

Holy Cross Roman Catholic Primary School Aided

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108623
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	356396
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Irene Cochrane

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	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nigel Huscroft
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Burns
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed fifteen lessons, observed 10 teachers and held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed pupils at work, and looked at data the school has collected on pupils' progress, the safeguarding procedures, pupils' books and records of the school's monitoring and review process. They also considered 76 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as analysing questionnaires from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of actions taken by leaders, including the governing body , to improve teaching and raise attainment
- The impact of the curriculum on improving pupils' basic skills, particularly in mathematics and in their personal development.
- The quality of teaching, particularly in the use of assessment to identify and address individual needs.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals is slightly below average and most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school holds a number of awards, including Investors in People, Healthy School status the Activemark and Creative Partnerships.

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 has particular strengths in the care and support it provides for pupils, which helps them to feel exceptionally safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. As a result, pupils are helped to be mature citizens with a good understanding of the responsibility they hold for themselves, that of others and the world in which they live. Parents and carers have every confidence that their children are well looked after. Pupils enjoy coming to school and as one pupil said, 'Teachers give you extra time and you learn a lot.'

Pupils make good progress and attain broadly average standards by the time they leave. Action taken by leaders has led to improved outcomes in mathematics and writing, particularly in Key Stage 1. A sharp focus on targeted intervention strategies is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. The quality of teaching is good. The use of assessment to support learning is inconsistent. In the better lessons, teachers review learning regularly to ensure that pupils understand tasks and involve them in self-evaluation. However, this is not always the case in all lessons. Pupils work productively because tasks are clearly explained, however, they are not always given enough information about what they have to do to improve their learning and the use of marking is inconsistent. The curriculum provides a wide range of enrichment opportunities which contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal development.

The headteacher sets a clear vision for the school which is shared by staff and members of the governing body. Effective systems of self-evaluation have identified appropriate priorities for improvement based on regular monitoring of provision and analysis of how well individual pupils achieve. This has resulted in sharply focused intervention strategies and support throughout school to address pupils at risk of underachievement. Actions taken by leaders and managers are leading to improved outcomes in most year groups. Consequently, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the use of assessment so that:
 - marking and the annotation of pupils' work ensures that pupils consistently know how well they have done and how they can improve their work
 - assessment information is consistently used in lessons to consolidate and extend learning and involves pupils in their own evaluation of their work
 - ensuring that pupils clearly understand the targets they have to achieve to move on to the next level in their learning.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery class is well below that expected for their age, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills and their personal and social development. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes although their attainment is below average by the time they enter Year 1. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as their peers.

During lessons, pupils respond well to instructions and show consideration and respect to others. They enjoy their learning because they are actively involved and work well together in pairs and groups to share their ideas. For example, pupils working in groups showed much enjoyment and motivation taking part in a mathematics lesson, when they were asked to solve the problems found in a bottle washed up from a desert island. Pupils behave sensibly in and around school and have positive relationships with each other, with older pupils often supporting their younger peers voluntarily. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and this can be seen in their positive attitudes to learning and their greatly improved attendance.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of taking regular exercise and the need for a healthy diet, which is reflected in the schools' achievement of Healthy School status. They are especially proud of the work they have done in their school vegetable garden, resulting in a Bronze medal at Chelsea Flower Show. Pupils feel exceptionally safe at school because of the outstanding care they receive from staff and they are highly confident that any worries will be dealt with promptly.

The school's strong Roman Catholic ethos has a profound effect on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in collective worship, pupils respond exceptionally well to opportunities to reflect on other faiths and spiritual aspects of life.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

How effective is the provision?

Pupils benefit from good and occasionally inspiring teaching which absorbs them in their learning. Good relationships and well-established routines contribute to good behaviour in lessons and the creation of a positive working environment. Pupils enjoy lessons which include first-hand experiences and opportunities for them to work cooperatively with their peers. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and use assessment information to move pupils quickly on to the next steps in their learning, often involving them in their own self-evaluation. This is not consistent in all lessons. Teachers are effective in ensuring that pupils understand the tasks set for them, but not all pupils are clear about the targets they have to achieve to move to the next level in their learning and marking does not consistently identify the next steps they need to take. Teaching assistants are well utilised to support the learning of all pupil groups.

