

Inspection of Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

2 Beaumont Road, St Jude's, Plymouth, Devon PL4 9BE

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2022

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils describe Holy Cross as a caring school. They go out of their way to make sure everyone feels included and valued. Pupils are respectful and speak highly of the 'Holy Cross family'. They know that adults want the best for them and listen to them. Consequently, pupils feel happy and safe. Many pupils hold roles of responsibility, such as 'gospel guardians'. They make sure pupils know how Christian values help them make the right choices in school and beyond.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils rise to meet leaders' expectations. They know that only their best is good enough. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the help they need to learn well. Leaders place no limit on what pupils can achieve.

Pupils understand the different types of bullying. They say it rarely happens. Pupils are confident that adults would step in and provide support if it did. Parents agree with this view. They appreciate that leaders sort out any issues swiftly. Parents are particularly proud of the nurturing ethos that leaders provide. They say that their children settle into the school quickly and look forward to attending each day.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. This begins in the early years. They have identified the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn in each subject. Teachers consider pupils' prior knowledge when deciding what they will learn next. For example, in mathematics, pupils deepen their knowledge of the four operations before using this to solve problems with confidence. Leaders provide training for all staff that helps them to understand how to deliver the curriculum well. Leaders have made recent improvements to the curriculum but they have not yet had the opportunity to fully evaluate it. In most subjects, teachers break learning down into small steps with success. This helps pupils to build knowledge well. However, in some subjects, pupils do not yet remember enough of their learning because improvements are so recent.

Leaders ensure that reading is high profile across the school. Pupils learn to read well. They learn through a well-organised phonics programme. Staff who teach phonics understand the programme and model sounds with accuracy. This starts in Reception where children encourage each other to pronounce sounds correctly. Staff provide a range of opportunities for pupils to apply their new phonic knowledge to their writing. For example, children in Reception write food names for their café with increasing accuracy. Staff identify pupils who need extra support with their reading. Pupils receive the help they need to catch up quickly. Leaders check that all pupils read books that contain the sounds they know. This helps pupils to build fluency.

This is an inclusive school. Staff help pupils with SEND to learn well by adapting their learning carefully to meet their individual needs. Leaders regularly review pupils' learning targets. They check how pupils are supported to progress through

the curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as other pupils.

Children settle quickly into clear routines in Reception. Staff promote meaningful interactions during independent learning. They encourage children to be independent and use their voice to express opinions. Staff place a clear focus on children increasing their language and use of ambitious vocabulary. As a result, children cooperate and communicate well with each other.

Leaders provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to attend. They make sure that clubs, trips and visitors reflect pupils' talents and interests. Leaders remove any potential barriers so all pupils feel able to take part. Pupils know how to keep safe online. It is their first consideration when engaging in any online activity. They know the potential risks and what to do if something causes them concern.

Pupils say that learning is rarely disturbed by poor behaviour. Staff guide pupils towards making the right choices. They help them to consider the impact of their actions. Pupils are adamant that they should treat everyone the same. They say this always happens at Holy Cross. Pupils understand why this is important. As a result, pupils understand that people can have different beliefs and opinions. They listen to and value others even when their beliefs differ from their own.

Governors have a secure understanding of the school's current strengths and areas for further improvement. Staff say that leaders and governors consider their well-being and workload. They appreciate the professional development opportunities the trust provides. The trust provides effective support and challenge for leaders. Leaders at all levels share the same ambitious vision for the future of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that the day-to-day safeguarding procedures help pupils to feel safe. They plan and deliver regular safeguarding for staff. This helps staff quickly identify any pupils who are causing concern. All staff record and report concerns with accuracy. Leaders take all concerns seriously. They make the appropriate referrals to get vulnerable families the help they need.

Staff are familiar with the whistleblowing policy. They know how it helps to keep pupils safe from potential harm. Pupils learn how to keep safe through the curriculum. They learn about issues that are prevalent in the local community, such as road safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have made recent improvements to the curriculum. Leaders have not had the opportunity to fully evaluate its effectiveness. There are some inconsistencies, for example the depth of knowledge that pupils know and remember in each subject. Leaders need to evaluate the curriculum and consider where further improvements can be made.

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.

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

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| Unique reference number | 140726 |
| Local authority | Plymouth |
| Inspection number | 10229007 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 300 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Ruth O'Donovan |
| Headteacher | Finola Gill |
| Website | www.holycross.plymouth.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Holy Cross Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in April 2014. When its predecessor school, Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is part of Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- All pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are taught in mixed-age classes.
- This is a Roman Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection took place in July 2016.
- There is a before- and after-school club on site.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with school leaders, subject leaders, parents, pupils and representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding lead (who is also the headteacher). Inspectors also spoke with staff, governors and pupils, and evaluated record-keeping and staff training.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, and comments made by parents online during the inspection. They also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

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