

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110090
Local Authority	Slough
Inspection number	310202
Inspection date	29 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Alan Jarvis

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	480
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	112
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kieran McKeown
Headteacher	Mrs Anne O'Connor
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Street Langley Slough SL3 8NF

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	29 September 2008
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Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated:

- How successful have the initiatives to improve the progress of different groups of pupils been in English, mathematics and science?
- How well do the Foundation Subjects help develop pupils' basic skills and capitalise upon their creativity and interests?
- How good is provision, and especially the curriculum, in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)?

Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. The inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Holy Family Catholic Primary is a large primary school. A large majority of pupils are White British although around one third, which is well above average, come from a wide range of other minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small minority of pupils is in the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and they mostly have speech and language or dyslexic difficulties. The school has achieved the 'Healthy Schools' and 'ICT Mark' awards.

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 that one parent described as being 'like a little corner of heaven'. The warm, caring ethos is evident from the moment you walk into the school and this underpins pupils' outstanding personal development and especially their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. It provides high quality care and support for its pupils and excels in the way it promotes community cohesion and reaches out to the local community to promote pupils' well-being.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average and quickly rising. This represents good achievement given pupils' average starting points. Much of this success can be put down to the effective team of senior and subject leaders and supportive governors who are committed to school improvement. They are given an exceptionally clear steer by the headteacher whose attention to detail leads to thoroughness and rigour in all that they do. For example, their incisive monitoring has helped them build on the school's many strengths and pinpoint those areas where it could be doing even better since the last inspection. Standards in mathematics have been consistently high. All groups of pupils sustain rapid progress in this subject because of high quality teaching in the smaller teaching sets and the extremely strong focus on problem solving and reasoning. Progress in science has also been quickening and standards are rising because of the stronger focus now given to scientific investigations and the use of regular targets that stimulate pupils to aim high. In contrast, the monitoring shows that whilst most pupils make very strong progress in reading, progress in writing is not quite as strong, particularly for the boys. A wide range of initiatives have been put in place to help address this. For example, teachers have modified writing activities and broken them down into 'bite size' chunks so that they are more motivating for the boys. In addition, pupils now learn how to link letters to sounds. Whilst more needs to be done, these initiatives have resulted in a quickening of progress. Standards in writing are rising, but are not yet as high as they are in reading.

Monitoring has also shown that many of the pupils with speech and language difficulties and others on the register of special educational needs had not been making the progress they should have been in English, mathematics and science, especially in writing. Well thought through initiatives such as improved training for the teaching assistants, better tracking of their progress and the use of individualised learning targets in lessons has started to bring benefits. Whilst underachievement is much reduced, the school recognises that more work needs to be done to build on these initiatives and ensure this group of pupils consistently make good progress.

A further success of the school is that the pupils not only do well in the national tests in English, mathematics and science but also achieve well across a wide range of creative subjects. This, together with the rising standards in English, mathematics and science and improvements to pupils' personal development demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve. Music is especially strong with almost one fifth of the school relishing singing in the school choir and many others learning to play a musical instrument. There is a splendid information and communication technology (ICT) suite equipped with advanced resources such as digital video cameras and data logging equipment. This, and good teaching of ICT skills, enables many Year 6 pupils to reach above average levels for their age and be well prepared for secondary school. The school have increased the number of designated subject weeks that helps pupils to learn in depth and think 'out of the box'. For example, Year 6 pupils undertake a joint science and

design and technology week, which is extremely popular, as are the Year 2 'China day' and the Year 6 history and geography weeks.

Parents rightly hold the school in high regard and comment favourably on how their children develop outstanding personal qualities. Typically they wrote, 'the staff always go an extra mile', 'our children go to a very safe and caring school' and 'teachers listen and help parents in any way they can'. Pupils have high levels of trust for all adults, and know any member of staff will quickly deal with any worries they have. Pupils have an acute understanding of the benefits of exercise and healthy food and love swimming, the specialist teaching of physical education and the strong focus on eating a carefully balanced diet. They know how to keep themselves safe at all times. For example, they understand exactly what to do to keep safe on the Internet, how to cross the road safely, and know 'never to go off with a stranger'. Behaviour is impeccable and pupils of all ages have lovely manners. Racist incidents are almost unknown and there have been no exclusions 'within living memory'. Attendance is above average and the school is doing all it can to encourage further improvement. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about the wider world and greatly enjoy the part played by visitors to school who do much to enhance learning.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Nursery with skills and understanding that are in line with expectations for their age. Staff place a strong emphasis on the safety, care and well-being of children. As a result, they settle in very well, are happy and confident and their personal development is outstanding. As one parent wrote, 'my daughter gets up with a smile, raring to go to school'. Children play well independently and in groups. The spacious and well-organised outdoor environment is used well to support children's imaginative play opportunities. The lively conversation sessions and fun game sessions clearly demonstrate that children learn to value and enjoy each other's company. Because of these factors and consistently good teaching children make good progress so that by the end of Reception, nearly all are working securely within the goals expected for children of this age and many beyond this.

The improved curriculum covers all areas of learning well. The well-organised and stimulating learning environment ensures children's easy access to resources and allows them to freely explore and learn from their environment. Careful thought goes into providing activities that capture children's interests based upon regular observations of what children are achieving. However, staff do not always match activities closely to children's abilities which limits their learning opportunities. For example, children enjoyed making letters from mould but opportunities were missed to extend this activity to enable them to form simple three or four letter words. Effective leadership of the EYFS has ensured good improvement to provision and progress since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Quicken pupils' progress in writing, particularly for the boys, so that standards reached are as high as they are in reading.
- Ensure that pupils with speech and language difficulties consistently make the good progress across subjects that most other pupils do.
- Effectively match the activities provided for children in the EYFS to their needs so that learning is more challenging and they make faster progress.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which 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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	1

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

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

09 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Slough, SL3 8NF

Thank you for being so friendly and for making the inspectors feel welcome when we visited your school recently. Many of you told us how much you enjoy coming to school and your parents wrote many comments which told us how pleased they are that you attend this school. Your school is a good school and a lovely place to be because everyone works hard to make you feel happy and to help you to learn.

Here are some of the really good things about your school.

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are improving and most of you are making good progress because of the good teaching you receive.
- Other subjects of the curriculum are covered well and encourage your creativity.
- Your behaviour is impeccable and you have lovely manners.
- The adults look after you exceptionally well and quickly deal with your worries.
- Staff excel at encouraging your parents and other people to be part of the school and help you learn.
- You know a great deal about how to be safe, eat healthily and how to keep fit.
- The youngest children make a good start to their education.
- The various improvements show that the school is run well and your teachers are all working very hard to build on its many successes.

I have asked your teachers to help to make the school even better by helping you to improve your writing. You can help by really concentrating on your writing tasks. In addition, I have asked the teachers and teaching assistants to quicken the progress of those pupils who have difficulties with their speech and language. I have also asked the adults to ensure children in the Nursery and Reception classes are provided with activities that better suit their individual needs.

I hope that you will always enjoy school as much as you do now and you will strive to do as well as you can in the future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Jarvis

Lead Inspector