

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119600
Local Authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	327083
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2009
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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)	199
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 Vivien Pickup
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Moreton
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Seacrest Avenue Blackpool Lancashire FY1 2SD
Telephone number	01253 354496

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2009
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Fax number

01253 595765

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school that serves an area with above average disadvantage. An average proportion of pupils are entitled to a free school meal. Most pupils are White British and a small number of pupils come from other minority ethnic backgrounds. A well below average proportion of pupils are learning English as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides for children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Currently, there are 30 full-time children in the Reception class. There has been a number of staffing changes in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that it is satisfactory and provides sound value for money. Parents and pupils are satisfied with the performance of the school. A typical comment from parents is 'Holy Family is a friendly, welcoming school. The teachers work very hard and have a wonderful relationship with the pupils.'

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual and cultural development, is good. This is because the satisfactory curriculum promotes personal development well and the school provides good pastoral care. The pupils' moral and social development is particularly strong and this has led to improvements in behaviour. There are very strong relationships that are evident throughout the school. Pupils say that they enjoy school and this is borne out in the average attendance and their good attitudes to school and work. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and being safe in all that they do. Pupils are successfully encouraged to make a contribution to the school and wider communities. The school council is active and effective and older pupils are happy to support the younger ones.

Achievement is satisfactory because the quality of teaching and learning, curriculum and guidance and support are also satisfactory. Pupils enter Year 1 with broadly average skills and abilities and make satisfactory progress. As a result, standards are broadly average at the end of each key stage. This is confirmed in the results the school achieves in recent national tests. However, pupils' progress in writing, mathematics and science could be quicker and lead to higher standards, particularly for the most able pupils. The main reasons for this are inconsistent teaching and learning and shortcomings in the use of assessment to challenge pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress. Those pupils learning English as an additional language are doing well and make good progress. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for future learning.

Although the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, there is too much inconsistent practice. The teaching is at its strongest for older pupils. Here, the challenge is greater and pupils have a better appreciation of the teachers' expectations. There is clear evidence that these teachers mark pupils' work well because pupils are told what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further. However, this is not as prevalent in the other classes.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has come through a difficult period where there has been a lot of mobility among staff in a relatively short period and no deputy headteacher in post until recently. The current picture reflects greater stability and this is a credit to the headteacher. The development of an effective senior leadership team has been a priority and it is now firmly in place and beginning to make a difference, particularly in the good management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Governance is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with skills which are below those typical for their age and particularly so in their reading and writing skills. Recently improved Reception provision ensures that children quickly develop a great interest and enjoyment in learning. As a result of good quality

teaching and support for children's welfare, children make good progress in all areas of learning. A good balance of child-initiated and teacher-led activities ensure that children grow in confidence and independence; as a result, their personal development is outstanding. Staff give high priority to the use of exciting role play experiences, both within and outside the classroom. Children's imaginations are set alight. For example, themed activities about snow and ice involved the children touching and investigating the properties of frozen gloves. Staff work closely together and establish excellent links with parents who say they appreciate the excellent care their children receive. By the time they start Year 1, standards are average except in personal development where they are above average. Rigorous assessment procedures enable teachers to keep a careful track of individual progress and provide tasks which challenge each child at the appropriate levels of difficulty. Effective management of EYFS provision ensures children's good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate of pupils' academic progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly for the more able pupils.
- Improve the quality of academic guidance so that pupils clearly know and understand what they have achieved and what they need to do next.
- Make sure that there are no inconsistent practices in teaching and learning, so that all pupils are well taught.

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

The evidence from the detailed tracking of pupils' achievements and the work in books is that in the current Years 2 and 6, pupils are on track to reach average standards. This will be better than the 2008 results for Year 2 pupils and similar to the results for Year 6. Given the average starting point to Year 1, this represents satisfactory achievement. Over time, the results in national tests have been inconsistent, particularly at the end of Year 2. For example, in 2004, the results were significantly above the national average while they were below average in 2006 and 2008.

Progress in writing, mathematics and science is satisfactory but could be quicker thereby leading to higher standards, particularly for the most able pupils. The school recognises this picture and there have been initiatives introduced recently to interest and challenge boys more and to improve the quality of marking. Although it is too early to judge the impact of these activities it is clear that some teachers are making better use of them than others. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and this goes a long way to lowering barriers to learning. The effective work of the special educational needs coordinator and the learning mentor means that pupils' needs are rigorously identified and they make good progress. Pupils learning English as an additional language are also well catered for and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Very good relationships result in a happy school where children say, 'everyone is really friendly'. Pupils say they are safe from bullying and know that the 'Rainbow' room is a haven for them should they feel vulnerable. Pupils appreciate everything the school provides. Overall, behaviour is good. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) helps pupils to become aware of the consequences of their actions. They understand how to follow a healthy lifestyle and eagerly participate in a wide range of physical activities. Spiritual and social development are good although cultural awareness, particularly of other faiths and religions, is largely undeveloped. However, pupils benefit from the close links with the church and the parish.

