

Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School, Bilston

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104378
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	324034
Inspection dates	25–26 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	257
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Higgs
Headteacher	Carroll McNally
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Fraser Street Bilston WV14 7PD
Telephone number	01902 558977
Fax number	01902 558978

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger in size than other primary schools and there are more girls than boys. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than that found nationally. About one third of pupils belong to minority ethnic groups, the largest of which is Asian or Asian British-Indian. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than is typically found. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although fewer than average have a statement of special educational needs. A high proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times of the year. The school has gained several awards in recognition of its promotion of healthy lifestyles. There are two Nursery classes and one Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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 Primary is a good school. It has many outstanding features and is moving forward rapidly under the clear direction of its motivational headteacher. Pupils are right to be proud of their school. They confirm that they are very happy and extremely well cared for, saying, 'It is one big family here.' The overwhelming majority of parents have great confidence in the school and its headteacher. The headteacher, with strong support from her senior team, provides outstanding leadership and this is at the heart of this effective school. She inspires and supports staff and pupils to get the best out of themselves and others so there is a very real sense of working together as a team. Standards reached by pupils have been significantly above average for four of the past six years and achievement is good and improving. Pupils make good progress because procedures are securely in place to enable the headteacher, her senior team and subject leaders to rigorously monitor all areas of the school's work. Consequently, the school has a very clear view of its strengths and areas for development.

When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills are well below the levels expected. Because of the very strong focus on developing children's social skills and their ability to communicate with each other, standards are broadly average at the end of the Reception Year. Standards continue to rise and by the end of Year 6 they are significantly above average. This represents good progress by all groups of pupils in relation to their starting points when they join the school. There is, however, some variation in pupils' standards and achievement across the core subjects. By the end of Year 6, standards are very high in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. Many pupils find achieving the higher-level science skills and concepts very difficult. They need considerable time and support to explain orally how they reason, deduce and infer things from their observations. This is a barrier to them gaining high levels in their work.

Teaching is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, give clear explanations and plan their lessons well. They use questioning in lessons skilfully to promote learning, to analyse and improve pupils' performance, and to set challenging targets for individuals. Teachers and support staff work very effectively together to meet pupils' specific needs. Learning is occasionally slowed when teachers do not plan well enough to meet the range of needs in their classes. Consequently, in a few lessons, pupils are not challenged as much as they should be.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding, especially their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Very good relationships and excellent care, guidance and support result in happy learners. The school makes good efforts to integrate new arrivals and those pupils new to speaking English. Pupils come to school ready to learn and are eager to contribute to lessons. Their good attendance reflects pupils' great enjoyment of school. There have been no exclusions in the last two years, which supports inspectors' observations of exemplary behaviour and so lessons are conducted at a good pace and in a positive climate. A carefully planned, imaginative and varied curriculum inspires pupils to work hard and gain a very wide range of skills, as does the very wide range of clubs, visits and extra activities. Pupils take part in a good range of sports and they adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils' knowledge of different cultures in the diverse society in which we live is secure because community cohesion is a particularly good feature of the school. All groups of pupils consistently make valuable contributions to life in school and to the wider community. Staff have created a school in which all pupils get on well together. The school knows exactly what to do to further its journey to excellence. Recent rises in the

standards of boys and in mathematics across the school show that the capacity to further improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Excellent provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to achieve exceptionally well and develop good independence. Many children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are well below the levels expected of their age. Children enjoy their learning, especially their sessions in 'jolly phonics', which is rapidly boosting their speaking and reading skills. The development of children's personal and social skills is outstanding. Good teamwork and rigorous assessment arrangements support children effectively, helping them to gain confidence and to learn school routines quickly. Consequently, children make rapid progress so that by the time they reach Year 1 they are working at broadly average levels. Relationships between adults and children are outstanding. Classes are composed of children from different backgrounds, cultures and languages, which are frequently changing, and they work and play together in complete harmony. The outstanding behaviour is a result of the high expectations and the welcoming, calm environment. The highly effective leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage means that leaders are fully aware of the strengths and areas they wish to develop. They have created a vibrant, stimulating learning situation both indoors and outside. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with English as an additional language, are identified early, their progress closely monitored and support introduced when necessary. The impact of outstanding provision and teaching is that the children are happy, enthusiastic learners.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on current planning to raise standards and achievement in science by providing more challenging and exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their investigation and reasoning skills.
- Ensure that teachers in all classes plan work carefully in all lessons to match pupils' abilities and their specific needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above average by the time they leave Year 6. Children join the Nursery class with standards that are generally well below those expected of their age, and very low in number and communication skills. They make outstanding progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage so that by the time they leave the Reception class most are working securely towards the early learning goals, and many are exceeding them.

Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1 to reach standards that are above average overall and which are very high in reading. Good progress continues into Key Stage 2, where standards are above average overall. However, pupils' progress is uneven across the core subjects. It is fastest in English, where standards are very high, reflecting the great importance the school has placed on developing pupils' speaking, writing and listening skills. Progress is satisfactory in science and standards are average because many pupils find it difficult to plan investigations and to draw conclusions from their observations.

