

# Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Upper Essex Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L8 6QB

## Inspection dates

29–30 June 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not tackled effectively inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics.
- Governors do not challenge senior leaders robustly enough over the standards pupils reach and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The progress that pupils make in mathematics is not consistently good. In some classes pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Consequently, many pupils are not challenged sufficiently and make uneven or slow progress as they move through the school.
- Teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough. This sometimes results in teachers setting tasks that are too easy for the most able pupils and too difficult for others.
- Pupils are easily distracted and quick to disengage when tasks do not match their abilities.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to broaden and deepen their understanding of mathematics and develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Teachers' feedback is not always effective in moving pupils' learning forward, particularly in mathematics.

### The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed deputy headteacher has begun to take decisive action to tackle weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- Improvements in the teaching of reading and writing are having a positive impact on pupils' learning and the progress they make.
- Pupils' attendance has improved greatly since the previous inspection; it is now comparable to that of pupils nationally.
- Pupils' personal development is good and their welfare is prioritised by the school. Leaders take their responsibility for safeguarding very seriously. Consequently, pupils say they feel safe, and parents agree.
- Holy Family has a welcoming and caring ethos. As a result, pupils grow into kind and considerate citizens.
- Music is a strength of the school. The exceptional leadership of this subject results in opportunities for many pupils to excel as singers and musicians.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - use what they know about pupils' previous learning to plan lessons that match pupils' abilities more closely and challenge all groups of pupils effectively
  - give pupils more opportunity to reason mathematically and solve problems so that they can broaden and deepen their understanding
  - ask questions in lessons that challenge pupils, particularly the most able, to think more deeply about their work
  - provide clear and precise feedback to pupils when using the agreed marking policy in order to have a stronger impact on pupils' learning and progress
  - plan activities that engage pupils in their learning so that they make the progress of which they are capable.
  
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - teachers have the highest expectations of every pupil
  - leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are used effectively to hold staff to account for the progress of their pupils
  - leaders robustly tackle any teaching that is less than good
  - governors ask the challenging questions required to hold leaders fully to account for their actions.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not taken the actions required to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is consistently good. As a result, pupils make slower progress than that of which they are capable in a number of classes. This is particularly evident in mathematics.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching identify its strengths and weaknesses but their feedback to teachers often lacks precision. Most importantly, some teachers are unable to improve their teaching because leaders' expectations of them are not made clear enough.
- Several aspects have improved since the previous inspection, including the systems used to check the standards pupils reach and to track their progress. The systems are increasingly useful in informing leaders about which pupils are achieving well and which are falling behind. Leaders, however, have only recently felt that the information gathered is accurate and reliable. This has resulted in information not being used precisely enough by teachers to identify pupils' understanding and to plan for their next steps in learning. Consequently many pupils do not make good enough progress.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are broadly appropriate and identify the areas of most importance to focus on, but they lack a sense of urgency and rigour. In areas such as improving the consistency of teaching and accelerating the standards in mathematics, action to bring about improvement has been too slow.
- The newly-appointed deputy headteacher is having a positive influence on school improvement and has already brought about a number of changes. She quickly identified the shortcomings in the early years and put actions in place which have had an immediate effect. Meetings to discuss pupils' progress are now being used more effectively to hold teachers to account, to identify and discuss those pupils at risk of falling behind and to plan actions to support their needs.
- Middle leadership is increasingly effective, particularly in English, science, music, physical education and personal, social and health education. The recent addition of a strong mathematics leader complements the team and provides a firm basis from which to establish effective leadership and bring about change. The most effective teachers in school are now influencing the practice of others and improving standards.
- Pupil premium funding is spent on a range of initiatives, including additional support to promote emotional health and well-being and ensuring that disadvantaged pupils can take part in everything the school has to offer. The school is effective in supporting disadvantaged pupils and their families. The school has also invested in activities to help these pupils quickly catch up in their learning. As a consequence, by the time disadvantaged pupils reach the end of key stage 2, their progress is broadly in line with that of other pupils nationally in reading and writing, but weaker in mathematics.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding is used well. Teachers have received additional training and pupils have benefited from opportunities to be involved in a wide range of sporting activities, both within the school day and after school. This has included competing in local and national events. Pupils talk with pride about their sporting opportunities and how well they do at representing their school in competitions. The school's outdoor climbing wall is regularly in use at lunchtimes. It is very popular with pupils, both to climb and to watch, and creates a very positive sense of team spirit among pupils as they cheer each other on.
- The curriculum has been thoroughly revised in line with the new national requirements. It is broad, balanced and engages pupils, contributing to their enjoyment of learning. It is enriched by additional opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of activities. The music curriculum is a strength of the school and plays an important part in developing pupils' pride and self-esteem. The strong leadership and passion of the music leader is infectious. All pupils sing, many to a high standard, and some have joined choirs at the two local cathedrals. Music and performance energise the school. Parents take part in fun music sessions with Nursery children during 'stay and play' sessions. At a samba drumming session in the playground at lunchtime, pupils gathered around, danced and joined in.
- Well-promoted spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means the school is a calm and considerate environment where pupils mix together well. Pupils are actively involved in promoting the school's values around school and also in the wider community. For example, the school is a dementia-friendly school and groups of pupils regularly spend time with residents at a local care home. The elderly residents value the time the pupils spend with them and, as one pupil said, 'We love hearing their stories and putting a smile in their day.' Through assemblies and the curriculum, pupils raise funds for charities and learn about tolerance, democracy and the rule of law. Older pupils participate in debates and discussions. Displays around school celebrate other faiths, cultures and how to be a good citizen.

