

Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104910
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	336385
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Anna Dawson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Father Harris
Headteacher	Mr P Davenport
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited all classes and observed 14 lessons and six parts of lessons. Nine teachers were observed. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, and groups of pupils, parents and carers. The inspectors observed the work of the school and that of pupils and looked at school policies, records of meetings, assessment and monitoring information, the provision for and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, curricular planning, and the school improvement plan. In addition, staff and pupils completed questionnaires and 96 parental questionnaires were received, all of which were analysed.

- the achievement of pupils, particularly the more-able, in mathematics
- the strengths identified by the school
- the safeguarding of pupils to ensure their welfare and well-being
- the effectiveness of the school's priorities to raise standards.

Information about the school

The school is about the same size as most other comparable schools nationally. Almost all pupils are White British. There are no pupils learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The Nursery is resourced to cater for eight children with complex learning needs and is in a separate building from the Reception class. The school provides before-school care. After-school care is provided by a private provider and is subject to a separate inspection. The school has gained the Investors in People status.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It fulfils its Christian aims in successfully meeting the needs of all of its pupils and helping them overcome any barriers to learning. As a result pupils feel extremely safe and secure and enjoy school greatly. The care, support and guidance for pupils, particularly for those who are most vulnerable, are outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is due to the extremely good support from the staff and the excellent partnerships with outside agencies and other schools which work together to meet their needs. Parents and carers fully appreciate the high quality care and in the words of one, find it 'very reassuring'.

Pupils achieve well from their starting points across the school and make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Attainment is above the national average. English is a strength of the school. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is not quite as good because a very small minority of the more able pupils do not achieve their full potential. By the time they leave, the social and basic skills pupils acquire, including those in information and communication technology (ICT), provide effective building blocks to enable pupils to continue to achieve well.

Pupils are taught well, and teachers plan interesting lessons that motivate pupils to learn. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and are particularly skilled in teaching English. In mathematics, there are too few opportunities for investigative and practical work, particularly for the more-able, and expectations of pupils' achievement are a little lower. The curriculum is broad and balanced and supports pupils well. Good enrichment, through visits and after-school activities, provide and add to pupils' enjoyment.

The headteacher leads the school well. Self-evaluation is accurate and there are effective strategies and systems in place to review and improve pupils' progress.

The school recognises that the plan to develop community cohesion and to increase pupils' cultural awareness is at an early stage of development. The Early Years Foundation Stage is effective in providing a good start to children's learning and development but is not functioning as effectively as it might, mainly because of the uneven distribution of resources over two separate sites. In view of the improvement since the previous inspection, accurate self-evaluation and the secure systems in place to raise standards further, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics, especially for the more-able, by:
 - refining the use of assessment in lessons to challenge the more able pupils

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- providing more opportunities for practical and investigative work
- raising the expectations of the staff in planning activities for the more able pupils.
- Develop the school's plan for community cohesion further, so that pupils gain a wider appreciation of cultural and religious diversity within the United Kingdom and globally.
- Reorganise the Early Years Foundation Stage to maximise resources and provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils really enjoy school and feel extremely safe, commenting, for example, 'There is no bullying here and everyone gets on with everyone else.' Because they are involved in deciding which topics they study and lessons interest them, pupils are keen to learn. Pupils are involved in a range of sports and physical activities and have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Consequently, attendance and behaviour are good. For example, during an information and communication technology lesson, Year 1 pupils were excited to control the direction of travel around a maze on the computer screen or make the toy robot 'bees' move in different directions. Year 5 and Year 2 pupils enjoy their Africa project, with their singing accompanied by drumming being particularly impressive. From well below expected starting points in the Nursery, children make good progress throughout school. Almost all pupils in Key Stage 2 consistently make at least the expected two levels of progress in English, mathematics and science and attain above average standards. English and science are stronger than mathematics where a very small minority of the more able pupils make only satisfactory progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good overall, but their cultural development is not as strong. Pupils work together well and the topics and projects pupils study contribute effectively to their understanding of economic and life skills. Pupils become increasingly responsible for aspects of school and their community as they, for instance, raise monies for charities or take part in inter-school or parish activities. However, their knowledge of the diversity within the United Kingdom or other countries is not as well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Relationships are good between pupils, and staff are skilled at managing pupils' behaviour positively, which is evident in pupils' enjoyment in learning. Teaching is good throughout school and the vast majority of pupils are challenged well in their learning. Because teachers assess pupils' understanding frequently, to ensure that they do not get left behind, the vast majority of pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding at a consistently good pace. English is particularly well taught and teachers plan lots of opportunities in other subjects for pupils to practise their reading and writing skills. In mathematics, teachers' expectations of a very small minority of the more able pupils are sometimes too low. Work set is at times the same for all pupils. This means these pupils find it too easy and do not have enough time in lessons to progress to harder work. In general there are not enough practical or investigational activities in mathematics lessons. This tends to limit the progress of pupils in developing the skills they need to solve problems and to attain higher standards.

The development of pupils' literacy, numeracy, social and information and communication technology skills are strongly represented in the curriculum, which enables pupils to achieve well. The school is at the stage of developing a more creative curriculum. There is an interesting range of projects and topics which appeals to pupils. There are good links, for instance, being made between English and other subjects, such as history, as pupils write stories about the Second World War, or between English and art, as pupils write poems about their art work. Links between mathematics and other subjects is not as evident. Pupils enjoy a wide range of enrichment opportunities such as the opportunity to learn Spanish, after-school activities, trips to the locality,

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visitors to school and a residential visit for older pupils.

