

Holy Family Catholic High School, Carlton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121718
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327558
Inspection dates	12–13 February
Reporting inspector	Heather Barnett HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	449
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Fagan
Headteacher	Mr R. A. Pritchard
Date of previous school inspection	January 2006
School address	Longhedge Lane Carlton Goole DN14 9NS
Telephone number	01405 860276
Fax number	01405 860311
Email address	admin@holyfamily.n-yorks.sch.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection date(s)	12–13 February 2009
Inspection number	327558

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including the tracking system used to monitor progress, development plans, students' work and the questionnaires completed by 167 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the provision and support for vulnerable students to ensure they achieve their potential
- the personal development of students as covered by the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes
- the effectiveness of improvement strategies
- safeguarding.

Information about the school

Holy Family is a smaller than average Catholic secondary school with mathematics and computing specialist status. There is a lower than average proportion of students eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English are also lower than average. There is a higher percentage than average of students with a statement of special educational needs, but a broadly average proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry is just below average for most recent years.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Holy Family is a good and improving school with some outstanding features. Students are proud to be at Holy Family and enjoy coming to school. There is a very welcoming and supportive atmosphere where all students are known as individuals and encouraged to do their best at all times. Students' behaviour is excellent both in lessons and around the school. They make good progress and standards achieved by students at the end of both key stages are above average. However, the school is not complacent and has recognised that there is scope for the most able to do even better. Plans are in place for further developments in this area.

Effective teaching leads to a good quality of learning. The differing needs of students are usually covered but not always detailed in lesson plans or reflected in the tasks set. The needs of those students with statements of special educational needs are met very well, as they have highly effective support programmes. Students feel extremely safe in school and say that there is always someone to help them if they have any issues or difficulties. The support, guidance and care provided by the school are outstanding.

Good progress has been made in tackling the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Accommodation has been improved as has the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the school. These initiatives have been supported by the school's specialist status. There is a very high priority placed on the safety and care of students. Leaders have a clear view of the school and self-evaluation is accurate and reflective. There is a constant striving for improvement and the school has good capacity to improve. The positive impact of strategies can be seen, such as those for improving mathematics at Key Stage 4 where modular examination results this year are the best ever.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on existing strategies to make sure the most able do even better by ensuring all work set provides an appropriate level of challenge.
- Develop the quality of lesson plans so that they describe how tasks set will meet the differing needs of individuals.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

Overall, students make good progress. All are keen to do well and enjoy taking a very active role in lessons. Questioning is used effectively to check understanding and all students are clear about how well they are doing. Students with complex needs, such as those with statements of special education needs, make outstanding progress because they have a very good amount of high quality individual support. They are extremely well supported in lessons and work is always carefully adapted to their individual learning needs. Most students make good but not outstanding progress because teachers do not consistently adapt all work set to meet the needs of different groups of learners.

Standards reached by students at the end of Year 9 are high and have been so for a number of years. Standards reached by students at the end of Year 11 are above average for most indicators and have been so for the last three years. In 2008 there was a slight dip, due to a decline in the number achieving a grade A* to C in GCSE mathematics. However, the percentage of students achieving five or more GCSEs at A* to C including English and mathematics was still slightly above average. Modular examination results for current students show that attainment in mathematics has improved.

Students feel exceptionally safe and praise the school's efforts to make them aware of safety risks. Behaviour is excellent; students are very supportive of each other and have very mature attitudes. No disruption to learning was seen in any session observed and behaviour is also very good around the school. There have never been any permanent exclusions and only very small numbers of fixed term ones in the last 18 months. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is a strong focus on spirituality and an atmosphere of mutual respect. Students have a clear sense of right and wrong and a very good understanding of how their actions can affect themselves and others. Cultural development is strong. Students have a good understanding of the differences between their own and other cultures and greatly enjoy taking part in different cultural activities. Students are keen to take on positions of responsibility and to explain how their views have led to improvements in the school. They have a good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle and well developed skills to support their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

There are high levels of enjoyment of learning in lessons and it is clear that all students are making good or better progress. Students are keen to respond to questions and also to ask their own questions to deepen their understanding. Teachers make explanations and expectations very clear so students know what they are meant to be doing and there are a variety of activities to stimulate interest. Assessment is effective with good systems in place for checking and regularly monitoring progress. Aspirational individual targets are used well and there are effective intervention strategies for those who need support. Marking is regular and comments are usually very helpful.

Students feel that the curriculum meets their needs and inspectors agree with this view. Students can see how suggestions they make have caused changes, for example the expansion of drama in the curriculum. They are also very positive about all the extra-curricular activities available to them, which many of them are involved with. The school works well with other providers, such as local colleges, to expand the range of options available, and students who attend college courses talk positively about the experience. Support, guidance and care are a key strength of the school. All procedures to ensure learning and welfare are extremely robust and enhanced by excellent links with outside professional agencies. Academic guidance is very strong. Students are involved very closely in the setting and reviewing of their targets and this ensures that they have a good understanding of how well they are doing. Students feel there is always someone to help them if they have a problem.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels know the school well. They know where things are working effectively and where improvements are needed. Issues are clearly identified and actions put in place which can be seen to be having a positive impact at individual student, subject and whole school level. Appropriate disability and equality schemes are in place, ensuring all students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable, are fully included in the life of the school. The achievement of different groups of students is carefully monitored and strategies put in place to overcome any variation in performance.

Procedures for safeguarding fully meet current requirements including those for child protection. The school is extremely pro-active in ensuring that all procedures and systems to keep students safe and healthy are of the highest quality. The school works well with its partners, and links with agencies to support vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are excellent. The school is a harmonious and cohesive community and has good links to other local and global communities, enhancing students' understanding of other areas. The school has a good understanding of its own community and its students' needs. There are good relationships with parents and carers and the school is working to involve them more fully in the decision making process. Governors have a good understanding of the main strengths and challenges of the school and provide effective support and challenge. They are developing their role further by linking themselves to themes in the development plan, in addition to their existing links with departments. Their expertise is now being used more effectively by the school. Value for money is excellent. The school has maintained good achievement for students while greatly improving accommodation and resources. Leaders and managers have made a conscious decision to increase levels of support staff which has helped those with the most complex needs to achieve very well and ensure the highest levels of support, guidance and care for all students.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Over 150 completed parental questionnaires were received and they were overwhelmingly positive and strongly supportive of the school. For most questions there was 1% or less of responses that were not positive. Nearly half the questionnaires had comments relating to the positive features of the school and their child's enjoyment of it. Particular strengths referred to were the caring ethos of the school and the outstanding pastoral provision.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



16 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Holy Family Catholic High School, Carlton, DN14 9NS

Thank you for all of the help you gave to the inspectors when we were at your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing the work you were doing. As well as looking at your work we read the questionnaires completed by your parents; they were most helpful.

We think Holy Family is a good and improving school with some outstanding features. You are making good progress and reach standards that are above average at the end of your time at the school. You are proud of your school. It is clear you enjoy coming to school and feel very safe when you are there. Your behaviour is excellent. Many of you like making a helpful contribution to the life of the school by participating in the school council and through fundraising for charity. You work hard in your lessons and know how well you are doing in different subjects. The curriculum is good and improving and you appreciate the school makes changes in response to your suggestions. The support, guidance and care that the school gives you are excellent. You know there is always someone who can help you if you have any concerns. The leaders and managers of the school have a clear idea of how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to improve further. The main areas are:

- Building on existing strategies to make sure that those of you who are most able do even better by ensuring all work set provides an appropriate level of challenge
- Developing the quality of lesson plans so that they describe how tasks set always meet your differing needs.

Your school has improved in many ways since the previous inspection and with your support can continue to make good progress in the future.

Yours sincerely

Heather Barnett
Her Majesty's Inspector

(on behalf of the inspection team)

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.