

Holy Cross Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100739
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	276374
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2006
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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 on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Coote Mrs Pat Peters
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Culverley Road Catford London SE6 2LD
Telephone number	020 8698 2675
Fax number	020 8697 7137

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This very popular school educates pupils from a wide surrounding area. Since the school was last inspected there have been significant changes. Children's knowledge and skills, when joining the school were high in 2000. Children joining the school more recently have broadly average skills for their age. Almost all of the staff have changed and the school has become a more ethnically diverse community. The largest groups now include pupils from White British, Black African, Asian and Black Caribbean backgrounds. In the last six years, far more pupils have joined the school with English as an additional language and, of these, a high proportion are at the very earliest stages of acquiring English. The school now educates an increasing and significant number of refugees and asylum seekers. Nonetheless, most pupils come from homes where there is little unemployment and few pupils are in receipt of free school meals. The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. The school is working towards gaining the 'Healthy Schools' Award'.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

- Regularly evaluate the quality of science work throughout the school and develop more challenging work for the most able learners.
- Help teachers to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils consistently well, especially higher attaining pupils.
- Develop assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage, so that the progress made by the youngest children can be easily evaluated.
- Improve the marking of pupils' work, so that they know how to develop ideas effectively and quickly.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Relationships are mostly good and staff have appropriate knowledge of the subjects taught. Where teaching is best, learning is fun and meets the needs of all abilities well, as was evident in Year 6 when pupils worked on ratios. However, the most able learners are not always given work that is challenging enough. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to aid pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy activities and most behave well in lessons. However, occasionally behaviour is inadequate when teachers do not use strategies effectively to help pupils to behave appropriately. A few parents correctly identified that learning can be hampered by inappropriate behaviour. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language are given effective help to improve. Assistants give satisfactory support. The school is improving the teaching of mathematics and places a strong emphasis on English but learning in science is not demanding enough.

Assessment is satisfactory, except in the Foundation Stage, where it is weak because it does not show children's progress clearly enough. Within the whole school the use of assessment information is inconsistent, particularly when preparing work for higher attainers. Some teachers mark pupils' work well and this enables pupils to make good progress, but the quality of marking is very inconsistent. Pupils are not always told how they can improve or given sufficient time to extend their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched by special focus weeks. For example, during the newly introduced 'Science Week' pupils enjoyed trying out exciting experiments and this is

helping to raise standards. There is a satisfactory range of after-school clubs for the older children and trips out including residential visits. The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils, but does not always take sufficient account of the most able learners. There is a good range of different types of extra help available to boost the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and those at the earliest stages of learning English as an additional language. Booster classes aid pupils progress in English and mathematics well.

The curriculum covers pupils' health, safety and enjoyment at school well. Citizenship and the promotion of pupils' economic awareness are taught through different subjects and make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

This aspect is satisfactory and the day-to-day care given to pupils is good. Child protection procedures are rigorous, and pupils' health and safety are promoted effectively. Parents have described the school as having, 'A family feel.' When pupils are ill they are very well cared for. Staff are well informed about individual pupils' needs and vulnerable pupils are well supported. For example, pupils learn about the importance of caring for refugees and asylum seekers. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and for pupils with English as an additional language is good overall. They are identified quickly and they receive effective extra help. Very good systems ensure that pupils' attendance is carefully monitored. Pupils commented that they value the help given by the 'learning mentor'. However, procedures to ensure that pupils behave well are cumbersome and not always fully effective.

Pupils know their targets for literacy and numeracy but pupils' work is not always marked with these in mind. The school has developed useful systems to track pupils' progress from Year 1 to year 6, but procedures in the Foundation Stage are inadequate.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

You may remember that three inspectors came to your school recently to find out how good it is and how well you are doing. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us about your school. We are writing to let you know that Holy Cross is a satisfactory school.

You are happy at school and enjoy learning. Many of you behave well, so keep this up! Occasionally, a few pupils do not behave well enough and sometimes this means that they are not able to do as well as they should in all of your lessons. Teaching is satisfactory and some lessons are good. You benefit from being in a caring Catholic school where you gain good spiritual and moral education. You have good opportunities to learn important social skills and value different cultures. You make steady progress while at Holy Cross and are beginning to help your school to improve, so well done for this!

The inspectors have asked your headteacher to help you to make even more progress by doing these important things.* Help you to make more progress in science by keeping a careful eye on how well you are doing and by giving you more scientific challenges.* Plan lessons that give the most able pupils things to do that make them really think hard and reach high standards.* Develop ways of finding out how much progress children make in the Nursery and reception classes.* Improve the marking of your work so that you know how well you are doing in reaching your targets. We enjoyed hearing you sing and hope that your production of 'Oliver' goes well.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector