

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116397
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	326381
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	387
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	Mrs Angela O'Neill
Headteacher	Mrs Gerida Montague
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mansel Road West Millbrook Southampton SO16 9LP

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Inspection number	326381

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Holy Family is a larger than average primary school situated on the western edge of Southampton. The majority of pupils are White British and come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The number of pupils receiving free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than average, although the number of pupils with a formal statement of special educational needs is less than average. There is a high level of pupil mobility. The school runs a breakfast club and an after school club on its premises. The school has been awarded the Activemark and has gained the Artsmark Silver award and the Healthy School award.

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 and rapidly improving school. It has a number of outstanding features including pupils' personal development and care, guidance and support. Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is outstandingly effective and the real key to the school's success. The partnerships and links she has set up with parents and others, the improvements she has introduced in the school's self-evaluation systems, staff morale and in the standards of behaviour and level of motivation of pupils are exceptional. Pupils are valued and their views really matter. Parents are totally supportive of the improvements made and the positive effects these have had on their children's attitudes to school. However, the changes made need further time to 'bed in' and secure consistent improvements in pupils' achievement across the school in English, mathematics and science. Provision and teaching for the children in the Reception classes are outstanding and achievement is exceptionally good. The quality of education in Years 1 to 6, including teaching and learning, is good and pupils achieve well. Although pupils progress well overall, not enough pupils achieve the higher levels at either Year 2 or Year 6. The school has adopted a number of new initiatives designed to improve standards across the school and while there are early signs of success, it knows there is more work to be done to improve standards.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and all pupils behave very well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. As a result of the school's rigorous systems, attendance levels are now average. Teaching is good across the school and at times exceptional in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2. The curriculum is good and is enhanced particularly well by the weekly 'Holy Family University' afternoon which motivates pupils exceptionally well and contributes well to them adopting healthy lifestyles. However, the curriculum is less successful in consistently challenging and supporting more-able pupils to achieve as well as they can by developing their independent learning skills. The care of the pupils is exemplary. All statutory safeguarding procedures are in place and health and safety procedures are excellent. All adults provide a high level of support for pupils in all groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good provision made for them. Challenging targets are set and the school has excellent systems for tracking pupils' progress. Pupils are fully aware of their targets, although, very occasionally, teachers' marking of their work does not make it clear to them what they need to do to improve.

Subject coordinators are enthusiastic and are beginning to get a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in their subject areas. Governors support and challenge the school effectively. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive, making comments such as, 'I find it hard to believe that any other school could match the care and commitment of the teachers in Holy Family.' The weaknesses noted in the last report have all been tackled with energy and enthusiasm. Based upon a clear understanding of how well the school is performing and what needs to be done next, the school is going from strength to strength. There are good indications that it will improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has made substantial improvement to the provision since the last inspection. The provision is outstanding because staff work well together as a team to offer a caring and exciting learning environment

where children are happy and settled. Children enter Reception classes with knowledge and skills that are well below those expected for their age in most areas of learning, with particularly low-level skills in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in certain aspects of personal, social and emotional development. They make excellent progress in all areas of learning so that, by the time they leave Reception classes, most are working within the early learning goals in most areas. However, despite the outstanding progress made, standards in certain aspects of communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development are still below those expected for their age.

There is an excellent balance between adult-led activities to extend children's skills from a low starting point as well as activities chosen by children to enhance their interests through the 'Manage Our Own Time' sessions. Staff make learning fun and relevant to the children. Staff know their children well and all are involved in observations of children's work and in recording their progress on a day-to-day basis. Rigorous entry and exit assessment and tracking systems provide staff with detailed information on the progress of each child so that next steps in learning are clearly identified. The transition arrangements and links with parents and other providers are used well to settle children quickly and give them an excellent start.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Raise expectations for more-able pupils across the school by setting more challenging open-ended learning opportunities.
- Ensure consistency in teachers' marking so pupils are always aware of how they can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Information provided by the school demonstrates that pupils make good progress as they move through the school and the inspection team agrees with this analysis. When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills are well below those typical for their age. Significantly improved provision has resulted in standards which are much closer to the national average on entry into Year 1, although communication and language and number skills remain low. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards by the end of Year 2 remain below national averages. Improvements in provision and in the standards of teaching are gradually working their way through the school, although it is too early yet for them to have had any significant effect on results at the end of Year 6. Although the most recent results for Year 6 are improved and now match national averages in terms of attainment at Level 4, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels remains well below average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress thanks to the help that they receive from their friends in class, their teachers and support staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of the pupils is outstanding in a school that shows a wonderful application of inclusion for all pupils. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences for the pupils are excellent and they respond to the supportive atmosphere in a very positive manner. There is an overarching spiritual and caring ethos that is well supported by a wide range of activities and events such as a daily act of collective worship and facilities

