

# Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Stonesby Avenue, Leicester, LE2 6TY

**Inspection dates** 16–17 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching in mathematics requires improvement as it is not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils, particularly the more able, make good progress. As a result, pupils' achievement in mathematics requires improvement.
- When planning work in mathematics, teachers do not take sufficient account of information about pupils' prior learning. More-able pupils are sometimes set work that is too easy for them.
- The quality of teaching varies too much in key Stage 2 and as a result, the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not consistently good.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use computers to support their learning in lessons.
- Until recently, governors have not been effective in holding the school to account for its performance and quality of teaching.

### The school has the following strengths

- The experienced headteacher is calmly leading staff to overcome barriers to learning and bring about improvement.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.
- The links between letters and the sounds they make, and reading, are taught effectively throughout the school.
- Behaviour is extremely well managed by all staff, helping pupils to enjoy school and feel safe.
- Additional government funding is being used effectively to promote good progress for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Pupils' achievements in writing are good following a recent focus on improving standards.
- There are examples of good and outstanding teaching for the school to build upon.
- Parents are supportive and most hold positive views about the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by nine teachers. Four lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the pupil council, a group of six Year 6 pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher and teachers with leadership roles.
- A discussion took place with a representative from the local authority about the support and advice it gives to the school.
- There were 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) by the end of the inspection. The inspectors took account of these and also sought the views of parents and carers they met in school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' recent and current progress, planning for school improvement, records of governing body meetings, and checks on teaching, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Joseph Peacock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Johnson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost half of the pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A quarter of all pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The ratio between the numbers of boys and girls in each class varies considerably.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a Nursery class each morning and one class of Reception-age children. Both these classes share the same spacious accommodation.
- The proportion of pupils supported by additional government funding through the pupil premium is high. In this school, it mostly applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are all broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Over the past two years, there have been significant staff changes and currently Key Stage 2 staffing is still not settled. Two teachers in the school are newly qualified and a senior leader is on maternity leave.
- More pupils than usual arrive at or leave the school during each school year.
- There is a morning club, organised and managed by the governing body, each school day. This is included in the inspection.

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

- Make teaching consistently good in order to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Raise standards in mathematics throughout Key Stage 2, especially for more-able pupils by:
  - increasing the proportion of good or outstanding teaching in mathematics
  - ensuring teachers take more account of information about pupils' prior learning when planning lessons so that the more-able pupils in particular are provided with appropriately challenging work.
- Ensure that the new computers are used effectively in lessons to support and encourage learning.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress is inconsistent in mathematics and for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in Key Stage 2.
- Work in pupils' books and the school's own assessment data show that progress in mathematics is variable in Key Stage 2 and requires improvement, especially for the more able. Many are not achieving the higher standards they are capable of because tasks do not take account of their prior learning and are not sufficiently challenging.
- There was little evidence of pupils using computers to promote basic skills in literacy or numeracy. Teachers are compensating well for the lack of classroom-based resources in English but not in mathematics where planned tasks do not always challenge pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are generally well supported in lessons throughout. However, their progress is uneven as they move through Key Stage 2 because the quality of teaching varies and this relates directly to the progress they make. National and school performance data show that most are not making as much progress compared to similar pupils in other schools by Year 6.
- Attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 as a steady upward trend has been maintained. For most pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 who have been in the school for at least two years, attainment is above average in English as reading and writing are taught effectively. This includes pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language. A recent focus on improving writing has seen standards rise significantly to well above average.
- The achievement of the group of pupils who left in 2013 compared to those who left in 2012 was lower. This reflects the relatively small class sizes and that in 2012 the large majority were girls compared to in 2013 when the large majority were boys. School data shows that from their starting points they all made similar progress.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve well. Their attainment is similar to that of other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils benefit from the close attention of teaching assistants in lessons who support them effectively.
- The school adopts a structured approach to the teaching of phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) and makes effective use of teaching assistants to create smaller groups in each year. This gives pupils more individual help to learn new work. There is a strong focus on teaching pupils to read and parents regularly hear children read at home. This has resulted in the standards achieved in the Year 1 phonics screening check being above those found nationally and overall standards in reading that are above average.
- Children enter the part-time nursery class with skills and understanding below those expected for their age, especially in communication skills, as there is a higher proportion than usual who have English as an additional language. Children enjoy a wide range of interesting tasks indoors and outside, such as continuing patterns of colour cards, illustrating the story of Jack and the beanstalk or sharing toy cars. The close individual contact with skilled teaching assistants or when they work in small groups promotes communication skills effectively. A similar pattern of close support continues in Reception, helping new arrivals to settle in quickly. Nursery and Reception-age children often work together with adults. This helps develop communication skills

