terms. This followed a year without a stable leadership team. The deputy headteacher fulfilled the role of acting headteacher for one term, prior to the new headteacher taking up post two terms ago. The school is situated in a suburban area between Salford and Leigh where housing is mainly privately owned alongside some council properties. The majority of children are of White British heritage. The number eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. There is a smaller than usual number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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 where children feel valued and happy. Recent changes in leadership are already making a difference to the performance of staff and children. Most parents have noticed this and praise the work of the school. They are confident that their children are well cared for and make good progress. The Catholic ethos is at the core of the school's mission statement. This contributes towards a respectful and happy atmosphere where everyone is included and feels special. Children enjoy coming to school and working hard, and attendance is above the national average.

The new headteacher has inspired everyone with her calm confidence that the school can do even better. She has high expectations of everyone. The staff feel well supported and are positive about their recently increased involvement in decision-making. The deputy headteacher provides good support for the headteacher and together they have built a strong and positive team. This good leadership and management has also involved children, parents and governors in deciding how the school should move forward. New approaches are already starting to have a visible impact on achievement and the capacity for improvement is good. The school has an accurate understanding of how well it is doing. The leadership team, including governors, has extensive plans for further improvement and appropriate priorities for developments have been planned. However, their extensive list of additional planned tasks is too weighty for the next year.

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Children receive a sound start in the Foundation Stage where they make satisfactory progress. Overall progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is good, but there is some variation between classes. All groups of learners are well catered for according to their needs and achieve well. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Learning is more effective in some classes than others because of differences in the quality of the teaching. As a result, pupils' progress varies from class to class, although the final outcomes at the end of Year 6 are good. Lessons that are good or outstanding inspire the children to learn by involving them in discussion, fun activities and assessment of their own learning. Children can work independently and make informed decisions about their learning. Where lessons are only satisfactory, children follow more prescribed activities that do not provide opportunities for them to reflect on and extend their learning. Despite these differences, children's attitudes to learning are very good. They particularly like the visits outside school because these help them to learn and remember. The school provides children with a good curriculum that is well balanced and enjoyable. This contributes to the above average standards. However, in the Foundation Stage the outside environment is not used often enough for planned activities.

Behaviour is outstanding in all classrooms, around the school and outside. The caring way that the children look after each other, and their mature responses to adults, are impressive. They are keen to take on responsibilities and the school is providing new outlets for their ideas through the school council. The school has a strong tradition of raising money for charities and the children take this responsibility seriously. Work towards the Healthy Schools Award is already making a difference and children show

a good understanding of healthy choices such as foods and sports activities. Their awareness of safety issues is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching in all year groups leads to at least good progress.
- Provide children with more opportunities to develop independent learning skills.
- Plan more frequent activities outside to promote further learning and development in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Test results have been above average for some years and the children's work in school is also good. Children starting Reception display a range of ability levels, but mostly they are in line with the national average expectations for their age. They make satisfactory progress during their time in the Foundation Stage class. In Key Stage 1, rates of progress increase and standards rise from average to above average. Test results at the end of Year 2 for reading, writing and mathematics are higher than those nationally. Pupils' progress varies during the four years in Key Stage 2 but overall it is good. In Year 6, achievement is excellent and national test results in English, mathematics and science remain above the national average. The school has recently started to set more challenging targets for all groups of learners and there are encouraging signs that standards are already rising to an even higher level. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Children who speak English as an additional language are now being tracked more closely as a result of the new assessment systems.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development is good, with some outstanding features. This, together with their above average level of attendance, is an important factor in enabling them to achieve well. Their enthusiastic attitudes to learning mean they are always keen to learn more. They know that their parents expect them to try hard and they respond well to adults in school. From Foundation Stage onwards, the school successfully fosters their self-esteem and confidence. As a result they are highly responsible, self-disciplined, yet outgoing, and considerate towards each other and visitors. Older children delight in helping the infants as play leaders. The teachers say they are 'stars' and this is true! Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good - spiritual and moral awareness is excellent. They show concern for the less fortunate, for example, in their many fund-raising efforts. Cultural awareness has been strengthened as children now experience themed weeks, for example, Hinduism Week. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities to develop enterprise skills. Children make active use of the school's widening range of initiatives to enable them to live more healthily. They say, 'the teachers in the classroom listen to your thoughts' and this helps pupils to feel

