

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Culverley Road, Catford, London SE6 2LD

Inspection dates

6–9 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and governors are dedicated to enabling pupils to fulfil their full potential and become well-rounded, resilient individuals who are ready for secondary education.
- The experienced headteacher has detailed knowledge of the school, its pupils and its staff. She is highly regarded by the school community for her determination that all pupils will achieve well and for her approachable manner.
- The headteacher has developed a highly effective team of senior and middle leaders who support the work of the school very well.
- Governors visit the school regularly to see its work for themselves, and to carry out activities that strengthen the school's links with the community it serves. They attend training events to make sure that they are able to hold leaders fully to account for their work.
- Pupils are excited about learning. Very high levels of attendance demonstrate that they are eager to learn. Pupils are proud of their school community, and of the part they play within it.
- Leaders make sure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. They ensure that all the necessary procedures are in place and rigorously applied.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in a range of curriculum subjects, including English and mathematics. In 2016, both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 attained scores above the national average in tests.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils in Year 2 who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above average.
- Teachers in key stages 1 and 2 plan lessons that inspire pupils. Pupils investigate, enquire and debate with confidence. Teachers have high expectations and pupils' work lives up to these; it is neat and well presented.
- Pupils' personal development and well-being are very well supported because pupils are taught to be confident and self-assured. Excellent provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins this work.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress. This is because their needs are accurately identified and teaching is adapted to make sure that they make the best progress possible.
- Teaching in the early years foundation stage is not of the same high quality as in other year groups. Children in the early years make good progress in their learning. They develop personal and social skills that prepare them well for Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the early years so that it is of the same high quality as that in the rest of the school by:
 - ensuring that carefully planned, enticing activities enable children of all abilities to make rapid progress
 - successfully implementing the plan already in place to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning within the early years provision.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher's unwavering dedication has resulted in a strong sense of community and belonging in this school. She has developed an environment which nurtures both pupils and staff so that all aspire to reach her very high expectations. The headteacher has established a strong team of senior and middle leaders through skilful recruitment and by encouraging talented teachers to develop their leadership skills. Parents are very satisfied with all aspects of the school, including leadership and management.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and rich with experiences that develop pupils' social and emotional development. For example, in a science lesson, pupils debated whether various items were solids, liquids or gases. The resources used were chosen by the teacher with great skill and included glitter glue, aerosols and sand-timers. Pupils are encouraged to debate their opinions, and refine their thoughts following the video clips providing definitions of each of the three states of matter. They develop resilience as they learn that it is all right to change their mind, or to make mistakes.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well catered for. This work is supported by the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer such as chess, film and French clubs. Year 6 pupils look after those in Reception through a buddy system. Pupils learn about their own faith and the faiths of others through a structured curriculum. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Middle leaders are very effective in their respective roles as subject leaders, because they have been nurtured and developed by senior leaders. They make sure that all areas of their subject are taught well and that teachers have the resources they need. They check that pupils are making as much progress as possible by visiting lessons and looking at pupils' books.
- Pupil premium funding is spent wisely. Disadvantaged pupils access enrichment activities such as music tuition and after-school clubs alongside their classmates. They also receive high-quality support with their learning if they show signs of falling behind. As a result, in 2016, disadvantaged pupils in the school made even more progress than their peers. Physical education and sport funding is also spent well to promote pupils' involvement in a wide range of physical activities.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is both supportive and challenging. Senior leaders carry out a range of activities to check that the quality of teaching meets their high expectations. Where things are going well, they provide opportunities for teachers to share their expertise. Where things are going less well, they provide effective support to make sure that teaching improves rapidly.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. They have identified that the early years provision is not as strong as they would like. Senior leaders have devised a coherent plan to ensure that the quality of the early years provision improves rapidly so that it is as strong as that in the rest of the school.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is excellent. Governors are committed to attending training and visiting the school regularly to support its work. As a result, they are able to ask challenging questions of leaders in order to check that the school maintains its high standards.
- Governors have undertaken an audit to check that members of the governing body have all the necessary skills and experience. They commission external consultants intelligently when needed. For example, a consultant works with them each year to enable them to have an accurate and impartial understanding of the published information about pupils' outcomes. This enables them to provide a high level of challenge to the school about pupils' progress.
- Governors take an active role in creating the school's plans for development. They hold a meeting each year specifically to discuss these plans. This demonstrates their understanding of the importance of having a clear, focused record of objectives for the coming year. At other meetings, they review the current plans, checking that they are on track to achieve their targets.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Parents are confident that their children are kept safe by the school. Pupils demonstrate their security through self-assured attitudes and calm behaviour. They know whom to go to if they have any concerns.
- Governors take their responsibilities with respect to safeguarding seriously. The link governor for safeguarding attends termly training provided by the local authority to ensure that she remains up to date with requirements. Although they are fully involved in the oversight of safeguarding, governors also commission external audits of safeguarding practice to be doubly sure that all the necessary arrangements are in place.
- Members of staff receive regular safeguarding training to make sure that this priority remains at the forefront of the school's work. Recent input has included information about female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and the risk of radicalisation. There are robust procedures in place for the recording and reporting of any concerns that arise.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Pupils make rapid progress because teachers plan work that catches their interest and makes them think. For example, pupils were investigating soil using scientific equipment such as magnifiers. There was a palpable sense of wonder as they identified slate, glass and insect eggs in their samples. The teacher adapted lesson timings skilfully, allowing pupils to extend their learning even further.

