

Holy Rosary Catholic Primary Academy

Hickman Avenue, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV1 2BS

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Governors have not secured a permanent head of school since April 2016. This has led to instability in leadership, which has limited the school’s ability to swiftly improve teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- Governors have been focused on teacher recruitment. The local academy committee is not providing sufficient challenge to senior leaders on the attainment and progress of pupils.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not fast enough. Pupil premium funding is not focused sharply enough on helping these pupils to catch up.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in reading and mathematics. As a result, standards in these subjects across the school are not high enough.
- Recent changes to the teaching of phonics have not yet resulted in improved outcomes in phonics and reading.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good in all classes in the school. As a result, pupils are not achieving their potential.
- In the early years, not enough children reach a good level of development. This means that too many children are not adequately prepared for learning in Year 1.

The school has the following strengths

- Acting leaders, in partnership with the multi-academy company, are now starting to strengthen teaching. In particular, improved teaching is boosting pupils’ progress in writing.
- Pupils behave well in school. They are proud to be part of the school and feel safe.
- Pupils’ attitudes to learning are positive. Attendance is improving.
- Pupils are well cared for. Safeguarding is effective. Staff are vigilant and support the welfare needs of individual pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the multi-academy company secures the appointment of a permanent head of school
 - governors are rigorous in holding leaders to account for the outcomes of pupils
 - governors, leaders and teachers closely monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils so that they can evaluate the impact of pupil premium funding on improving outcomes for these pupils
 - leaders and managers secure more consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Improve the quality of teaching and lift pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics across key stages 1 and 2 by:
 - securing good foundations for reading through the effective teaching of phonics in Reception and key stage 1
 - making sure that teachers use reading assessment information precisely to develop pupils' fluency and understanding of what they have read
 - expanding the range of books pupils read and developing their love of reading
 - ensuring that pupils have opportunities to solve real-life problems in mathematics and develop their basic arithmetic skills and reasoning skills.
- Ensure that children in the early years are well prepared for learning in key stage 1 by:
 - narrowing the gap between the achievement of boys and girls
 - making sure that adults use observational assessments effectively to inform their planning and identify the children's next steps in learning
 - creating a stimulating environment, both indoors and outdoors, to engage the children's interests and develop their exploratory play.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since September 2016, the school has had a permanent executive headteacher. However, from September 2017 there has been an acting head of school and an acting assistant principal of school. Governors are aware of the need to appoint permanent senior leaders in the school. Nevertheless, those that are in temporary roles are starting to have a positive impact on provision. Staffing is becoming more stable and teaching is beginning to improve. In particular, there have been improvements in the teaching of writing, behaviour is getting better and attendance rates are rising. Leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure that teaching and learning, including the teaching of reading and mathematics, are consistently good.
- Governors allocate pupil premium funding to a wide range of different provisions and activities. However, governors and other leaders do not evaluate the impact of these strategies carefully enough. Consequently, they are not able to identify the impact that pupil premium funding is having on disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school improvement plan reflects clear areas for improvement identified in the school's self-evaluation. The school improvement plan is focused on improving teaching and learning. Training and development for staff have significantly improved since the school became an academy. Support and training for staff is well received and staff value the wider range of training opportunities they now have. A combination of staff training and effective performance management of teachers is resulting in an improving picture of teaching.
- Senior leaders and leaders from across the Pope John XXIII multi-academy company regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning. There is strong collaboration between leaders in the multi-academy company schools. Teachers value the feedback they receive. There are clear links between staff training and leaders' monitoring. This is resulting in some better teaching. For example, new approaches to the teaching of writing, introduced in September 2017, are being closely monitored by the English subject leader. Feedback to staff identifies strengths in their practice and next steps. Evidence in pupils' books shows that the changes to the teaching of writing are resulting in improvements in pupils' learning.
- Over the past two years, the leadership of English and mathematics has not been effective because actions to improve outcomes for pupils have not been swift enough. Current leaders show the capacity to make improvements. Leaders recognise that there is more to be done to improve the leadership of the curriculum. In the current academic year, all teachers have taken on a curriculum leadership responsibility. Teachers have received training on middle leadership. Teachers said that they value the opportunity to develop their leadership skills.
- Leaders monitor the impact of programmes to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Some funding is used for specific programmes to develop pupils' emotional resilience, speech and language or to help some pupils with anger management. As a result, pupils are more settled in class, allowing them to access learning in lessons with their peers.

