

Inspection of The Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Bicknor Road, Park Wood, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9PS

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 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

The headteacher of this school is Megan Underhill. This school is part of the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Annemarie Whittle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Powis.

What is it like to attend this school?

School is interesting and fun for pupils at The Holy Family Catholic Primary School. Pupils like learning and are inspired by the curriculum offered to them. They explain enthusiastically how it helps them to learn about the world. Strong relationships with adults help pupils to trust that they will be given help when needed and that they will be kept safe.

Pupils behave well. They understand and follow the high expectations staff have. Pupils know that if they run in the corridor or lose focus, they will be quickly corrected. This helps to ensure that the school is an orderly environment. Pupils know that coming to school regularly is important. They do not want to miss their learning, as they value the high-quality education on offer.

Pupils feel confident and happy at school. They are respectful and get along well with each other. Pupils understand the school's values and are quick to explain which value is the current focus of assemblies. Pupils understand how they can demonstrate concepts such as love in their behaviours towards each other. Equally, pupils are proud of the range of roles they can take on to contribute to the life of the school, such as being 'pupil leaders' or representing their school in sports teams.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and engaging. It has been carefully structured from Reception to Year 6 so that pupils build knowledge and understanding well. Pupils remember what they have been taught. They are keen to talk about their favourite artists or what they have learned through scientific investigations. There is a buzz of excitement about learning. The school carefully identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that the curriculum is adapted well so that pupils with SEND can learn alongside their peers. Staff at all levels are passionate about ensuring that every child is included and is successful.

Learning to read and developing a love of reading are at the centre of the school's work. Children start to learn phonics as soon as they join Reception through a carefully structured programme. This is delivered by well-trained staff. Regular assessment means that pupils are given additional help to catch up when this is needed. Pupils are positive about reading. Staff make sure that the books pupils read are well matched to their needs. This helps pupils to experience success as they apply their knowledge of letters and sounds. Pupils are surrounded by inviting book displays in classes, the library and at key areas in the school, such as when they queue for their school lunches. Pupils are excited by books and stories. The school makes sure that pupils have every opportunity to share this joy at home, for example by using the 'book swap hut' together with their parents.

Children settle quickly into school when they start in Reception. They enjoy the wide range of activities on offer to them, inside and outside of the classroom. Staff are

attentive to the needs of pupils and ensure that they are well cared for. Most children join in with singing rhymes and chat happily as they play and learn. Occasionally, developing children's communication skills through early talk for all children is not as focused as it could be. This means some children are not as well-prepared to learn in key stage 1 as they could be.

Teachers receive the support and training they need to help them to deliver the curriculum skilfully. They check carefully on what pupils know and remember so that they can build on learning. There are a few areas of the curriculum where leaders have made adjustments to help pupils learn even more effectively. This can be seen in the sharp emphasis on the teaching of mathematical facts and in aspects of the reading curriculum in key stage 2. Sometimes, the teaching approaches to these areas lack the consistency and effectiveness seen elsewhere as teachers strengthen their understanding of the new approaches or curriculum content.

Pupils behave well. The school has ensured that there is a clearly understood policy in place to support everyone in knowing what is expected. There is little disruption. This helps pupils to learn.

Pupils learn about themselves, positive relationships and staying safe. The personal development curriculum is brought to life through experiences, visits and visitors that help pupils develop a view of the wider world. This helps them to be ready for the next stages of their lives and education. Pupils are welcoming and accepting of difference.

The school is well supported by the trust and the local governance committee. They know the school well and offer helpful challenge and insight for leaders. Parents are positive about the care and education offered to their children. A parent summed up these views by saying, 'The word 'Family' in their name is accurate.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have recently made some well-chosen adaptations to the way the reading and mathematics curriculums are implemented. These are not yet fully embedded. Sometimes, staff do not yet have the subject or pedagogical understanding to deliver these as leaders intend. As a result, pupils are not yet developing a depth of understanding in all reading and mathematical skills. Leaders should continue to support staff in their understanding and implementation of these plans so that pupils develop skills consistently well across the school.

- There is not a consistent sharp focus on communication and language in early years. Consequently, some children, particularly those who are disadvantaged, are not as well prepared for Year 1 as they might be. Leaders should ensure that a sharp focus on communication and language is evident in the planning, curriculum implementation and the early years environment.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140980
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10268321
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	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Powis
CEO of the trust	Annemarie Whittle
Headteacher	Megan Underhill
Website	www.holyfamily.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up role in September 2023 following a period in which she worked alongside an executive headteacher.
- This is a Catholic school and is part of the Catholic Diocese of Southwark. The school's religious character was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in December 2018.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with school leaders. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the local committee and spoke to representatives from the trust and the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, and science. For each deep dive, the 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. The lead inspector listened to pupils read.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys. An inspector spoke to some parents at the school gate.
- The inspectors talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including about their workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Owen McColgan	Ofsted Inspector

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