

Holy Cross RC Primary School Aided

Coniston Road, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear, NE28 0EP

Inspection dates 10–11 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, well supported by the governors and all staff, has tackled weaknesses and brought about improvements in pupils' achievement. Test results in mathematics at Key Stage 2 have improved markedly, attendance has risen and pupils' progress is tracked more effectively.
- Good leadership and management are evident at all levels. Staff and governors are united in their clear vision for moving the school forward and consequently the school is well placed to improve even further.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. They are keen to take responsibility, show respect for adults and look after each other.
- From mostly below average starting points on entry to the Nursery class, pupils make good progress and achieve well to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years and quickly become confident learners.
- Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching over time. The pace of learning is usually brisk, resources used are interesting and varied, teachers are knowledgeable and explanations are clear.
- The curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well and ensures that they are prepared effectively for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement in writing at Key Stage 2 is not quite as good as that in mathematics and reading. Work in mathematics at Key Stage 1 does not always fully challenge all pupils.
- A small amount of teachers' marking and feedback is not of sufficiently high quality to give pupils clear pointers for improvement.
- The school website does not meet statutory requirements and currently does not keep parents fully informed about the school's work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons being taught to full classes and smaller groups of pupils of all ages from the Nursery class to Year 6 in a range of subjects, including mathematics and English. The headteacher and lead inspector made several shorter visits to classrooms together.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at pupils’ books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Twenty-six responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, as well as those from the school’s own parental surveys. The views of school staff were also gathered through a separate questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Pattinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or children in the care of the local authority for whom the school receives additional funding) is above average.
- A below average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, while an average proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average, while the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- A very small number of pupils receive specialist teaching off-site at the Grasmere alternative resource provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils achievement further by:
 - giving pupils of all ages, including children in the Early Years, more opportunities to develop their writing skills
 - ensuring all Key Stage 1 pupils are given challenging work in mathematics
 - checking that teachers' marking gives pupils consistently high quality feedback on how to improve their work.
- Ensure the school's website is kept up to date to meet statutory requirements, to keep all users well informed about the work of the school and to enable parents to better support their children's learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The calm and determined leadership of the headteacher has been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement. He is very ably supported by well trained senior and middle leaders who share his vision for further school improvement and together create a culture where learning can flourish. The school's view of its own performance is accurate and priorities for improvement, such as improving writing, have been clearly identified.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' progress are carefully monitored. Staff performance is well managed. Staff feel valued and morale is high. Productive partnerships with other schools and good support from the local authority ensure that staff have access to high quality professional development and good practice is shared.
- Extra funding, such as that for sport and that provided to support disadvantaged pupils, is used wisely. The school ensures that all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed. Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others have narrowed or been eliminated. Extra resources, staff training and specialist teaching in physical education have allowed pupils to participate in new sports and take part in competitions, which promote their healthy lifestyles and allows them to reach the performance levels of which they are capable.
- School leaders track pupils' progress carefully and use the results of assessments to ensure that pupils, parents and teachers know how well pupils are doing. They use assessments to identify quickly those who need extra help.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. Staff are well aware of child protection and risk assessment issues.
- The school has worked closely with partner schools to successfully implement the new curriculum and is now formulating a new approach to assessment following the removal of national curriculum levels. The curriculum, including thought provoking assemblies, promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A wide range of extra-curricular activities adds greatly to pupils' enjoyment of school. Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about dance festivals, performing Shakespeare plays, football successes and outdoor activities.
- The school website does not meet statutory requirements. There is insufficient information to keep all users well informed about the schools work. A lack of information about the curriculum means parents are less able to support their children's learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well trained and very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They share the clear vision of the headteacher for improving the school further and are fully involved in strategic planning. They are aware of how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally and closely monitor the quality of teaching and the performance of staff. Governors are clear about how good teachers are rewarded and sensitively support staff if their performance is weaker. Resources are well deployed and governors hold the school to account for the way in which the pupil premium funding is used. They are well informed about the implementation of the new national curriculum and how pupils' progress is assessed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most show kindness and respect for each other, for staff and for visitors. A caring ethos pervades the school. Older pupils are keen to look after younger children and are sensitive to the feelings of others.
- In lessons most pupils are keen to learn. They answer questions readily and take a pride in presenting their work neatly. They wear the correct uniform, are punctual and come well equipped for school.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. They have high expectations of behaviour whilst dealing sensitively with pupils whose behaviour is challenging.
- Pupils are well aware of social and moral issues. They clearly know the difference between right and wrong and understand that the school's system of rewards and sanctions is fair. Meaningful assemblies and close links with the Catholic Church promote pupils' spiritual awareness. The curriculum provides good opportunities for study of other faiths and cultures which promotes their tolerance and understanding of other cultures.
- Attendance improved markedly last year and is now above average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced and is now well below average.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents are confident that their children are kept safe and that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly. Pupils say the same. They feel safe in school and are happy to talk with staff about anything they find worrying. Pupils know there are different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. School records show that incidents of all types of bullying are rare.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet and mobile phones. They are keenly aware of the dangers of, for example, alcohol or drug abuse.

