

Holy Trinity School

Birmingham Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 2BY

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders have ensured that the school has made rapid improvements since it became a free school in 2014.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the school.
- Pupils in the secondary phase make very rapid progress to achieve outcomes well above the national average at GCSE.
- Primary-aged pupils are making rapid progress from their low starting points.
- Teaching for most groups of pupils across all phases of the school is of a high quality.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are a significant strength. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around school.
- Pupils feel very safe and this is confirmed by parents. Arrangements for safeguarding are very robust.
- The curriculum, enhanced by after-school activities, is highly enriching. Pupils study two languages in primary from an early age.
Pupils are well prepared for the next phase in their learning or future career.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium promotes healthy lifestyles for pupils very effectively.
- Outcomes in early years have improved very rapidly from an exceptionally low base two years ago.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are also improving at a fast rate over time from a low start.
- Governors are thinking strategically in order to secure the school's future sustainability, for example by exploring future local partnership arrangements for the sixth form.
- Teaching does not challenge pupils consistently enough, including the most able, in lesson activities and in the presentation of work.
- Leaders and governors have not been strategic enough in targeting pupil premium funding and evaluating its impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Analysis of the progress of children in early years is underdeveloped. The outdoor area is in need of improvement and some activities do not challenge pupils sufficiently.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership of pupil premium by ensuring that:
 - there is greater strategic oversight of how the funding is spent
 - the evaluation of the impact of funding is more closely linked to outcomes of pupils
 - governors regularly challenge leaders on the impact of expenditure on special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve teaching and learning further by ensuring that:
 - there is a consistent level of challenge for most-able pupils in lessons
 - expectations for pupils' presentation of work are consistently high for all groups of pupils, including the most able.
- Improve provision further in the early years by ensuring that:
 - there is robust analysis of the progress children make from their starting points
 - the outdoor environment is improved
 - activities are more consistently challenging to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, supported by leaders and governors, has overseen rapid improvements in the short time that Holy Trinity has been a free school. The school has the capacity to improve further through the development of faculty leaders to enhance the work of senior leaders.
- Previous weaknesses in teaching, including in mathematics, have been addressed. Below-average progress in reading and writing in key stages 1 and 2 in 2016 has been tackled successfully as a key priority. Outcomes are rapidly improving in the sixth form and the early years from a low base. Leadership in special educational needs has been established recently and is developing.
- There is a relentless focus on improving teaching and outcomes for pupils. Leaders monitor teaching closely and this has led to changes, where necessary, and improvements. Leaders know where teaching is strong and where it requires further improvement. Although there is not an established link between pay and performance, teachers are held to account through the challenging targets which are set and are supported through an extensive training programme coordinated through a teaching and learning group.
- Leaders have ensured that, from their start at school onwards, pupils enjoy a wide and varied curriculum, enhanced by a rich array of extra-curricular activities, for example craft clubs, a forest school and athletics. Art, music and sport are significant strengths in the school. By reducing the time in the timetable for English and mathematics in primary to focus on a wider range of subjects, pupils are very well prepared for secondary and go on to succeed in a range of subjects at GCSE. The transition to secondary is further enhanced by the provision of specialist teachers in primary, for example in languages.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to support pupils who were below the expected levels in reading, writing and numeracy at the end of Year 6. The provision of a small additional mathematics group in Year 7, taught by a primary specialist, ensures that pupils make rapid gains in their learning during the year. Most have caught up with the expected standard for their age during the academic year.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extensive. Leaders have responded well to the changing nature of the pupil intake, which has led to the school becoming more diverse by gender, ethnicity and social background. Pupils have greater opportunities to mix with pupils who are different to themselves.
- Leaders promote British values well through lessons, form periods and the wider curriculum. In a mock election activity in Year 5, pupils were given the opportunity to develop their understanding of democracy and the rule of law. In their 'election manifestos', they showed their understanding of social justice and care for the environment.
- Pupils are advised well for their next steps in their future education, training or employment. All pupils who leave school go on to further education, training or employment, with a high proportion securing places in universities.

- Leaders plan, review and evaluate very extensively the impact of the PE and sports premium. Collaboration with the Wyre Forest Sports Partnership provides a wide range of sporting activities and training. Pupils spoken to were highly appreciative of the sporting opportunities on offer in lessons and out of school time, including an on-site swimming pool.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View or by free text agreed that the school is well led and managed and that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- The school has had regular monitoring visits from the Department for Education and an external consultant to ensure that there is external verification and challenge.
- Where leadership of an aspect or subject is split between several leaders or across phases, coherence is not sufficiently strategic across the whole school, for example in special educational needs and the pupil premium. Leaders have not sufficiently evaluated the impact of pupil premium funding or set out the rationale for funding decisions. Consequently, leaders and governors do not have enough oversight of how these groups are doing. Evaluation is not sufficiently linked to outcomes.
- Leaders do not ensure that teachers follow the school policy on written feedback as closely in foundation subjects as they do in core subjects.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly knowledgeable and offer a wealth of experience and expertise to the school, for example in education and safeguarding.
- Governors are very supportive of leaders. They are prepared to challenge, for example by not accepting excuses for the previously poor outcomes in early years and last year's low outcomes in writing in Year 6. They challenge leaders on the link between teacher pay and performance.
- Governors are strategic in planning for the future of the school to ensure that it remains financially viable. They are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses in the school and overall pupil outcomes.
- Governors are highly active in the life of the school through visits, learning walks, meetings with staff, consulting with parents and pupils and attendance at special events.
- Governors are rigorous in ensuring that leaders meet all their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding.
- Governors are not so well informed about overall outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have not held the school sufficiently to account for how the pupil premium funding is spent and its impact on pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders place a very high priority on safeguarding and the welfare of pupils. Since becoming a free school, they have transformed the culture and attitudes of staff, parents and pupils. Pupils reported that they feel reassured by the gates and fences and feel safe in all parts of the grounds. Parents spoken to and those responding to Parent View and by free text agreed overwhelmingly that their children feel safe in school. Parents spoken to said that safeguarding arrangements had improved significantly since Holy Trinity became a free school.
- Leaders carry out all required checks assiduously and ensure that policies and procedures are kept fully up to date. Designated leaders are well trained for their roles. Records of incidents are kept accurately and in a timely way. Arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff are rigorous. Risk assessments carried out, for example of forthcoming trips, are comprehensive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan lessons well, with clear learning objectives so that pupils know what they are expected to be learning. Lessons planned provide pupils with a wider experience beyond a narrow examination focus.
- Teachers have good knowledge of their subject and of their pupils, which allows them to plan work appropriately in most instances.
- The teaching of mathematics is focused on problem-solving challenges, for example in primary lessons where pupils had to solve a murder from mathematical clues or, in another instance, crack a combination code from number clues. In secondary lessons, pupils have the opportunity to work in greater depth in problem-solving.
- Teachers in both secondary and primary phases ensure that pupils have opportunities for extended writing, not only in English but in other subjects as well, such as languages and humanities.
- Teachers manage their classes well. They have high expectations of pupil conduct and behaviour. Classrooms are calm orderly environments and pupils are on task and engaged with their activities. Instructions are clear and little time is wasted in lessons, which move at a brisk pace. Lessons, especially in the secondary phase, are free from incidents of low-level disruption.
- Additional adults are deployed well, for example when pupils were calculating angles in small focus groups in a key stage 2 lesson. The support enables pupils, including those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to access tasks and enhance their learning.
- Teaching allows for pupils to take part in whole-class discussions, as well as in groups. Teacher questioning is highly effective.
- Guided reading lessons in key stage 1 support pupils to apply the phonics skills they have acquired to tackle new and less familiar words.

