

Holy Family RC Primary School

Lime Green Road, Oldham, Lancashire, OL8 3NG

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils enjoy school, say they feel safe there and their attendance is above average. Parents agree their children are happy and well looked after.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. By the time pupils leave the school, they attain national expectations in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and a small proportion is outstanding. Well-planned lessons capture pupils' interest so they have good attitudes to learning. Reading is taught well and standards are above average by the time pupils leave.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are considerate towards others, enjoy good relationships with staff, and are friendly, polite and willing to help.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their time in school.
- Strong leadership has united the staff team with a clear view of how successful they intend the school to be. School leaders and governors have a good overview of strengths and what needs to be improved. They rigorously check the quality of teaching. This is having a positive impact on teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teaching requires improvement to be good or better.
- Not enough pupils reach higher standards, particularly in writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with half a day’s notice.
- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, visited small group sessions, heard some pupils read and observed pupils at play and lunchtime.
- The team met with staff, pupils, parents, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- They looked at school documents, procedures for gathering an accurate picture of the school’s performance and assessing the quality of teaching and learning, pupils’ workbooks and their progress records. Safeguarding arrangements were checked.
- The 12 responses in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of parents and pupils in the school’s own survey were taken into account.

Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bernard Dorgan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on the school roll has increased considerably and five new members of staff have been appointed.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is similar to that found in most schools, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The Orchard room, providing early behaviour support and intervention, is sited in the school. This facility is funded and shared by 14 local schools. Currently, no pupils from Holy Family attend the unit, which did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so all is good or better by sharing more widely the good practice already found in the school.
- Make sure that a greater proportion of pupils reach higher standards, particularly in writing, by:
 - matching work even more carefully to pupils' abilities so all pupils, but especially the more-able, are always stretched and challenged
 - improving pupils' spelling, handwriting and the way they present their written work
 - making sure lessons always have a sharply focused aim so pupils are clear what they will be learning
 - using a consistent system of marking pupils' work throughout the school so pupils are given clear feedback that shows them how to improve and ensures they put this into practice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills well below those expected for their age, especially language, personal and social skills. High quality care in the welcoming environment ensures they are quickly ready to learn and enjoy all the imaginative activities, indoors and outside. Staff use every opportunity to boost children's language, for example while watching the tortoises, 'Its legs are like dinosaurs', said one child. Children progress well though their skills are still below those expected when they start in Year 1.
- Good progress continues as pupils move through the school. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and mathematics match those found nationally but are lower in writing. Standards are just above the expected level when pupils leave Year 6. However, in both key stages, too few pupils reach the higher levels, especially in writing.
- Throughout the school, attainment has risen steadily over time, and school data indicate that pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are on course to continue this trend and reach challenging targets.
- The recent emphasis on boosting writing skills has given pupils more confidence to write at length. However, the work in their books showed examples of unimaginative vocabulary, and confusion of common words, such as 'their' and 'there'. Careless spelling, handwriting and presentation sometimes lower the quality of their writing.
- Pupils told inspectors they enjoy reading. 'The more you read, the more you learn', said one older pupil. Well-taught reading activities in small groups each day give younger pupils a good start, 'sounding out' letters and blending them together when they meet unknown words. Many say their parents hear them read at home, and older pupils say they use the local library. Pupils read with increasing confidence from different types of material, such as play scripts, and put their reading skills to good use in all subjects and for research.
- Additional support in class and visits out of school are provided for those entitled to the pupil premium. Consequently, they often progress more rapidly than their classmates and this extra support has successfully closed any attainment gap between them and pupils in the school and similar pupils nationally.
- Well-organised adult support and additional learning activities enable pupils with special educational needs to progress at a similar rate to their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Inspection evidence and the school's own records show that teaching is mainly good and a small proportion is outstanding. Small pockets of teaching, however, still require improvement.
- Good teaching results in pupils' good progress. Imaginatively planned activities capture pupils' attention and motivate them. Staff put their own good subject knowledge to effective use, and carefully build on what pupils already know. For example, in an activity that appealed particularly to the boys, Year 4 pupils enjoyed watching an extract from a well-known television series and then wrote an explanation of the events.
- In the best lessons, teachers make sure pupils are very clear about their tasks, build these tasks up in a structured way and link subjects through themes. Consequently, pupils find learning really meaningful and so progress more rapidly. For example, in an outstanding lesson based on a Greek legend, Year 6 pupils showed high levels of interest and resilience when challenged to use exciting adjectives and adverbs to turn three-word phrases into vibrant sentences.
- Where teaching is less successful, the aim of the lesson is not always clear so pupils lose concentration and their progress slows. In some classes, too many worksheets are used and so pupils do not have the chance to use their writing skills.
- Clear assessment and tracking systems provide accurate information about how well pupils are doing. Teachers use this information to set targets and match tasks to pupils' different abilities,