The school has a well-organised curriculum with a strong emphasis on promoting basic skills. Pupils say they enjoy the wide range of practical and enrichment activities which has a positive impact on their personal development. The introduction of a range of strategies and intervention programmes to improve mathematics and increased teaching about letters and sounds are having a positive impact on outcomes for all pupil groups. Pupils are keen to take part in the after-school clubs and activities.

Care, guidance and support are exceptional strengths in the school. This is endorsed by the highly positive response in questionnaires completed by parents and carers and the

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views expressed by pupils. There is outstanding provision to support those pupils who are potentially vulnerable or have specific needs. Case studies provided by the school show successful outcomes for pupils as a result of highly effective work with outside agencies. The headteacher is relentless in her dogged pursuit and vigilance to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Well-organised transition arrangements ensure that children get off to a good start in the Nursery class and that pupils transfer smoothly to secondary school at the end of Year 6. Strategies to support pupils' behaviour and to improve attendance are highly 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	3
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 provides strong leadership and a clear direction for school improvement. Action taken by senior leaders has succeeded in raising pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 this year, to match that in Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection, there has been a continuing focus on improving the quality of teaching through training and support. The introduction of a new tracker for pupils' progress and assessment procedures are enabling senior leaders to monitor pupils' progress more rigorously, but these are still at a relatively early stage of development. The school promotes equal opportunities well and places a high priority on ensuring that procedures for tackling all forms of discrimination are effective. Partnerships with other agencies, particularly the Wallsend Partnership, benefit all pupils, including those who have specific needs.

The governing body is highly supportive of the school and understand its strengths and areas in need of improvement. Members of the governing body are regularly involved in school life and individual members' skills are well used to support the work of the school. Good safeguarding procedures are securely in place and have a high profile in the daily life of the school. Particular strengths lie in the robust checking of adults to ensure that pupils are kept safe and a tenacious approach in following up any support required from outside agencies. The school has a well-structured approach to community cohesion and as a result, pupils find out about a range of cultures and have a good understanding about the diverse nature of society.

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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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery class through well-planned opportunities to familiarise them with their surroundings. They understand school routines and make sensible choices from the range of resources provided. They make good progress, although outcomes remain below average by the time children leave the Reception Year. Parents and carers appreciate the support they receive from staff should the need arise and feel confident that their children are well looked after. A daily focus on letters and sounds engages children well and is having a positive impact on increasing their progress in phonic awareness and contributes to their enjoyment. Well-planned opportunities for children to play together and cooperate with their peers contributes effectively to their personal development.

Teaching is good and children enjoy their learning as a result of the interesting activities provided, for example, having first-hand experiences in exploring sea creatures, such as an octopus and a crab, which promote opportunities for discussion and collaborative learning. Good planning and assessment procedures ensure that children access a range of experiences to support their learning, but sometimes opportunities for children to learn independently and follow their own interests are missed.

Children enjoy the regular opportunities for outdoor provision and the school is aware of the need to further develop resources in this area to ensure that activities build on prior learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. There is a shared vision among all staff to provide the best outcomes for children, which is reflected in the good progress the children make. Welfare requirements are met in all respects.

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

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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

Fewer than average parents and carers returned questionnaires. Those who did respond were highly positive about the work of the school. The inspection evidence supports these positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holy Cross Roman Catholic Primary School Aided 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 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 256 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	74	20	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	74	19	25	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	70	23	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	66	23	30	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	58	76	17	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	67	23	30	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	59	29	38	1	1	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)	49	64	26	34	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	63	25	33	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	55	30	39	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	58	30	39	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	74	19	25	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	75	18	24	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 all 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



16 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Cross Roman Catholic Primary School Aided, Wallsend, NE28 OEP

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we came to inspect your school. A particular thank you goes to those of you who filled in questionnaires or met with us to talk about your school. We would also like to thank those of you who explained what you were learning when you were in class. We are pleased to know that you enjoy coming to school.

We think your school is good and it has some parts which are excellent. Adults care well for you and you told us how your school ensures you are safe. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent. You enjoy the interesting activities which your teachers plan to help you with your learning.

We have asked your school to help you to improve your work by:

- improving the way teachers mark your work, to help you to understand what you need to do to improve it
- making sure teachers always use their knowledge of what you already know to extend your learning in lessons and involve you in this process
- making sure that you all know your targets to help you achieve the next steps in your learning.

You can help by continuing to work hard and behave well. Once again, thank you very much for your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Irene Cochrane

Lead Inspector

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