such as the 'prayer corner'. The behaviour of pupils in class and in the playground is excellent and they show a caring attitude to each other. Pupils enjoy coming to school and remark that everyone is friendly and that the school is like one big family. Attendance is improving due to the introduction of effective strategies linked to excellent communication with parents. Despite all these efforts, there remain a small number of pupils with low attendance. The pupils feel safe and well cared for in school and comment that there is always an adult they can talk to. Work undertaken to gain the Healthy School award ensures that pupils are fully aware of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and most follow this advice. There are many opportunities for exercise in physical education, 'university' activities, breaktimes and after school activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall with some examples of outstanding learning in the Reception classes and in Key Stage 2. Teachers plan their lessons in great detail and many lessons are planned to enable pupils to work both cooperatively in groups as well as independently. Whole-class activities are, in a few cases, less successful as some pupils remain passive. All teachers are well supported by effective teaching assistants who are fully involved in all class activities. In a few instances, however, the higher-attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged and find the work too easy. Pupils really appreciate the caring manner of the teaching staff and enjoy lessons immensely. As one pupil said, 'This lesson is so annoying - because the time goes too quickly'. Although there are some examples of good marking where teachers praise the success of the pupils and then clearly identify what they need to do in order to improve, this is variable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and national strategies and guidance for English and mathematics are used well to ensure that learning is built upon year on year. There is a good range of lunchtime clubs and after school activities available for children to join, which help them to learn how to get on well with each other. The weekly 'Holy Family University' afternoon provides an aspirational range of opportunities for pupils to extend personal skills such as teambuilding and cooperation and to experience the world of work and future work opportunities. Educational visits and visitors successfully extend and enrich learning, and links with local educational institutions are used well to provide pupils with specific expert tutoring. Throughout the school, work for pupils with learning and physical difficulties is planned well, ensuring their good progress. However, the school is aware of the need to provide more challenging work for the more-able pupils to ensure they achieve as well as they can.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The headteacher has established an enthusiastic team that demonstrates a very high level of commitment to the care of the pupils. The school has a robust system of health and safety audits that involve all staff and governors. Any pupils considered at risk are well known by the school and their progress and situation is carefully monitored using an extensive range of outside agencies. There are many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and they

are well supported by the coordinator and all staff. As a result, these pupils make good progress. The headteacher has introduced an extensive system for reviewing the progress of each individual pupil. The school is using these assessments effectively to identify successes and where further support is needed. All pupils are aware of these targets and are mostly given clear guidance on how they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher maintains a robust and sustained lead, and her leadership is outstanding. She has high expectations for pupils' personal and academic achievement and communicates these very effectively. All staff are strongly motivated and the school has a clear sense of direction including a strong commitment to improve provision even further. The headteacher delegates responsibility wisely, and the senior leadership team fulfils its role well. Provision for the youngest children and for the large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is managed very well. Subject coordinators are very enthusiastic about their new roles. Their priority is to analyse the school's annual test results to identify the most important areas for improvement in their subject. Teamwork is promoted strongly, and is reflected in the well-focused school improvement plan, which was created with full involvement of staff and governors. The school's self-evaluation procedures are accurate and, for example, the need to raise standards for the higher-attaining pupils is already identified in the school improvement plan. The headteacher and other key staff monitor teaching and learning rigorously and provide teachers with pertinent feedback, which benefits pupils' learning. Efficient use is made of resources. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and offer such comments as: 'The strong feeling of family makes this school second to none.' The governors fulfil their roles well, and, after 'a steep learning curve' now have a good overview of the school's work and future priorities. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It has strong links with the local community and good links with Catholic schools nationally. However, it realises that the international dimension is more limited and needs developing.

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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	3
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	3
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	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

17 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Southampton, SO16 9LP

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleagues and I very much enjoyed our visit.

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is a good and improving school. You all make good progress in your learning. Your headteacher and staff help you learn well and you say that you enjoy your lessons. The staff make sure you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe and you do this very well. You told us that you really like coming to school and there are lots of things for you to enjoy, particularly the weekly 'University' activities. Your behaviour is excellent and we know you work hard and try to succeed in all that you do.

We have asked your school to do a few things that we feel would make it even better.

- Help you to do better in English, mathematics and science and help more of you achieve the higher levels by giving you more chances to find out things independently.
- Make sure, when they mark your books, that all teachers let you know how you can improve your work and keep on getting better.

We are confident that, with your help and hard work, the school will achieve this and will improve further.

I wish you all well in your future education.

Yours faithfully

Clive Lewis

Lead Inspector