

Inspection of a good school: Holy Family Catholic Primary School & Nursery

Hall Lane, Cronton, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 5DW

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 March 2024

Outcome

Holy Family Catholic Primary School & Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils learn that making other people happy helps them to feel happy. This informs how they treat each other, with care and kindness. For instance, Year 6 prefects help younger pupils to tidy up at lunchtime. They organise games for children in the early years to enjoy. Older pupils delight in the strong bonds that they forge with their 'little friends'. Pupils feel part of the school's close-knit and happy community.

Pupils endeavour to behave in accordance with the school's values of respect, responsibility and resilience. They appreciate that staff notice when they do this successfully. For example, they receive 'you've been spotted' cards or 'gems' for their class jar. Around school, pupils conduct themselves sensibly and are considerate of others.

Pupils try their best during lessons. Children in the early years are keen to share work that they are proud of, so that it can be displayed on the 'wow wall' for all to see. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), meet the school's high expectations for their achievement.

Pupils relish participating in extra-curricular activities, such as gardening, cheerleading and cross-stitch clubs. They appreciate these opportunities to discover new interests.

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

The school has a strong focus on the professional development of staff. Its engagement with educational research has informed the design of an ambitious and well-defined curriculum. The school has ensured that the early years provides a strong foundation for future learning. Careful thought has been given to the knowledge and experiences that children will have, so that they are well prepared for Year 1 and beyond.

Staff are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. They help pupils to connect new information to knowledge that they have encountered before. Staff frequently check that pupils understand and remember what they have learned. However, in a small

number of subjects, assessment strategies are not well matched to the intent of the curriculum. This means that staff do not know whether pupils have learned and remembered some of the curriculum.

The school has recently strengthened its systems for identifying any additional needs that pupils have. It has developed its provision to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support that they need. In the main, staff have suitable information and guidance that helps them to adapt the delivery of the curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND learn well.

Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. They spoke excitedly about the ways in which staff build suspense when they read stories to them. Pupils take on roles as reading champions and organise events to celebrate reading, such as older pupils reading to younger peers. Pupils enjoy these times when they share books together.

Children are immersed in stories and songs from the moment that they join the Nursery class. This helps to prepare them for the school's phonics programme, starting at the beginning of the Reception Year. Staff deliver this programme well. They are quick to identify and support pupils who develop gaps in their phonics knowledge to catch up. Most pupils develop into accurate and confident readers.

The school enhances pupils' personal development by encouraging them to embrace challenge. For instance, every class participated in an assembly and performed a poem to the rest of the school. Younger pupils acquire new skills when learning outdoors. Older pupils attend residential trips that promote their independence. These opportunities help pupils of all ages to develop into confident and resilient individuals.

Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Meticulous thought has been given to the school's 'inspire aspire' programme, through which pupils learn about a diverse range of people and experiences. Pupils develop a strong understanding of the importance of being tolerant and respectful of others.

There is a calm atmosphere across school. For example, soothing music plays during lunchtime. Staff foster strong relationships with pupils that are based on mutual respect. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. The school works closely with families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

Governors are proud of the many strengths of the school. They use their expertise to support and challenge the school to continue to improve the quality of education that it provides. Staff appreciate the steps that the school takes to keep their workload manageable. For instance, they are given time to develop the curriculum. Staff said that the support and friendship that they offer to each other makes the school community feel like a family. They are overwhelmingly happy and proud to be part of this community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, assessment strategies do not inform teachers about how well pupils are learning some aspects of the curriculum. Occasionally, some pupils do not learn some important content and these gaps go unchecked. The school should ensure that assessment strategies are closely aligned to the intent of the curriculum, so that teachers can accurately identify if previous learning should be revisited.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2018.

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	104454
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10313957
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James Wilson
Headteacher	Helen Rooney
Website	www.holyfamilycronton.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic School is in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in December 2023. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in 2028.
- The school offers a breakfast and after-school club for pupils.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. She met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed some samples of pupils'

work and spoke with staff and pupils. The inspector also looked at curriculum documentation relating to other subjects.

- The inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar member of staff. She spoke with some pupils about reading.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. She also visited the breakfast club.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the archdiocese. She also spoke with an educational consultant who works with the school.
- The inspector met with pupils to ask about their experiences of school. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector met with several groups of staff. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation documents and minutes of governing body meetings.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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