The school has worked tirelessly to redress the difference between the standards reached by boys and girls, through, for instance, changes to the curriculum, which have encouraged boys' learning. The work seen by inspectors shows that now there is very little difference between the standards attained by boys and girls. Overall, standards and pupils' progress continue to rise steadily. Pupils who have been at the school for a long time make much faster progress than those who join mid-way through the year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. This is because the school works very well to support the needs of all groups of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school and are excited by all that it has to offer. This is reflected in their great enjoyment of learning, good attendance, and their keen involvement in a wide range of activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding so that by Year 6, pupils are mature, considerate, self-assured and responsible young people. Pupils report an absence of bullying and racism and relish their involvement in many cultural activities. Pupils from a range of cultures work and play together very well. They have a very highly developed sense of responsibility, fairness and justice and make an excellent contribution to their school community as well as to charities overseas.

The focus on social skills starts very well in the Nursery and Reception classes where children learn how to concentrate, listen, explore new things and work and play successfully with others. All of these valuable skills, together with the above average standards pupils achieve in English and mathematics, equip them exceptionally well for their next stage of education and eventually for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships underpinned by mutual respect, humour and warmth. Typically, teachers have high expectations of pupils' work, and they work hard to meet the challenges set. Consequently, pupils make good progress and become confident learners. They greatly enjoy their work because teachers make learning fun. The pace of lessons is nearly always brisk, and there is a good balance between the teacher explaining things to the whole class and pupils working independently or in groups. This helps to maintain pupils' interest and gives them an enthusiasm for learning. In one lesson, for example, the teacher explained concisely how to approach a complex mathematical investigation, had pupils using their 'talking partners' to investigate the problem for themselves and then fired questions to see how much they knew. Pupils worked at a furious rate, enjoyed every minute and made excellent progress. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan adequately for the range of abilities in the class or build on pupils' prior knowledge, with the result that a minority of pupils are either not challenged enough or struggle to comprehend.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The carefully planned curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' learning. The school ensures that learning is meaningful and fun because it carefully and imaginatively plans themes with

strong links between subjects. Through its 'International Primary Program', the school has successfully motivated and enthused pupils, especially the boys, and has done much to increase their confidence as learners. Provision for information and communication technology across subjects is good and makes a strong contribution to pupils' good achievement. There is an excellent focus on using visits to widen pupils' life experiences. The school provides pupils with a wide variety of sporting activities as part of the school day. These, together with well-supported creative and educational activities outside the normal school day, make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, levels of enjoyment and their personal and emotional development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The value placed on each pupil, and the attention paid to meeting each one's individual needs, underpins the school's success in supporting and developing pupils' personal and academic achievements. This success ranges from the security, cleanliness and attractiveness of the whole learning environment to the valuable help and guidance given to pupils to ensure they improve their work. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are secure and sensitive. The school promotes its nine core values, including truth, trust, and forgiveness, in all that it does and so pupils know exactly what is right and wrong and what is expected of them. Staff know the pupils very well and make effective use of assessment information to track and check pupils' progress so that extra support can be provided if pupils need it. As a result, pupils are very clear about what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are set clear learning targets, which they confirm are helping them to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The skill of leaders at all levels at promoting the clear and strong Catholic ethos of the school and in securing the commitment of all staff in the drive to raise standards underpins pupils' good and improving progress. The headteacher works tenaciously to improve pupils' educational opportunities. Many members of the school community speak with delight and admiration of how she communicates her high expectations persuasively to staff so that all have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team. Well supported by her leadership team, she has empowered staff and has encouraged and enabled them to take real responsibility for their respective areas. This is well displayed in the way that the newly appointed subject leaders are energetically and enthusiastically growing into their respective roles. Leaders have created a school which is a harmonious environment, in which pupils of all races and cultures get on well together. The governing body is extremely supportive of all the school's work but does not always act as a critical friend by asking the searching questions needed to hold the school sufficiently to account. The school improvement plan is comprehensive and shows clearly how improving the effectiveness of leadership, and teaching and learning, is at the heart of all it does.

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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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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	1

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?	1
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

27 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School, Bilston, WV14 7PD

I would like to thank all of you very much for the kindness and consideration you showed to my colleagues and me when we came to visit your school recently. We really enjoyed ourselves. Holy Trinity is a good school. You told us many interesting things about your school, which was very helpful. I would like to say a special thank you to the school council and those of you from Years 5 and 6 who gave up part of your lunchtime in order to meet us.

Here are some of the good things about your school.

- You behave outstandingly well and you get on well with your fellow pupils. Holy Trinity is a well-ordered school and you look after each other.
- Teaching is good and sometimes excellent and your teachers are very concerned to make sure that you do as well as you can.
- By the time you are in Year 6, you reach standards that are higher than those of other pupils in other schools and you make good progress in your lessons.
- You learn lots about keeping yourselves safe and leading a healthy lifestyle.
- Your headteacher and other senior staff know exactly how to make Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School even better.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Work with you to make sure you reach higher standards in science.
- Ensure that all your lessons are as good as the best by making sure that when teachers plan work for you, it is not too easy or too hard, but just right for you. I hope that you all continue to work hard and do well at Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant

Lead inspector