

Inspection of The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School

Cotterill, Halton Brook, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2NL

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this small, friendly school where everyone is welcome. As one pupil said: 'I love this school; it is like my second home.' Staff provide care and support for pupils. When pupils have worries, there is always someone to help.

Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Pupils behave considerately to staff and each other. They work hard in lessons. Pupils take pride in their work and want to do well. Those who need help to follow the school's rules receive appropriate support from staff. Pupils reported that if bullying happens, staff stop it quickly.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve academically and personally. However, the curriculum in some subjects is not designed with sufficient thought. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils elect their peers to positions of responsibility such as the school council. This gives them a sense of pride. Eco councillors enjoy leading projects to reduce the school's impact on the environment. For instance, they organised litter picks in the school grounds.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and ambitious. Some subject curriculums build pupils' knowledge in a logical way. These curriculums identify what knowledge pupils should learn and when this should be taught. However, some subjects are not as well developed. In many subjects, the curriculum does not make clear the knowledge that pupils will learn over time. Leaders have not thought carefully enough about what pupils need to know before learning something new. In these subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

In some subjects, leaders do not check what pupils have learned sufficiently well. This means that, at times, teachers do not provide opportunities for pupils to revisit missed or forgotten knowledge. Consequently, pupils find it hard to recall the important knowledge in these subjects.

Leaders have ensured that reading is a high priority. Staff receive training that means they can effectively teach reading. The phonics programme is well designed and ordered. Pupils, and children in the early years, use the sounds that they have learned when they are reading and writing. This helps to develop their fluency and confidence. Staff quickly identify pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, who fall behind with their reading knowledge. Staff provide these pupils with appropriate support to help them catch up. Leaders encourage pupils to read often in school and at home. Most pupils become successful readers.

Leaders identify pupils who need extra help. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified quickly and effectively. Leaders

work closely with outside agencies to meet pupils' needs. This helps to ensure that pupils, including children in the Reception class with SEND, access the full curriculum.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. This starts in the early years, where children learn to work and play together successfully. Pupils know how to look after their mental and physical health.

Pupils show respect and empathy for others. They value people from religions that are different to their own. Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents. For example, leaders made sure that pupils who needed a guitar received one to practise at home.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Leaders check that pupils arrive in school on time and attend regularly. Leaders support parents and carers effectively when pupils' attendance needs to improve.

Leaders check staff's well-being often. Staff value the support they receive from leaders. They appreciate how leaders consider their workload.

Governors visit the school frequently. They know the school and the local community well and share leaders' high ambitions for pupils. Governors understand the school's strengths and what needs to improve. They provide suitable support and challenge for leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in this school. Leaders, including governors, ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils is given the highest priority. Leaders draw on the support of outside agencies to keep pupils safe when required.

Staff are well trained to spot any signs that pupils may be at risk from harm. Staff understand how to raise concerns with leaders. When required, they do so quickly and effectively. Leaders follow up concerns tenaciously to ensure that pupils and their families get the right support.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum helps pupils to learn how to stay safe, including when working and playing online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified what pupils should learn and the order in which this knowledge should be taught. This makes it difficult for

teachers to design learning that enables pupils to learn important knowledge. Leaders should ensure that the curriculums for all subjects identify the knowledge that pupils should know and when this will be taught.

- Assessment systems are not used effectively in some subjects. This hinders teachers from spotting pupils' missed or forgotten knowledge. Leaders should ensure that staff are supported effectively to check pupils' learning so that they can support pupils to overcome gaps in their knowledge.

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	111321
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10226288
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	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kathy Keig
Headteacher	Lorraine Connolly
Website	www.holyspirituncorn.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, most staff have changed. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- Governors are responsible for a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- This Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.

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 has 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 considered a range of documentation shared by leaders, including the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, leaders' self-evaluation of the school and reports from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors evaluated the curriculum, met with curriculum leaders and visited a sample of lessons. They reviewed pupils' and children's work in these subjects, and spoke to teachers and pupils about their learning. They observed pupils reading to a member of staff.
- Inspectors spoke with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body. They spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders and curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff. Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including safeguarding records, behaviour records, attendance records and reports from governors. Inspectors discussed safeguarding with pupils and staff throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during breaktimes and observed pupils playing. They collected the views of different groups of pupils and discussed their learning.

Inspection team

Keith Pullen, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Pippa Jackson Maitland

Her Majesty's Inspector

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