

# Holy Trinity Catholic School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123184
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314528
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Thompson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	192
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss Wyn Brack
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Bernadette May
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	24 London Road Chipping Norton OX7 5AX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01608 643487
<b>Fax number</b>	01608 642934

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Holy Trinity is smaller than most primary schools. Almost all of its pupils are of White British heritage, and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is below average. A very small number of LDD pupils have more severe needs; these are mostly categorised as moderate learning difficulties. The school has the Active Mark accreditation for its commitment to promoting physical exercise and school sport, and has 'Healthy School' status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Holy Trinity is a good school because its pupils achieve well. Parents and children hold it in very high regard because of its good teaching, caring ethos and their partnership with the school. Typical of the many appreciative comments made by parents are, 'We are very pleased with Holy Trinity and its happy family atmosphere' and 'the staff are very supportive and make everyone feel welcome.' Each child matters and all pupils are warmly welcomed and equally valued in this inclusive school. A strong Catholic ethos permeates all its work.

Standards are rising. From starting points normally expected of four year-olds when they join the Foundation Stage class, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Currently, pupils' attainment in Year 6 is above the national average in English, mathematics and science. This has not always been the case. In recent years, standards have been broadly in line with the national average and pupils' progress has been satisfactory. The recent improvement is due to changes both in staffing and within the organisation of the school. Pupils are now taught in single age groups for the first time. The pupils greatly appreciate this and feel that they are now making much better progress because the classes are smaller and they each get more attention. In addition, the school has improved its systems for checking on the progress made by pupils. This has enabled senior managers to identify and respond to instances of underachievement at an earlier stage. The school acknowledges that these checking systems need considerable further refinement in order to make the data more accessible. This lack of easy access to good quality data about pupils' performance is one of the key reasons why subject managers do not currently have enough of an overview of pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility. The academic guidance provided for pupils is good overall, but is inconsistent. The quality of teachers' marking of their pupils' work varies from class to class and from subject to subject. In addition, the systems for setting targets for pupils to achieve, and checking on pupils' success in meeting them, also vary too much. There is some excellent practice in setting specific targets to meet individual pupils' needs, but this does not permeate all areas of the curriculum.

An important contributory factor to the school's effectiveness is the excellent standard of pupils' personal development. This stems from the outstanding pastoral care provided for all. Pupils' excellent behaviour contributes to the very good atmosphere that encourages learning in all classes. The school also makes excellent use of its many links within the community to enrich its good curriculum. In most classes, teachers make effective use of the information gathered about pupils to provide achievable challenges through interesting and exciting activities. Consequently, pupils learn well. However, on some occasions teaching does not provide enough challenge for more able pupils.

Overall, the leadership provided is good and helps ensure that pupils achieve well. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. There is a very strong commitment to continuous improvement and systems to help ensure that this happens. Despite the inconsistencies found in some aspects of its provision, the school is well placed to make further progress.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Reception year, and by the time they move to Year 1 most reach the goals expected for their age. Adults create a caring, happy and well-organised environment. Good teaching, through varied and interesting tasks, prepares children well for the next stages of learning. The teacher groups children according to ability, especially for literacy and mathematics, and this means that they receive work well matched to their needs. There is a strong emphasis on developing language through role-play activities, such as in the 'hairdressing salon'. These stimulate imagination and encourage children to engage in real-life situations. A clear focus on children's personal development nurtures maturity and confidence so that even the youngest settle in well. Behaviour is good. Children respond well to adults and understand what is expected. Through careful observation, adults build up a picture of how well children are doing and what they should learn next. The school offers effective guidance for parents when reading and number games go home, and this helps actively involve them in their children's education.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of subject managers.
- Ensure greater consistency in the academic guidance provided for pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils make rapid progress when given intensive extra help to remedy specific weaknesses in their work. A good example of this is found in Year 6, where the teacher effectively helps her pupils to prepare for the national tests by providing each individual with specific targets to focus on when revising. Similarly, 'writing conferences' in Key Stages 1 and 2 provide pupils with individual targets to help improve their work. These examples of excellent practice contrast with day-to-day target setting, which does not generally focus enough on specific individual needs but instead provides goals for groups of pupils to attain.

Pupils with LDD make good progress. Their individual education plans clearly set out their needs and skilled teaching assistants use these plans effectively when they support these pupils during lessons.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

The excellent rates of attendance and punctuality reflect pupils' outstanding attitudes towards their education and enjoyment in being at school. The pupils gave inspectors many examples of what they like about the school and could think of little they would want to improve. Many commented on the value they place on the caring climate within the school and the friendships they enjoy. Bullying is not an issue. When asked about this, one of the Year 4 pupils commented, 'No-one in this school would ever be that cruel to someone else!' Pupils respond well to the very clear guidance provided on leading healthy lifestyles, and understand clearly the need to keep fit. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Particular strengths are the pupils' social skills and their spiritual development. Pupils also develop a keen sense of responsibility for others and their surroundings. They take their responsibilities seriously, such as being school councillors. By the end of Year 6, pupils can be trusted to do the right thing.

