



Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104915
LEA Sefton
Inspection number 277256
Inspection dates 17 May 2006 to 18 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr George Crowther CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Norwood Crescent
School category	Voluntary aided		Southport
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Merseyside PR9 7DU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01704 213084
Number on roll	239	Fax number	01704 211951
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mgr Kennedy
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Ann Quinn

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	17 May 2006 - 18 May 2006	277256

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Holy Family is an average sized primary school. Its social context is no more or less favourable than most schools. Children's attainment when they start school is similar to that expected for their age. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. Almost all the pupils are from white British backgrounds. A few are from minority ethnic heritages, but none are at the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Holy Family is a good school, which provides a very positive environment for pupils' learning. It has a clear grasp of its own effectiveness and is well placed to bring about further improvement. It provides good value for money.

The pupils make good progress across the school because the teaching is good. By Year 6, standards are above average. Particular strengths are the good progress pupils make in English and recent improvements in results in the Year 6 national tests. Whilst the more able pupils do well overall, they do not make enough progress in some lessons, particularly in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy being at school and the staff make them feel secure and valued. Everyone gets on very well together. Pupils are very keen to learn and their behaviour is excellent. Good teaching in most lessons is interesting, challenging and encourages the pupils to work hard. In a few lessons, however, the teaching lacks sufficient interest and challenge, particularly for the more able. The curriculum is good, well planned and meets the diversity of pupils' needs effectively. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps the children to achieve well.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Good leadership is helping the school to improve further. A very strong team of senior staff has identified what needs to be done next to raise standards still further. Governors know the school very well and provide a good balance of challenge and support.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the more able pupils are sufficiently challenged by the work they are given, particularly in mathematics.
- Increase the proportion of lessons where the quality of teaching and learning is good or better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When they start school, children's attainment is average overall, even though a few have weak skills. They make good progress and by Year 6 have done well to reach above average standards.

Progress in the Reception class is good because interesting activities are well matched to the children's needs. By the time pupils join Year 1, many exceed the expected standard. During Years 1 to 6, progress is good overall, but better in some lessons than others because the quality of teaching varies. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average, and have been improving in reading and writing. The 2005 Year 6 national test results were significantly above average and early indications suggest

the improvement has been sustained this year. Last year, measures of pupils' progress from Year 3 to Year 6 were average. Current progress is good, with a marked improvement in pupils' reading skills. More able pupils, however, although they achieve well overall, are not always making as much progress as they could, particularly in mathematics. On the whole, pupils are reaching the challenging targets set for them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same good progress as the rest because they are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' very positive attitudes to school and their outstanding behaviour support their learning very effectively. They say, 'We do lots of interesting things in lessons and the teachers make it fun,' which explains why they are very keen to learn. Parents praise the children's immaculate behaviour and comment upon the enjoyment gained from the wide range of activities provided, such as the recent European Day. Relationships are outstanding. The older pupils like nothing better than helping the younger ones, as reading buddies or play leaders. As one child said, 'It's a very friendly school.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. A rich range of experiences, such as studying art from different cultures, develops pupils' understanding of themselves and their place in the wider world. Attendance is good.

Pupils have a strong sense of their own well-being. They make healthy choices in the food they eat and the exercise they take. They say school is a safe place because, 'The teachers look after you and they try to make you happy if you are sad.' Pupils recognise dangers out of school. Most have special jobs, and the older ones have significant responsibilities, which promote an excellent understanding of contributing to the community. Pupils express their views confidently through the school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' positive relationships with the pupils help them to manage and organise learning well. Lessons are planned carefully. In many lessons, lively, engaging teaching generates enthusiasm, as seen when Year 6 pupils were learning about equivalent fractions. Teachers explain new work clearly and involve the pupils effectively through questions and discussion. Good support for learning from teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils to do their best. In a few lessons, however, the teacher does not fire the pupils' interest sufficiently or move their learning on quickly enough. More able pupils do well in many lessons, but they sometimes spend too much time covering work they already know, or the tasks they are given do not provide sufficient challenge.

