

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Norwood Crescent, Southport, Merseyside, PR9 7DU

Inspection dates 30–31 October 2013

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 make good progress and achieve well in all subjects. They reach above average standards in their writing.
- The quality of teaching has continued to improve since the previous inspection and is consistently good. Some of the teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers plan particularly well for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and for those who join the school with English as an additional language. As a result, these pupils make at least good progress from their starting points.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle very quickly and happily. They are provided with exciting resources and make rapid progress in all areas of their development.
- Holy Family is a very happy school where pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pupils are polite and helpful and behave very well in lessons and around school. They are proud to take responsibility for themselves, each other and their community.
- The curriculum provides many memorable experiences and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Every member of staff contributes to the huge variety of after-school clubs on offer.
- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, her senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body. They monitor the quality of teaching and pupil achievement and progress very effectively. Plans are put in place quickly to address any weaknesses. As a result, this is an improving school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few pupils make outstanding progress to reach higher levels in reading and mathematics to match their achievement in writing.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunity to develop their skills as confident speakers who can express their views and opinions well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons including two joint observations carried out with the headteacher. All classes and teachers were seen. Inspectors also carried out a number of shorter observations of sessions for small groups of pupils which were delivered by teaching assistants, external specialists and parent volunteers.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors met with a group of pupils who were representatives of the school council and spoke with pupils informally around the school.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents informally. They took into account the 47 responses to the on-line questionnaire, a number of letters received from parents and the analysis of the school's own recent parent questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including the school's checks on how well it is doing and development plans, information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, the curriculum and how well the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection team

Hilary Ward, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has an Early Years Foundation Stage for Reception-aged children.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average. (Pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children of service families.)
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average but the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language has increased in recent years. Many of these pupils join the school at times other than from the start of their Reception Year.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is about average but the proportion of those who receive support at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- A private before- and after-school club is run on the school site but is inspected separately and was not included as part of this inspection. The school also runs its own after-school, lunchtime and holiday clubs.
- The school shares some external facilities with a neighbouring primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in reading and mathematics so that more pupils, particularly more-able pupils, make outstanding progress by:
 - further raising the expectations of teachers, pupils and parents for what they can achieve
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn at a faster pace and to work more independently without being directed by the teacher.
- Improve pupils' speaking and listening skills by:
 - encouraging them to extend their answers to questions when appropriate
 - ensuring all pupils are actively involved in tasks where they can develop their confidence through practising their oral skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below those typical nationally and a growing number arrive with English as an additional language. Children make rapid progress during their Reception Year as a result of the very effective communication and teaching strategies and the well-chosen resources which help them to learn very well in all areas of their development.
- On entry to Key Stage 1, pupils are achieving at or slightly below national expectations which represents good progress during their year in Reception class. However, for many, literacy and numeracy skills remain low at this stage.
- By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1, however, the achievement of the majority of pupils is nearing the national average in English and mathematics.
- This progress is built on in Key Stage 2 with pupils' attainment reaching at least the national average in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils make accelerated progress in writing because teachers have given attention to providing them with the support and prompts they need to write with confidence. Pupils can write well in all subjects of the curriculum. For example, in a Year 1 history lesson pupils enjoyed finding exciting words to describe the dinosaurs they were writing about.
- Pupils do not always make sufficiently rapid progress towards higher levels of attainment, especially in reading and mathematics. This is because sometimes teachers do too much for more-able pupils. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their independent thinking and speaking skills as effectively as they should by finding things out for themselves, answering questions fluently and talking about what they have learned independently.
- All groups of pupils make at least good progress from their starting points. Consequently, those eligible for the pupil premium have closed attainment gaps with their peers. Disabled or those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language, including those who join the school at later times, do particularly well because of the additional support they receive from well-trained staff and from specialist advisors the school brings in.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and there is some outstanding practice across all key stages. Children in Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with a range of methods to support their early communication and enthusiastically join in with teachers and teaching assistants who model sign and gesture very effectively.
- Lessons are fun and teachers are very skilled at finding topics that will capture their pupils' interests. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils developed their knowledge of tables by calculating how many rows of seats had been sold on an aeroplane and how many were left. The teacher had added appropriate airport sound effects and visual resources which pupils really enjoyed.
- Pupils know how well they are doing because teachers' marking consistently provides them with information about their achievements and sets challenges and targets for where to go next. Increasingly, pupils are self-evaluating how well they are learning as they respond to the comments and additional work teachers give them.
- Teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning across the school. Teaching assistants willingly undertake training and develop skills and knowledge which enable them to support pupils, especially those with additional needs, to give them an equal opportunity to succeed and close the gaps in their learning.
- Early good communication skills are not always built on well enough higher up the school. Pupils develop very good writing skills but sometimes teachers miss opportunities to encourage pupils