- A large majority of parents responding to Parent View and by free text said that their children are taught well in school.
- Teachers systematically check pupils' learning in lessons and adapt their teaching accordingly.
- Occasionally, the most able pupils are held back from starting challenging work more quickly as teachers wait to ensure that all pupils are secure in their learning.
- Teachers do not consistently set high demands for the presentation of work, including for most-able pupils, in both primary and secondary lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils reported that bullying, derogatory language and racist or homophobic name-calling were exceptionally rare. According to pupils, the school takes a very serious approach to the very few incidents that occur and deals with them very firmly.
- Pupils said that they felt very safe in all parts of the building and school grounds. They felt that security is tight and they are well informed about how to protect themselves from potentially harmful situations, for example when using the internet.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The minute's silence for the recent terrorist atrocities was observed impeccably by pupils. Pupils also have opportunities for reflection during religious education lessons and assemblies, for example on mental illness and how people of all ages, including young people, can be affected.
- Pupils show an interest in learning about different cultures and lifestyles, for example in their enthusiasm for learning modern languages and younger pupils' celebrations of 'India day'.
- Representatives on the school council and student action group are elected. Pupils have contributed towards the development of the behaviour policy.
- Pupils have enjoyed a wide range of trips, including the choir undertaking an overseas tour and theatre and museum trips to other parts of the UK, including London and Greater Manchester.
- A primary pupil sports council helped to organise a swimming gala and sports days.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- In lessons, pupils are eager to learn and show interest and enthusiasm for their work, even on occasions when they are given less demanding work. They listen and respond to each other very well and share materials generously, as well as providing mutual support for each other.
- They show an inquisitive nature in the questions they ask, such as 'What are snap

elections?’ and ‘Is it compulsory to vote?’ They listen well to each other and willingly take part in group work, learning to work as a team.

- Pupils are confident, self-assured and articulate in expressing their views. The school council, while having a highly positive view of the school overall, are not shy in expressing their views. They think, for example, that improvements could be made in the rewards system, which they feel is underdeveloped.
- Pupils move around the building in an orderly fashion. They are polite and courteous, holding open doors for visitors.
- Incidents of low-level disruptive behaviour were conspicuous by their absence in secondary and sixth-form classes and very rare in primary classes, where very occasionally pupils lose focus and start to daydream. They quickly settle back to their work, however.
- There are very few incidents of exclusion.
- Nearly all parents responding to Parent View and by free text said that the school makes sure that their children are well behaved. Pupils spoken to said that behaviour was very good throughout the school in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Despite the constraints of the small playground, pupils conduct themselves well. Older pupils look out for the welfare of younger ones.
- Pupils are very proud of their work and their achievements and were keen to show inspectors examples of their writing or talk about their own initiatives, for example raising over £300 for a local charity.
- Rates of attendance across all year and pupil groups have continued to improve since 2015, when they were below average, especially for disadvantaged pupils. They are now above average and rapidly improving for disadvantaged pupils. Rates of persistent absence, which were above average in 2015, have now significantly reduced. This is as a result of dedicated pastoral staff working closely with parents to promote regular attendance. For example, there is a ‘walking bus’ each morning for pupils and rewards are issued for regular attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils currently in both primary and secondary phases, including middle-attaining pupils, are making rapid progress across a range of subjects and year groups, especially in writing. Writing has been a particular focus for the school after the previous year’s low rates of progress in Year 6. Evidence in pupils’ books indicates that this is being tackled successfully, with pupils in Year 6 on track to achieve high outcomes this year.
- Pupils in secondary, including girls and low-attaining pupils, are doing particularly well in English, languages and humanities, as well as in mathematics, where there is now more settled leadership and teaching.
- Indicative outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 for 2017 are high. Work in pupils’ books in Year 2 shows that they have made strong progress from starting points well below average at the end of Reception.

- Most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have made rapid progress in their learning across key stages 1 to 4. Occasionally in lessons, they are held back from moving on to more challenging work more quickly.
- In the most recent tests and assessments in Year 6, attainment was above average for pupils overall in reading, writing and mathematics and above average for most-able pupils in reading and writing. Progress from the end of key stage 1 was below average in writing, as it was for middle-attaining pupils. There were too few disadvantaged pupils or pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to report on their outcomes in Year 6 last year.
- In the most recent examinations at GCSE, progress for pupils from the end of key stage 2, including those who were most able, was significantly above average overall and especially in English and science. Attainment was well above average in English, mathematics, science and humanities and in line with the national average in languages. There were too few disadvantaged pupils or pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to report on their outcomes in Year 11 last year.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View and by free text said that their children were making good progress.
- Pupils' outcomes in phonics, based on the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 1, have been below average in recent years but there is a rapidly improving rising trend.
- All pupils who left in 2016 have gone on to further training, education or employment. A significant proportion of sixth-form leavers secured places at universities.
- Most of the small number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have made rapid gains in their learning during this academic year. The extent to which they are on track from their starting points from the previous key stage to diminish the difference in the attainment gap with their peers is more variable, especially for those who have joined the school late from other settings.