quickly. Provision is well-organised with indoor and outdoor learning promoting skills in all areas of learning effectively. As a result, most make good progress. Very few have problems understanding instructions in English by the end of Reception. Most achieve the standards expected in all areas. This prepares them well for learning in Year 1.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because some teachers are not ensuring that pupils achieve consistently well. Too often in Key Stage 2, it was not effective enough to make sure all groups of pupils, including the more-able pupils in mathematics, made good progress.
- Teachers' expectations for the more-able pupils are not high enough in some mathematics lessons. Planned tasks are sometimes too easy and this limits pupils' achievement. Not all teachers in Key Stage 2 are taking proper account of pupils' known ability levels in mathematics when planning lessons to ensure tasks are sufficiently challenging.
- The school has a large computer suite but teachers have very few computers for pupils to use in the classroom to support their learning. A new batch of 30 computers are still in boxes waiting to be unpacked. Children in Reception make good use of the interactive display board to sequence numbers, but this kind of imaginative use of new technology is not routinely evident across the school.
- Teachers are beginning to collect, analyse and use data on pupils' progress much more effectively following support from external advisers on how to improve the assessment of pupils' skills and progress.
- A strength is the management of behaviour in lessons. Teachers and their assistants ensure pupils are attentive and closely supported if they are experiencing difficulty. There is a quiet, calm atmosphere for learning in most lessons, even when some pupils are not provided with tasks that engage and challenge them.
- In lessons where teaching is good or outstanding, teachers convey high expectations for pupils of all ability levels and plan tasks that challenge pupils and require them to apply their skills to extend their learning. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils described a hero as they developed an adventure story. The most effective teachers create a positive atmosphere for learning and pupils say that they enjoy lessons. 'Working wall' displays give pupils clear guidance on skills to learn and use in their tasks.
- Most teachers mark work carefully and give clear direction about how pupils could further improve. Guidance by teachers for pupils' written work has resulted in significant improvement and higher standards.
- Teaching assistants make a major impact on the quality of pupils' work. Additional staff are used purposefully and work effectively to support individuals and specific groups of pupils in most lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure 'phonics groups' are small and contain pupils of similar ability. This results in good progress in sessions and is successfully building pupils' essential reading skills.
- Children in the nursery and Reception classes benefit from good teaching and this ensures that they have a good start to school and make good progress. Here, teachers' planning consistently ensures skills in all areas of learning are practised in indoor and outdoor activities. This helps new skills to be learnt quickly.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. They sometimes find work too easy or too difficult and their attention wanders. This means that their progress is not always as good as it should be.
- Behaviour is generally good in lessons and in the morning club. Teachers and teaching assistants manage behaviour exceptionally well in lessons, ensuring that for most of the time, there is a calm atmosphere for learning. Pupils show respect to adults and to one another. They say that they enjoy the sessions before school when they can play a good range of games with their friends. However, some complained about the behaviour of 'a few' at break and lunch times. School records show that exclusions are rare.
- Behaviour is particularly good in nursery and Reception. Children share resources sensibly and enjoy playing on the adventure play equipment indoors and outdoors. Routines have been quickly established and all quickly respond to teacher or other adults' instructions.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders are proud that they have created a nurturing atmosphere. Pupils say that they feel safe and that 'everyone is friendly'. Those who spoke to the inspectors said that they are well looked after by staff.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They are clear about internet safety and know about cyber bullying. School records show that incidents of bullying or racist behaviour are extremely rare and always dealt with thoroughly by staff.
- The school has well-established procedures to ensure good attendance and these have resulted in attendance that is in-line with most other schools nationally. Pupils are usually punctual and there is hardly any persistent absence.
- Over half of the very few parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire had positive views about the school. They were equally split about recommending the school to others. Those spoken with during the inspection were much more positive. One parent said her children were happy and refused to move to another school. 'Staff are welcoming' and 'children love it here' were typical views.

