

# Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115181
<b>Local Authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	311868
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Falconer HMI

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.

---

<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 (total)	333
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sister Mary Lyons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Katherine Golden
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Daiglen Drive South Ockendon Essex RM15 5RP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 853000
<b>Fax number</b>	01708 856337

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 October 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	311868

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is situated in a large urban area. The majority of pupils live in the local area but some travel from further afield. Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with broadly expected levels of ability. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties/and or disabilities is higher than the national average but the percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is much lower than the national average. The percentage of pupils in minority ethnic groups is larger than the national average as is the percentage of pupils for whom English is not their first language. Attendance figures are above the national average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The majority of the pupils are happy, friendly, and take great enjoyment from learning in this satisfactory school. The headteacher gives a suitable steer to the satisfactory leadership and management and works hard to improve the quality of provision. The distributed leadership and management team is developing well. The chair of governors is very knowledgeable about school development and is enthusiastic to provide a good level of support. The school management systems highlight strengths and areas that require further improvement. Monitoring lessons regularly and using assessment information rigorously and accurately are not fully developed.

Achievement and standards are satisfactory for the EYFS and the whole school. Children in the EYFS settle quickly and the majority make satisfactory progress from expected levels on entry. School results for 2008 show that progress for pupils in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2, they have shown average levels of attainment, overall. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, they have continued to demonstrate satisfactory progress and reached the national average attainment levels. A concerted effort is being made to make sure that all pupils are working to challenging targets. However, there is evidence of underachievement for some.

Personal development and well-being are good in the EYFS and in the whole school. Staff work well to provide pupils with relevant opportunities to keep healthy and to stay safe. The school has achieved Healthy School Status and the Active Schools Mark indicating its enthusiasm to provide pupils with an education for life. There is also a school travel plan to encourage alternative forms of transport. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is also good in classes and attendance is above the national average.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall with some strong features in the pastoral elements. In terms of the academic guidance and support, pupils are generally suitably supported as they move through the year groups but the school recognises that it has to be more secure with its assessment for learning processes in order to be more accurate in informing the next steps in learning. The welfare of children in EYFS is good.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with lessons ranging from good to inadequate. The teaching is not consistently good throughout the school. The curriculum is also satisfactory but with strong levels of curricular enrichment which give further opportunities to develop pupils' skills and wider interests in areas such as music and educational visits. The place of the school in the community is strong and growing but the school recognises the need to be strategic in carrying out its part in the development of community cohesion. Partnership with parents is well established and the majority of parents are positive about the school although a minority expressed concerns about behaviour.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children start Nursery with broadly average skills. As a result of satisfactory teaching and a balanced curriculum, every child makes satisfactory progress and, by the end of the reception year, nearly all reach the goals they are expected to in all areas of learning. Children are confident to talk about their experiences and to ask for help should they need it. Emphasis on personal development, care and welfare builds children's self-esteem and they are confident to take

part in new activities. Classrooms are well organised with resources and displays that stimulate the children's interests. However, adults do not plan for children to learn outdoors on a day-to-day basis, which limits the opportunity for them to make choices about learning and to pursue their own interests. Too many activities are planned and led by adults and so the children do not have enough opportunity to extend their learning independently. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Assessment procedures through regular observations are not yet secure enough to track the children's progress and plan well-matched learning experiences.

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

- Make sure that the EYFS gives children more opportunity to make choices about their own learning in the classroom and the outdoor area, making sure that there is equality of learning opportunities for all pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better throughout the school, resulting in learning that is more effective for all pupils and raises standards.
- Ensure that the leadership and management, at all levels, monitor lessons regularly and use assessment information more rigorously and more accurately, to make sure all pupils are on track to reach challenging targets.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but which has areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement and standards are satisfactory across the school. Achievement is satisfactory for the majority of children in the EYFS who enter with broadly expected ability levels. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with broadly average abilities and make satisfactory progress to the end of Key Stage 1, as indicated by the 2007 published results and in the school's most recent results. Attainment in reading, according to the school's 2008 results is broadly average. Mathematics is also broadly average but writing is still below average. Potential higher achievers are still under-represented in Key Stage 1 tests.