Early years provision

Good

- There have been rapid improvements in the leadership of early years since the current leadership was established two years ago. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception has increased rapidly since 2015, when it was exceptionally low.
- Evidence from learning journeys indicates that children have made good progress from their starting points in September 2016. This is particularly so in writing, where children apply their phonics skills well to move from writing recognisable letters to forming recognisable words and sentences. Most-able children are now using capital letters and full stops. Teacher-led activities focusing on writing have led to improvements in children's outcomes.
- Provision in the early years environment has been transformed from a previous formal setting to one where free flow play is now a regular occurrence. Learning areas and resources inside the classroom are attractively presented.

- There is a wide range of activities planned around themes such as Remembrance Day and Chinese New Year, which enable children to experience a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Links between home and school are strengthening through learning journeys and an online system to enable communication between parents and staff. Regular meetings are held with parents to encourage them to support their children's literacy and numeracy development at home.
- Transition arrangements on entry to and exit from early years are developing through increased information sharing. Pre-school settings are visited regularly and there is close collaboration with Year 1 teachers.
- Occasionally, children are set low-level tasks with little opportunity to develop their language and numeracy skills.
- The outdoor environment requires further development as there are limited opportunities for children's creative development.
- Analysis of the progress children make over time is less well developed, although evidence in learning journals indicates that they have made rapid progress since their starting points in September 2016.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Strategies introduced through new leadership have already started to have a favourable impact on outcomes for students. Outcomes in 2017 are set to be an improvement compared to the previous year, as a result of consistently good teaching and support. Current students have made good progress from their starting points. Students in Years 12 and 13 have made rapid progress from their starting points.
- Completion rates were very high in 2016, when all students completed their main study programme. All leavers in 2016 went on to further education, employment or training. A programme including outside speakers from universities and local businesses prepares pupils well for thinking about their next steps.
- The sixth form is growing in size through the recruitment of more pupils from key stage 4 and more international students.
- Students have the opportunity for a week's work experience in Year 12.
- Behaviour and personal development are very good. Students are fully integrated within the life of the school. Attendance rates are very good and behaviour is of a very high standard.
- All of the small number of students who resat English and mathematics GCSE passed their examinations in 2016. Outcomes were below average for the very small number of pupils who took A levels in 2016. Students last year made below-expected progress from the end of key stage 4. The proportion of pupils achieving the highest possible grades was very low.

School details

Unique reference number	141105
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10032558

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	540
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Marlow
Headteacher	Pamela Leek-Wright
Telephone number	01562 822 929
Website	www.htsfreeschool.co.uk/
Email address	office@holytrinity.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Holy Trinity is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are girls is 66%, well above the national average, as a result of the school's legacy. Holy Trinity was previously an independent Catholic girls' school and then a multi-faith international school which admitted boys from 2010. It became a free school in 2014.
- About 60% of the pupils have joined the school since 2014. The primary phase has

doubled in size since 2014. A higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have joined more recently and were not present at the school at the start of their education.

- The chair of the governing body was appointed after Holy Trinity became a free school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is about one in eight, which is slightly higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils in the school are White British, although there is a larger proportion of minority ethnic pupils in early years than in older year groups.
- Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very low, although rising. About 10% of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- There is a very small number of looked after pupils in school.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school midway through a key stage is below average.
- There are two pupils in alternative provision.
- Based on their 2016 results, the school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum standards expected for pupils' learning and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies and free schools should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons, all of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or other senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and other activities.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 10 were taking internal examinations during the inspection and those in Years 11 and 13 were taking external examinations. Consequently, inspectors undertook extensive scrutinies of pupils' work, especially in the secondary phase.
- Inspectors heard pupils read during lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, other members of staff and three groups of pupils.
- Inspectors met the chair of the governing body and three other governors.
- Inspectors met a group of parents. In addition, they took account of 159 Parent View free-text responses and 163 responses to the online questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including those relating to the school's self-evaluation, governing body minutes, improvement plans and school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also considered behaviour and attendance information and policies and procedures relating to special educational needs, pupil premium funding, PE and sports premium funding, safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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