The school's care and support for pupils are outstanding and strengths of the school. Parents, carers and pupils are appreciative of the care and support that is given. This is particularly the case for the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are most vulnerable. In the words of one parent 'The school is fantastic and has helped not only my child but the family.' The senior leaders and teaching staff are proactive in successfully supporting pupils and families. For example, a strong stance is taken on promoting good behaviour and attendance, and in providing a calm and attractive learning environment. The before-school club has a positive impact on pupils' attendance and gives them a good start to the day. The transition arrangements for pupils entering the school and arrangements for transfer to high school are effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is held in high esteem by the staff, pupils, parents and carers. Together with the senior leadership team he gives clear direction to achieve the school's aims and improve performance. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is shared between staff, governors and parents and carers. The systems for school development and improvement are well embedded and run smoothly. Staff work effectively in curriculum subject teams to develop provision further in English, mathematics and science. Plans for improvement, and the quality of teaching, are regularly monitored, mainly by the senior leadership team, and successful strategies put in place to improve pupils' performance. Staff promote equality of opportunity successfully. As a result, since the last inspection, the achievement gap between boys and girls has narrowed and a growing number of pupils are attaining higher standards than previously. However, it is recognised that there are a small minority of the more able pupils in mathematics who are capable of attaining higher standards.

Procedures to safeguard pupils are well met. There are effective policies in place. The staff take great care of pupils and are extremely successful in helping pupils to overcome any barriers to learning. This is reflected in the excellent partnership that exists with outside agencies and other partners to meet pupils' needs. Provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has good links with the local community and other schools. However, it is at an early stage of developing links with other communities farther afield to enable pupils to acquire a better awareness and

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appreciation of diversity. The school has a good partnership with parents and carers. A few parents and carers benefit from the courses provided for them, for example, in literacy, which puts them in a better position to help their children learn at home. Partnerships with schools and outside agencies, particularly to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are excellent. The governors, led by the very experienced Chair of the Governing Body, discharge their duties effectively and carefully manage their resources. Consequently, and in view of pupils' positive outcomes, the school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The majority of children enter the Nursery with language and social skills well below those usually expected of this age. By the end of their Reception Year, most have made good progress to attain or exceed average standards. Provision is well led and managed. Good quality teaching motivates and inspires children to learn as staff plan purposeful activities for children to explore and investigate, taking the children's needs and interests into account. For instance, the children in the Nursery enjoyed their water painting outside, exploring different sized brushes and containers to paint and water the fence and paths. The staff are skilled and they take extremely good care to meet the needs of all children, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The learning environment is interesting and motivating. From the start, there is a strong focus on the development of language and of personal and social skills, the areas in which children make most progress. By the end of the Reception Year, children become confident and independent learners and their understanding of sounds and letters is

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giving them a good start to reading and writing activities in Year 1. There are good relationships with parents and carers, which enable them to be full partners in their children's learning and development. The Early Years Foundation Stage as a cohesive unit is not fully effective. The Nursery and Reception classes are in different buildings and the level of resourcing differs. There is ample space and resources, including staff, in the Nursery and limited space and resources, particularly for outdoor learning, in Reception.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers are very appreciative of the school. They feel their children are taught well and enjoy school, and they are particularly appreciative of the high quality care taken of their children. Very few have any concerns. The inspection finds that behaviour is good overall and any disagreements are generally sorted out when brought to the attention of the staff. There are appropriate arrangements in place to inform parents and carers how well their children are doing. The vast majority of children make good progress but a very small minority of the more able pupils are not achieving as well as they could in mathematics. The inspection also finds that when parents and carers discuss any concerns with the staff, there is a good partnership with parents and carers to help them support their children at home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	66	33	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	75	24	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	50	52	43	45	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	52	41	43	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	68	71	26	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	61	34	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	63	66	29	30	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	57	59	36	38	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	64	32	33	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	50	41	43	4	4	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	50	43	45	0	0	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	57	59	35	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	73	25	26	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

On behalf of the inspection team thank you for the welcome you gave to us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work and were interested in all your activities. Thank you to those of you who filled in their questionnaire for us. We agree with you that nearly all of you really enjoy school. The staff take excellent care of you and help you to feel safe and learn well. We judged your school as good overall, and we know that:

- children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and that most of you work hard and make good progress in English, mathematics and science
- your headteacher and the other teachers and members of staff teach you well and provide interesting things for you to do
- you behave well, get on very well with each other and are willing to help one another
- you have many opportunities to follow your interests. You take part in a wide range of activities out of school and go on trips and visits about your topic work, all of which help you to learn well.

We have asked that, in mathematics lessons, your teachers set harder work for a few of you who find learning easier than most to help you to make even better progress. We have asked that you learn more about the different cultures and races in Britain and what life is like in other countries. We have also asked the headteacher and the staff to make better use of the space and resources available to the children in the Nursery and Reception classes to help them make even better progress, particularly in outdoor learning. You can all help by making sure you always try hard and do your best.

Yours sincerely

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