

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Culverley Road, Catford, London SE6 2LD

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

## **Outcome**

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The Holy Cross community values and celebrates each and every pupil as a unique individual. Pupils, staff and families are very proud of their school. Pupils are happy and feel safe as they know that staff will help them if they have any worries.

The school motto – ‘Aspire not to have more but to be more’ – is well understood by pupils and staff. Leaders are highly aspirational for what all pupils can achieve, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders and staff are united in their belief that every pupil can achieve great things. Pupils work hard to meet these high expectations and, as a result, achieve very well across the curriculum.

Pupils are polite and caring. There is mutual respect between adults and pupils. Pupils are considerate of one another. Bullying is rare. The Year 5 ‘peacemakers’ are trained to support pupils and resolve any friendship issues that they may have.

Pupils relish the extensive additional activities and experiences available to them. All pupils have a role to play in the wider life of the school. They are immensely proud of the contributions that they make. These range from classroom jobs to many different roles of responsibility, including sports and house captains, eco-warriors and digital leaders. Older pupils are keen to share their enthusiasm and expertise in reading with their younger peers by acting as reading buddies.

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

Leaders have designed a highly ambitious curriculum. They have thought astutely about how to make subject content rigorous and demanding but also relevant to their school community. The ‘curriculum drivers’ of significant people, community, equality and justice, and environmental responsibility thread through all curriculum subjects. As a result, the curriculum gives pupils the pathway to academic excellence and prepares them very well for life in modern Britain. Pupils achieve exceptionally, both in English and mathematics and across the curriculum.

Starting from the early years, leaders have identified with precision the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to learn and remember. Learning is broken down into well-organised chunks so that pupils build detailed knowledge over time.

Teachers have considerable subject knowledge. Their expertise helps them to set out subject content with clarity and accuracy. In lessons, pupils recall and recap their prior learning often and with purpose. This helps them to remember what they have been taught and make connections across their learning. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and can do. They use this information to identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning in a highly effective manner.

Leaders' ambition for pupils with SEND is realised by all staff. They understand their role in ensuring that all pupils flourish, regardless of their needs. Staff know pupils very well and, as a result, quickly spot when a pupil may have any barriers to learning. Teachers skilfully adapt learning for pupils. Pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that all pupils get the right kinds of support, whatever their needs may be.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Starting from Nursery, children are immersed in books, stories and environmental sounds. As soon as children join the Reception class, they are taught the sounds that letters make. This is done in a systematic way, and continues in Year 1 and beyond. Pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds they have been taught and know. This helps them to become fluent readers. Teaching staff are experts at teaching phonics. At the earliest opportunity, any pupil who is falling behind is quickly picked up, and extra reading practice is put in place. A love for reading is promoted throughout the school. Pupils enjoy the daily story time sessions and the weekly times set aside to 'drop everything and read' that all adults and pupils take part in.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and try their best in lessons. They are focused and attentive in class.

The provision for pupils' wider development is extensive. This includes specific sessions designed to develop pupils' speaking and communication skills and opportunities to debate. Educational visits enrich the taught curriculum and pupils attend a range of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils are taught, and understand, that not all people and families are the same. They learn about how society is enriched by difference and that everyone can learn from the diverse experiences and backgrounds of others. Pupils are taught how to keep physically and mentally healthy.

Leaders at all levels are reflective. They continuously strive to improve and strengthen what is already in place. Staff are proud to work here and feel that their workload and well-being are considered. Their professional development is also clearly prioritised by leaders. For instance, staff benefit from working on the curriculum with their counterparts across the federation.

The governing body members know the school well. They provide an effective balance of challenge and support.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive regular training. They know the signs to look out for that indicate a pupil might be at risk of harm. Leaders' procedures for reporting and recording concerns are clear and well understood by staff. Leaders have good oversight of any concerns raised. They liaise and work closely with other agencies to help families and pupils get the support that they need.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Information about keeping safe is threaded through what pupils learn in a range of subjects. For example, pupils are taught about fire safety when they study the Great Fire of London and about water safety through their swimming lessons.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in December 2016.

## 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>	100739
<b>Local authority</b>	Lewisham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240571
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	242
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Tara Nelson
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Mary Collins Catherine Mahony (Head of School)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holycross.lewisham.sch.uk">www.holycross.lewisham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	8 and 9 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school is a Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Southwark. A section 48 inspection was carried out by the Archdiocese of Southwark in November 2016.
- Holy Cross Catholic Primary school is federated with St Augustine's Catholic Primary school.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, music and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector 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. They listened to pupils read. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection, including mathematics, art and history.

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and members of the governing body.
- The inspector spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding. The inspector also checked safeguarding records and documentation.
- The inspector considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey.
- The inspector also considered staff survey responses.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in the playground.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Wright, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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