

Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107748
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309494
Inspection date	1 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Marie Cordey

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	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Moreland
Headteacher	Mr Patrick Conaghan
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Bath Road Heckmondwike West Yorkshire WF16 9EA
Telephone number	01924 325712
Fax number	0

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The following issues were investigated: the pupils' achievement and standards; the quality of teaching and learning; the pupils' personal development and well-being and how well the school's leadership promotes care and high standards. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, the pupils' work, discussion with pupils, staff, the chair of governors and a parent governor, a scrutiny of school documents and parent questionnaires. 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

The school is smaller than most primary schools. Smaller than average numbers of pupils are eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is low. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. At the time of the inspection, the school was led by an acting headteacher because the substantive headteacher was working as an interim headteacher in a local school. The Reception class was being taught by a temporary teacher during the absence of the class teacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Holy Spirit is a good school. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. Pupils are delighted with the school and they thrive on the care they receive and the learning that they experience in lessons. Pupils feel safe and are well looked after at school. This is backed up by the vast majority of parents. They observe, for instance, 'My daughter loves school. There is never a day when she wants to stay at home,' and, 'Fantastic children, fantastic teachers, fantastic school.' Parents feel that they can go into school at any time and approach staff for support. A small number of parents commented adversely on behaviour in one class and on generally large class sizes. Inspection evidence found that behaviour was exemplary and that in the large classes, the work was carefully matched to the needs of all the pupils. The views of parents who want to be more involved in their children's learning are being taken seriously and the school is working on this as a priority.

The school's character is outlined in its mission statement and is at the heart of its ethos. 'Children are to be cared for in such a way that their physical, moral and intellectual talents may develop. so that they may attain a greater sense of responsibility and a right use of freedom.' The promotion of tolerance, respect and care for others is central to the school's character. As a result, the pupils care for others, relish their role as part of their community and learn to value themselves. They hold strong values that are summed up by caring for others as you would care for yourself. They are responsible citizens and active fundraisers for local and international charities. Food is nutritious and pupils exercise regularly. The school's 'Community of Enquiry' is chaired by the headteacher and meets regularly to focus on personal and spiritual topics. Pupils are encouraged to listen, question and think carefully. In lessons and around school, pupils from all years talk to each other and use phrases such as, 'You could put that another way.', 'As he said we need to look into this.', and 'Do we thoroughly understand what is at the bottom of this?' Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being are partly why their standards are above average. It is also because of good, and sometimes outstanding teaching and good, visionary leadership. Pupils' attendance is above average and they enjoy coming to school. They relish their lessons, especially when they are actively involved. They progress very quickly when learning is turned into a game and they pit their wits against the teacher. High expectations and a brisk pace characterise most of the pupils' lessons. Occasionally, the pace is slower, usually when the teacher talks for too long and the pupils are not as actively involved.

Pupils make good progress from their average starting points and achieve well. Their above average standards prepare them well for the future, as does their simulated purchase and management of stocks and shares, a feature of the good curriculum. Standards are not quite as high in science as they are in English and mathematics. The school has not tracked progress in science closely enough. The school is aware of this and the need to use precise assessment in science so that the pupils know what they need to do to make it better. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and looked-after children make outstanding progress. Their needs are identified very quickly and speedy action is taken including individual support, close liaison with home, challenging targets and regular reviews involving their teachers and their parents or carers. The fact that looked-after children are the first and most important criteria for entry to the school reflects the caring character of the school.

All staff love being at the school and want to make it as good as it can be. The school has good systems to develop learning and the needs of the pupils, demonstrating good management.

When the substantive headteacher was asked to lead another school for a term, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator stepped seamlessly into acting headteacher and deputy headteacher roles. This is because of the good groundwork and team leadership that is characteristic of Holy Spirit. The acting headteacher has a clear vision for achieving the best for the pupils and sets them challenging targets. The pupils reach these challenging targets overall, although, as yet, they are not quite as high as the school expects in science. The school actively cares for its pupils and leaders are passionate about making sure that every pupil is treated individually. This provides the framework for the outstanding progress made by pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and looked-after children. Leaders ensure that arrangements for safeguarding the pupils are appropriate. Care, guidance and support are good. Links with outside supporters, such as educational psychologists, bereavement counsellors, and speech and language therapists make an outstanding contribution to the pupils' well-being and achievement. The school understands itself well and judges itself accurately. Self-evaluation is regular and expected of all staff. Leaders have acknowledged deficiencies in some aspects of the Foundation Stage provision, where children's achievement is currently satisfactory, rather than good. Governors are very much a part of the school and challenge it well. The school provides good value for money and has made good improvements since the previous inspection. Holy Spirit has good capacity to improve still further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage provision has improved since the last inspection. Staffing absences are managed well to minimise the impact on children's learning and well-being. Teaching and learning are effective and children make satisfactory progress from broadly typical skills when they join the Reception class. The enthusiastic staff team plan a range of activities to promote learning in literacy and number, and are especially good at promoting the children's personal development and well-being. The teaching of early reading skills and recognition of number is systematic and there are effective learning programmes to promote speaking and listening. Activities are not always stimulating and challenging enough to promote independent learning and self-awareness. The children have the opportunity to work and play outdoors, but overall, resources are limited. This restricts the development of communication skills and partnership building, particularly when children act in role play. The school's judgement of the provision in the Foundation Stage is over generous. It did not sufficiently take into account how much time it would take for the new staff to plan and prepare work. As a result, some activities are not challenging enough for some of the children. All staff contribute to effective systems to track children's individual progress, although they do not yet provide an overview of the progress made by the class as a whole. There are good procedures to welcome new children who settle quickly. Relationships with parents are positive and the morning and afternoon greetings sessions are much appreciated.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage so that children's progress is as good as that of pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- Make better use of teachers' assessments of pupils' learning in science in order to raise standards. Make sure that pupils are aware of their standards and what they need to do in order to improve their work.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

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

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?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School, Heckmondwike,
WF16 9EA.

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I came to visit your school. I would especially like to thank the pupils who met with me to talk about their views on the school. You are all very polite and enthusiastic. I managed to talk to many of you and thoroughly enjoyed listening to your well thought out comments.

I think that, like you and your parents and carers, your school is a good school because you learn well and reach high standards in English and mathematics. You are happy to be in lessons and love being active and involved. You eat very healthy food and take an active part in physical education lessons and sporting activities. You are confident and cared for and most of your parents are pleased with the school. This is because of the excellent way that the school works to help you to be good citizens and to prepare you for the future.

I think that children in the Reception class do better than they did at the time of the last inspection and they make satisfactory improvements to their work. I would like your school to improve even more so that the children in the Reception class make the same good progress as the pupils in Years 1 to 6. I also think that you should be more aware of how you are doing in science and what you could do to reach higher levels.

You can help by doing any extra work that your teacher gives you and asking teachers for more advice about how to improve your work.

I wish you the very best for your future.