

Inspection of Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Queens Drive, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 1AR

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 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 are proud and happy to come to Holy Cross Catholic Primary School. They talk about how the school's values support them to be kind, respectful and show tolerance. They know that all people should be treated equally, regardless of differences.

Pupils are polite and considerate towards adults and each other. Adults' expectations of behaviour are high. Pupils respond well to this and say that they feel safe. Bullying is rare, but if it does happen, pupils are confident that adults will deal with it.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They talk about the wide range of books they study as they progress through the school. They understand how these link to learning in other subjects.

Pupils take part in a wide range of activities beyond the academic curriculum. This helps to develop their talents and interests. For example, pupils take part in chaplaincy, dance, chess and sports clubs. Trips support learning across the curriculum. Pupils develop their leadership skills through their roles as librarians and school councillors.

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

Leaders provide clear vision and set high expectations. They ensure consistency across the school. Leaders' focus on the educational outcomes of pupils is relentless. They want every child to be successful.

Leaders have used support and advice from external partners to improve the learning for pupils. They have designed an ambitious curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge over time. Some subject curriculums are in the early stages of implementation. Nonetheless, in many subjects, pupils learn well because they build on what they already know.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Children learn to read from the start of their time at the school. Leaders have constructed a reading curriculum based around a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. These link to learning across subjects. Leaders make sure that staff have the expertise to teach reading. As a consequence, teachers are confident and accurate. Pupils receive extra help if they struggle to keep up with their peers. This helps them to catch up quickly. Older pupils become confident, fluent readers with a love of reading. They enjoy talking about their favourite books and authors. 'When you read it takes you to somewhere else, somewhere different,' is a typical comment from pupils.

In a few curriculum subjects, leaders have not identified the key vocabulary they want pupils to know and remember. This means that teachers are unsure of the subject-specific language that should be taught and when it should be learned by

pupils. Consequently, pupils do not always have the specialist vocabulary they need to be able to read, write and speak about some topics in the wider curriculum.

Subject leadership is developing. In many subjects, leaders have a clear understanding of the curriculum and support teaching staff well. Where this is less developed, leaders do not evaluate the impact of the curriculum precisely enough. This means they do not always know how well pupils are learning.

In some subjects, such as mathematics and early reading, teaching makes good use of assessment to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, this is not the case in all subjects. In some subjects, learning does not always build on what pupils know. This is because staff do not match teaching to pupils' starting points. Pupils learn less well in these subjects.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. Pupils can explain why fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, are important. Pupils are respectful of other people's beliefs. They recognise that it is important to learn about different world religions. They are proud of their work to support local and national charities. They understand how this helps people in need.

There are clear systems in place for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that staff receive the training they need. Teachers adapt activities so that pupils with SEND can follow the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders work with external agencies to support those with the highest level of need. Leaders are developing effective systems to involve parents, carers and pupils in the review of targets and to evaluate the impact of support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors understand their roles and responsibilities well. Leaders know how to respond to allegations or concerns about staff. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Reporting and recording systems are effective. Leaders follow up all concerns. Leaders have developed effective relationships with external agencies. They are proactive in ensuring that pupils and families get the help they need. Pupils know who to speak to if they are worried. They know how to keep themselves safe, both online and offline.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leadership is underdeveloped. As a result, leaders do not have a secure enough understanding of how well the curriculum is implemented across all subjects. This can hinder pupils' learning. Leaders need to evaluate the impact of the whole curriculum to ensure that it is leading to improvements in pupils'

learning.

- In the wider curriculum, assessment is not effective in identifying what pupils know and can do and what gaps they have in their learning. Leaders need to ensure that assessment leads to pupils building knowledge and that gaps are addressed effectively.
- In a few subjects, leaders have not given enough thought to the subject-specific vocabulary that pupils should learn. This hampers pupils' ability to talk, read and write about these subjects. Leaders should identify the subject-specific vocabulary pupils need to know so that pupils learn well across the wider curriculum.

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	136981
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10284081
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	346
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Paul Kehoe
Headteacher	Samantha Dowdeswell
Website	www.holycross.swindon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a change in headteacher since the last inspection.
- Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and governors. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the diocese and met with a representative from the local authority.

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