valued and respected. The recently established school council provides another channel for the school to act on children's own ideas such as their choice of new PE equipment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Lessons are conscientiously planned and teachers give clear explanations about new learning. They instruct well so that children know exactly what they have to do. Teachers manage children expertly and encourage all groups of learners to do their best, whatever their ability. Teaching assistants are well managed and make a positive impact on learning. In all lessons, children cooperate readily, concentrate well, and listen carefully. As a result they remember new information accurately. This gives them firm foundations to move on to the next stages of learning. In some lessons, teachers do not always make it clear to children what they are expecting them to learn, although they always tell them what they are going to do. Where teachers dominate too much, opportunities are missed to capitalise on the children's natural curiosity and responsiveness. In the stronger lessons, there is a real 'buzz' to learning as questioning is designed to extend children's thinking skills and challenge them to think imaginatively. Teachers are now more aware of systems for tracking children's progress but they do not all build the full range of assessment techniques into lesson planning. Consequently, they are less successful in promoting independent learning and helping children evaluate the next steps in their learning. Marking is variable in quality but is regular which reinforces the strong relationships teachers have with the children. This helps them take more pride in their work and want to do even better next time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that is well balanced. Work is matched to children's needs so that all groups of learners achieve well. Provision is good for English, mathematics, science and ICT, leading to above average standards. Many outside visits enrich the learning across the curriculum. These include local opportunities such as walks in the surrounding neighbourhood for sketching, and visits further afield like to the squirrel sanctuary at Formby. The impact of such visits on learning was evident in a display of Year 4 work following a trip to Poole's Cavern. Geography, art, digital photography and poetry writing were all of a high standard following that exciting and interesting experience. Residential visits for Years 5 and 6 help the children to develop more independence. There is a satisfactory range of lunchtime and after school clubs such as cheer-leading, football and netball and a multi-skills club for the younger children. There are good opportunities for competitive sport and the school enjoys many successes in local tournaments and leagues. Year 2 children showed a good understanding of the impact of exercise on their bodies during an active science lesson. Children are very involved in contributing to the community. Local elderly residents

enjoyed lively discussions with the Reception children during their Easter bonnet parade!

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The staff are pro-active in ensuring the safety of children, although some policies and procedures need updating. Children feel secure because school is a welcoming place and improvements have been made to site security. Bullying is not an issue. Children feel well supported in their learning and are not afraid to ask for help when they need it. Well-organised facilities such as first-aid points, access to water and spotless cloakrooms and toilets contribute to children's well-being. Children feel well supported in their learning and are not afraid to ask for help when they need it. Good guidance is given. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped sensitively in class and are fully included in lessons. Children and parents greatly appreciate the new wide range of merit awards. These help them feel secure in their achievements and valued by those who help them learn. Arrangements for the induction of new pupils and transition to secondary school are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good despite an unsettled two year period. There have been significant staffing changes and there is now a new leadership team in place. This is already having a visible positive impact on school improvement. The headteacher has high expectations of everyone and, as a result, there is an abundance of enthusiasm, commitment and high morale. Performance has been raised amongst staff and children alike. The deputy headteacher is an excellent role model for others through her exemplary classroom practice. Together, they make an inspiring duo and have quickly developed a positive and united team. They have involved staff, pupils, parents and governors in reviewing how the school is doing and planning important changes. Some changes have happened swiftly and are already making a difference to children's achievements. For example, individual targets are now set for each child and they are tracked to ensure that progress is being made. This is making a difference to how lessons are planned. Teachers are starting to develop their roles as subject leaders. The capacity for further improvements is good and there are clear priorities. However, the current school action plan contains too many additional new initiatives for the current year. Communication between home and school has improved. The vast majority of parents say they are happy with the school and many made positive comments about the recent changes. The school also works well with other partners such as the local authority and the diocese. This provides considerable benefits to the children, for example, the training for play-leaders provided by the Local Authority's Sports Development Officer.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
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	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	2

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?	2
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Thank you very much indeed for looking after us so well when we inspected your school recently. Mr Aitken and I felt very welcome and enjoyed spending time with you and the grown ups who work at Holy Family. Mrs Farrell and the staff and governors think your school is good and we agree. Here are some of the things that are especially good.

- You told us that you feel safe and happy at school and we think that is very important.
- You work hard and your test results are good.
- Your teachers take you on visits that help you with your learning. Sometimes that is close by (like sketching your church) and sometimes it is further away (like Poole's Cavern). When you stay away from home (like Year 6 who go to the Lake District) this helps you build closer friendships and become more independent.
- Your behaviour is excellent. You work and play well together and are kind to one another so there is no serious bullying in your school.
- You know a lot about healthy choices and act in ways that are sensible and safe.
- You are very good at PE and sport.
- You don't have many days off school so you don't get behind with your work.

It is our job to help your school plan what else it needs to do to become even better. There are three main things that we would like Mrs Farrell to organise. Firstly, we want her to make sure that you all make as much progress as possible during each year in school. Secondly, we would like you to develop some skills to help you make decisions about your own learning. Finally, we would like the Reception children to do more of their learning outdoors.

I wish you all a very happy and successful future and hope that Holy Family RC Primary School continues to be such a happy place for you to learn and have fun.