

Inspection of The Holy Cross School

25 Sandal Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 5AR

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected The Holy Cross School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming school. Many pupils spoke of the sense of family in the school's community. Staff make sure that pupils are well cared for and safe in a nurturing environment. Students in Year 13 like being part of the 'Big Sisters' programme. They enjoy looking out for younger pupils and helping new pupils to settle in.

Pupils are set high standards to achieve. They rise to leaders' expectations and work hard in everything they do. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Behaviour in class and around the school is calm. Pupils are polite and friendly.

The school's ethos is one of tolerance and respect. Pupils are encouraged to treat everyone equally and to accept people's differences. Staff are quick to deal with any bullying. However, some pupils feel that staff do not resolve issues between friendship groups consistently well.

Pupils attend extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school. Older pupils help to run some of these, including dance, athletics and subject clubs like 'maths pod'. Pupils work together in their 'houses' to raise money for charities. They organise fundraising events such as tee-shirt sales and music competitions.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. They ensure that all pupils learn a wide range of subjects from Years 7 to 11. Subjects such as languages, history and the performing arts have high uptake at GCSE. In the sixth form, students have a variety of vocational options as well as academic courses. Leaders' decision to run a joint sixth form with another local school allows a breadth of choices and subject combinations.

Leaders consider carefully what pupils should learn and when. Staff plan sequences of lessons to build up pupils' knowledge and skills over time. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use their expertise to develop pupils' understanding well. Typically across the curriculum, pupils learn in depth and achieve highly. However, in Years 7 to 9, pupils do not get the opportunity to learn a broad range of subject content in design and technology lessons. Pupils have limited options also to study design and technology subjects in Years 10 and 11. Leaders have plans to address this for September 2022.

Teachers introduce new concepts clearly and provide opportunities for pupils to revisit previously learned content. For example, in languages, pupils applied their knowledge of vocabulary from previous learning in order to write and say more complex sentences. This helps pupils to embed essential knowledge in their long-term memory. Pupils articulate well what they have learned previously. Teachers check routinely what pupils have learned and address any misconceptions. For

example, students in Year 12 spent time carefully unpicking their answers to a mathematics question on negative reciprocals that they had completed previously. They discussed different ways of working out mathematical problems.

Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Some pupils receive extra help before and after school. Leaders make sure that teaching staff are informed about pupils' needs and know what strategies will help pupils with SEND to keep up with their peers. However, some staff are not as clear about how to use these strategies effectively to support pupils with SEND across the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy reading. Staff encourage pupils to read widely and often, including in tutor time and in English lessons. Leaders ensure that weaker readers are well supported. These pupils catch up quickly through a structured programme of phonics and reading practice.

High expectations and established routines help to ensure that lessons are calm and free from disruption. Pupils focus on their learning and pay full attention in class. They are motivated and work together productively. Pupils share their ideas in a mature and confident way. Pupils are grateful to staff for the help they receive with their work.

Leaders give pupils the chance to explore a wide range of cultures and religious viewpoints. Pupils in the 'diversity group' help to organise activities for events such as LGBT History Month and International Women's Day. Pupils enjoy the educational visits, including art excursions to Kew Gardens and various theatre visits. Pupils take on leadership roles, including as house captains and prefects. Pupils in all year groups receive suitable careers guidance. Leaders have ensured that the programme for relationships and sex education meets statutory requirements.

Staff are proud and happy to work here. They spoke highly about the supportive and committed leadership team. Staff value the training and development opportunities they receive. Leaders are mindful of staff's workload and arrange activities to support well-being. Leaders and governors have clear and ambitious plans in place to build on the school's successes and make it better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's safeguarding team respond promptly to any concerns about pupils. They take appropriate action to ensure that pupils receive the right support. Staff are vigilant about pupils' safety and report any concerns about pupils. They are well trained to support pupils' emotional and mental health.

Pupils can use the school's anonymous reporting system to let the safeguarding team know if they are worried or at risk. Someone from the team will help straightaway. Pupils receive guidance about keeping themselves safe from harm.

This includes talks from the police about the dangers of drugs misuse and assemblies on themes such as consent. Pupils spoke highly of the support they get at the school's inclusion centre, St Theresa's.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In Years 7 to 9, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn a broad range of design and technology subjects. In key stage 4, pupils have limited opportunities to continue their studies in design and technology. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum includes sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn all aspects of design and technology in Years 7 to 9. Leaders should ensure that pupils have more opportunities to study design and technology subjects in Year 10 and beyond.
- Leaders do not routinely monitor how effectively staff use identified strategies to support pupils with SEND. There is inconsistency in how well staff use the information leaders give them about pupils' needs. This means that pupils are not supported consistently well across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that staff know and use the personalised strategies for pupils with SEND.
- Even though leaders deal with reported incidents effectively, some pupils think that staff are not good at sorting out problems, including bullying and friendship issues. Leaders should ensure that all pupils feel reassured by the school's procedures for dealing with any incidents, including any bullying.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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	138459
Local authority	Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	10216736
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	988
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Piers North
Headteacher	Dervla McConn-Finch
Website	www.holycross.kingston.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Holy Cross School is a secondary Catholic school. The school had its last section 48 inspection in July 2018.
- The school converted to become an academy school in 2012. When its predecessor school, The Holy Cross School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school has a sixth-form partnership with the Richard Challoner School. Students can choose to study courses at both schools.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2021.
- Leaders use three registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider.

- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders. Inspectors held a discussion with five members of the governing body and spoke with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, English, design and technology, history, languages and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and staff about other subject areas. Inspectors visited lessons and reviewed samples of pupils' work in a range of subjects, including science, geography and music.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders, pupils and staff about the arrangements for safeguarding and reviewed safeguarding documentation including pre-recruitment checks. Inspectors also spoke with a representative from the local authority about safeguarding at the school.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and around the school. Inspectors held formal and informal discussions with groups of pupils from different year groups.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey of parents' views, Ofsted Parent View, and to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Jude Wilson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bec Allott	Ofsted Inspector
David Boyle	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Clemens	Ofsted Inspector

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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022