

Inspection of Holy Cross Church of England Primary School

School Road, Runcton Holme, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE33 0EL

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 July 2023

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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils of all ages learn and play together happily. Whether sitting and chatting over lunch, or playing tennis at playtime, older pupils include the youngest in all they do. Many pupils have joined the school recently. These pupils are made to feel welcome. They quickly become part of the school community.

Adults expect pupils to work hard in lessons and behave well, which most do. Many pupils strive to be 'star learner' of the week. They delight in receiving this award in assembly, sharing their achievement with the wider school community.

Pupils are proud to carry out roles, such as being a school ambassador, sports leader or library monitor. They take these responsibilities seriously. Opportunities such as the annual Christmas sleepover, taking part in sporting competitions and attending a range of clubs are enjoyed by pupils. These opportunities, coupled with a range of trips and visits, provide pupils with chances to develop independence and experience the world beyond the school gates.

Pupils are guided to stay physically healthy. They learn ways to support their mental health and well-being. Pupils know it is best to share worries or concerns when they have them and not keep these to themselves.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked with skill and determination to merge two school communities into one. They have established a clear and shared vision, values and ambition. Everyone is proud to be part of the school community. Leaders and the trust have brought significant improvements in curriculum development and building the leadership capacity of the school.

Pupils remember important knowledge across many subjects because teachers teach the curriculum in a sensible order. Pupils build new knowledge on what they already know. This means that, over time, they develop a broad and deep understanding. Children in the early years learn a similarly ambitious curriculum. They develop independence along with the social skills they need as they move through the school. The youngest children are immersed in language. They enjoy listening to stories, poems and rhymes to help them learn and use many new words. They are well prepared for their move into Year 1.

Reading sits at the heart of the curriculum. Adults are skilled at teaching the youngest pupils to read. This means pupils learn phonics well, enabling them to read more widely and for pleasure as they move through the school. The recently refurbished library provides an ideal space for pupils to enjoy a book. Those who find learning to read tricky are well supported to help them catch up.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers make careful adaptations to some activities in

lessons. Pupils with SEND also receive much additional support. At times, some of this support does not always have the desired effect. Leaders do not ensure that teachers have specific guidance about what help pupils need. Teachers make adaptations, but these are not always as effective in helping pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.

Pupils generally behave well, meaning the school is a calm and orderly place. Where some pupils need additional guidance to help them behave well, adults are effective in providing this.

Leaders have employed a variety of means to improve pupils' attendance. Much of this has been successful and is paying dividends. Despite this, there remain too many pupils who miss too much school. This slows their learning.

The well-considered personal development programme helps pupils develop their understanding beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships, through the school's well-established relationships curriculum. They celebrate the differences between themselves and others. Along with a range of clubs, trips and visits, pupils raise money for a range of charities. These opportunities help pupils develop into responsible and active citizens.

Trustees and trust leaders have an accurate view of the school. They provide leaders with effective challenge to spur them on to make the school even better. Trust leaders are skilled at developing school leaders. They provide well-tailored training and support, for example helping staff to grow the knowledge and skills they need to lead curriculum subjects. Teachers in the early stages of their career are well supported. Staff are proud to work at Holy Cross. Senior leaders manage the workload of staff well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Adults receive regular and relevant training to help them identify when pupils may be at risk of harm. Adults are vigilant to any signs that may indicate harm. When they have any concerns, they report these without delay. Leaders take swift and appropriate action to help pupils in need. This includes working with external agencies when needed.

All pre-employment checks are carried out and recorded following the relevant statutory guidance.

Pupils know how to stay safe. This is especially the case when they are online or out and about in the local area.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The individual targets for some pupils with SEND are too broad. They do not precisely set out what pupils need to know, remember and be able to do as a result of the additional activities they undertake. This means some additional support that pupils receive is not always tightly focused, and they do not learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff put in place specific, measurable and time-focused support to ensure that these pupils achieve well.
- While there have been some improvements in attendance, a significant minority of pupils are persistently absent from school. They miss too much learning time. Leaders should ensure that their approaches to promoting good attendance are precisely tailored around the needs of pupils and result in these pupils attending school more regularly.

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

Unique reference number	141228
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10268177
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Jackson
Headteacher	Emma Zeil
Website	www.holycrossfederation.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post in September 2017 as headteacher of both Runcton Holme Church of England Primary School and Wormegay Church of England Primary School. In September 2021, these two schools merged to form Holy Cross Church of England Primary School. Holy Cross Church of England Primary School retained the unique reference number of Runcton Holme Church of England Primary School.
- The school use one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2018. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.

Information about this inspection

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, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust and representatives of the governing body.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of staff personnel checks and reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems. Inspectors spoke with leaders, teachers, support staff, trustees and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in school.
- Inspectors considered the 12 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and spoke to several parents and carers informally during the inspection. They also considered the five responses to the Ofsted survey for staff and the 17 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Hemmings

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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