

Inspection of a good school: Holy Cross CofE Primary School

Ruth Street, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL1 3EZ

Inspection dates:

17–18 December 2019

Outcome

Holy Cross CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is a happy place where staff and pupils share a passion for learning. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They behave well and work hard. Governors and staff share leaders' high expectations. They are ambitious for all pupils to succeed, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They said that members of the pastoral team help them to sort out any arguments. They are confident that if bullying occurs it will be dealt with quickly. Pupils said that there will always be someone to talk with if they have any worries.

Pupils contribute to the life of the school. Members of the school leadership council have organised games at lunchtime. Older pupils hold positions of responsibility such as members of the 'Ethos Committee' or as prefects. Pupils enjoy the many clubs and activities that they take part in. These include breakfast club, craft club and the choir.

Leaders provide a wide range of experiences for pupils to enhance their learning. These include visits to museums, the seaside and residential trips. Visitors to school from other faith groups and the emergency services promote positive links with the local community. This contributes to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed a curriculum that stirs pupils' curiosity about the world around them. The curriculum provides many opportunities and experiences that help pupils to overcome the barriers to learning that they may face. Leaders know the knowledge they want pupils to learn and the order they want it to be taught. Training enables most teachers to deliver the curriculum effectively. However, some teachers are not as secure in their subject knowledge for teaching other subjects. This is because they have not received the specific training for these subjects as part of the school's cycle for development. As a result, these teachers are less confident when teaching these subjects.

Leaders have appropriate plans in place to overcome this issue.

Developing children's confidence and spoken language is a priority. Most children speak English as an additional language. When children, including those with SEND, start school their communication skills are weak. Many of them start school with a limited experience of songs, stories and rhymes. Children soon settle into an environment that is rich in vocabulary. Children enjoy listening to their favourite stories. They quickly learn the sounds that letters make. The books that they read match the sounds that they are learning. Leaders work with parents and carers so that they know how to help their children with their reading at home. An increasing proportion of pupils meet the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check, including pupils from low starting points. Pupils who fall behind are given the help that they need to catch up.

Pupils know how important reading is. They explain how reading helps them to learn new concepts in other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 talked with enthusiasm about their favourite authors and the books that they have read. Pupils understand the powerful impact that vocabulary can have on the emotions of the reader. Pupils are confident readers. They read with fluency and expression. They described the visit to school from a popular children's author as 'inspirational'. A high proportion of pupils achieve well in reading at the end of Year 6.

Children in the early years practise their understanding of numbers through focused activities. The outdoor provision is used well to enhance their understanding further. Pupils in key stage 2 have a secure knowledge of place value and key mathematical ideas. This allows pupils to apply their knowledge confidently when tackling new learning in mathematics and other subjects. Pupils achieve well in mathematics over time.

Teachers quickly identify why pupils are struggling with their learning. They give them the help they need to catch up. Disruption in lessons is rare because teachers meet pupils' needs and interests. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning help them to achieve well.

Pupils with SEND are supported well to succeed. Learning is carefully planned to meet their individual needs.

Most pupils achieve well in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils explained confidently how they use what they already know to help them when learning something new. For example, in Year 4, pupils' previous work in mathematics helped them to successfully interpret graphs about rainfall as part of their geography topic. Pupils in Year 6 told me how a previous study of the rainforest helped them to understand their recent study of different climate zones around the world.

Leaders enhance pupils' experiences beyond the classroom through the wide range of opportunities they provide. Younger children visit the local park. Older pupils talked excitedly about crossing the river using stepping stones on their trip to Malham Cove. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to perform for local elderly residents as part of the school choir. Pupils also take part in lots of sport activities.

Governors use their knowledge and skills well to hold leaders to account. They play an

active role in the life of the school. Governors and leaders are mindful of the pressures that staff face. Staff appreciate their actions and the support that they receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are vigilant. Checks are carried out to make sure that all adults in school are safe to be with pupils. Training ensures that staff know the signs of risk to look out for. They understand what to do if they have any safeguarding concerns. Leaders work with other agencies and charities to support the most vulnerable pupils and their families. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. These include when they are out in the local community and when they are using the internet. Pupils know that they should tell a trusted adult if they have any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For some teachers, their knowledge, skills and understanding in some subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics is not always secure. This has an impact on their confidence to promote pupils' deep understanding of these subjects. Leaders should ensure that these teachers have the subject knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum for these subjects even more successfully.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Holy Cross CofE Primary School to be good on 1–2 December 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	135720
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10111013
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carole Howarth
Headteacher	Paul Wardle
Website	www.holycross-primary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2015

Information about this school

- The school has a part-time Nursery class.
- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Diocese of Manchester, in April 2015.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I spoke with pupils about their work and school life. I spoke with the chair of governors, two members of the governing body, the headteacher, subject leaders and members of staff. I also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- I considered the 14 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 33 responses from the online staff survey. There were no responses to the pupils' survey.
- I looked in detail at several subjects. These were reading, mathematics and geography. I met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning. I also looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- During the inspection I reviewed a range of documentation including curriculum plans. I also scrutinised a range of documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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