

Inspection of a good school: Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Coventry Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B10 0HT

Inspection dates:

10–11 March 2020

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Many happy, smiling faces fill the classrooms of this vibrant and successful school. There is a real sense of togetherness where pupils and staff look out for each other. Enter any classroom and you will find pupils focused on their work and behaving sensibly. They know that their teachers expect them to try hard. Pupils live up to these expectations. They enjoy their lessons because teachers make learning interesting. Pupils' comments included: 'Teachers push us to be the best we can be.'

The school's reading culture is inescapable. Pupils value reading and are eager to talk about their favourite stories. Eye-catching displays on walls around the school celebrate pupils' work. From high-quality creative writing to some fantastic works of art, pupils are rightly proud of their achievements. Their learning is enriched by a wealth of extra-curricular experiences. These include activities such as outdoor pursuits and author visits.

Pupils are safe. They like the 'family feel' of their school. They say it is easy to make friends. Pupils are kind to each other and respect individual differences. They understand what bullying is and know it is unacceptable. Pupils trust teachers to deal with it quickly should it ever arise.

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

Leaders have invested time in improving the school's curriculum. Previously, not all subjects were given the attention they deserved. Pupils now benefit from better learning experiences across the full range of subjects. They achieve well because they know more. Teachers have the same high expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as they do for others. They find ways for pupils with SEND to overcome their barriers to learning and succeed.

Teachers have a good grasp of the subjects that they teach. They have clear, ambitious end points in mind for pupils. Their plans set out, in order, the steps pupils need to take to reach these goals. However, in a few subjects, there is sometimes a lack of clarity

about key knowledge pupils are expected to learn. In history for instance, pupils' knowledge of the Dark Ages was not as secure as it needed to be. This hindered pupils' ability to fully explore the historical concept of 'change and continuity' between the European Dark Ages and the Golden Age of Islam. These gaps in knowledge sometimes prevent pupils from building on their previous learning and what they already know.

Teachers are thorough in checking what pupils know and can do. They address any gaps in knowledge quickly. Teachers make sure that pupils revisit previous learning every so often. They are skilful at making meaningful links between different subjects. For example, pupils apply their geographical skills to make better sense of history. This helps pupils to remember more and secure a deeper understanding.

One of the school's top priorities is helping pupils to become enthusiastic, competent readers. The teaching of reading throughout the school is strong. Pupils are excited about reading for pleasure. They read with confidence, fluency and understanding. Younger pupils grasp new phonic sounds rapidly. In lessons, time is spent widening pupils' vocabulary. The impact of this is seen in pupils' writing and their adventurous use of words. Pupils write confidently for a wide range of purposes.

Teachers establish good routines in the early years. Children play together well and share. There is a flurry of conversation as children act out in pretend play. In Reception, the curriculum helps children build on their nursery experiences. Children learn to read simple books and solve number problems. The environment enables children to explore and create. However, sometimes activities, both indoor and outdoor, do not demand enough of children. This means that some children do not achieve their full potential.

Visits to places of interest, and taking part in sporting events, broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils learn about the world of work. This helps to raise their aspirations for the future. Pupils who are disadvantaged benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered. Pupils are taught about the diverse world in which we live. For example, they learn about artists from around the world.

Pupils are almost always sensible, polite and very well-behaved. They are self-motivated and show positive attitudes towards learning. They feel safe in school and know that they have someone to talk to if they are worried. They are confident that if there is any unkindness, it will be dealt with promptly by teachers.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders continually strive for improvement. Good relationships with staff mean that senior leaders get the best out of everyone. A committed governing body plays a key role in the school's success. The governors check the school's work, and are as ambitious for pupils as they are for leaders. Parents are very much involved with, and supportive of, the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders adopt a rigorous approach to keeping pupils safe. Staff understand the many personal challenges that some families face. They work hard to support vulnerable children and their families. Leaders ensure that staff have the right training to meet their specific safeguarding responsibilities. Staff know what is expected of them if they suspect that a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff always act in the best interests of the child and involve other agencies when necessary. Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe from abuse, both online and offline.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few of the foundation subjects, some subject leaders have not given enough thought to the precise knowledge they want pupils to know. For example, in some history units of work, the core knowledge is not clearly set out in enough detail. This means that, sometimes, pupils do not build their knowledge over time as effectively as they could. Leaders need to ensure that the knowledge pupils are expected to learn is explicitly set out for all curriculum subjects. This will help pupils to grasp the more demanding curriculum content.
- In the early years, teachers ensure that resources are available to support children's self-exploration. However, sometimes activities do not enable children to be as focused on their learning as they could be. This means that children do not always challenge themselves. Leaders should ensure that teachers plan learning activities, both indoors and outdoors, that encourage more open-ended thinking. Adult interaction should, when appropriate, prompt children to experiment and find solutions to more complex problems.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good/standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 1 February 2011.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	103421
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10111805
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	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Joyce Jones
Headteacher	Peter Foley
Website	http://www.holyfam.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school has a Catholic religious ethos.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders. I also met with five members of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair.
- Subjects considered in depth as part of this inspection were reading, history and English. I carried out lesson visits to see these subjects being taught and looked at pupils' work. I talked to pupils about their work. I spoke to teachers who taught these subjects and held discussions with subject leaders. I listened to pupils read.
- I considered 17 responses to Ofsted Parent View and seven free-text comments from parents. There were no responses to the Ofsted pupil survey. I considered 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- I explored safeguarding arrangements by reviewing safeguarding records, checking the safety of the school site, talking to staff and pupils about how they keep safe and checking the school's single central record. I met with the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL.

Inspection team

Tim Hill, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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