

# Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Fontenoy Street, Liverpool, Merseyside, L3 2DU

**Inspection dates** 20–21 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Children get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make rapid progress at the start of their time in school.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics as they progress through school and reach standards that are similar to national averages by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Different subjects are taught by different teachers so that pupils benefit from expert teaching and make clear progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Pupils benefit from teachers with good subject knowledge and well resourced classrooms.
- Lessons are interesting and pupils enjoy school. Pupils have good relationships with adults and each other and value learning.
- Pupils make friends easily, and share and play together well. They gain confidence and develop good social skills alongside their academic studies.
- The new leadership team has secured improvements to teaching and standards over the past three years, and are managing resources well.
- The governing body has a broad range of expertise that is used well to support and challenge the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attendance remains a concern for some pupils, and those with poorer attendance make less progress than others.
- Some aspects of teaching particularly the teaching of handwriting, expectations of presentation and insufficient time for pupils to respond to teachers' marking are limiting the quality of pupils' written work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 9 lessons or part lessons and saw lessons that were delivered by a combination of teachers and support staff across both key stages. One of the observations was carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke to pupils from two different year groups and spoke to pupils during lunchtime and break time. Pupils were listened to reading in all year groups.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, the parish priest, a representative of the local authority and the school family support worker.
- Pupils' work from the current academic year was seen across all subjects and the inspector scrutinised documents relating to pupils' progress, policies, management and safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the 24 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's own surveys.

## Inspection team

Rebecca Lawton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average primary school with an on-site nursery.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a small, but gradually increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is higher than average, and the proportion who are supported by school action plus and statements of special educational need are both above average.
- In 2013 the school met the governments' current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection there has been a significant change to the leadership and staffing of the school and several changes to the governing body.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the standards of presentation of pupils' work and quality of handwriting across the school.
- Improve the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work in all subjects to be as good as that of English and mathematics.
- Ensure pupils have time to reflect on advice given by staff and time to respond to suggestions for improving their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start Nursery and Reception with skills and abilities well below those expected for their age. Children start at several different points of the year and make outstanding progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach the skills expected for their age by the time they leave Reception. Those who consistently attend for at least three terms make the best progress. Irregular attendance patterns interrupt this progress for a small minority of children.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils' progress has in the past been slower in reading, writing and mathematics, but is now accelerating and is similar to what is expected. New programmes, changes to staffing and bespoke literacy and numeracy teaching and learning packages have secured good progress for all pupils. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language or who have special educational needs receive specific support and any gaps in their achievement are closed by the end of Key Stage 1 for the majority of pupils.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils make good and even progress year on year in a wide range of subjects and reach standards similar to national averages by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. There are no discernible gaps between the progress and attainment of any groups of pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium funding and all achieve equally well by the time they leave school. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring every pupil is given an equal opportunity.
- All pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and the proportions of pupils making and exceeding the progress expected of them are at least in line with the national average and in a few cases, slightly higher. The most-able pupils are stretched appropriately and standards at the end of Year 6 are rising each year.
- Pupils gain good social and cultural skills as well as academic success. They gain in confidence and by the time they leave are articulate, sensitive to other cultures and religions and are mature and sensible young people.
- Progress and achievement in writing has recently improved. However, standards of presentation and handwriting remain weak across the school and boys' writing in particular suffers from poor organisation and legibility. The school have tactics in place to address this weakness in Key Stage 2, and the pupils coming up through the school are gradually improving their standards of presentation, but this approach is yet to have a significant impact in all years.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The school has mixed age classes and shares the teaching of these groups so that pupils are taught by subject specialists, especially for English and mathematics. This ensures pupils make consistently good progress over time and have access to the best resources available.
- Good practice in teaching is shared well and teachers have a clear focus on providing quality learning for all pupils, and particularly encourage the development of literacy and numeracy skills in all lessons. Those capable of higher levels of achievement are appropriately challenged to make further progress, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching has improved over the last three years and is now good in all areas and in some cases outstanding. The Early Years Foundation Stage in particular helps children to make rapid progress in speech and language development so that all are able to start the curriculum in Key Stage 1 with the skills expected of them for their age.
- All pupils make equally good progress and for those who need additional support, this is of high quality and supports both academic and pastoral needs well. Teaching assistants and support staff are highly skilled. Pupils make accelerated progress in the sessions that are deliberately tailored to their needs, successfully closing the gaps in their knowledge and skills by the start of Key Stage 2.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are a particular strength of the school. Teachers skilfully

question pupils to challenge everyone to achieve, and pupils are confident enough to explore and investigate independently.

