

Holy Family RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114239
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	378820
Inspection dates	10–11 January 2012
Lead inspector	Frank Cain

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	Malcolm Frank
Headteacher	Chris Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2006
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Introduction

Inspection team

Frank Cain
Chris Cottam

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 16 lessons or parts of lessons taught by seven different teachers and looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they did.

Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation records, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's own assessment data. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff as well as those from 82 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Holy family is an average sized primary school, with a slightly lower proportion of girls than found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very small. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small percentage is from minority ethnic groups. The school has been awarded Healthy School Status and renewed the Primary Quality Mark. There is a recently appointed new headteacher as well as two new teachers who have joined the school since September. The school meets the current government floor standards.

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 children	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of children	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Holy Family is a good school. The previous inspection in 2006 also judged the school as good.
- When pupils enter the school in Reception their abilities are around what would be found in most schools nationally. By the time they leave their overall attainment is above the national average.
- At times, some higher-ability pupils have not achieved as well as they could have done.
- The school is successfully developing its pupils to become very confident and fluent in their reading. Standards of literacy observed in school are high.
- Mathematics is a strength of the school and many pupils make more progress when compared with schools nationally.
- The majority of teaching in the school is good and this was supported when inspectors looked at pupils' work to see what they had been doing since September 2011.
- Generally pupils behave well in most lessons, most of the time. This contributes to their good progress.
- Leadership at all levels in the school is good, fostering a friendly but industrious atmosphere, which allows pupils to flourish.
- Whilst there are strengths in the literacy and numeracy, other subject areas do not boost pupils' achievement in these basic skills to the same degree.
- The school's self-evaluation, planning and use of further staff training have already successfully supported the launch of a new programme that links the teaching of sounds to letters.
- The school has been rigorous in following up areas identified for improvement in its last inspection report.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Create more opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills across all areas of the curriculum.

- Improve the attainment of higher-ability pupils by:
 - giving them learning tasks which are consistently matched to their learning needs in all areas of the curriculum
 - giving pupils more time in lessons to develop their understanding through independent learning by reducing the time devoted to whole-class teaching.

Main Report

Achievement of children

The attainment of pupils, both boys and girls is above average when compared to all schools nationally. Pupils make good progress from their starting points across all key stages so that when they leave attainment is above national averages in English and mathematics. In lessons pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners who take pride in their classwork. The standards in literacy, in particular, in pupils' books are high. Good support from teachers engage and enthuse pupils in most lessons and, as a result, they progress well and enjoy their schoolwork. All pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress overall. Support staff were seen to be making an exceptional contribution to the achievement of these pupils in a number of lessons across the school. Whilst higher-ability pupils do well, some are not challenged sufficiently, to attain the very highest levels. Boys, whilst they are not achieving quite as well as girls in literacy, are doing particularly well in mathematics. The numbers of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is extremely small but all do as well, or even better, than their peers.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are keen learners and develop well across all areas of learning so they are well prepared for the next stage by the time they transfer to Year 1. Pupils' reading in both Year 2 and in Year 6 was judged to be above average, which reflects the high priority the school places on developing good literacy skills. Pupils are encouraged to keep a reading log so that staff are able to monitor whether books are suitable for pupils' level of ability, though some instances were seen where these were not as well matched as they might have been. Overall, pupils read confidently and are able to explain and interpret what they read well. An overwhelming number of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire feel that the school meets their children's needs, that they are making good progress and that the school helps them to support their child's learning. Inspection evidence confirms this. The school does seek ways to address any parental and carers' concerns over children's progress.

Quality of teaching

All teachers make sure that the learning objectives at the start of each lesson are clear for pupils, so that they can judge if they have successfully achieved them. Particularly good use is made of 'talking partners', which enables pupils to share ideas, and to get used to working with others in a constructive way. Literacy and numeracy lessons consistently give pupils work that matches the ability of most of them. Whilst work in other subject areas such as science interests pupils, there are fewer opportunities provided for all abilities, especially the more-able pupils, to be

challenged fully. In these lessons, more use is made of worksheets, than in the far more imaginative literacy and numeracy lessons. Overall, the planned curriculum has a good impact on teaching and progress.

Teachers' enthusiasm and expectations are exceptionally high and, as a result, the quality of work in many books is of a very high standard. In the very best lessons teachers explained the objectives and tasks very well. Sometimes the balance between times when the teacher talks to the whole class and when pupils are engaged in independent activities allows less time for some pupils, particularly the more able, to develop their ideas. The teachers exploit resources well. In a Year 1 design and technology lesson, for example, the teacher was using a wide variety of fruit for the children to decide which would be the most suitable to put into a salad, using colour, taste and texture to form their judgements. Marking in books is generally thorough and frequent, and pupils are encouraged in many areas to follow up teacher comments by re-doing parts of their work. Verbal feedback is given by teachers and pupils gain from marking the work of other pupils.