The quality of teaching is good

- Work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress over time. Varied tasks and the use of interesting resources engage pupils' interest so they produce a good amount of well presented, quality work.
- Pupils respond well to the knowledgeable teaching and clear explanations they receive. For example, Year 6 pupils demonstrated their good knowledge of numerical place value and were able to explain clearly how they were reducing a number to zero.
- Pupils' pace of learning is usually brisk because teachers' expectations are high and the work set is challenging. Pupils move swiftly from one task to the next and no learning time is wasted. Where work is not as challenging and fast paced, such as in mathematics at Key Stage 1, pupils' pace of learning is slower.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress because those who need it are given timely and sensitive extra help by both teachers and teaching assistants. Where pupils are taught in specific groups they make good progress in gaining basic skills in literacy and numeracy because of the high quality teaching they receive.
- Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and there are examples of high quality feedback given so pupils know exactly how to improve their work. A small amount of marking is not of such high quality and does not give pupils clear pointers for improvement.
- Pupils' understanding is assessed regularly during lessons and also by more formal tests each half term. Good use is made of this assessment information to plan future learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Work in pupils' books, displayed on walls and seen in lessons and the school's own assessment information all confirm pupils' good progress.
- Most children enter the Nursery class with skills which are below those typical for their age. They make good progress to reach broadly average standards in tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Consequently, they are well equipped with the literacy and numeracy skills needed to succeed in the next stage of their education.
- In 2013, the Year 6 test results were lower in mathematics than in reading and writing but the school quickly addressed this problem and results in mathematics rose markedly in 2014. Although pupils' progress remained good, the most recent test results for Year 6 were slightly lower overall and particularly in writing. The school now, rightly, has identified this as an area for improvement because pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is good. In 2013 this was most evident in reading, where the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was significantly above average. The most able pupils benefit from specialist tuition and challenging homework which helps them, for example, to reach the highest standards of which they are capable in tests in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils, for whom the pupil premium provides support, achieved slightly better than their classmates in tests in writing and mathematics and were less than a term behind them in reading. Compared to all pupils nationally these pupils were less than half a term behind in writing and mathematics and less than a term behind in reading. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others are narrow or non-existent because the school has spent the money wisely on providing extra staff to enable pupils who need extra help to have high quality teaching in specific groups.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, those from ethnic minority backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language all make good progress. They receive timely and well-focused individual support from teachers and teaching assistants if and when this is needed.

- The school receives regular detailed reports about the progress of the very small number of pupils who are educated off site. They make good progress, attend regularly, behave well and are kept safe.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children enter the Nursery class with skills below those typical for their age, but they catch up quickly. The school works closely with parents to ensure children have a smooth start to their education. After only a few days at school they settle into routines and learn to share, take turns, listen and follow instructions.
- All groups of children make at least typical progress and most make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes so they are ready for the next stage of their education. They reach standards close to average by the time they leave the Reception class although their writing skills are sometimes weaker than those in other areas. Children do not always have sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills.
- Children behave well and become confident learners as a result of the good teaching they receive. During the inspection, children were seen to develop their speech and language skills well as they took their dolls to the 'baby clinic'. They quickly learnt about appointment times and were introduced to new vocabulary such as 'weighing scales'.
- Staff provide interesting opportunities for children to learn both inside and outside the classroom. They assess children's progress carefully across all areas of learning.
- Good leadership and management of the Early Years ensures that children are kept safe and school policies are followed. Staff and resources are well deployed and the learning areas continue to improve.

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

Unique reference number	108623
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	449146

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	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Huscroft
Headteacher	Andrew James
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2011
Telephone number	0191 200 7357
Fax number	0191 200 7358
Email address	holycross.primary@northtyneside.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