- Each term, pupils access a broad range of subjects. Pupils enjoy the way that the school uses educational visits to bring the curriculum to life. During this inspection, pupils spoke enthusiastically about visits to a space centre in Leicester and the Think Tank museum in Birmingham as part of their science topics.
- Sports funding is used well and results in pupils having access to many different sporting opportunities. The funding has resulted in wider participation in many different sports clubs. The school monitors progress closely, particularly the number of pupils who are able to swim.
- Pupils learn about many different religions and show respect, tolerance and understanding of other cultures and beliefs. Pupils have a strong sense of democracy and show a good understanding of British values. Through their work in the community, including fundraising for charities, pupils take responsibility and show concern for others. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents and carers reported that there are increasing opportunities for them to be involved in the life of the school, particularly since it became a part of the multi-academy company. During this inspection, a violin concert of pupils in Year 4 was well attended by parents. Pupils show great pride in their musical achievements.

Governance of the school

- Governance is provided by a local academy committee that reports to the board of directors of the multi-academy company. The local academy committee has an understanding of some aspects of the school's provision. Governors are aware of weaknesses in teaching but do not have a clear understanding of the progress of groups of pupils.
- Governors do not do enough to check the impact of pupil premium funding on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school.
- Governors are not holding leaders sufficiently to account. Minutes of meetings show that governors ask questions. However, governors too readily accept answers and do not challenge leaders sufficiently on the impact of school programmes and outcomes for different groups of pupils.
- Governors visit the school regularly. They attend training and updates provided by the multi-academy company and the local authority.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders in school are meticulous in monitoring the welfare of vulnerable pupils. Records are managed well. Staff training is up to date. This means that staff understand their roles and what to do if they have a concern about a child.
- The acting head of school is proactive in his work to protect vulnerable pupils. He has high expectations of outside agencies, taking appropriate action to support pupils and their families when needed.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils are supported through counselling and projects to promote their mental health and emotional needs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good across the school. As a result, not enough pupils are making good progress across key stages 1 and 2.
- On too many occasions, teachers do not provide pupils with work that is sufficiently motivating or matched appropriately to their needs. This results in the pupils not making as much progress as they could.
- Sometimes, teachers' or teaching assistants' subject knowledge restricts pupils' progress. At other times, explanations are not clear enough for pupils. Practice varies across the school. Where the best practice is seen, teachers and teaching assistants ask pupils questions to make sure that they really understand what they need to do next in their learning. Teachers go over errors, allowing pupils to extend their learning there and then.
- In some classes, the teaching of mathematics is very effective, and pupils have a good range of opportunities to solve real-life problems and develop their mathematical vocabulary and reasoning skills. In other classes, opportunities for pupils to consolidate their mathematical skills and use them to solve real-life problems are limited. As a result, not all pupils are developing the basic arithmetic skills. In some classes, pupils' mathematical fluency and reasoning are limited.
- Teachers show greater confidence when delivering the school's new approach to writing. The pupils review good examples of writing. They are taught the grammar, spelling and punctuation skills required for the type of writing they are undertaking. Pupils are given time to edit and improve their pieces of extended writing.
- The school has recently adopted a new approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff told inspectors that, because of their recent training, they have a growing confidence in their own subject knowledge in teaching phonics. However, there are still variations in the quality of phonics teaching. In some lessons, pupils do not have enough time to practise and use unfamiliar sounds before they move on to new work. In key stage 2, some pupils who find learning more difficult have gaps in knowledge and lack confidence when reading unfamiliar words.
- Pupils are generally taking more pride in their writing. Work in books shows that this is improving. However, some variation in their standards of presentation remains.
- Pupils are eager to learn. They have positive attitudes to learning in lessons. They are supportive of one another. Pupils talk confidently about their ideas with others and show good skills of perseverance and concentration.
- Pupils said that they receive homework regularly and the school offers incentives to encourage pupils to complete it on time.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Throughout the school, pupils show respect for each other and adults in school. Pupils are friendly and welcoming. They are proud of their school and their achievements. They are courteous, holding doors open for each other and adults as they move through school.
- Staff know the pupils well. They understand and respond to the individual needs of pupils. Staff work very well with external agencies to provide additional services for pupils and signpost families to support groups when appropriate. Several parents told inspectors how much they appreciate the support school gives to their children, particularly pupils who have medical needs. Staff throughout the school work effectively to develop the self-confidence of every pupil. As a result, pupils are proud of their achievements and value the contributions they make to the school community.
- Pupils are confident and keen to suggest ways in which the school can improve. Pupils articulate their ideas with maturity.
- Pupils feel safe in school. All parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire feel that their child is safe in school. Pupils said that incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, such as racism and online bullying. Pupils reported that adults help them if they have a problem and they know whom they can talk to about any concerns.
- Pupils show a good understanding of safety, in particular online safety. Regular teaching in school and the work of the Year 6 digital ambassadors provide pupils with up-to-date advice and guidance about e-safety. The school works well with outside partnerships to promote pupils' safety.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in most classes and the majority of lessons. However, in some reading lessons some pupils do not concentrate on the task in hand. This is because not all reading activities have an appropriate level of challenge.
- Most pupils behave well around school. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Leaders and staff have introduced new systems to promote good behaviour. All pupils understand the 'good to be green' system. Leaders monitor behaviour carefully. Leaders and parents reported that the behaviour of pupils has improved significantly in the school over the past year. Historically, exclusion rates have been above average, but in the autumn term 2017 there were no exclusions.
- The school has introduced reward systems to promote positive attitudes to learning and behaviour. Pupils understand these systems and show maturity in understanding the consequences of their actions. Support is in place for pupils who have particular behavioural needs.