They become outgoing and understand the need to work as a team. In conjunction with their good progress in developing their basic skills, these qualities help prepare them well for the next phase of their education and a future as life-long learners.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers are keen to nurture pupils' personal development so that confidence and social skills grow. A strong emphasis on speaking and listening enables pupils to develop skills in communicating their ideas and in considering the views of others. They enjoy working together in groups or with a partner. Relationships are good. One pupil summed this up when commenting, 'I like the teachers because they are really fun and they joke with us.' Teachers make their expectations clear and probe pupils' understanding through astute questions. They are aware of the range of ability in their classes and match work to needs. However, tasks are sometimes too easy, especially for the more able. Teachers' marking of pupils' work praises effort but does not always tell pupils how they can improve. In instances where marking effectively helps pupils to understand how to move on, such as in writing, pupils make markedly better progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a range of varied and interesting activities, which pupils thoroughly enjoy, and is open to new ideas in curriculum planning. For example, younger pupils sometimes work outdoors in 'Forest School' activities. To improve transition from the Reception class, the Year 1 curriculum is being modified by placing greater emphasis on practical activities chosen by the pupils. This builds on good practice already in place in Reception. In some areas, there are clear links across subjects, although the school has yet to adopt a fully integrated approach to curriculum planning. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy. Pupils write for a range of purposes, and this helps them develop skills and make sense of their learning. For example, when studying the Romans, Year 3 pupils created their own descriptive accounts of the origins of Rome. In a bid to embed information and communication technology (ICT), pupils' access to computers is intended to support learning in other subjects. However, pupils' ICT time is sometimes curtailed by the unreliability of equipment. A wide range of clubs, visits and visitors provide opportunities for pupils to participate in sport, music and public performance.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Holy Trinity places a strong emphasis on the pastoral care of pupils. Within a mutually supportive atmosphere, communication is open, ideas freely shared and efforts valued and recognised. Relationships are warm and rewarding. Good systems exist to ensure that pupils remain safe. The school works very well in partnership with others to benefit its pupils, especially those with particular gifts and talents. There are systems in place to check on how well pupils are doing, and targets are set for pupils to work towards, especially in English and mathematics. However, pupils are not always fully aware of what they are working towards and how they can improve because of inconsistencies in the way that teachers manage these targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

High quality teamwork and the sensitive management of personnel are hallmarks of the leadership provided by the headteacher and her deputy. The recent changes in the organisation of the school and in staffing have been effectively managed and have resulted in the improvements seen in pupils' progress and rising standards. However, one of the consequences of these changes has been the need to develop the skills of staff as they now take on the roles of subject managers. In particular, these managers do not make enough use of data about pupils' performance to help inform their actions. The headteacher and deputy recognise that improvements need to be made to the way in which this data is collated and presented to enable more effective monitoring. The school successfully promotes cohesion within its community and there is a strong commitment to ensuring that all its pupils' needs are met.

Governance is good. Governors work hard to support the school, have a good understanding of the issues facing the school, and are good at holding it to account.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2

### 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 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

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	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

13 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Trinity Catholic School, Chipping Norton, OX7 5AX

I would like to thank you very much for being so helpful when I came to visit your school with my colleague. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work. Your parents think that you go to a good school, and we agree.

Here is a list of some of the other things we like.

- You are making good progress, and we think that your work has improved a lot this year. Those of you in Year 6 are now doing better than pupils in many schools. You should be really proud of this.
- You learn well in lessons because your teachers are good at making your lessons interesting and fun.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you show great care and consideration towards each other.
- You know a lot about how to keep yourselves healthy and safe.
- All of the adults in your school look after you very well.
- Your headteacher, deputy head and the governors who help run your school are doing a good job.

Even a good school like yours has something that could be improved, so we have asked your school to concentrate on two things to help you to do even better.

- All of your teachers have to be leaders and managers as well, so we would like them to learn more about being in charge of different subjects.
- When we asked you about your targets, many of you were not sure about exactly what you need to do to improve, or about what would happen when you reached your targets. Therefore, we would like to see your school have a clearer system that is the same for all classes. We particularly like the individual targets that you have, such as those you get when your teachers discuss your writing with you in your writing conferences. We think that it would be good if all of your targets were individual ones like these.

With best wishes for your future success,

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector