

Holy Family Catholic Primary School Platt Bridge

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106496
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	395443
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead inspector	Steve Isherwood HMI

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	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs L Atherton
Headteacher	Mrs K Mitty
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Steve Isherwood
John Shutt
Gillian Hunter

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 8 teachers teaching 13 lessons and parts of lessons. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including the school's improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, monitoring reports, the work pupils were doing in their books and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding. The inspectors also analysed 97 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and took account of those completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average as is the number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has gained Healthy School status and provides a breakfast club run by teaching assistants. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for four weeks.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because pupils’ attainment is not high enough and higher-ability pupils should make more progress. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support this good school and these comments express the views of many: ‘The school cares about the whole-child’; ‘Our daughter is flourishing’; ‘My son is encouraged to be the best he can’.
- Pupils feel safe, have positive attitudes to their work, enjoy coming to school and behave well. When asked to express their views on the school, they found it very difficult to think of any improvements they would like to see. There was strong praise for the wide range of opportunities on offer and for the high levels of care they receive from staff.
- From skills that are typically below those expected as children start the Early Years Foundation Stage, they achieve well and make good progress to reach broadly average attainment by the end of Year 6. Pupils make more progress in mathematics than in reading and writing. However, not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels because the work presented to them is not always challenging and at the correct level.
- Teaching has many strengths and there are examples of outstanding practice. The proportion of good and outstanding lessons is growing but is not yet at a level that will raise pupils’ attainment further. Where teaching is strongest, expectations are high, learning is fun and pupils are given every opportunity to make decisions and show initiative by discussing and sharing their ideas with others. Where teaching is not as strong, there is insufficient challenge for higher-ability pupils and less attention is given to the development of pupils’ independent learning skills.
- The headteacher and senior colleagues lead teaching well and keep a close eye on the school’s performance. They are clear about the direction the school must take to secure its momentum. They correctly recognise that developing teachers’ awareness of whole-school data and national expectations is central to accelerating pupils’ progress and raising their attainment further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment to above the national average and accelerate the progress of pupils, particularly in reading and writing, by:
 - maintaining the focus on improving teaching and learning and increasing the proportion of good and better lessons
 - using assessment information more consistently to ensure that all teachers set work that is sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils
 - ensuring that more pupils reach the higher levels in their work
 - giving pupils greater opportunities to work independently and make choices about how they learn
 - improving teachers' awareness of whole-school performance data and national expectations.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Typically, pupils are keen to learn new skills and answer questions readily in class. Their natural curiosity is harnessed well through carefully chosen activities which fire their enthusiasm for learning. For example, the atmosphere buzzed with excitement when Henry the lamb visited children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Elsewhere, in Year 5, pupils developed their writing skills well in trying to persuade people of the earth to save the planet if they act now. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to organise their own activities and make their own decisions because in some lessons teachers tightly control what pupils do. This reduces pupils' ability to work independently, to use and develop their thinking skills.

Pupils' current work, the 2011 test results and the school's own data show that while their attainment in reading and writing is broadly average at age 11, the progress pupils make from their below typical starting points is good overall. Parents and carers agree.

Pupils make stronger progress in mathematics. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2011 was high and a notable success was that all pupils reached the expected Level 4. However, in all subjects, not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels. This is because of variability in how assessment information is used to plan work for pupils of higher ability. This means that some of these pupils do not always achieve as well or as rapidly as they should.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs learn well and make good progress because their needs are identified early and they receive a great deal of individual support to accelerate their progress.

The school is developing a strong culture for improving writing and although additional work is required to raise attainment further there is clear evidence to suggest that as a result of improvements to provision, pupils are currently making better progress than they did previously. In reading, attainment at the end of Year 2

is broadly average but improving securely. Pupils generally read with fluency and enjoy talking about the author and content of their books. Younger pupils are developing well as readers using their phonics skills and knowledge with confidence.

Quality of teaching

Pupils achieve well overtime because teaching is mainly good with some outstanding practice. The vast majority of parents and carers agree. More effective teaching is having a strong impact on pupils' good behaviour, their positive attitudes and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, a number of common strengths were seen in lessons. Positive relationships exist between adults and pupils. Teachers are enthusiastic and plan well around a broad and balanced curriculum. Teaching assistants provide an effective layer of support, particularly for those that find learning difficult and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. In many lessons, teachers are skilled in developing pupils' thinking through effective questioning which keeps engaged and focused. New skills are developed by building well on prior learning and clear links with other subjects. Although not consistent in all classes, pupils are supported effectively in knowing how to improve their work through effective comments from teachers' marking in their books. When the planning and teaching are at their very best, the impact on pupils' work is outstanding, which was seen when Year 3 pupils were developing their skills in writing persuasive texts. With skilful prompting from the class teacher, pupils were given every opportunity to make their own decisions and work independently. This lesson confirmed how well the pupils can do when expectations are high and the teaching imaginative.

Where teaching is less strong, tasks for higher-ability pupils lack pace and challenge. This is because assessment information is not used consistently by staff to pinpoint exactly what pupils can do and what they need to learn next and on occasions work is not pitched at the correct level. In addition, in some lessons, not enough attention is given to the development of pupils' independent and decision making skills.

The curriculum provides a wide range of meaningful learning experiences, including art, music and sport. There are carefully planned opportunities for enrichment through specific timetabled lessons, visits to places of interest, visitors into school and a variety of extra-curricular clubs and activities. These experiences add some considerable enjoyment to pupils' learning and are much appreciated by all.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

In line with inspections findings, the vast majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire confirm that behaviour is typically good. Pupils also agree and enjoy attending school. They speak highly of staff and say they feel safe and secure in school. Pupils with a concern turn confidently to an adult knowing that it will be quickly resolved. Attendance has improved significantly and is now broadly average through the determined efforts of the pastoral manager and all staff.

Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are very well supported in their emotional needs and are encouraged to talk through their feelings. Effective use is made of the 'nurture room' and the school's careful attention to pupils' personal, social and health education to provide care and support. Pupils are proud of their

school, develop a strong social conscience and are eager to take on extra responsibilities, such as becoming playground leaders, eco warriors or members of the active school council.

Instances of all kinds of bullying and disruptive behaviour are rare. When they do occur they are dealt with effectively because staff manage pupils well.

Leadership and management

The newly formed leadership team is determined to improve the school further. As a group they set the tone and are leading the school in the right direction. They recognise the need to maintain the focus on improving teaching and learning and increasing the proportion of good and better lessons. Highly focused work on improving pupils' writing skills is beginning to bear fruit and the quality of teaching and learning is steadily improving. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. Senior staff are constantly alert to any variation in achievement and are effective in improving pupils' life chances and in tackling discrimination. They are committed to inclusion and to seeing that all children are given every chance to succeed. As a consequence, their teamwork is strong and the school's work is clearly focused on raising pupils' achievement and in improving the quality of their learning.

Senior staff are well aware of the strengths in the school and where further improvements can be made. For example, they correctly recognise that one of the next challenges is to increase teachers' awareness of whole-school performance data and national expectations for pupils beyond their own individual year groups, which will enhance their collective responsibility and understanding for improving the school.

The governing body is committed to see the school improve further. Governors are increasingly confident to act where necessary to support improvements or to question proposals. Safeguarding arrangements are clear and no stone is left unturned to ensure that all pupils, including those most vulnerable, are well cared for and supported.

A good curriculum is provided with a clear focus on the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, a rich variety of visitors are invited into school on a regular basis. These visits have included people with disabilities, Gypsy Roma Travellers and members of Manchester's Chinese society.

Considering the accurate self-evaluation by senior leaders and along with its other strengths, including the rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



18 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School Platt Bridge, Wigan, WN2 5JF

Thank you for the kind welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. I am writing to you to say what we found out about your school as I told some of you I would do.

You are rightly proud of your school and expressed your views very clearly. We really enjoyed chatting to you in lessons, in interviews with you and when we listened to some of you read. You told us how much you like coming to school and, having spent the two days with you, we can understand why. We are pleased to tell you that you go to a good school and are taught well. It is such a safe place to be. Everyone takes good care of you and we were pleased to see how well you behave in lessons and around the school. We were really impressed with all your beautiful art work and were pleased to read all your good writing examples on the walls.

Your teachers are working effectively to improve the school. To help them we have asked if you can make faster progress in reading and writing and that some of you are given harder work to really challenge your thinking. This will help more of you to reach the higher levels. We have also suggested that more of your lessons are like the very best ones we saw when you were very involved in working on your own and in making your own decisions about how you learn. Finally, we have asked your teachers to look more closely at how they plan to improve the school. You can help by telling your teachers what makes your lessons interesting and what helps you to learn.

Keep trying hard! We can see why your teachers so much enjoy working with you every day.

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

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