

# Holy Rood Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 106632               |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Barnsley             |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 309185               |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 25–26 September 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Terry McDermott      |

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                                    | 256   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                    |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Derek Skitt  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mr John Gregson                                       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 4 November 2003                                       |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Shaw Street<br>Barnsley<br>South Yorkshire<br>S70 6JL |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01226 281219  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01226 770351  |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school. It serves families from a variety of social and economic backgrounds across the town of Barnsley. Almost all pupils are of White British or European heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that found nationally, though the proportion with statements of special educational need is above average. More pupils than usual join the school midway through their education, many with little or no spoken English. The school holds the Football Association (FA) Charter Mark, the Silver Healthy Schools Award and the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Quality Mark.

## 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. It has two outstanding strengths, both understandably recognised and appreciated by parents. The excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural education it provides for pupils is recognised in the comment, typical of many, 'Strong spiritual and moral leadership sets the tone for the culture of care that exists in every aspect of the school.' The excellent links it has built with parents and other partners are exemplified well by the comment, 'Holy Rood School has a great relationship with parents and involves them in everything done in school.' The attention given by the school to the needs, rights and responsibilities of the individual, underpins all of its work. It is a calm and happy place where pupils show tolerance and respect for each other and for adults.

Pupils make good progress because teaching and the curriculum are good. They enter the Nursery with skills slightly lower than would normally be expected for children of their age and leave school at age 11 with standards above the national average.

Pupils' personal development is good. They are very thoughtful about their beliefs and ideas, because of the care staff have taken to build values of honesty, respect and consideration successfully into all that the school does with them. Pupils are aware of cultural differences and enjoy exploring and talking about these. All pupils make good progress in the development of their basic skills and know how to plan for the working day, as evidenced in good practice during registration. Pupils are developing as independent learners who are able to work together in pairs and groups and are laying good foundations for their future economic well-being.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan their work well and are aware of the different learning needs of all pupils. Challenging and interesting tasks engage pupils' attention well. This leads directly to good learning. Pupils' work is marked regularly but often lacks an indication of what they need to do next in order to get better. Though senior leaders monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching regularly, the focus on pupils' learning is not sharp enough.

A stimulating and interesting curriculum goes beyond normal requirements. Being well strengthened with a wide range of extra-curricular activities, it ensures that children are well motivated and keen to learn. There is a good blend of teaching the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT and providing opportunities to practise these skills across a range of subjects. The Foundation Stage caters well for all areas of learning despite weaknesses in the outdoor environment.

The school pays very close attention to safeguarding its pupils and gives very good support to those who require it. Good tracking systems to check pupils' progress and detailed analysis of assessment information ensure that staff are aware of pupils' needs and the next steps in their learning. Pupils are not as closely involved in this process as they could be. Most are aware of their challenging learning targets, but do not always know what they need to do to reach them.

Leadership and management are of good quality. The headteacher leads with quiet determination, focusing on raising standards and giving every encouragement for pupils to succeed. His vision is shared by all adults in the school and recognised and understood by the pupils. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection: standards in writing are now above average; pupils work well when not under direct supervision; and assessment of pupils' achievements is now reliable. The curriculum is also now good. For these reasons, the school has shown good capacity to make improvements.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The good quality of provision in the Foundation Stage ensures children make good progress in all areas of learning. Children's personal, social, emotional and language skills are weak when they join the Nursery. By the end of Reception, children are working securely within the goals expected for their age. Their counting skills and physical development are strengths, even though the outdoor learning environment is outdated and the play surface uneven in places. Knowledgeable staff provide an exciting world of adventure and new experiences for them to enjoy and have created a vibrant and stimulating learning environment. Nursery and Reception age children mix freely throughout the day, with older children showing the younger ones what to do and how to behave. The success of the Foundation Stage hinges on the first class attention adults pay to developing the independence of every child through close questioning and attentive support work. Children lap up this attention and eagerly embrace opportunities to fend for themselves, resolve problems and talk through their thought processes. This approach stands children in good stead for their future education and ultimate success.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers' marking consistently provides guidance for pupils on how to improve their work and meet their targets.
- Improve the rigour with which senior leaders check on how well pupils are learning in lessons.
- Improve the physical provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