As a result of the good teaching pupils are well motivated and make good progress. They are encouraged by staff to share and think of others. They willingly take on roles of responsibility in group work and make sure that they take turns in leading. In Reception one child helped two others to settle a dispute about whose turn it was to play with a particular toy. The school's ethos, based on clear moral values, underpins the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the school. An act of collective worship reinforces this before lessons start each day.

Almost all parents and carers feel that their children are taught well and so prepared for the next stage of their education. Inspection evidence, particularly in discussions with pupils, supported that this view as being accurate in the vast number of instances.

Behaviour and safety of children

Pupils in school are polite and friendly and considerate towards others and adults. The vast majority typically behave well in lessons, when moving around the school or at play. School records indicate very few incidents of bullying and there have been no racist incidents at all and no exclusions for a number of years. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well integrated, feel safe and are happy. One pupil commented that members of her class helped her to speak and learn English. Pupil attendance is consistently high for all groups of pupils and very few are late to school. Pupils feel safe and know that the teachers and other adults in school will help with any problems if they arise. They are aware of what constitutes a dangerous situation and the older pupils fully understand the possible implications where computers might be used to cause harm.

A small number of parents and carers did raise concerns about the way in which the school deals with bullying. Some pupils felt that some bullying did take place, but said that instances were infrequent, and that they were sure that any that did occur would be dealt with effectively. Slightly more concerns were expressed about low level disruption in lessons and the school has been doing some work with the local authority behaviour team to help resolve this. During the inspection teachers used

firm, non-confrontational, strategies to deal with any issues that arose. Most parents are of the opinion that behaviour is good in the school and that the behaviour of a very small minority does not routinely disrupt the learning of the majority. When pupils are fully engaged in lessons, behaviour, including attitudes to learning, are at their best.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, ably supported by the acting deputy headteacher and senior leaders, has a clear vision and a purposeful approach to driving school improvement. Very successful professional development is improving the effectiveness of all staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The introduction of a new programme for the teaching of sounds and letters has been done extremely well, so that when teachers and support staff are delivering it at the same time, inspection evidence shows that it is done consistently and seamlessly across different groups of pupils. Since the last inspection science has become more investigative in approach and, as a result, is now more popular with pupils. The school's capacity for further improvement is good. The new headteacher regular monitors teaching and evaluation judgements are accurate.

Subject leaders monitor the work done by teachers, though this lacks some sharpness when evaluating the impact on pupils' achievement. The school works well with parents and carers and almost all state that they are well informed. This helps to make the school a very popular choice among parents. The governing body is highly committed and knowledgeable about the strengths of the school. They are supportive and yet challenge the school to improve it further.

The curriculum is good, particularly in literacy and numeracy, where pupil progress is particularly strong. In other subjects the opportunities for pupils to improve their attainment in basic skills is less evident. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is good, especially the spiritual element. The school's high standards means that pupils are developing a good sense of the difference between right and wrong and are extremely well equipped to work with people from different backgrounds. The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. It has systems for identifying groups and individuals who need additional support to close any gaps in their learning successfully, making Holy Family an inclusive school. Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements. The school is particularly vigilant in making sure that all visitors are checked before they can gain entry to the main school.

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 children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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 child's 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.
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 children 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 children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children's 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.



12 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Family RC Primary School, Darlington DL3 9EN

I want to thank all of you for the extremely friendly welcome that you gave us when we inspected your school. We found the time we spent talking to you, your teachers and other adults extremely enjoyable and rewarding. Here are the main things we found.

- You go to a good school.
- You make good progress and reach above average standards of attainment because you work hard and receive good teaching.
- You are well prepared for the future.
- Your school is led and managed well and all staff, including the governing body members, do all they can to help your learning.
- Most of you feel very safe and secure and think the teachers and other adults care about you. Only a very tiny number of you said you had problems at school.

In order to help you to do even better and to improve the school further, we have asked the school's leaders, teachers and the governing body to:

- give you more things to do that will allow you to develop your literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects
- improve your work by cutting down on the time teachers talk to the whole class and giving you more time to do your own work
- make sure that the tasks you are given are matched to what you can do, especially those of you who find learning easier.

I am sure you will all want to help make your school even better by continuing to work hard and playing together well.

Yours sincerely

Frank Cain
Lead inspector