- Attendance rates are below national average, but are improving. There has been a reduction in overall persistent absence. There are a small number of pupils whose attendance remains a concern. Staff work tirelessly with the families of these pupils to improve attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In some year groups, outcomes for pupils require improvement. In particular, outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have been low for the past two years in reading, writing and mathematics. Senior leaders are now monitoring the quality of teaching and learning more closely. Leaders identify pupils at risk of not meeting the end of Year 2 expectations and put extra support in place. School assessment information indicates that, with improved teaching, the attainment of current Year 2 pupils is rising.
- Over time, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has not been rapid enough. Many disadvantaged pupils have gaps in their learning. The school is now starting to address variations in the quality of teaching. Where teaching is stronger, disadvantaged pupils are making as much progress as their peers.
- Pupils do not read often enough. Pupils' fluency in reading and their understanding of what they have read are not developed sufficiently by teachers. As a result, pupils with average starting points are not making enough progress in reading across key stage 2. Pupils are not confident when talking about different types of books, such as fiction and non-fiction, poetry and plays. Staff across the school are not fostering a love of reading. Consequently, many pupils are not reading for pleasure.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2017, progress of pupils was average in reading, writing and mathematics. This was an improvement on progress rates in 2016. However, pupils with low starting points were not well prepared enough for the next stage of their education.
- Current information held by the school shows that rates of pupils' progress in reading and mathematics vary across key stages 1 and 2. Where teaching is weaker, the progress of pupils is too slow. Work in current pupils' books shows that achievement in writing is stronger than in other subjects.
- At the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics is below the national average. Over the past two years, results in the Year 1 phonics screening check have dipped, and only two thirds of pupils have reached the expected standard.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities currently in school are making similar progress to their peers. Adults support individual pupils by explaining their work clearly. As a result, some pupils are developing greater self-confidence when tackling more challenging work.
- Current school information shows that the level of challenge for the most able pupils remains strong, and they are making expected progress given their starting points.
- Pupils achieve well in physical education and music. Pupils enjoy singing and learning to play instruments.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has fallen over the last three years. In 2017, only half of the children in Reception reached a good level of development at the end of the year. Boys attained less well than girls in most areas of learning.
- The majority of children join Reception with a level of skills and knowledge that is below that typical for their age. Many children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. They settle into the Reception class and learn to follow routines. Children behave well and follow adults' instructions. However, gender gaps remain in the current Reception class. Boys are less well prepared for Year 1 than girls.
- Leaders and managers have limited information on the progress of children in some areas of learning. As a result, their analysis and evaluation of the progress of groups of children in the different areas of learning are insufficient. The local authority has invited the school to be part of a Department for Education project for early years with other schools in Wolverhampton. Adults are attending training as part of this project. Staff in school have audited the Reception environment and are in the process of updating areas for children to read, write and play. It is too soon to evaluate the impact of this recent work.
- Adults' observations of children are recorded in learning journeys and detail what the children have said or done. However, these records do not show a clear evaluation of progress over time. This is because adults do not ensure that children build on what they already know and can do. This is restricting their progress in some areas of learning.
- The learning environment is a safe space for children. However, neither the indoor nor the outdoor environments provide rich stimulating environments for learning. Activities do not engage the children's interests or stimulate their exploratory play. Leaders have already identified this as a priority for improvement.
- Adults ask questions to prompt children to talk about what they are doing. They develop children's confidence and resilience. For example, during the inspection children worked together to build a tall tower using wooden blocks. When the tower toppled over, they showed great teamwork by encouraging each other to build it up again.
- Adults' good modelling of spoken English helps children to develop their language skills.
- Children are happy at school and keen to share their ideas with adults. Strong pastoral care is evident and relationships between children and adults are positive. Adults ensure that children are safe. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.
- Parents said that they appreciate the work of the Reception staff in ensuring that their children are happy, safe and well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	141789
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10042833