to verbally express their views and opinions with confidence.

- Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, using a common format across the school to ensure activities are well matched to the differing abilities of pupils in the class. Planning ensures pupils are able to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects of the curriculum. Occasionally, the planning does not enable pupils, especially those who are more-able, to find things out for themselves without the help of an adult.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents say their children are safe and happy at Holy Family. Pupils and their parents enjoy excellent relationships with adults in the school. This, together with the Catholic ethos which permeates the rich curriculum, supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and improving due to the introduction of an 'assertive mentoring' programme which encourages pupils to take increasing responsibility for their own learning, behaviour, attendance and punctuality. Pupils thoroughly enjoy 'going for green' and love to receive rewards such as the 'I've been spotted' cards. As a result of effective implementation of this approach, pupils are becoming more active learners in the classroom.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is now excellent. Senior leaders have reorganised some aspects of provision for the high number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to enable them to learn and behave more appropriately. This enables other pupils to learn more effectively too.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being members of the school council, eco-warriors and play buddies. They show respect for each other, for adults and for their community, with a group of older pupils inviting local councillors to see the mess made by dogs outside the school and asking for their support to take action. They enjoy learning about other cultures and take part in events, for instance as members of the choir, band or dance group.
- The work of the parent support adviser, together with the assertive mentoring programme, has resulted in improvements in attendance and punctuality which are now close to national average and improving over time.
- The mutually respectful relationships pupils enjoy with adults and fellow pupils ensure bullying in all its forms is understood and that rare occurrences are dealt with effectively. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and develop a good understanding of the dangers of social media.

The leadership and management are good

- Holy Family is a very happy and steadily improving school because the headteacher and her team share a total commitment to providing their pupils with the best possible start in life. Given this track record, together with good governance, means that the school is well placed to improve further.
- Senior and middle leaders have very accurately evaluated how well the school is doing and what is needed to make it even better. They have put actions in place to secure further improvements in pupils' progress and attainment.
- The headteacher, her deputy and middle leaders check pupils' progress frequently. They match this against their regular monitoring of the quality of teaching. Support and training are provided to ensure staff have the skills they need to meet the learning needs of the different groups of pupils. As a result, all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. This is a highly inclusive school where support for vulnerable children is outstanding.
- Staff feel well-supported by leaders and managers, including members of the governing body who are frequent visitors to the school. The support they receive has improved the quality of teaching over time.
- The curriculum is extremely well-thought-out to be sure it captures pupils' interests and

imagination. Pupils go on a wide range of visits and have visitors into the school. Every member of staff offers a skill or interest in the huge range of after-school clubs which pupils can attend.

- Partnerships with parents are very strong and they feel well-informed about what their children are learning. The school works closely with a range of external agencies where appropriate to support parents and their children to meet individual needs.
- The local authority provides light-touch support to the school. Routine visits are made to monitor the quality of provision and ensure standards are maintained.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is good. Members of the governing body make regular visits to classrooms to monitor aspects of pupils' learning. They are well informed about pupils' progress and involved in decisions to improve the provision. Governors monitor the performance of the headteacher and other members of staff very effectively and ensure promotion is awarded appropriately. They ensure pupil premium funding is used in the best interests of eligible pupils and is making a difference. Governors have agreed how the new physical education and sports funding will be spent. Safeguarding is a priority and all requirements are fully met.

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	104915
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	428827

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Taylor
Headteacher	Louise Morton
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2009
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