but tasks do not always challenge more-able pupils so not enough reach the higher levels.

- Pupils say their work is marked and that they understand the letter code which teachers use to tell them how they have done. Sometimes, feedback and guidance are helpful but this is not consistent throughout the school so pupils do not always know how to improve their work or what to do to reach the next level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Comments such as, 'The teachers are always there', and 'They care for us', show pupils feel the school is a happy community where they are safe and secure. The well-maintained environment and imaginative displays make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by celebrating their achievements and activities.
- Plenty of space ensures pupils behave well out of doors and break times are enjoyable for everyone. They know how to keep themselves safe, for example responding quickly and sensibly during fire drills.
- Pupils understand that bullying can take different forms, such as cyber-bullying and know just what to do, saying, 'We would always tell someone'. They say any incidents of bullying are dealt with well. They are confident that they can speak to staff and trust them to sort out any problems. Exclusions are rare.
- The school's procedures to promote good behaviour are clear and applied consistently. Pupils know the school rules, describe them as fair and are keen to earn 'golden time' each week. They carry out any responsibilities sensibly and school councillors say they want to look after the school and make it better for everyone.
- Attendance is above average and the great majority of pupils arrive in good time each day. The school swiftly follows up any absences and works closely with parents through the learning mentor. It offers a breakfast club that provides a healthy start for those who attend.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's high aspirations are fully supported by leaders, governors and staff. Morale is high. The staff are a strong team, aiming to improve all aspects of provision and ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to everything the school offers.
- Good procedures give leaders an accurate picture of the school's performance, resulting in clear priorities and sharply focused improvement plans and targets for staff.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher check the quality of teaching through regular observations in class and staff may observe each other at work in order to share ideas and ways of working. These actions have successfully raised the proportion of good teaching. However, a small amount still requires improvement and the best practices already found in the school have yet to be implemented consistently.
- The curriculum is well focused on numeracy and literacy so pupils gain the skills they need in all subjects and for their future lives, for example, writing about the Second World War in history or calculating temperature changes in science. Pupils say they enjoy all their lessons so they behave well. Learning French, the clarinet or the ukulele broadens pupils' experience and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Visits extend learning outside the classroom. Year 6 pupils are currently preparing to perform a song composed in response to a painting seen in the Manchester Art Gallery. The residential experience extends pupils' experiences and knowledge of life beyond their own community. After-school clubs are popular, including sports coaching and singing.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school. This has proved effective, working with Early Years Foundation Stage staff on the new outdoor area.
- Good partnerships with other local schools support The Orchard room and provide staff training and support groups.

- Arrangements for pupils' welfare and safety meet all statutory requirements. All staff and governors have received safeguarding training and the school is safe and secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know their school well, are clear about how well pupils are doing and provide good links with the local community. They challenge and question senior leaders, and hold them to account, for example, about the effectiveness of procedures to improve the quality of teaching or why few pupils reach the higher levels in English and mathematics. Financial affairs are carefully managed and governors check that pupil premium funds are spent effectively.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105724
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	402988

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Holland
Headteacher	Collette Gill
Date of previous school inspection	10 April 2008
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