

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Crookhams, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 1PG

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 October 2024

Outcome

The Holy Family Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this welcoming and inspiring school. The values of the school shine through the pupils' attitudes and the relationships they have with each other. Expectations are high for learning and behaviour. Pupils strive hard to meet these expectations. As a result, they achieve exceedingly well and become confident and independent learners. Pupils are happy and feel safe.

The school helps children in the early years to settle in quickly. They quickly learn to follow the school rules and the class routines. Pupils learn the importance of the school community and their role in it. The school is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They value the importance of treating others with respect. Pupils are encouraged to take on extra responsibilities, such as being school councillors, librarians and organising charity fundraising events.

Pupils benefit greatly from the thoughtful enrichment programme that extends beyond the classroom. School events such as heritage and international days ignite pupils' enthusiasm and knowledge of their own and other pupils' cultures. Pupils enjoy a range of trips to enhance the curriculum, alongside clubs such as the choir and sports activities. These capture pupils' interests, developing new skills and talents.

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

The school's curriculum is a priority for leaders. It is well structured and logically ordered. It is ambitious for pupils, including those pupils with SEND. The curriculum provides teachers with detailed guidance about what to teach. Staff feel well supported in their

work and effective training ensures they have strong subject knowledge. They use this well to promote ambitious standards. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND benefit from skilful adaptations to their work that help them access the same curriculum and thrive in all aspects of school life. The school values its staff and is mindful of their workload. For example, it has ensured that the amount of marking of pupils' work is manageable.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. In most subjects, teachers skilfully check pupils' understanding and adapt learning to ensure no misconceptions arise. This means that pupils can concentrate on producing work of a high quality. This is evident in the improvement in writing across the school. Leaders' priority to improve handwriting from the early years onwards is making an impact. The school has recently reviewed the curriculum in foundation subjects. It is in the process of adapting commercial schemes that are not yet fully embedded. In these areas, checks of what pupils know and understand are inconsistent and imprecise. This lack of precision means that sometimes staff do not maximise pupils' learning opportunities. More work is planned to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs at the school.

Pupils' success in national assessments demonstrates a strong understanding of what they have been taught. This is evident in subjects such as mathematics, where pupils have a thorough grounding in mathematical concepts. They have a fluency and understanding of key vocabulary, solve problems confidently with clear reasons and explanations. Also, in the quality of writing observed in many subjects.

The school is determined to ensure that pupils learn to read widely and with enjoyment. From the early years, staff deliver the chosen phonics programme with skill and expertise. Teaching staff are well trained in how to teach phonics. Pupils gain confidence in reading as their books are matched carefully to the sounds they know. Consequently, pupils master the knowledge they need to read fluently. Staff make regular checks on pupils' reading. Weaker readers receive timely additional support to catch up quickly. As a result, most pupils love to read and become fluent readers.

Pupils are taught that everyone is different and deserves respect. Pupils exemplify the school values in all aspects of school life. Pupils have high attendance rates as they love coming to school. The school takes effective action to reduce any persistent absence. There is a calm and settled atmosphere in classrooms and around school. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, attentive and lessons are rarely interrupted by any poor behaviour.

A carefully crafted personal education programme gives pupils an understanding of healthy lifestyles, relationships and keeping safe in school and in the community. Pupils positively embrace regular outdoor learning. It helps them build confidence and teamwork. Pupils are respectful to each other and to staff.

Staff appreciate the support they receive from leaders and governors. Governors support and challenge the school effectively. They work in harmony with staff to realise the school values and improve the quality of education for all pupils.

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 foundation subjects, changes to the curriculum are not fully embedded. Staff are still getting used to the new curriculum organisation. Assessment opportunities lack precision. The school should ensure that they embed changes to the curriculum fully. Ensure staff are clear about what pupils have learned and when new knowledge should be taught.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in July 2019.

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	117481
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345209
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	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Father Norbert Fernandes
Headteacher	Mrs Katie Linnane
Website	www.holyfamily.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with leaders and subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, met with teachers, and looked at pupils' work. The inspector also looked at the curriculum and pupils' work in some other subjects. The inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.

- The inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- 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
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online staff survey.
- The inspector spoke with some parents. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Phil Garnham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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