

# Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Dean Lane, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 1DB

## Inspection dates

14–15 November 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- This school has improved significantly since its previous inspection. The key driver has been the headteacher, ably supported by her assistant headteacher
- Their determination, enthusiasm and skill have successfully eradicated past weaknesses in teaching and learning. As a result, pupils' outcomes have improved.
- Progress in reading and mathematics was significantly above average in the most recent published key stage 2 assessments. Progress in writing was average.
- Governors have made a significant contribution to the improvement journey and are justifiably proud of the school. They offer an impressive level of expertise and hold senior leaders to account for the effectiveness of the school.
- Children get off to a very good start in Reception. A well-thought-out learning environment, coupled with high-quality teaching, result in good progress from their starting points. The quality of teaching is high and this ensures that they are fully prepared for Year 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress because they are supported well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are effectively supported to help them to make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and ensure that their pupils are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need for the next steps of their education.
- Most teachers follow the school's feedback policy and provide astute advice for pupils on how to improve their work. However, leaders know that not all teachers adhere to this policy. This results in some inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' written work.
- Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. Some pupils do not take sufficient care in their work.
- A very positive ethos pervades the school. Pupils show respect for each other, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are well prepared to take on their role as citizens in modern Britain.
- Leaders' actions to improve attendance have paid off. Current attendance for pupils is now in line with the national average.

## **Full report**

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

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

- Continue to improve teaching, particularly of writing, so that pupils make consistently good progress and reach higher standards by:
  - consolidating all the new writing initiatives and ensuring that all teachers have the highest expectations of their pupils
  - making sure that all teachers routinely follow the school's agreed policy for providing feedback
  - ensuring that all pupils take sufficient care when completing written tasks.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has demonstrated an unswerving determination to provide the best possible education for all pupils who attend Holy Cross. She has been very well supported in this by her assistant headteacher. Together they have successfully driven through substantial school improvements which have had a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is rooted in leaders' scrutiny of evidence across the school. They accurately pinpoint where improvements have been secured and where further improvements are needed. Leaders regularly seek advice and secure improvements swiftly.
- Senior leaders have developed a culture of high expectations in relation to pupils' conduct and learning. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress across all aspects of their education. Staff training and well-targeted support from their local cluster of Catholic schools have improved the effectiveness of teaching. This has been supported by an experienced headteacher, and specialists from the local authority. Leaders use lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books to check on the impact of planned developments and to provide targeted advice and guidance. Staff morale is high because they feel valued. They appreciate the investment that has been made in their training and well-being.
- The role of middle leaders has been strengthened and this has contributed to the improvement in pupils' outcomes across the school. This has been achieved through highly focused and specific training received from their local cluster of Catholic schools and their school improvement partner. The middle leaders have a better understanding of the impact their work has on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Most teachers give feedback in line with the school's assessment policy and pupils use this effectively to improve their learning. However, leaders are fully aware that not every teacher adheres to the school's feedback policy. This is an important focus in the current monitoring programme.
- Arrangements for managing teachers' performance and setting targets link successfully to the school improvement plan. Leaders hold teachers to account for pupils' progress and reinforce teachers' shared responsibility to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Any underperformance is challenged with urgency and rigour.
- The curriculum is broad and offers pupils a breadth of learning activities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in a wide range of subjects. It is organised through topics and high-quality children's books. The work in pupils' books shows that they make good gains in their learning in a range of subjects, such as science, history and geography. Pupils' learning is enriched beyond the classroom through a range of activities, such as after-school clubs, educational visits to local museums and places of historical interest, and residential trips.
- Leaders actively develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education effectively. The school motto to, 'treat others as we wish to be treated', is at the heart of its work in developing values such as respect, kindness and honesty. Pupils are taught explicitly about British values so they are well prepared for living in the diversity

of modern Britain. For example, they learn about religious values and understand that talking about different cultures can be, as they describe, 'emotive'. Pupils are also involved in many democratic processes in the school, such as electing school council members and house captains.

