

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106772
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	309230
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Fiona Gowers

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter O'Neill
Headteacher	Mr P McLaughlin
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Kirton Lane Stainforth Doncaster South Yorkshire DN7 5BL
Telephone number	01302 841283
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves a wide area with some level of social and economic disadvantage. Almost all the pupils are White British and a very small percentage of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The school also caters for Traveller children. The number of children from this group can vary from year to year, but at the time of the inspection was relatively small. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average overall, but varies considerably from class to class. The proportion of children with statements of special educational need is above average.

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 is a satisfactory and improving school. Many parents share the view that 'staff are very caring and create an environment which feels more like a family than a school.' As a consequence children feel happy and settled, and develop good personal and social skills. Close links with the church have a significant impact on pupils' spiritual development. For example in preparation for 'moving on' to the next stage of their education, Year 6 pupils gained much from a residential visit to Holy Island.

The formation of a new school leadership team has been the catalyst behind recent school improvement. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very hard, successfully engaging school staff in continuing school improvement. Raising standards, whilst maintaining the high levels of care, is the main focus of school improvement. To this end, the school's leadership thoroughly tracks the levels of attainment of each pupil. However, teachers do not always use the information gained effectively to match work to pupils' needs.

When they join the Nursery many children's skills are below those typical for their age. By the time children leave the Foundation Stage standards are broadly average, because of the good teaching they receive. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress overall. At Key Stage 2, standards dropped significantly in 2006, due to a period of staffing instability. The school's leadership took effective action to minimise the impact of the staffing changes and acted swiftly to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, standards have improved and are now much closer to national averages. However, standards in writing are below average. Despite improvements, inconsistency in teaching and learning remains an issue. Where the teaching is weaker pupils make limited progress. Pupils progress rapidly in response to good teaching. Systems to enable teachers to share best practice to improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching are not embedded. The curriculum is satisfactory, with a strong focus on literacy, numeracy and science. It offers an increasing variety of practical learning opportunities, such as investigative work, which increase pupils' enjoyment of learning.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are keen to learn and achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage because of good quality teaching. Staff work well as a team to provide a good level of care, guidance and support and children's progress is particularly strong in the area of personal development. This provides a firm foundation for learning higher up the school. There is a good range of learning activities for children indoors, but opportunities for children to learn outdoors are not planned in as much depth to support their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' standards and achievement in writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all is in line with the best practice in school.
- For all teachers to make better use of information from tracking and assessments to match work effectively to all pupils' needs.

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 their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Most children enter Year 1 with broadly average standards. Standards at the end of Year 2 have generally been in line with national averages since the last inspection. In 2007, however, standards fell to just below average. This was largely a result of the profile of the cohort of pupils taking the national tests last year. In 2006, standards in the Year 6 national tests were very low and fell to well below average. Unavoidable staffing changes adversely affected pupils' progress and led to significant underachievement. Following the successful implementation of whole-school strategies to track pupils' progress and address underachievement, standards are now broadly average by the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards of writing throughout school, however, still remain below average. Effective strategies are in place to help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. In this school, everyone is made to feel that they matter. Parents comment on the 'lovely, warm and caring environment'. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is particularly strong and is supported by very close links with the church. From an early age pupils are able to talk about their own feelings. They are reflective and express their opinions well, knowing they are valued as individuals. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures is satisfactory.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, as shown by their considerate behaviour and positive attitudes. 'Learning is really fun!' enthused a group of older pupils. They are developing important life skills, such as listening to others and taking initiative as they work as school councillors and playground friends. Older pupils readily look after younger ones, helping them at playtime and encouraging them to have their say.

Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Staff work very hard to maintain a positive trend, with the school and local authority providing very good support to improve the attendance of Traveller pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and leads to satisfactory learning. Recently introduced strategies are improving the quality of teaching. Less effective teaching occurs when the level of challenge is insufficient, questioning narrow and when pupils have too few opportunities to work independently. For example, in a minority of lessons at Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is at times weak and adversely affects the rate of pupils' learning. In the best lessons positive learning relationships are promoted, pupil behaviour is good and they demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning. 'Every second is a learning opportunity so please don't waste it,' urge senior leaders, all of whom have high expectations and set good examples in

teaching. There is effective deployment of teaching assistants, who support teaching and learning well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum affords opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems. It is enhanced with an interesting range of visits and visitors, which add to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Links between subjects are emerging, but are not fully embedded. Consequently, opportunities for pupils to understand how learning in one subject can support study in another are not capitalised upon enough. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from a range of extra teaching in small groups to boost their progress. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education has a beneficial impact. It helps them deal with any conflict or problems in a mature and thoughtful way and promotes their understanding about how to keep fit and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care and support for pupils is good and helps promote positive attitudes to learning. Pupils who have learning or emotional needs, benefit from very sensitive support. This is enhanced through the work of the learning mentor, teaching assistants and effective liaison with outside agencies. For example, very effective liaison with the agency that supports Traveller pupils ensures that they have extra resources to help them develop their learning whilst they are absent from school. This means they can rejoin their class without having missed too much learning. Arrangements to ensure pupils' health and safety, including child protection, meet requirements. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their progress and as a result have a growing understanding of what they need to do to meet their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership in the school is focused on raising standards and promoting pupils' personal development and well-being. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together and the school runs smoothly from day to day. They have created a genuine team spirit amongst staff, and pupils are happy and settled. Many parents appreciate the care given to their children and agree that any issues of concern are dealt with straight away.

Senior leaders accurately evaluate the needs of the school. Over the past year they have successfully implemented a programme to raise standards, with effective support from local authority staff. As a consequence, pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Information from the new systems for tracking pupils' progress is analysed regularly and school leaders have an accurate assessment of levels of attainment across school. The information is used to help improve the performance of key groups of pupils by giving them support. However, it is not yet used extensively enough in all classes, to ensure pupils have the correct degree of challenge to make good progress.

Subject leaders are starting to monitor progress and use this to help raise standards in their areas of responsibility. The greatest impact has been in literacy, numeracy and science. The

governing body acts as a critical friend to the school, and carries out its duties well. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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?	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 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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for helping us with our work when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking with you. We found your school to be satisfactory. These are the things we found to be best about your school.

- You enjoy learning.
- You are very well behaved and polite.
- We like the way you are encouraged to have a say in what goes on at school, both in lessons and through the school council.

The adults at school look after you very well. We have asked them to help you reach higher standards in writing and to make even more of your lessons exciting and interesting so that you all achieve as well as you can.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection at school. Keep working hard and enjoying school!

We wish you well in the future.