- Pupils enjoy learning and classrooms are welcoming learning environments. Homework and additional activities and events led by staff all enrich pupils' learning well. Pupils describe all teachers and support staff as friendly and welcoming and appreciate the quality of guidance they provide.
- Advice that teachers give to pupils when marking their work has been a recent focus for the school. In English and mathematics books there is a clear link between improved marking and better progress for the pupils. However, this is not yet the case in other subjects and pupils do not get time to make the improvements suggested by teachers in their books or to reflect on and correct their mistakes.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' attitudes to learning and to school are good. They like lessons and are keen to learn in all subjects. They value progress and genuinely celebrate each others' successes.
- There has been a reduction in the number of incidents of poorer behaviour over the past three years and disruption to learning is rare. Pupils behave well in lessons and respect each others' learning time and they respect teachers and support staff.
- Teachers have a consistent expectation of good behaviour in classrooms and at break and lunch times. Pupils are well-mannered and respectful. They are grateful for the help they receive from staff, including lunch time staff and they appreciate the healthy food that is prepared for them.
- Pupils make friends easily and are very welcoming to the significant number of pupils who join the school during the school year. They accept and are sensitive to other cultures and religions and welcome new friends into their community.
- Pupils have a good awareness of all types of bullying and how to report any incidents that might arise. They are confident that staff will address any issues they might have and are sensible and articulate when describing the behaviour they expect from their peers.
- Pupils' awareness and knowledge of cyber bullying and how to stay safe when using the internet is very advanced. They can describe a number of approaches to online safety, including mobile phone and social networking protocols.
- Attendance is an on-going battle for the school. A small but significant number of pupils are persistent absentees and this has a negative impact on their achievement and progress. The school is employing a wide range of tactics to try and improve attendance but this remains a concern.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- There have been considerable alterations to the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection. The new headteacher, deputy headteacher and new governors have equally high expectations as existing staff and have together led the school well through a period of significant change.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate and action plans are detailed. The headteacher and subject leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. This strong network of subject leaders has successfully secured improvements in reading, writing and mathematics.
- An appropriate focus on pupils' literacy skills has improved reading and writing. Progress is now even across the school and any gaps in the attainment of different groups of pupils are identified and closed more quickly.
- The school works well with parents, especially with those of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This good community relationship supports the academic progress and the well-being of pupils and so they benefit continually from what the school provides both inside

and outside the school gates. An on-site family support worker funded by the pupil premium supports hard to reach families and those in particular need, which has also improved pupils' wellbeing in particular.

- Performance management procedures are used well to successfully secure improvements to teaching over time and targets are clearly linked to pay.
- The provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is particularly well supported by the governing body, senior leadership team and the wider school community. Visiting experts, trips, assemblies and additional activities at lunch time and after school enrich and broaden pupils' experiences. The school exploits its city centre location to good effect, for example it has developed partnerships with the central library and World Museum and pupils have many opportunities such as singing in the town hall and participation in the Holocaust memorials.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and key skills in literacy and numeracy are developed well across all subjects.
- The school has a good relationship with the local authority. Training opportunities are used well and the school uses the local authority successfully as a 'critical friend' in helping to gauge how good it is and in decisions about how to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body supports and challenges the school well in all areas. There is a broad base of expertise that is drawn upon well to inform curriculum, financial and improvement planning and reviews. Governors attend a significant amount of training and dedicate time and energy to robust monitoring of the school's performance.
  - The governing body manages finances and resources well. The pupil premium funding and the primary schools sports funding are monitored closely for their effect on improving pupils' academic progress and their health and well-being. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet government requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104633
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	427244

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	144
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	James Doyle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Bannon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 June 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 2369505
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