- Leaders and governors use additional funding effectively to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The funds are spent in a variety of ways, such as providing breakfast club, pastoral support and employing additional adults in class to mentor individual pupils.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is led well. The funds available are used effectively to meet the pupils' specific needs, including both academic and personal needs. For example, leaders work closely with other professionals, such as play therapists, to support these pupils. As a result, this group of pupils make good progress.
- The physical education (PE) and sport funding is used effectively to enhance the pupils' experiences. Consequently, there are more opportunities for pupils to participate in sporting activities both at school and in local competitions. This helps them to have healthy lifestyles. PE and sport funding has also been used well to fund specialist training for teachers and facilitated the employment of additional sports coaches to support pupils during lunchtimes.
- Leaders and governors have received strong support and rigorous challenge from their local authority school improvement partner. Visit notes over the past year demonstrate the insightful evaluations of the progress that the school has been making and identifies clear steps needed to take for further improvement.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school and their children's progress. The views of many parents can be summed up by one who explained, 'This school has transformed because of the headteacher's leadership over the past two years'.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are determined to ensure that the school provides the best standard of education for its pupils and are highly effective in their work to achieve this. They are very clear about their roles and responsibilities and use their professional expertise extremely well to benefit the school. For example, some use their knowledge about the school's published assessment information to challenge the headteacher. Others use their legal background or social care experience to advise other members of the governing body.
- Visits to school are carefully planned around the priorities in the school improvement plan. Governors see first hand the impact of developments to improve teaching and learning. Consequently, they are very knowledgeable about what is going well and what still needs improvement.
- Leaders and governors work as a close team to set aspirational targets for school improvement and identify precise actions which will help them to achieve this. This provides leaders with the support they need to secure swift improvement across the school.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are carried out and recorded carefully. Leaders ensure that staff receive up-to-date training in all aspects of safeguarding. Consequently, they are knowledgeable about the signs to look for that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm, and are clear about the school's internal procedures for raising concerns about a pupil, should they need to. They are well trained on safeguarding matters, such as the 'Prevent' duty, female genital mutilation, child exploitation and children missing from education
- Leaders' liaison with external agencies and parents is highly effective in ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for. Parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire agree that their children are safe at school and well looked after.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about all aspects of safeguarding and meet regularly with the designated safeguarding leader to monitor the school's internal procedures.
- Leaders make sure that the school's physical environment is safe and well cared for. The site manager takes good care of the grounds to ensure that the site is kept secure.
- Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils understand the dangers associated with using the internet. They report how safe they feel when they are at school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Leaders continually improve the quality of teaching through setting targets for teachers, providing effective training and rigorously monitoring pupils' learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure across a wide range of subjects. They ensure that pupils understand the specific terminology of the lessons they are learning and skilfully question pupils so that they are challenged to achieve their best. High-quality questioning from the teacher encourages pupils to reflect carefully about what they are learning.
- Pupils learn in a supportive and stimulating environment. They are encouraged to help each other when they learn something new. This helps them to consolidate the knowledge and fully understand the concepts they are learning. It also boosts pupils' self-confidence and helps them to develop their independence as learners.
- Reading is given a very high priority in the school and is taught effectively. The wide range of high-quality children's books displayed around the school and in classrooms promotes the joy of reading. Teachers place a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils understand what they are reading.
- The teaching of phonics is consistently strong and this ensures that younger pupils are able to confidently work out unfamiliar words.
- The work in pupils' mathematical books shows that they are taught mathematical concepts and skills well. Teachers ensure that they use the knowledge they have gained during the week to solve problems during 'figure it out Friday' activities.
- A new cross-curricular approach to the teaching of writing has led to notable

improvements in pupils' confidence when applying punctuation and grammar skills.

- Teachers' assessments of what pupils know are robust and the precise tracking system allows teachers to identify which pupils are in danger of falling behind. They use a wealth of information to support their judgements and incorporate this effectively in their planning. This enables teachers to set work at the right level for pupils and implement bespoke support quickly.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported in their learning during lesson time by their teachers and the well-trained learning support assistants.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and show this through their polite and cheerful natures. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are positive. They think carefully about their work and they are eager to please their teachers by working hard.
- Although most pupils present their work neatly, there is a significant minority who do not take sufficient care when completing their written tasks.
- Staff continually promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school community embraces its values of love, kindness, respect, cultural diversity and citizenship. Consequently, pupils show respect for each other and people's differing views, beliefs and cultures. They willingly take on additional roles and responsibilities around school, such as setting up the hall for collective worship and delivering the lunch details. This helps pupils to develop their leadership skills.
- The school provides pupils with a vast range of opportunities to expand their social development. Regular opportunities for parents and carers are built into the school year to enable pupils to celebrate with them what they have been learning. This improves pupils' confidence and helps parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning in school.
- Pupils develop a strong sense of social responsibility through raising funds for children who are less fortunate than themselves. This shows that they are caring and empathise with children beyond their community. Pupils are very reflective, as shown in the work produced by Year 6, based on Remembrance Day.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for in school. They are taught how to stay safe through a range of activities, such as assemblies, visitors and workshops. They talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe online. Children in Reception follow safety rules well when they are playing outside.
- Leaders ensure that the pupils are safe and well cared for when they attend alternative provision.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, respectful and extremely well mannered. They are true

representatives of the school who take great pride in attending Holy Cross. Their achievements and individual talents are celebrated, which boosts their confidence as learners.

