

# Holy Family RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105724
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	308934
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marie Cordey

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fr Barry Lomax
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs C Gill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Lime Green Road Oldham Lancashire OL8 3NG
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 6522400
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 6244271

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement and standards; the quality of teaching and learning; pupils' personal development and well-being; and how well the school's leadership promotes care and high standards. Evidence was gathered from national published assessment data, the school's self-evaluation, assessment records, policies and minutes, observation of lessons, pupils' work, discussion with pupils, staff and two governors, and the questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average sized school is in an area of significant social and economic deprivation. A high number of pupils are eligible for free school meals and above average numbers of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage and there are small numbers of pupils at an early stage of learning English from Poland and Czechoslovakia. A small proportion of pupils are looked after children.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Holy Family is a good and improving school. When governors were asked about the school a typical response was, 'It lives up to its name. It is a family.' The headteacher provides committed, visionary leadership and acts as a strong role model for all staff and pupils. Excellent relationships with parents and outside supporters, such as social services, contribute to the good progress that the pupils make in their personal and academic development. Pupils get on extremely well together and grow in confidence. They show a strong sense of commitment to many groups of people both worldwide and in their local community. They make a difference by raising money for charities that work to reduce poverty in Africa and in making the local environment more attractive and welcoming. The spiritual character of the school acts as a cornerstone in promoting pupils to reflect and to value themselves and others. Parents and members of the community are regular and enthusiastic visitors and school helpers.

Although standards are below average at the end of Year 6, pupils make good progress and achieve well given their exceptionally low starting points. This is because of good quality teaching, rigorous assessment systems to check how well pupils are doing and a caring and nurturing atmosphere in which pupils thrive. Challenging targets are set for pupils and they are on course to achieve them. Across the school, standards in writing are not as well developed as those in reading, mathematics and science. A new focus on developing the link between letters and sounds, and creative story writing, is beginning to have an impact, but the school knows that standards in this aspect of English could be higher. The work that is done to develop pupils' speaking skills is also beginning to support their development as writers. Overall, pupils are confident and articulate when speaking to small groups and large numbers of people in class and assemblies.

High quality support for the needs of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make good progress. Good provision is made for the small number of pupils from Poland and Czechoslovakia who are just beginning to learn to speak English. Similarly, looked after children are quickly identified and sensitively supported so they make significant gains in their understanding and learning.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and the good teaching nurtures their enthusiasm and desire to understand and learn. Support staff are thoroughly involved in planning lessons and are therefore making a good impact on supporting pupils' learning. Although pupils' work is marked regularly it is not always made clear to them how they might improve, particularly in their writing.

Pupils on the school council take their responsibilities seriously and are vigilant in representing the views of all the pupils. They have made significant differences to school, especially in the range and quality of play equipment outdoors and in the very attractive environment. Pupils strive to be healthy. They eat sensibly and take regular exercise both in lessons and in organised physical activities at break-times. The very popular breakfast club provides nutritious breakfasts and activities that pupils enjoy, such as board games. The club also promotes pupils' social skills, for example, as they engage in meal-time conversations and clearing up after themselves. Holy Family devotes a high priority to preparing pupils for life in multicultural Britain. Pupils visit neighbouring multi-faith schools, are active members of the 'Removing Racism from Football' project and contribute well to their rich and varied community. Their good behaviour is founded on respect and tolerance of other people. A small number of pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviour are quickly identified and supported. In this way they realise how their

actions can affect other people and learn to become more considerate. Attendance has improved to average because of the school's good systems to promote it. It is significantly above average in Years 5 and 6.

The inspiring headteacher has carefully planned leaders' roles so that they are all involved in improving the school's performance. The senior leadership team has been strengthened and middle leaders are now more actively involved in planning for improvement. Pupils, staff, governors and parents appreciate the headteacher's clear direction and care for their well-being. Self-evaluation is accurate and clearly linked to improving pupils' academic and personal development. Governors are very supportive and take the school to task to ensure the pupils receive a good education. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection, especially in raising standards in mathematics and science. The school has good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children start the Foundation Stage with exceptionally low skills, especially in communication and social development. They quickly settle and enjoy learning because of effective admission arrangements and the care taken to develop good relationships with their parents. Parents are welcomed into school to help settle their children and become aware of what children will be learning by taking them to their tables and seeing what activities they will be doing. In the Nursery class children develop their confidence and understanding and become comfortable in playing together. Learning speeds up in the Reception class and children develop more independence. Children relish bringing books to life by acting out characters' roles, enthusiastically portraying their understanding. Skilful teaching in linking sounds and letters enables children to begin to write simple sentences. New outdoor facilities help children to develop their physical skills and improve their social development through collaborating and playing well together. Good progress is made because of good teaching. Although children's skills are still low in relation to the standards expected by the end of the Reception year, they have improved well in relation to their starting points. The temporary lack of a Nursery teacher is being managed well so that children are not being adversely affected.

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

- Raise standards in writing to match those attained in reading, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teachers' marking so that it makes it clear to all pupils precisely what they need to do to improve their work, especially their writing.

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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
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	1
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	1
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?	2
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

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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



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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I got to know many of you by name and I enjoyed hearing your views about your school. You told me you liked your school very much. The points made by you and your parents made it much easier for me to understand your school.

Holy Family is a good school. Some of the best things about it are the ways it helps you to become very caring and tolerant young people. Your headteacher is respected by all of you and she makes sure that you do well in your work. You enjoy your lessons and are keen to be involved in learning lots of interesting things. You make good progress because of good teaching and because you are well cared for well.

Pupils in Key Stage 2 reach below average standards in reading, mathematics and science but do not do as well in writing. That is why I have asked your school's leaders to help you to do better in writing. I have also asked that teachers' marking be made clearer so that you know exactly what to do to make your work, and especially your writing, better. You can help by taking notice of the advice you are given.