The school council value their role. It has prepared a questionnaire to gather views on healthy eating and raised funds for playground equipment. Older pupils look after younger ones well but other opportunities to take responsibility in lessons are rather limited. The school participates regularly in local community events. For example, several pupils took part in an anti-bullying event within the town and others staged a protest about parking outside their school gates. The average basic skills acquired by the pupils prepare them adequately for their future education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Most lessons seen were satisfactory and a small minority was judged to be good or inadequate. Throughout the school there are very strong relationships and this means that pupils are confident when making a contribution in a lesson. Pupils are challenged in lessons more than at the last inspection but in some lessons, tasks are not always matched accurately to pupils' different abilities. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 are developing improved systems for marking and providing pupils with detailed feedback about their work and learning is better in these classes. Also, there is a greater emphasis in these classes on encouraging pupils to talk about their work through the use of 'talk partners'. In some classes, there are opportunities missed to make learning more interesting, relevant and challenging. For example, in one lesson, bland worksheets did not stimulate interest in the topic and as a result, pupils were not inspired in their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The strongest aspect of the curriculum is the good promotion of pupils' personal development. Satisfactory promotion of pupils' academic development concentrates mainly on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and increasingly on information and communication technology (ICT). Statutory requirements are met. Good enrichment of the curriculum includes a wide range of musical tuition, visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. A Year 6 residential visit at the beginning of the year extends pupils' learning and personal development well. The school has responded appropriately to major national initiatives in English and mathematics, but there has been little innovation from within the school. For example little has been done to increase enjoyment and creativity in the curriculum. Nevertheless, the school modifies the curriculum well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and these pupils make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good and pupils are safe and well looked after. Statutory requirements to safeguard pupils meet requirements. Child protection procedures are clear and understood by all staff. The monitoring of attendance and behaviour is good and has led to improvement. A rigorous approach to risk assessments enables pupils to undertake activities safely both on and off the school premises. Careful induction procedures for children new to school and for transient pupils ensure children settle quickly into school. Parents and pupils affirm this. Support and guidance are satisfactory, but inconsistent. Support for pupils with learning difficulties withdrawn from class, and who spend time with the learning mentor, is good. The tracking of pupils' progress is satisfactory. Nevertheless, marking is inconsistent and too often does not provide enough information to fully inform teachers and pupils of how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

In recent times, the pace of school improvement has been disrupted by changes to key staff. The headteacher has dealt with these well and has stabilised the school. The appointment of an effective deputy headteacher has also meant that there is now an increased and successful emphasis on sharing and devolving leadership and management. The senior leadership team knows what the school's strengths and weaknesses are and has gone some way to resolving them. Sound structures to monitor and evaluate the work of the school are in place and having a positive effect. School improvement planning identifies the right priorities but there are too many objectives for one year. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school's work is strongest within the parish and Blackpool, but weaker in presenting a more global picture and providing opportunities for pupils to meet other cultures. Governors are highly supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory role in a serious and dedicated manner. However, they are too dependant on management for the information they receive and this means they are not sufficiently challenging, particularly in the areas of achievement and standards and the quality of teaching and learning.

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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?	3
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	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?	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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**

19 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Blackpool, FY1 2SD

My colleague and I really enjoyed meeting you and being in your school during the recent inspection. Thank you for your warm welcome, courtesy and help. We found good things in your school and some that need to be improved. As a result, we are saying that the school is satisfactory. In a short letter it is difficult to capture all the features, but here are some of the things we really liked about your school.

- The good teaching and learning that leads to the good progress made by children in the Reception class.
- The good support for pupils with extra learning needs that helps them make good progress.
- Your good attitudes and behaviour mean that the school is a happy place to learn.
- The strong relationships between staff and pupils mean you are confident in school.
- Your good knowledge and understanding of the benefits in developing a healthy and safe lifestyle.
- Your good contribution to the safe and caring atmosphere in the school and the work you do in the parish.
- The good range of activities that enrich your curriculum.
- The effective way the school checks on behaviour and attendance and the resulting improvements.
- The satisfaction most parents have with the work of the school.

To make your school even better, your teachers will make sure that you make quicker progress in Years 1 to 6, particularly the more able among you. You can be a great help by always doing your best work and following the advice from your teachers. They will also raise the quality of teaching and learning across the school to a more consistently good standard. Finally, the staff will improve the guidance they give you, so that you have a clearer idea of how well you are doing and what you need to do next.

The inspection team wishes you well and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector