

# Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120225
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester City
<b>Inspection number</b>	313557
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geoff Cresswell

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.

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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 (total)	216
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	55
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mary Lynch
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julia Christy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 January 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>	Stonesby Avenue Leicester LE2 6TY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01162 833135
<b>Fax number</b>	0116 222 3615

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, and a high proportion of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There is a high proportion of pupils moving in and out of the school and this movement affects all year groups. A significant proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a minority speak English as an additional language. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) into the Nursery and Reception classes. In the last two years there has been a very high turnover of governors and teaching staff.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Pupils clearly enjoy school – a view overwhelmingly expressed by parents – and have a positive attitude to all aspects of school life. They work well together, behave well and have a strong sense of community. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom are recent arrivals, integrate well. The inclusion of these pupils is managed well. The positive personal development of pupils is due to the good level of pastoral care provided by staff, who know pupils well and who have good relationships with them. Personal development is also promoted successfully through innovative partnerships within the local area and beyond, such as hosting a combined community concert and inviting local school choirs. Effective systems are in place to safeguard pupils, and the pupils themselves feel safe and have a good understanding of what to do to stay safe.

Inconsistencies in the rate of progress mean that achievement as a whole is satisfactory. For example, while pupils make good progress in reading and science, progress in writing and mathematics is satisfactory. The relatively slower progress in writing and mathematics is partly due to a narrowing of the curriculum, where basic numeracy and literacy skills are often taught well, but pupils are not given enough opportunity to use and apply them. In addition, although the school's leadership has an accurate overview of the current strengths and weaknesses of the school, the performance of pupils has not been analysed in enough detail to produce sufficiently challenging targets to improve achievement further. This shortcoming has a particular impact on more able pupils, who do not always reach high enough levels of attainment. Teachers are not always taking these pupils forward from what they have already understood, tending instead to recap on work already known. Progress picks up in Year 6 and enables these pupils to reach broadly average standards. This acceleration is particularly marked in the oldest pupils learning to speak English as an additional language. Having developed proficiency in speaking English, their progress then accelerates in other subjects.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There have been some important improvements to the school, driven by the headteacher. For example, the attendance of pupils has improved to a satisfactory level in response to a key issue from the previous inspection, and results at Year 6 increased in the most recent national tests. The new senior management team and enthusiastic staff have a clear understanding of how to increase the progress of the very responsive pupils. While subject leaders are new to their positions, they have already improved the quality of planning and are now starting to check teaching and learning. The governors are very supportive of the school. Recent training and a new committee structure have strengthened the ability of the governing body to act as a 'critical friend'. All these improvements show that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the EYFS is satisfactory and equally so for both the Nursery and Reception. Children enter these classes with attainment well below the level expected for their age and make satisfactory progress. Although standards have risen in the last three years, at the end of the EYFS, standards are still below average, a number of children only having joined the school in the Reception class. In keeping with other year groups, progress varies across areas of learning. Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy because teachers and skilled teaching assistants systematically engage them in activities that are matched

well to their interest and stage of development. Children learn quickly to cooperate and collaborate in a positive, safe atmosphere, where good relationships are modelled and encouraged and children's welfare is promoted well. Progress in other areas of learning, including mathematical development, is satisfactory. Children's progress is relatively slower in other areas because activities are not always linked to purposeful learning objectives.

The leadership of EYFS is satisfactory. Recent improvements to the outdoor area have increased opportunities for creative and physical development and for extending children's knowledge and understanding of the world, although this facility has yet to be fully available to all children throughout the day. Staff make observational notes to track children's progress, but have yet to use this information to the full when completing the profile of children in EYFS.

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

- Raise the achievement of more able pupils in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Create manageable systems for accurately assessing pupil progress that result in challenging targets and more pupils achieving well.
- Ensure that pupils are given opportunities to use and apply their basic skills in numeracy and literacy.

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**

Whilst progress in some subjects is good, given variations in progress across different subjects, achievement is satisfactory. Close attention to reading skills ensures good progress in reading. Progress is also good in science because pupils gain a thorough grounding in scientific knowledge and understanding, although pupils do not always have enough opportunities for scientific investigation. Too few chances to use and apply their mathematical and writing skills mean that progress in these subjects is satisfactory, rather than good.

