

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103421
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308314
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Rodney Braithwaite

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	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Lynch
Headteacher	Marian Mulroy
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Coventry Road Birmingham B10 0HT
Telephone number	0121 6752670
Fax number	0121 675 0734

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Holy Family Catholic Primary School has an average number of pupils. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than in most schools. A much higher-than-average number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The headteacher was newly appointed 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

Holy Family Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils in a caring and welcoming community. There is a calm, supportive and respectful ethos throughout the school, where pupils from many backgrounds and faiths coexist very happily together. Very good relationships between staff and pupils are present everywhere, guided by the strong links with the local church.

Standards when the pupils leave school are a little below average in English and science, and below average in mathematics. Pupils mostly make satisfactory progress, including children in the Foundation Stage. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, but some more able pupils could do better, especially in mathematics. Parents praise the school highly, and appreciate the quality of care and safety it provides. They also benefit from the school's provision of workshops to help their own learning of English. The school's safeguarding of pupils and provision for those most in need of help are good. Since the last inspection, standards in science have risen, and improved procedures have led to a good rise in attendance. However, there has been less success in improving some aspects of mathematics and in helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. The school's self-evaluation, led by the new headteacher, is candid and accurate and shows that the school has the capacity to improve.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, get on well with each other, and older ones especially enjoy their out-of-school activities and sports clubs. They have a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle and enjoy taking responsibilities. They behave well and are polite and respectful to adults and each other. Pupils, through their learning and social opportunities, are being prepared satisfactorily for their future lives. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers are very caring, and have good relationships with their pupils. Classes are well managed and planning is improving. However, teachers are not consistent in the way they use assessment data to make pupils fully aware of how they can improve, and what their learning targets should be. The pastoral care and guidance given to pupils are very good, and are enhanced by the good support of teaching assistants and good quality partnerships the school shares with other organisations such as health education units, safeguarding and resilience providers, and the Coleheath schools consortium. The curriculum is broad and balanced.

The new headteacher has made an impressive start in identifying priorities for improvement. This includes the development of senior managers to take increased responsibility and accountability for their roles. Subject leaders are now beginning to set realistic challenging targets, which are within reach of pupils but stretch all groups. The school has also rightly decided that a designated leader and manager of the Foundation Stage is an urgent priority.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Good induction arrangements help children to settle happily and make a positive start to their education in a very caring environment. Children's standards when they start school are well below national expectations. This is especially so in language skills as nearly two-thirds of present entrants do not speak English as their first language. Children make satisfactory progress overall, and good progress in their personal and social education. Teaching and the curriculum are adequate, with strengths in the quality of relationships. Children are safe and become confident in their learning environment because of the strong emphasis placed on their health

and well-being. Rigorous systems are in place for assuring all aspects of safeguarding, supported by good links with support agencies. The location of the Nursery some distance from Reception, makes shared approaches to planning and assessment difficult for teachers and their assistants. Recent staffing difficulties have resulted in slow progress in developing a fully cohesive and consistent curriculum for the youngest children. The school has very effective links with parents, and provides parent workshops which are effective in helping them to support the learning of their children. There is currently no Foundation Stage manager, and this has delayed the drive for improvement. The headteacher, who has a very good understanding of Foundation Stage, is monitoring and evaluating learning at present. In addition, the school has valued the support and advice of an Early Years adviser from the local authority. These interim measures have helped support the priority for better effectiveness in providing for the changing and diverse needs of the youngest learners.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics, particularly those of the more able learners.
- Improve the use of assessment and tracking data in order to set targets which pupils know and understand, and which will help them to raise their achievement.
- Establish quickly a fully cohesive Foundation Stage, with an integrated curriculum and a designated leader and manager.
- Build the capacity of leaders to monitor standards and achievement rigorously, encouraging full accountability for standards and effective learning.

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 the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children's steady progress in the Foundation Stage continues through Years 1 to 6. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average in reading, close to average in writing and well below average in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards overall are below average. In 2007, standards in English and science were close to average, but attainment in mathematics dropped, continuing the trend of the previous two years. However, evidence seen during the inspection confirms that the actions the school is taking to improve achievement in mathematics are beginning to have an effect. The trend in science shows that standards have been rising in the last two years. Boys in 2007 did significantly better than girls, a number of whom did not reach their predicted levels. In both English and mathematics, few pupils reach above-average levels by the time they leave school, because the more able pupils in all year groups are not sufficiently challenged in their work. The increasing number of pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, and pupils with learning difficulties make better-than-average progress and achieve well. This is because their needs are well understood and provided for through good classroom support and teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their life at school, and describe it as 'amazing' and 'fantastic'. Their relationships with each other are particularly good, and there is a palpable atmosphere of mutual respect and care between all ethnicities and faiths throughout the school. Pupils' attendance has shown