Good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress have been put in place relatively recently. In some cases, the information is being used well to

raise standards, for example, in writing. As yet, however, it is not used consistently to ensure that work in lessons is sufficiently challenging. Pupils have their own targets for learning, but these are more successful in English than in mathematics. Careful assessment of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities supports their good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A rich curriculum and an outstanding range of activities outside lessons ensure that the pupils enjoy school and do well. The curriculum is broad, balanced and generally meets the needs of all the pupils. In some lessons, however, it is not adapted well enough to meet the needs of the more able pupils.

Whole-school art, music and dance weeks, together with a wealth of visits, visitors and additional activities, ensure that the pupils have stimulating learning experiences. The link with a school in Ghana develops their knowledge of and empathy for people in other parts of the world. Pupils particularly enjoy belonging to the Children's University and gaining their degrees. Very good links with the church and many local organisations help the pupils to appreciate their place in the community. The pupils' outstanding personal development owes much to a good programme of personal, social and health education, which supports all aspects of their learning. The curriculum helps all the pupils, whatever their needs, to be fully involved in school life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Levels of care are very good. All the staff work hard to ensure each child is safe, happy and ready to learn. Parents find the staff very approachable, which means that any concerns are solved quickly. The pupils say they feel safe and cared for in school because, 'There's always someone to help you if you are unhappy.' This confidence in the care staff provide makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. The school places a strong emphasis on promoting good health, for example, through fruit snacks and a wide range of sports activities. Clear procedures for first aid, child protection and health and safety are implemented assiduously. Parents value the extended care provided through the breakfast and after-school clubs. Teachers have a wide range of assessment information to track pupils' progress and support their learning. As yet, involving pupils in aiming for their own learning targets is better established in English than mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The determined leadership of the headteacher, drawing skilfully on the energetic support of senior staff, has enabled the school to improve considerably since the last inspection. Parents and governors emphasise that support for pupils' personal development has always been first rate. Now, however, there is also a strong focus on

raising standards. For example, a recent initiative to improve pupils' writing has been pursued doggedly, and standards have risen. Nonetheless, senior staff know that more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. This is leadership's next task.

Leadership and management have a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. Rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation have identified correctly areas for improvement. For example, possible underachievement by some younger boys was tackled successfully. Views of pupils, parents, staff and governors are gathered effectively to consider the best areas for improvement. The resulting school improvement plan provides a very clear way forward and is strongly focused on improving pupils' achievement. The headteacher ensures she makes best use of the skills of colleagues. For example, the staff work in teams to lead improvements in English and mathematics, and more of this team work is planned. The result is a strong sense that successes belong to the whole staff.

Governors know the school very well. They are very supportive of current developments, but are not afraid to ask challenging questions of the staff. A difficult financial situation, caused by falling pupil numbers, has been managed efficiently.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We visited your school last week to find out if it is giving you the education you should receive. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for being helpful when we asked you questions. We enjoyed talking with you, looking at your work and finding out about the things you like doing.

We think there are lots of good things about your school, but we also discovered two ways in which we think your learning could be even better. The things we particularly like are:

- your school is a very happy place and everyone seems to enjoy learning
- in most lessons, you are very keen to do your best and you work hard
- you are making good progress in most of the work you do
- everyone gets on very well together
- we particularly liked the way the older children help the younger ones
- most of the lessons we saw had interesting things to do, which helped you to learn
- you have a wide variety of activities outside lessons, such as the Children's University
- you are very well behaved and very friendly towards visitors
- there are lots of extra activities, such as visits, which you really enjoy
- you have a good understanding about being healthy and staying safe
- the link you have with a school in Ghana is very interesting
- around the school, there are lots of attractive displays of your work.

We would like you to work with your teachers to improve the way you learn.

- In some lessons, particularly in mathematics, we think some children are given work they can already do quite easily. We have asked your teachers to make sure that the work you are given in all lessons helps you to take the next step in your learning.

- Most of your lessons are interesting and many of them are exciting. This helps you to learn quickly. Some of the lessons we saw could have been more interesting. We have asked your teachers to make sure that all the lessons are as good as the best.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. Please share this letter with the other children. We all hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Holy Family a good place to be.