

# Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Witham

Maltings Lane, Witham, CM8 1DX

**Inspection dates** 18–19 March 2015

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

- This is a caring school; pupils look after each other and behave well in lessons and around the school. The school promotes all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well.
- Staff new to leadership roles are ambitious for the school and have been integral in raising standards in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are now on track to achieve average standards. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is rising this year, and pupils are on track to exceed national averages in reading, writing and mathematics in the Year 6 national tests.
- The governing body makes a good contribution to the school's effectiveness.
- Teaching and leadership in Reception are good. Children are enthusiastic to learn and play well together.
- Teachers feel valued by the leadership team. Leaders ensure they receive the training they need to improve their teaching. As a result, teaching is typically good and this is bringing rapid improvements in achievement.
- The school provides very effective support to help all groups of pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. Pupils, including the most-able pupils, disadvantaged and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, all now achieve well, particularly in reading and writing.
- Pupils feel safe in school and relationships with adults are positive. They are proud of their school and older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities.
- Pupils behave well. Pupils' attitudes to learning in Year 6 are exemplary.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all marking gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work, particularly in mathematics.
- Progress is not as rapid in mathematics as it is in reading and writing.
- The school's self-evaluation and planning for development is too general and does not identify precisely enough all relevant information. This limits the opportunities for governors to check on the impact of the school's actions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 18 lessons, four of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders and teachers, pupils and five members of the governing body. They held discussions with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school’s self-evaluation and development plan, policies aimed at keeping pupils safe, and information about the management of teachers’ performance.
- Inspectors analysed the views of the 86 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and also letters from parents. Inspectors spoke with parents during the inspection, in person and on the telephone.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by the 34 staff who returned a questionnaire.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 2.

Inspection team

Kelly Stock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Heather Housden	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years attend Reception full-time.
- The majority of pupils are White British, with others coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been a significant number of changes in staffing since the previous inspection, including a new deputy headteacher and a new member of the senior leadership team, both from September and a new inclusion team.
- The chair of the governing body is newly appointed.

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

- Improve progress in mathematics across the school by sharing the good practice evident in some year groups, and particularly by planning activities which match the abilities of all pupils and challenge the most able.
- Improve the quality of marking so that it consistently offers pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Improve leadership and management by including detailed and relevant information in school improvement documents, so governors can monitor the school's progress towards its key priorities more rigorously.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- New appointments to the leadership team have been highly successful and these individuals have contributed significantly to raising attainment. They are ambitious for the school, and their high expectations of pupils' achievement and of their behaviour have already had a positive effect since September. As a direct result of leaders' monitoring of other teachers' work and the impact of their own teaching, pupils are now very keen to learn and standards are improving rapidly.
- The headteacher has focused her efforts on ensuring the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school. The feedback she provides following lesson observations is effective in helping teachers enable pupils to make good progress in their learning. However, this feedback is not sufficiently evaluative to help teachers improve their practice to outstanding. Nevertheless, teachers and learning support assistants are given the opportunity to attend training to become outstanding teachers and they say this is valuable in supporting their development.
- The school's records of performance management are thorough and teachers do not receive a pay increase unless they meet their targets, which are linked to the progress pupils make.
- Leaders have identified the gaps between boys' and girls' learning as a priority, and have worked to make changes to the curriculum to engage boys' interest. This can be seen in the better standards boys are achieving in reading and writing across the school, from Reception to Year 6.
- The headteacher is committed to providing high-quality pastoral care for all pupils, and especially for the rising number of children who join the school with additional emotional, learning or language needs. She works closely with the new inclusion team and with the leader for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to ensure that these pupils receive effective support and have the same good opportunities to succeed as the others. Consequently, they enjoy school and make good progress.
- Parents, as evidenced in letters, phone calls and the entries in Parent View, appreciate the school's work, and in particular the difference made by the new senior leaders and inclusion team.
- The curriculum is good and pupils receive good support for their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong and how to treat others, including how not to discriminate. Pupils readily explained to inspectors how homophobic or racist language is offensive.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective in keeping pupils safe. Pupils say they feel safe at school and parents agree.
- The school uses the primary sports funding effectively, and its analysis of its impact on pupils' participation in sport, pupil confidence and staff's skills is exemplary. The leader for this aspect of the curriculum carefully evaluates the impact of the funding and includes qualitative and quantitative evidence to show value for money, its positive effects on pupil and staff skills, and how the improvements can be sustained.
- The governing body carefully monitors the spending of the pupil premium funding and the progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils receive good support that enables them to make good progress.
- The headteacher recognises the school is improving its use and understanding of data. In the past, teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment has been inaccurate and consequently the school is now starting to work with other schools to moderate pupils' work. The school is developing assessment systems, following the removal of the National Curriculum levels.

