

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Leen Mills Lane, Hucknall, Nottingham, NG15 8BZ

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and make at least good progress as they move through the school, particularly in reading.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because they receive good quality support.
- Teaching is good overall and a small amount is outstanding. In the best lessons, teaching is brisk and lively, and pupils delight in their learning.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well and they are eager to learn and work hard. They say that they feel safe in the school and that all pupils are treated equally.
- The headteacher has a strong commitment to helping all pupils to achieve and a clear view of how the school can continue to improve. She is well supported by other leaders in the school.
- The governing body challenges the school well because it knows how well pupils are doing. It makes sure that teachers' performance is managed well and is linked to pupils' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Although progress is good overall, pupils are not always given enough challenge in their lessons to help them achieve exceptionally well.
- Some lessons do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to choose ways of working things out for themselves or to learn from each other.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, of which four were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made short visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning in different subjects. Inspectors listened to pupils read, attended an assembly and observed break times.
- Inspectors took account of the 39 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, an external consultant, governors, school leaders and other staff.
- The information from 18 staff questionnaires was taken into consideration.
- Inspectors looked at various aspects of the school's work, including documents about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. They checked on how the school keeps its pupils safe. They also looked at pupils' books, the school's plans for improvement, records of the checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of the governing body and external reports.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Cooper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Blakelock

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is a converter academy, established in October 2012 from a maintained school in the control of Nottinghamshire local authority. The school is a member of the Pax Christi Catholic Academy Trust, made up of three other primary schools and one secondary school.
- When it was last inspected in 2009, the school was judged to be outstanding overall; teaching and the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage were judged to be good.
- This is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils joins the school other than at the usual times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils can make outstanding progress, by:
 - improving the quality of teaching to match that of the best
 - planning lessons which consistently include activities which challenge all pupils exceptionally well, so that pupils are always able to achieve the best they possibly can
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work out things for themselves and to learn from each other.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join Reception with skills and knowledge that are in line with those typical for their age. Fast-paced teaching and stimulating outdoor activities help them to make outstanding progress during their Reception Year, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were above average in 2012, with good progress in writing. Although fewer pupils reach the higher levels in reading and mathematics, they are well-prepared for Key Stage 2.
- Pupils continue to make good progress during Key Stage 2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above average in 2012, showing a strong improvement on 2011. Almost all the pupils leaving Year 6 in 2012 made or exceeded the progress expected of them. Pupils' progress in reading was outstanding. Most pupils made good progress in writing and mathematics, with some pupils achieving exceptionally well, including a pupil who gained grade C in GCSE mathematics.
- Most pupils make good progress during both key stages because they are well taught. However, in a small minority of lessons, pupils do not always have enough challenge in their learning, because teachers do not consistently plan work at different levels to help them achieve their best.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well and make progress that is at least as good as other pupils, as the school gives them good support.
- Pupils entitled to additional funds from the government through the pupil premium make good progress due to the extra help and opportunities provided by the school. The funding is used to provide extra tuition, books to help pupils study and residential trips. Pupils who join the school at other than the normal times also receive good support which helps them catch up well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good, so pupils achieve well. Teaching is not yet outstanding because pupils are not always fully stretched in their learning. At times, pupils do not have enough opportunities to work out things for themselves and to learn from each other.
- In the best lessons, teachers plan work that will get the very best out of all pupils. In a Reception class, for example, pupils made outstanding progress when practising the sounds that letters make (phonics), and all were thoroughly absorbed in this activity. Any mistakes were quickly sorted out by the teacher, and pupils rapidly became confident in creating new words, to their great delight.
- Pupils enjoy working together so that they can learn from each other. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils practised their times tables with gusto. They said that it was fun to test each other on the times tables 'because you can help a friend'. Pupils rose to the challenge of the teacher's brisk questioning and relished working out more difficult calculations in their heads.
- When lessons are planned to offer plenty of challenge to all pupils in the class, they become

highly interested in their learning and make outstanding progress. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils greatly enjoyed reading out loud the story of 'Goldilocks'. The teacher's excellent questioning at different levels kept pupils alert and helped them think about the characters' feelings. The pupils' practise of new words and expressions in the lesson prepared them exceptionally well for re-writing the story in their own words.

- Pupils who need further help are given well-planned support in extra sessions, and this allows them to catch up well.
- Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and often write detailed advice to help pupils improve. Pupils practise spellings set out by their teachers, but they do not always act on their teachers' comments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils work extremely well together, and their attitudes to learning are outstanding. In lessons, there is often excellent behaviour, and pupils show a real enthusiasm to achieve. Parents agree that their children are happy at the school.
- Pupils are in agreement that they are all treated equally, and the school's motto, 'everybody matters', is seen in action right across the school, with praise awarded for pupils' efforts as well as their achievement.
- The school encourages pupils to manage their own behaviour. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of acting as 'job squad leaders' and school counsellors to help younger pupils, and this gives them good skills for later life.
- Pupils' behaviour towards each other is sensible and polite both in lessons and at play. Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare, and there have been no exclusions for a number of years. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what bullying means, and they are confident that any occasional incident is sorted out quickly by staff.
- Pupils say they feel safe, and parents agree with this view. Pupils show a very good understanding of how they can keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and their attendance is consistently above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is strongly committed to helping all pupils to achieve, and she has a clear view of how the school can continue to improve. She is well supported by other leaders in the school.
- School leaders' good analysis of data helps them to understand the strengths and areas to improve. After reviewing pupils' progress in learning letters and sounds (phonics), the school made some well-planned adjustments to teaching. An outstanding lesson in phonics was seen during the inspection.
- Performance management has been used well to improve teaching. Teachers have clear targets that have led to a rise in pupils' attainment. Well-chosen professional development has helped teachers develop their skills and good training for leaders gives them confidence in their role.

- A well-planned curriculum with interesting topics helps pupils develop good understanding and skills and the school offers many opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences. For example the 'Scottish Day' included a stimulating mix of dancing, cookery and design.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Assemblies and 'retreat days' help them reflect together on beliefs. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They gained a good understanding of different traditions when they learned about a Tudor Christmas and Divali, for example.
- Parents appreciate the work the school does for their children. The school encourages parents to support their children through the homework regularly posted on the school's website, and has recently trained parents to help with reading in school.
- The school is committed to ensuring that pupils are safe, and its safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the strengths and areas to improve in the school because they visit the school regularly to find out how well it is doing, and gain first-hand evidence of how well pupils are learning. Governors ask school leaders about data and pupils' achievement. They have a good understanding of the relationship between teachers' performance and salary progression. Governors question leaders about the progress of pupils entitled to the pupil premium, to make sure that the funding is spent wisely to help pupils achieve well. Governors bring a good range of skills and experience to their role and receive relevant training.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138812
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	410602

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy Converter
School category	Non-Maintained
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christa Bales
Headteacher	Pat Snowdon
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	0115 9534577
Fax number	0115 9680826
Email address	office@holycross.notts.sch.uk

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