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and pupils live up to these. As a result, work is of high quality. At the start of Year 1, for example, some pupils were writing a basic sentence with variable letter formation. After just one term, they have moved on to writing a series of sentences with clearly formed handwriting.
- Leaders have implemented a clear structure for assessing what pupils can and cannot do. Teachers use this information skilfully to devise groups of lessons that are precisely focused on what pupils need to learn next. They use a range of questioning techniques to check pupils' understanding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. This is because their needs are assessed accurately and timely interventions are implemented to make sure that they do well. Leaders have invested in training courses for teachers and other adults. They check that the training is improving adults' practice. As a result, outcomes for this group of pupils are improving rapidly.
- Pupils of all abilities read with confidence and clarity. Most-able readers use tone and expression to add flavour to their reading. Those whose reading skills are less well developed use their phonic knowledge to identify less familiar words correctly. Pupils' comprehension skills are strong and this supports their accuracy when reading aloud.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the early years is not as strong as in key stages 1 and 2. This is because teachers do not consistently plan activities that enable children of all abilities to make rapid progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Opportunities to develop self-esteem and resilience are threaded through the school day.
- Pupils report that there is no bullying in the school and inspection findings confirm that such incidents are extremely rare. However, leaders make sure that pupils are taught about the different forms of bullying, in order to prepare them for life after primary school.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe when out and about in their local community and when online. For example, police officers talk to older pupils about the dangers of gangs.
- Leaders promote healthy lifestyles through a range of initiatives. Road safety officers teach pupils how to ride their bicycles safely and many pupils come to school on scooters or bicycles. Pupils eat healthily because a range of healthy eating options is available in the school canteen. Pupils with medical needs are well catered for and their needs carefully documented.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are courteous, articulate and well mannered. Pupils demonstrate caring attitudes towards each other with older pupils looking after younger ones. Different age groups mix well on the playground and at lunchtime.
- The importance of attending school regularly is embedded within the school's culture. Consequently, overall attendance is well above average. Very few pupils do not attend regularly. In these cases, leaders do all they can to enable pupils to attend more often.
- In lessons, pupils apply themselves to their tasks very well. They are excited about their learning because teachers plan innovative lessons that motivate pupils to learn. Pupils are keen to talk about their studies and explained recent projects to inspectors.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- In 2016, pupils in key stages 1 and 2 made exceptional progress because they are taught well and are eager to learn. The school's information shows that around two thirds of those on roll in these year groups made outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics in 2015/16. Scrutiny of pupils' books confirms that leaders' judgements are accurate.
- The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in 2016 were above the national average.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2 made more progress than other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This was as a result of effective spending of pupil premium funding. In Year 6, both the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged groups attained an average test score above the national average in reading and mathematics. There is no test score for writing. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make as much progress as others.
- Pupils make excellent progress in a range of subjects. In science, for example, scrutiny of work in books shows that pupils learn how to investigate, set out their findings and draw clear, accurate graphs.
- Pupils join the school with wide-ranging levels of skills. In the early years, children develop a positive attitude to learning and become confident and inquisitive. They make strong progress, and the proportion of pupils who reach a good level of development is above average.

Early years provision

Good

- Children join the early years provision with variable levels of skills. They make good progress and the 2016 assessments show that around three quarters of children in Reception reached a good level of development.

- The early years leader is competent and knowledgeable. She knows which groups of children are doing well and which need a little extra help. She provides support for other teachers and adults who work in the early years by modelling good practice. She also oversees the planning of other teachers.
- Children in the early years settle quickly into the school's nurturing environment. They see older pupils behaving well, being polite and kind to each other, and taking on responsibilities. They aspire to be like their older peers and develop positive attitudes to learning and self-confidence soon after joining the school. As a result, they are well prepared for Year 1.
- As in other parts of the school, staff work effectively with parents. Parents are confident that their children are taught well and kept safe. Leaders arrange workshops and activities to help parents support their child's learning at home. Additional funding is spent wisely and consequently disadvantaged children make similar progress to their classmates.
- Leaders have recognised that teaching in the early years is not of the consistently high quality found in the rest of the school. Where teaching is strong, activities are enticing, vibrant and well resourced. They are enriched by the presence of text and numbers to extend children's literacy and numeracy skills. Where teaching is weaker, activities do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able to make rapid gains in their learning. Occasionally, resources are tired and no longer fit for purpose.

School details

Unique reference number	100739
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10019247

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Monaghan
Headteacher	Mary Collins
Telephone number	0208 6982675
Website	www.holycross.lewisham.sch.uk
Email address	admin@holycross.lewisham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2011

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is a one-form-entry school catering for pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and cultures.
- Children attend Nursery part time, attending in either the mornings or the afternoons.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is broadly average, but the proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

Information about this inspection

- The school was inspected on 6 December 2016 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. This inspection was led by an Ofsted Inspector. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act, which took place between 8 December and 9 December 2016 and was led by one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and some small groups. The majority of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher or acting deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, a group of staff and a group of pupils. Two meetings were held with groups of governors, and a telephone conversation was held with a local authority officer.
- Inspectors observed pupils during an assembly, on the playground and at lunchtime. They considered the views of parents through the 73 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and meeting with parents at the start of the school day.
- A wide range of documentation was considered, including that relating to safeguarding, pupils’ outcomes, the school’s curriculum and the work of governors.

Inspection team

Gaynor Roberts, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Diane Rochford	Ofsted Inspector
Keith Tysoe	Ofsted Inspector
Tom Canning, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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