- The school's self-evaluation covers all aspects, but lacks sufficiently explicit detail, specifically about the school's development areas such as the quality of teaching of and pupils' attainment in phonics, and the local authority's recommendations to moderate assessment. As a result, governors do not always have all the information available to evaluate how quickly the school is improving.
- The local authority provides good advice, although sometimes this support has not always been acted on by the school in the past.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is good. The Vice-Chair and the new Chair of the Governing Body work closely together to good effect. They have a good knowledge of school data.
  - There is a good mix of skills and governors are confident in challenging the headteacher based on the information they are given. They are passionate about their school and are keen to provide the best possible care for the pupils.
  - Through their visits to the school, governors have a good understanding about the quality of teaching. They know where it needs to improve and what is being done to make this happen.
  - Governors have a good understanding of the school's funding and know how additional funding for school sports and for disadvantaged pupils is being spent.
  - The governors make sure that the school meets all safeguarding requirements and manage teachers' performance, including that of the headteacher, well. Governors ensure that key values of tolerance and respect for all are strongly promoted across the school.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is the case in lessons and around the school, and pupils and staff confirm behaviour is typically good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy coming to school. Attendance is average.
- The school caters for an increasing number of pupils with challenging behaviour and these children are managed well. During the inspection, inspectors did not see any low-level disruption in lessons. The school's thorough behaviour records show incidents are few and are followed up quickly by teachers and the headteacher.
- Pupils speak articulately and with pride about their school. Attitudes to learning in Year 6 are exemplary; pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning giving their very best to achieve their full potential. The questions they ask in lessons demonstrate a genuine thirst for knowledge and intellectual curiosity.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and help each other in lessons with patience and care. Routines are well established and pupils respond quickly to instructions so that no time is lost in lessons.
- Older children manage responsibility well as 'play leaders' and 'peer mediators' and look after the younger children at play time and know how to care for them without being told by the adults.
- The school's class behaviour and lunchtime logs are used effectively to record any incidents or bullying. This is monitored closely by teachers and the headteacher. Pupils say that behaviour has improved as a result.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Both pupils and their parents and carers confirm that pupils are kept safe while they are at school.
- Parents and pupils have previously expressed concerns of bullying. The school has responded by placing great emphasis on pupils' personal development and ensuring that pupils feel confident in different situations. Pupils trust their teachers and feel able to go to them if they have a problem.

- Pupils confirm that should bullying happen, it would be dealt with by teachers. They say systems like the 'friendship wheel', peer mediators and the 'worry box' are helpful. One pupil said that pupils who are different are 'the same as us and we need to treat them as we would like to be treated'.
- The school has good links with outside agencies to help make sure that pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable receive the additional support they need.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example, road safety and when using the internet.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good, particularly the teaching of reading and writing. The teaching in Year 6 is very effective and pupils are making rapid progress, enabling the most-able pupils to achieve the very highest levels in most subjects. In one lesson, the teacher acted as Iron Man and pupils interviewed her to write a biography. All pupils, including those with English as an additional language fully participated and asked thoughtful and intelligent questions.
- In some year groups, the teaching of mathematics is carefully planned to cater for different abilities of pupils, for example in one mathematics lesson observed, the teacher used song and movement to help pupils understand place value and the most-able pupils were given the opportunity to clarify their own understanding by helping the less-able. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- In Reception, teachers use a good range of strategies and resources to interest the children and consequently they are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning. Teachers model reading effectively, for example, when reading aloud they use their finger to track the text and encourage children to use the pictures to support their understanding. At the end of the day children were seen to engage in the school prayer, re-visiting the school mission statement and all children responded, demonstrating positive relationships with their teachers and each other.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers refer to the learning achieved the previous day and specifically focus on any gaps in understanding or confusion before moving on. In the majority of mathematics lessons, pupils are encouraged to check their work by using different methods, enabling them to apply their knowledge and skills using a variety of approaches.
- Learning support assistants are effective in supporting pupils in lessons and in small groups outside of the classroom.
- Most teachers mark work conscientiously and the new marking policy enables them to show pupils what they have done well and how to improve their work. However, not all teachers follow the policy consistently, especially in mathematics where feedback is not always as specific as it is in literacy.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment in Key Stage 1 was below the national average in 2014. However, pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are now making rapid progress and are on track to at least meet expected levels by the end of the key stage.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was average. However, better teaching of phonics in Reception and Key Stage 1 is now helping to raise standards, and pupils are making good progress in their reading and writing skills as a result.
- Attainment in Key Stage 2 is improving largely due to the new leaders and their impact on raising expectations and the quality of teaching. In 2014, pupils achieved in line with national averages in writing

and reading. In the current Year 6, standards are now above average and the teacher's own high expectations have encouraged pupils to become more ambitious and expect more of them. Consequently, these pupils are on track to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Attainment in reading across the school is good. Inspectors heard pupils reading with confidence and expression. Boys are particularly enthusiastic about their reading and the range of texts available in school. One boy said the library was the best thing about the school and pupils value being able to make recommendations for new books to the headteacher.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well compared to other pupils in the school and nationally, except for in the phonics screening check where they do not achieve as well as their peers. Several of these pupils also have additional language needs and are receiving extra support. The school is now tracking this carefully to ensure the gap closes. There were not enough disadvantaged pupils leaving Year 6 in 2014 to comment on their attainment without identifying them.
- The most-able pupils across the school are starting to make good progress, particularly in reading and writing and this again is due largely to the new leaders' impact on teaching and the introduction of new initiatives to support learning such as accelerated reading programmes, 'Bug Club' and 'handwriting hero'. Those in Year 6 are on track to achieve the higher levels in all subjects. This is due to raised expectations, and teachers are now planning different activities for them in lessons to meet their abilities and additional language needs.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve well. At times, they make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Progress in mathematics across the school has been a weaker aspect of pupils' achievement over time. However, work seen in pupils' books confirms standards are rising to ensure pupils achieve in line with national figures. Improvements in teaching and specifically how teachers now plan to support and challenge pupils of different abilities in lessons is leading to good and sometimes rapid progress.
- Girls currently achieve better than boys across the school, particularly in reading and writing. Leaders continue to address this through a more 'boy-friendly' curriculum.
- Previously, teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 have been too generous which has meant from their starting points pupils in Key Stage 2 do not appear to have made the expected levels of progress when in fact they have. The school is now working with other schools to ensure their initial assessments of pupils' starting points are accurate.

### **The early years provision** is good

- Children join Reception with levels of skills and knowledge that are typical for their age in most areas of learning. However, a significant number are below the levels typical for their age in language and communication and in fine motor skills, such as manipulating small objects. School records and inspectors' observations of children in lessons confirm that they make rapid progress in these areas of learning, which is enabling them to catch up.
- Teaching is good. Teachers think carefully about how to capture the boys' interests so they achieve as well as the girls.
- Leadership is good. The leader quickly identifies any areas needing additional support; for example, where focus on fine and gross motor skills remains weak, or where children need extra support with speech and language.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) has improved since September and is now good. Children who join the school speaking English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points.

- Children are happy and enjoy their learning. They play safely together and behave well. By the end of the Reception Year, they are well prepared to join Year 1.
- Parents are able to celebrate successes at home through 'Wow' cards detailing what the children have done well at home. These are displayed in the classroom and through the class email page.



## 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>	115199
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	456041

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	202
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joe Reidy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ann Kelliher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01376 513418
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