Attainment is affected in all year groups by the arrival of new pupils. Although these pupils acquire English quickly and begin to make good progress, their initial lack of understanding in lessons means that many have not reached the expected level for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1, where standards are below average. In the 2008 tests for Year 2 pupils, relatively few attained the higher levels for reading, writing and mathematics. In general, the oldest pupils in the school make more rapid progress than other year groups. Those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Faster progress in the last year leads to broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in English, mathematics and science were average in the 2008 national tests for Year 6, an improvement on the previous year. As with Key Stage 1, relatively few pupils attained the highest levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have the same strengths and weaknesses in progress as other pupils.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and older pupils diligently carry out a range of duties. New arrivals are assimilated quickly into the school and relationships are good. Pupils understand what is involved in a healthy lifestyle and whilst in school they exercise and eat well, for example taking the lead role in producing a healthy menu for school dinners. Pupils enjoy learning experiences a good deal, both in and beyond the school day; to quote one pupil, 'I really like the homework.' They make a positive contribution to the local community, the chance to sing in a choir being particularly well used and popular. These positive qualities, together with their sound acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills, provide a secure basis for their future education and adult life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

While some teaching is good, most is satisfactory. Teachers respond positively to pupils' contributions both in class and when marking work. The use of praise encourages pupils and helps to raise their self-esteem. Nevertheless, marking does not always give pupils clear guidance on how to improve. Learning objectives are explained well at the start of lessons and the strategy of getting the pupils to discuss a question briefly in pairs is used to good effect. Although planning takes account of more able pupils, the activities set do not always stretch them. Pupils rise to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and presentation of work, but teachers give them too few opportunities to explore and investigate. Teaching assistants work well in partnership with teachers and are effective in enabling pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to take a full part in lessons along with other pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The strongest element of the school's satisfactory curriculum is its good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in music and physical education. These opportunities contribute well to the pupils' enjoyment of school life and their understanding of a healthy lifestyle. An increasing number of visitors and educational visits also provide important enrichment of the curriculum. Planning focuses closely on basic knowledge, skills and understanding, but pupils do not yet have all the opportunities they should to use their skills in new situations or across the curriculum as a whole. Consequently, pupils do not always see the relevance of what they are learning. As with literacy and numeracy, pupils gain basic skills in information and communication technology, but have limited opportunities to apply these skills.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

While the school provides strong pastoral support for pupils, academic guidance is still a developing area. A particularly successful feature of pastoral care is the nurture group, which is very effective in increasing attendance and reducing disruptive behaviour. As a result, attendance has risen and is now broadly average. This group provides a secure, stimulating

environment where pupils who struggle to acquire good learning habits begin to develop them. Helpful courses for parents equip them to support their children's learning at home.

The school recognises that it now needs to track pupils' progress more closely and use this more detailed information to set challenging targets and ensure that pupils make good progress in all subjects. Recently introduced individual targets in English are beginning to be understood by pupils. They are increasingly influencing the rate of progress, but there are not yet similar individual targets for mathematics to help to boost pupils' progress in this subject.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's leadership has a clear broad overview of the school's effectiveness and of areas where further development is needed. Improvements have already been made to standards at Year 6 and to attendance. The school is aware that it now needs to analyse its data in greater detail in order to pinpoint weaker areas within subjects and provide more challenging academic targets for its pupils. New subject leaders have made a valuable start. For example, the monitoring of pupils' written work has ensured that specific learning objectives are used in all English and mathematics lessons. The school now plans to extend such checks into more regular and systematic monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons. The capacity of the governing body for challenging the school about its work and performance has increased. The school's good pastoral support for all its pupils and families, including those new to the school and from minority ethnic backgrounds, ensures a cohesive community, as do its links with the local community and schools nearby.

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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?	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?	2
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	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

<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	4
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?	2
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 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Leicester, LE2 6TY

My colleague and I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education and knows what needs to improve. These are the main things that we found.

- Your behaviour is good and you work well together. This helps to make the school a calm and safe place for you to be as well as a welcoming place for new children arriving in the school.
- You say that you enjoy school; your parents agree and so do we.
- Some of you are sometimes given work that is too easy and more could be expected of you.
- You are taught to read well and you make good progress in reading and science.
- You make satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics, but do not often get the chance to use the skills that you have learnt in new situations.
- The staff know you well and take good care of you.
- You lead a healthy lifestyle in school and know how to keep yourselves safe.
- You join in well in special events with people who live near the school.

In order to help the school to improve further, we have asked the staff to do these things.

- Make sure that those of you who can manage difficult work achieve as well as you possibly can in English, mathematics and science.
- Make sure your progress is carefully checked so that your targets are always challenging and help you all to do well.
- Give you a lot more chances to use your writing and mathematics skills.

You can help your school to improve by attending regularly and working hard. I wish you every success and happiness in your future education.

Yours faithfully

Geoff Cresswell Lead inspector