good improvement in the last two years in response to improved procedures, although a few are still taken on extended trips abroad which affects their learning. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, and are polite and well behaved in and out of school. They have a good understanding of healthy living, enjoy many sporting opportunities, and try their best to choose healthy foods, although a number confess to enjoying the Friday school lunch of 'pizza and beans' the most. They know how to keep themselves safe, and name many adults they can turn to in school if they have a personal problem. Pupils report little bullying, and the oldest enjoy helping 'lonely or sad' pupils in the playground. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are strong links with the local church which enable pupils to develop social and community awareness, and promote consideration and collections for charities and those in need. They are proud of being given responsibilities such as becoming members of the school council, and are always eager to take on more. At present, their skills in preparing for their future lives, through their standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils make steady progress in their learning in Years 1 to 6. Lengthy staff absence has been a problem in the Foundation Stage, but in spite of this, teaching and learning there are satisfactory. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good in all classes, with shared respect a very positive feature. Very well trained teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, and work effectively with teachers. Planning has improved in most respects, but the use of assessment is inconsistent. Pupil tracking data are not used consistently enough by some teachers to identify specific individual learning goals. As a result, some more able and gifted and talented pupils are not being extended sufficiently in their learning tasks. In contrast, pupils with learning difficulties receive much focused teaching and support, with clear learning targets. The school makes every effort to provide language support for the increasing number of pupils whose first language is not English. Teachers regularly encourage pupils to answer questions and explain their thinking, and the pupils' speaking skills are improving.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage, the school is rightly prioritising the introduction of a more coordinated curriculum designed for the changing needs of children starting at the school. Basic skills are given good emphasis, with a range of intervention strategies helping those pupils in danger of falling behind in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties receive well planned support, which helps them make good progress in their personal targets. However, more able pupils are not always fully challenged because the tasks they are set are not sufficiently challenging and do not extend their skills. Specific help for pupils new to learning English is effective, although the school has recognised the need to develop more coordinated provision for these learners. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. Close attention by staff to the social and emotional aspects of learning is having a very positive impact on behaviour. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities which includes residential visits, sports clubs and music tuition. Many pupils take advantage of these, although the school realises that more could be offered to younger pupils. The school has established good links

with partner schools and the local community through visits and shared expertise, for example, in modern foreign languages.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents praise the staff's concern for the total welfare of all pupils, especially the most vulnerable. The social and emotional development of pupils is a very positive feature, helping them to develop confidence and self-esteem. Very robust safeguarding systems, including close monitoring of pupils' personal health, are in place. All staff vetting and child protection procedures meet requirements. Looked after pupils are achieving well because of the school's good home-school links, and support through effective care plans. Good links with a range of services help to nurture pupils' behaviour and social development, and create racially harmonious relationships.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school realises that the assessment of pupils' progress is inconsistent, particularly in the tracking of pupils' progress. Progress for pupils with learning disabilities, though, is good because their individual targets are clear and understood. The school has recently introduced Assessment for Learning, which is beginning to have a positive impact. Marking has improved slightly since the last inspection, but focuses mostly on what pupils have achieved, rather than how they can improve. Some pupils, but not all, understand their learning targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has a very clear picture as to the direction the management must take in order to promote improvement, and to maintain the high quality of care and safeguarding in the school. A new leadership and management structure has been created this year, resulting in a number of changes in responsibilities for senior leaders, with a strong emphasis on ownership and accountability. The subject leaders for English, mathematics and science are beginning to set clear and enthusiastic direction in their goals for their subjects. Monitoring and evaluation in mathematics, the main priority for the school, has improved in the last few months, resulting in improvement to standards and learning. Leaders have become more aware of how they should set challenging targets, which, in the past, have not always been realistic. The school's self-evaluation, guided strongly by the head, is honest, accurate and robust. Consequently, clear targets for improvement are being set, and the pace of change is accelerating. Inclusion is strongly promoted in most respects, but is not yet fully effective. This is because more able and gifted and talented pupils are not always achieving as well as they can.

The governing body is very supportive of the leadership. It has not been used to challenging school leaders in the past, but the experienced Chair has instigated plans for training of governors, so that they have a greater awareness of their responsibilities.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	3

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

15 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Birmingham B10 0HT

I would like to thank you all for making us so welcome to your school in the last two days. It was a real pleasure to be greeted by so many smiling faces, with lots of 'Good Mornings', because you are all so polite. We think you are all very well looked after and safe in school and are pleased that you enjoy coming so much that your attendance has improved. You really get on well together, and with your teachers and their assistants, and the dinner ladies. Your parents are very proud of the school, think you do really well here, and that the staff are wonderful. You enjoy taking responsibilities, especially in your school council. We are pleased that you want to do as much as you can for your school.

Since the last inspection, you have done well in improving your learning of science. We would like you to do that now in mathematics, and we have asked your teachers to help. Some of you, we are sure, can do even better in your learning, especially a few of you who we think can reach really high levels. We have asked your teachers to make sure you know exactly how to get better, and you can help by learning what your targets are and judging whether you think you are doing your best. Some of the teachers who help the headteacher to manage the school will be keeping a much closer eye on how well you are doing. The very youngest children in Nursery and Reception are in rooms some way from each other, and we think it would be helpful if you could work a bit more closely together in everything you do..

You are lucky to have so many kind teachers and helpers and your headteacher, and we hope that you will continue to work hard with them so that you can go on confidently to your next school. Keep enjoying your sports, your healthy eating and being with your friends.

Good luck and best wishes

Rod Braithwaite Lead inspector