- Leaders have worked hard to establish a caring and welcoming ethos for pupils and parents. The school provides strong pastoral support to pupils and their families to help them overcome any issues that arise. Leaders value highly the involvement of parents and offer many opportunities for parents to find out how they can help their child learn. They also provide training for parents to develop parenting skills.
- The local authority has provided appropriate and helpful support for the school in developing teaching, learning and the curriculum and this has been welcomed and valued by school staff and leaders. Most recently, a new school improvement adviser has stepped up the pace of improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Although governors know the school well and ask some challenging questions, discussions with governors and evidence from records of meetings shows that the challenge is sometimes not rigorous enough. As a result, the governing body has not been able to hold leaders to account to the extent that it should.
  - The governing body has a clear understanding of performance management procedures and has oversight of the management of teachers' pay increases. As the quality of teaching is inconsistent and pupils are not achieving as well as they might, their oversight is not as effective as it should be. Governors have worked with the headteacher to make some good staff appointments. However, they have not been decisive enough in tackling staffing issues and insisting on the highest expectations of staff. The governing body ensures that the pupil premium and the PE and sport funds are spent effectively.
  - Governors have not ensured that all required information is published on the school's website.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are very effective. Robust systems are in place and are understood by staff. Staff undertake regular training and safeguarding is a high priority in the school. Leaders are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. Effective relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies between classes and is not consistently good throughout the school. In mathematics in particular, a few teachers do not use what they know about pupils' previous learning to plan lessons that ensure that they fill gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills and provide the right level of challenge. As a result, learning in a small number of classes is erratic and pupils make slower progress than they should.
- Mathematics is not taught confidently by a few teachers because their subject knowledge is underdeveloped, and so the activities that are being given to pupils are repetitive and uninteresting. Pupils are not challenged enough to try out strategies for solving problems and are not offered opportunities to deepen their understanding of mathematical ideas.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, in line with the school's policy. The quality of their feedback is mixed. Marking in some classes is not as effective as it could be in helping pupils to improve their work.
- Teachers in some classes do not ask the right questions and this means pupils are not being offered a chance to deepen their understanding of what is being taught. Weak questioning also means teachers do not challenge pupils, especially the most able pupils, to think deeply enough. These weaknesses in the quality of teaching are not seen in every class.
- In several classes, the subject knowledge of teachers is strong. Pupils are excited about learning. Teachers ask the right questions to aid pupils' thinking, draw out learning and help them move on. Staff and pupils see a mistake as another opportunity to learn.
- The teaching of reading, writing, grammar and punctuation has greatly improved since the last inspection. Teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing. Fiction and non-fiction books are used to interest and engage pupils in their learning. Pupils have opportunities to write for a purpose and use their understanding of the effect of language to improve their work. For example, pupils in Year 6 listened carefully to each other's writing about the ancient Greek character Medusa and helped each other find more descriptive and powerful ways of describing her thoughts and her actions.
- Reading is now taught well. Leaders have invested in a range of good-quality texts to enhance pupils' interest in reading. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is strong and gives pupils the skills to read unfamiliar words. Pupils have a regular opportunity to read to an adult in school until they are fluent and are motivated to read by themselves. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and talk

excitedly about books. Pupils that struggle with reading have very good support to practise their skills and are proud of the progress they make.