- Pupils conduct themselves very well around the school. Pupils' behaviour during playtimes and lunchtimes is positive and safe. They have lots of fun interacting with their friends and engaging in healthy activities. Conflict is rare and the very few incidents of anti-social behaviour are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are constructive and this contributes to a purposeful learning environment in lessons. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare because of teaching staff's high expectations of behaviour.
- Leaders and governors monitor behaviour across the school and records show that behaviour has steadily improved. Pupils, staff and parents all agree with this.
- The effective strategies introduced by leaders to support individual pupils identified as having poor attendance have had a positive impact on reducing absenteeism. Similarly, the proportion of pupils arriving late for school has decreased significantly.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- The school's own information and robust checks on pupils' work show that rates of progress have improved vastly over the past two years. Leaders have successfully diminished differences in the progress made by boys compared with that of girls.
- In the most recently published national assessments at the end of key stage 2 for reading, pupils' progress was significantly above the national average. This is due to the introduction of a more systematic approach to teaching key skills and the use of improved reading resources. Pupils read for pleasure and talk enthusiastically about the books they read together in class. They demonstrate a good understanding of the context of the books they are reading.
- In the most recently published national assessments at the end of key stage 2 for mathematics, pupils' progress was also significantly above the national average. Leaders believe that their focus on providing challenging problem-solving mathematical tasks has deepened pupils' understanding of concepts and enabled them to achieve well.
- Pupils' results in the assessments at the end of key stage 2 for grammar, punctuation and spelling showed that above-average progress was made. Assessments for writing indicated that average progress had been made. Leaders are rightly focusing on developing the pupils' writing skills further. Teacher and pupil expectations have been raised with the implementation of additional weekly writing opportunities and increased assessment tasks.
- The proportion of pupils who met age-related expectations at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was average. Pupils who had reached a good level of development in Reception made steady progress during key stage 1 and exceeded age-related expectations. The headteacher is ensuring that this cohort makes accelerated progress in Year 3.
- In the most recent Year 1 phonics check, results were average. Considering the high proportion of pupils in this cohort with SEN and/or disabilities, their progress was good. Those pupils in this year group who reached a good level of development in their



reading and writing at the end of their Reception Year secured their phonic check.

- The above-average proportion of children who secured a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year demonstrates the high quality of the early years provision.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress throughout the school. Additional support is typically effective and helps pupils to move their learning on. It is well matched to meet pupils' individual needs and accelerates the progress being made.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is gradually diminishing because additional funds are used well. School assessment information and the work in these pupils' books show that they make good progress. Nevertheless, leaders are not complacent and remain firmly focused on the acceleration of disadvantaged pupils' progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good gains in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. They are supported well when tackling technical vocabulary.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The highly effective leadership of early years has been supported by expertise from a local outstanding nursery school. This has led to secure and sustained improvements in provision, teaching and outcomes since the previous inspection.
- All welfare requirements for early years are met and safeguarding is effective. Children settle quickly into routines and really enjoy their learning activities. Children's relationships with teaching staff are extremely strong and this enables them to feel happy, safe and well cared for.
- Children demonstrate good attitudes towards their learning. They share resources well and demonstrate perseverance in their writing. The children are inquisitive young learners who interact sensibly and calmly with each other.
- Most children enter early years with skills below those typical for their age. Teaching staff are aware of children's different starting points. They provide learning activities which help children to develop their skills and knowledge at a good, and often very good, rate in a range of areas. Observations and assessments are used well to inform the activities that are planned to meet their individual needs. By the end of Reception, children are well prepared to move into Year 1.
- The classroom provides a bright, vibrant and exciting learning environment. Well-thought-out activities are provided for children to undertake by themselves or under the direction of the staff.
- The outdoor area is used particularly well as an extension of the indoors. It is very well equipped with a stimulating range of interesting learning opportunities to develop children's skills in all areas of development.
- The teaching of reading, writing and number skills is particularly effective. Teaching staff effectively model new vocabulary and this helps children to expand their knowledge and skills. For example, the 'post office' role-play area is used very well to promote mathematical terminology, such as 'big' and 'small' and 'heavy' and 'light'.



- Parents have overwhelmingly positive views of early years. They particularly value the weekly sessions where they can stay and work with their children.

## School details

Unique reference number	109244
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	10020318

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Fayers
Headteacher	Jo Kingston
Telephone number	01173 772199
Website	<a href="http://www.holycross.bristol.sch.uk">www.holycross.bristol.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:holycrossp@bristol-schools.uk">holycrossp@bristol-schools.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–4 November 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher took up her post shortly after the school was placed in special measures in November 2015.
- The school serves a very culturally and socio-economically diverse community.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs funding is above average. There are currently no pupils attending the school with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

- Children in early years are taught in one class on a full-time basis.
- A breakfast club is run by the school.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision for a weekly session at a French school and the Bristol Dyslexic School.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes during the inspection to observe teaching and learning, many more than once. All of these visits were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- When visiting classrooms, inspectors observed parts of the lessons that were taking place, and focused on gathering evidence about what teaching and learning are typically like over time. This included scrutinising the work in pupils' books and on display, talking with pupils about their learning and listening to them read.
- Inspectors took the school's assessments of pupils' progress into account and considered leaders' and external visitors' evaluations of the quality of teaching over time.
- Inspectors met formally and informally with a wide range of people to gather further evidence. This included pupils, parents, staff, school leaders, governors and the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of the school's documentation and records, including particular scrutiny of those relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. There were no free-text responses. Views from parents, staff and pupils were also gathered informally and formally throughout the inspection and considered alongside the evidence.

## Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Aaron Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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