By the time pupils enter Year 1, the majority are working at the levels expected for their age. They make good progress through Key Stage 1 and accurate teacher assessments show that standards reached at the end of Year 2 in 2006 were above average. Results in 2007 were broadly similar. Accurate tracking and continued good teaching through Key Stage 2 ensured that standards reached in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2006 were above average. Results in 2007 were also above average, which represents good achievement for these pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who are learning English as an additional language and those who start at school in different year groups are well supported to enable them to achieve as well as others.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are very positive about their school. They enjoy their lessons and have good relationships with each other and with their teachers. They say they feel safe and have few concerns about bullying. They appreciate that teachers are, 'willing to listen to us and help us with our work'. Throughout the school pupils behave well, are courteous, well mannered and want to learn, but too many pupils become distracted in lessons and learning opportunities are lost. Attendance is in line with the national average and is improving following some decline in recent years. Pupils have the confidence to express themselves and they enjoy opportunities to celebrate their achievement and ideas as seen in the Key Stage 1 assembly on 'homes and family'. They have a high regard for the needs and beliefs of others. The active school council raises money for a range of charities and, with other pupils, makes a very good contribution to the local,

national and global communities. It also brings about changes to the school environment, for instance, the 'Play Train' for Key Stage 1 pupils, the 'Pirate Ship' for Key Stage 2 pupils and to healthy eating through the tuck shop. Pupils in school make very positive choices in relation to healthy eating. Large numbers are active in the wide range of sporting activities and events the school provides.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Excellent relationships flourish between adults and pupils. Pupils make good progress because they are encouraged to work independently from an early age and are trusted to get on with a task without close supervision. Pupils are keen to learn and behave well even though some lessons proceed with an accompanying background of low-level chatter from some pupils. This slows pupils' learning as teachers frequently interrupt the flow of the lesson in order to coax pupils into listening attentively. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, have secure subject knowledge and plan challenging activities for groups of differing abilities. However, these plans do not always transfer well enough into classroom practice and, as a result, some pupils become confused by overly challenging activities whilst others find them too easy. Teachers regularly mark pupils work but often do not tell them clearly what they need to do to improve. Good quality questioning ensures pupils learn effectively and consolidate the learning points from each lesson. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of the presentation of their work and in their regular completion of homework. Pupils consistently meet these expectations.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' good achievement and stimulates their interest in learning. It provides many opportunities for pupils to extend their personal, emotional and social qualities. A good range of enrichment activities, along with a programme of extra-curricular clubs, offers pupils opportunities to pursue a variety of sporting, musical and creative interests. This adds to their personal development and strengthens their academic understanding. First class links with parents as well as other local schools and agencies mean that pupils gain support for their learning on many fronts. They access outside expertise in terms of modern foreign language development, pursue international links with a school in Spain and access specialist facilities at the neighbouring sports' college. Teachers use ICT well to add interest to lessons and to support pupils' learning in all subjects.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

One parent's comment, 'The school values every child and encourages them to be the best that they can. The children learn to be helpful and to value themselves.' reflects the views of many on the good quality support provided for pupils. Child protection, safeguarding and health and safety procedures are all in place and meet the most recent national guidelines. The school has also put in place effective procedures to improve attendance. Very strong links with other local schools help staff to share skills and ease pupils' transfer to the next stage of learning. Good procedures are in place to identify and meet the additional learning needs of those pupils who

require extended support. Skilled support is well deployed to help pupils of all abilities and needs, including those who have little or no English when they join the school, to make good progress. Well established tracking systems give a clear overview of pupils' progress. Most pupils know the level at which they are working, but some are not clear about what they must do to reach the next level. Parents are kept aware of progress so that they can support their children and are very appreciative of the support the school gives their children.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Senior leaders know the school well and inspectors agree with their evaluations. A strong team spirit lies at the centre of all that the school does. Staff have a clear commitment to continued improvement. The school has good systems for accurately measuring the progress pupils are making. The information generated provides a firm foundation for a flexible yet challenging target setting system which ensures that all groups of pupils achieve well. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly, but leaders do not always check closely enough on how well all pupils are learning. The active governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met and gives good support to the school. The challenge they can give has been restricted by their limited ability to interpret pupil performance information. The school has successfully addressed the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. Resources, including staff, are well deployed, and financial management is good.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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   | 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                                     | 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                                    | 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?          | 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**

Inspection of Holy Rood Catholic Primary School, Barnsley, S70 6JL

I am writing to you for two reasons. The first is to thank you for the very warm welcome you gave my colleagues and I when we visited your school recently. The second reason is to tell you what we found out.

We found that Holy Rood is a good school. Here are some of the things which make it so.

- It helps you to make good progress because teaching is good and you are given the chance to take part in many exciting and interesting activities.
- It helps you to develop an excellent way of appreciating other people and the world around you.
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, teachers and other adults.
- The excellent links between Holy Rood School, parents, other schools close by and abroad and other groups ensure that help is available when it is needed.

There are also some things which we think the school could do even better.

- When teachers mark your work they do not give you enough information on what you need to do to improve.
- The school's leaders do not check closely enough that you are all learning as well as you can in lessons.
- The outdoor space in the Foundation Stage is too hard and bumpy.

These are what we have asked the school to improve and you can all play a part in this. It does mean that you will have to concentrate more closely on the tasks you are set and pay better attention to what your teachers tell you. However, we did see some examples of outstanding learning whilst on our visit, so we know you can do it.

Thank you once again for welcoming us to your school and good luck to you all for the future.