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Angela Walker
Executive Headteacher	Mr Karl Russell
Telephone number	01902 878440
Website	www.holyrosaryschool.org.uk
Email address	holyrosaryprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Holy Rosary Catholic Primary Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support through the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- Holy Rosary Catholic Primary became part of the Pope John XXIII Catholic Multi-Academy Company in March 2015.
- There have been significant changes in the leadership and management of the school since it became an academy.

- A permanent executive headteacher, who took up post in September 2016, was absent during the inspection. He is the executive headteacher of two primary schools and the acting executive headteacher in one other primary school in the multi-academy company.
- Holy Rosary Catholic Primary works collaboratively with two other primary schools: St Mary's Catholic Academy and Corpus Christi Primary Catholic Academy as well as Our Lady and St Chad Academy, a secondary school. These schools are all part of the multi-academy company.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of lessons, some jointly with the acting head of school, acting assistant principal of school and head of school from St Mary's School. Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and met with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors read with pupils in Reception and Year 2 and jointly with the acting assistant principal of school with pupils in Years 4 and 6. Inspectors reviewed samples of pupils' work in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during breaktime and lunchtime to seek their views about the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and on the playground.
- Inspectors observed a music performance for parents of Year 4 pupils.
- Inspectors met with members of staff, including the acting head of school, acting assistant principal, leader of the early years, special needs coordinator (SENCo), two middle leaders and five members of staff.
- The lead inspector held two meetings with the chair of the board of directors and three members of the school's academy committee. A meeting was held with a local authority representative. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with the director of education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, self-evaluation documents and external reviews and evaluations of the school. They reviewed school information about the achievement of current pupils' progress and attainment. They looked at documents relating to governance, safeguarding, the monitoring of teaching and learning, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Pamela Matty, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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