At the end of Key Stage 2, the 2007 test results showed that pupils make satisfactory progress and attain results broadly in line with the national average in mathematics and science but with English results trailing the national figure. There is evidence of some under-achievement for the potential higher achievers the end of Key Stage 2. The most recent, unvalidated, school results show an improving picture in some areas with the overall attainment being broadly average. However, the school's 2008 data indicates that actual results for English, mathematics and science are still falling below the predicted results.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils of all ages are confident to express their opinions and engage in conversations with adults and each other. They are generally well motivated and are interested in lessons. Attendance is very good and pupils say that they enjoy school very much. They talk enthusiastically about how they learn to lead a healthy lifestyle through improved sporting activities. They excitedly report

their enjoyment of active learning initiatives when they talk about themed days when they dress up and take part in interesting activities linked to subject areas, such as history or geography. Pupils' behaviour is generally good in class. They learn about a range of cultures and traditions and are involved in community activities. A successful school council enables them to have an input into the way their school is run.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching varies too much across the school. Many teachers think carefully about how to make lessons interesting for pupils. Good teaching goes one step further and identifies clear lesson objectives that focus on what pupils are expected to learn, and monitors progress against clear targets. There is not enough assessment information for teachers to use consistently to plan learning that builds effectively on every pupil's prior knowledge and skills. Consequently, some pupils find some work too hard and some too easy. In good lessons, teachers use their knowledge of pupils' learning to plan relevant tasks for those with different abilities and to target support and challenge. This good practice is inconsistent across the school. Some lessons put too much emphasis on what pupils will do rather than on what they should learn. As a result, progress slows and pupils do not achieve their potential. Teaching assistants generally give focused support to pupils who need specific help to learn and help them to make satisfactory progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The organisation of the curriculum into topics adds interests and relevance to pupils' learning experiences. For example, in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, pupils learn key computer skills while finding out about the different kinds of transport in geography. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to apply knowledge and to practise reading, writing and numeracy skills in other subjects and so help prepare them satisfactorily for their next stage of education and adult life. The personal, social and health education curriculum gives good support to pupils' personal development. Special themed days and a varied range of extra-curricular visits and clubs enrich pupils' learning experiences well. Older pupils enjoy learning French and the opportunity to learn to play the violin, viola or cello. The school's choir is a lively and exciting event every week.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

Care guidance and support are satisfactory overall but with levels of pastoral care being strong. Most pupils feel safe from bullies and know who to go to if they feel afraid or unhappy. The buddy system works well to support children and to help them to understand the needs of others. Staff are well informed of their role in safeguarding. Good risk assessment procedures ensure children are safe. Child protection procedures are regularly updated and meet requirements. Most children know about their work targets. However, assessment procedures, including marking, are not robust enough or consistent enough to ensure that these targets are always accurate. This affects children's ability to reach their full potential. The school works well with pupils and their families.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall with the headteacher providing firm direction. The leadership and management team is developing well at all levels but the school's monitoring systems are not yet refined enough and consistent enough to inform accurate target setting systems.

Governors are actively involved in the life of the school which strives to make sure that equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled. However, there are still some groups of pupils whose attainments fall short, compared to the national average.

Community cohesion is firmly on the school's agenda with the school now beginning to take a wider view of its place and responsibilities within the community. The chair of governors has already attended several courses on this area and is well placed to give good guidance. Both teachers and pupils alike play an important role in working with others to improve the school's common vision and a sense of belonging. Diversity is appreciated, valued and promoted.

Resource levels are satisfactory and well used to achieve satisfactory value for money, including the use of ICT. Improvements since the last inspection are generally satisfactory but there is more work to do. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



**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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

---

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

3 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, South Ockendon, RM15 5RP

Thank you very much for making us welcome and for your big contribution to the inspection of your school. We really enjoyed our time talking with you as well as with your teachers and other adults who help you.

We noticed that the vast majority of you behaved well in classes and were polite and courteous to each other as well as to the staff. The school puts a lot of effort into teaching you about healthy lifestyles and about staying safe. Most of you feel you can talk to an adult if you have any problems. The school looks after you well in many ways. Some of you thought that the learning was just right but there were others who thought that sometimes the work was too easy or sometimes too hard.

Your enthusiasm for learning is good with many of you seen enjoying the lessons. A really good example of your levels of enjoyment was seen in the singing rehearsals in the hall. We thought you sounded very good. Another good example was the French lesson where you were very much engaged and learning through speaking and listening and physical activity.

We saw that the school is a caring school and that it is working hard to provide a good education for you. We looked very hard at how the school could improve and we talked to your headteacher and other staff about it.

The ideas that came from that talk are aimed at giving you greater opportunities to reach even higher targets than you are reaching at the moment. Your school agrees that all children should have the right opportunities. Your headteacher and other leaders in school are going to make sure that teaching and learning is consistently good all the way through school by making regular checks in classes and by getting all your teachers to share all the good ideas they have. Teachers are also going to make sure that they know exactly where you are in your learning, from when you begin in the EYFS, so that your activities and work are at the right level and guide you to reach your full potential.

Yours sincerely

George Falconer

Her Majesty's Inspector