**The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have not yet succeeded in making teaching, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning and achievement consistently good, particularly in mathematics.
- The disruption to staffing continues in Key Stage 2 and the depleted senior leadership team are finding it difficult to cope with other barriers to learning such as the above-average movement of pupils in and out of the school. In addition, there are insufficient resources to enable the effective use of new technology, such as computers, across the school.
- The headteacher, supported exceptionally well by one assistant headteacher and by external advice and support, is leading the work to ensure that all pupils should enjoy high quality learning and achieve their full potential. A senior leader has been 'borrowed' from a nearby school for part of the week to strengthen senior leadership. Already, relevant priorities for improvement have been identified. Inadequate teaching, for example, has been eliminated.

However, too much still requires improvement.

- The experience and expertise demonstrated by the leader responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage, who is on maternity leave, ensure children have a good start to school in the nursery and Reception classes. The school makes good use of outside specialists to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs from entry and right through the school but inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that their progress is also inconsistent, especially in Key Stage 2.
- The national standards for teachers are used by the headteacher to judge the quality of teaching, so accurate judgements are made on how well teachers are performing. Other staff with leadership responsibilities are becoming more involved in checking teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. These assessments inform decisions about teachers' pay.
- The school has not yet begun to prepare for the new national curriculum which is due to start this coming September. It will work in partnership with other local schools shortly to begin preparations for the new curriculum. However, a focus on writing has brought about significant improvement and reading is well taught. Pupils are provided with enjoyable additional learning opportunities beyond the normal timetable, such as after-school clubs for dance, films and mathematics. Residential visits add to pupils' enjoyment of school. The study of different faiths gives pupils an understanding of other cultures and contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The additional funding allocated to increase sporting opportunities is being used effectively to enhance the quality and breadth of physical education and sports provision. It has significantly increased participation by enabling coaches with specialist skills to motivate pupils and share their expertise with staff.
- Parents have a generally positive relationship with the school, and a majority expressed positive views in the inspection questionnaire. Attendance at the regular family learning courses organised by staff is good and parents are keen to help and support their child's learning. They correctly believe that staff treat every pupil equally, their children are safe and looked after well, and that discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils are well prepared for life in Britain and a global society.
- The local authority is supporting the school effectively. This has significantly improved the assessment of pupils' progress, for example. Governors benefit from regular training events, developing their skills and expertise.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well-informed by staff about how well pupils are achieving in comparison with others nationally. The governing body is starting to focus much more on helping the school to check how well it is tackling its identified priorities for improvement. Performance targets are set for the headteacher each year but until recently, governors have not been effective in holding the school to account for pupils' achievement and teaching quality. All current national requirements relating to employment and safeguarding are met. Governors carefully check the impact of the pupil premium and the funds allocated to provide additional sporting opportunities on the achievement and behaviour of pupils.

## 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>	120225
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicester
<b>Inspection number</b>	430699

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>	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elizabeth Harris
<b>Select</b>	Julia Christy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 June 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 2833135
<b>Fax number</b>	0116 2223615
<b>Email address</b>	office@holycross.leicester.sch.uk

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