

# Inspection of a good school: Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Harlow

Tracyes Road, Southern Way, Harlow, Essex, CM18 6JJ

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2023

## Outcome

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Harlow continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel welcome at Holy Cross. A typical pupil's view is that 'this is a loving and caring community.' They are welcomed at the gates each morning by staff that know each of them by name. This makes pupils feel valued. All pupils understand the importance of following the school's 'golden thread' of values. They show this by being caring, polite and respecting one another.

Pupils behave well. They are clear on the high behaviour expectations leaders have set and expect each other to follow them. Pupils are attentive and focused in lessons. Lessons are not interrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Older pupils are kind and nurturing to younger pupils. Some have responsibilities as buddies or mediators to ensure pupils feel included in school life. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, pupils are confident that trusted adults will deal with it promptly.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about clubs and additional activities including international week, choir, and gardening. Pupils know that staff listen to their opinions and ideas through the school council. For example, the pupils were able to create a gardening area through the school's eco-council. Pupils aspire to win awards at the weekly rewards events which parents attend.

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

Leaders have planned a curriculum that clearly sets out what pupils should learn in all subjects. This planning has identified the key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn to progress well at each stage from Reception through to Year 6. In most subjects, pupils successfully learn more and remember more. In a few foundation subjects, leaders have recently started to review and develop the curriculum. In these subjects there is a focus on what teachers would like pupils to do, rather than learn. Staff are still working on adapting their practice to ensure they deliver the curriculum well for all pupils.

Reading has been prioritised by leaders. Pupils talk enthusiastically about books and reading. Well-trained teachers ensure that pupils follow a systematic approach to phonics and reading as soon as they start at the school. Pupils have daily reading activities that include a wide range of texts that teachers carefully select. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading have books that are closely matched to the sounds they have learned. As a result, pupils become confident readers who enjoy reading. If a pupil falls behind with their reading, teachers identify this quickly and support them to catch up.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly and their needs are accurately identified by leaders. Staff are well informed about pupils' individual needs. Leaders ensure that additional resources are used, and teachers adapt their approaches well to ensure that pupils with SEND learn as effectively as their peers. Often, these pupils thrive in the school. Parent survey results are overwhelmingly positive about the support pupils with SEND receive.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils consistently meet these. They behave calmly around school and speak positively about coming to school. Older pupils are behaviour ambassadors for younger pupils. While pupils can be lively in lessons, they remain engaged and listen to teachers. As a result, pupils learn in lessons without interruptions. Leaders have placed high importance on supporting pupils to manage their emotional well-being. As a result, pupils speak openly and honestly about how they are feeling. If they feel sad, they know there is always an adult they can speak to about this.

Leaders' focus on 'developing the whole not just the academic' supports pupils' personal development well. Leaders have carefully planned a personal, social and emotional education (PSHE) and a relationships and sex education and health education (RSHE) curriculum to do this. Pupils develop compassion and resilience. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. The school's international day is a highlight of the year for many pupils and their families. Pupils speak with maturity about tolerance and inclusivity.

Leaders, including governors, have acted thoughtfully following a sensitive time for the school. They have ensured staff have had emotional support and stability of leadership. Staff feel well looked after and valued by leaders. Staff state that leaders ensure their workload is considered in any decisions made. They are proud to work at the school.

Parents overwhelmingly state in parental surveys that they would recommend the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff know how to identify the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff raise concerns about pupils promptly. Leaders respond quickly to any concerns. This includes involving other professionals where appropriate. Pastoral staff know pupils well. They work closely with families to provide additional support.

Pupils feel safe. They are taught how to keep safe, including online. Pupils are clear on how to get support if they are worried or concerned. The required checks to ensure adults are suitable to work with children are completed and recorded accurately.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, staff are not fully confident in their subject knowledge to enable them to teach the planned curriculum well. As a result, pupils do not routinely know and remember more in these subjects. Leaders should ensure staff receive the training they need for them to deliver the intended curriculum confidently and consistently in all areas of the curriculum well.

## **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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2012.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136967
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211174
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	426
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mrs Claire Selwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Alison Kerrell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holycross-pri.essex.sch.uk">www.holycross-pri.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Hoy Cross Catholic Primary School has had many changes to staffing and leadership since October 2021.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.
- The religious aspects of the school's provision were last inspected in July 2017 under section 48 of the Education Act, 2005.

## Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The lead inspector held meetings with governors, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers, and support staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised safeguarding policies, the school's record of background checks of adults at the school, and a sample of child protection files. Inspectors also spoke with trustees, the chair of the local

governing board, the designated safeguarding lead and staff about safeguarding practices at the school.

- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils about learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector looked at curriculum planning documentation and met with subject leaders across other subjects, including art, languages and geography.
- The lead inspector considered the 67 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 67 free-text responses. The lead inspector also considered the 45 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and the 103 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Stainsby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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