- There are strengths in the teaching of some other subjects. For example, science, music, and physical education are all taught well. As a result, pupils are excited and animated by their learning and often make good progress. Evidence in pupils' science books shows that they explore science topics and consider concepts in a range of practical ways. Pupils in Year 4 were enthralled by an experiment demonstrating the water cycle. They asked interesting questions, were encouraged to think for themselves and considered 'what if...' questions. They were delighted when they were successful in creating a cloud.
- Pupils who struggle with their learning receive a range of support to help them catch up. Teaching assistants in key stages 1 and 2 are used effectively. They are knowledgeable and skilled and make a good contribution to the progress of the pupils with whom they work.
- For those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the support they are offered is broad, targeted and of an appropriate quality. They are making the progress expected. These pupils are well cared for and participate fully in all that the school has to offer.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** requires improvement

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The importance placed on pupils' personal development and welfare is evident in all aspects of school. Staff and governors are diligent in their responsibility to ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment for pupils.
- Staff treat pupils with consideration and ensure that the school makes everyone feel welcome and valued. Adults model respectful and caring behaviour in lessons, around school and in the way they engage with pupils. As a result, pupils are developing as thoughtful and compassionate citizens. For example, school prefects from Year 6 are chosen specifically because they are kind and considerate members of the school community, and promote the values of the school. This responsibility is highly prized by prefects and respected by pupils throughout the school.
- The vast majority of parents who spoke with inspectors and those that responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, felt that their children were well looked after and safe in school. Vulnerable pupils are supported particularly well, with extra opportunities to develop their self-esteem, resilience and confidence. If needed, pupils can also access counselling. Staff spend time building trusting relationships with all families, but particularly those that may need extra help or assistance.
- The school is very effective in supporting pupils to develop their social and emotional skills and considers this aspect of the curriculum as important. Pupils have opportunities to explore their feelings in lessons and small-group activities, and to discuss important qualities such as respect, loyalty, trust, forgiveness and happiness.
- Most pupils in key stage 2, and a growing number in key stage 1, are happy to talk about their learning. The older pupils tend to be the more confident and self-assured. Pupils told inspectors how they enjoyed coming to school and how they felt well looked after by adults. They also talked with pride about helping each other in their learning and looking after each other in the playground.
- Pupils spoken with during the inspection were clear about what bullying was and said that incidents were rare and always dealt with promptly by an adult. They were also confident that teachers quickly dealt with any unkind or negative language towards pupils. Pupils were unanimous in their view that they felt safe in school and most, particularly older pupils, knew how to keep themselves safe personally and online. The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View felt that the school deals appropriately with bullying or that they were not aware of any bullying towards their child.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils are not always encouraged effectively to take pride in their work. In the classes where expectations are too low, pupils take less care in how their work looks and teachers are inconsistent in the way they remind pupils to apply school policies. In these classes, pupils are easily distracted and are not as interested in completing the activities they are set. This is because lessons are not planned precisely enough to meet these pupils' needs. As a result, pupils in these classes are quick to put work aside and talk to their neighbour about something else or engage in behaviour that is irritating to those around them. This means other pupils cannot get on with their work and pupils make slower progress than they could.

- Pupils are fully aware of how they should behave and the consequences of poor behaviour. They say incidents of inappropriate behaviour do occur, but are dealt with quickly by teachers. Pupils are usually responsive and respectful to adults. Pupils who have behavioural needs are well supported to ensure that their behaviour does not get in the way of their learning and does not often distract others' learning.
- In the classes where teaching is interesting and engaging, pupils have a positive attitude to learning. They are eager to learn, absorbed and excited by their work.
- Leaders have worked extremely hard to address the poor attendance identified at the previous inspection, with great success. This has come about in part because of the strength of relationship that the headteacher has with pupils' parents, but also through the hard work of key members of staff who have been employed to focus on encouraging improvements in attendance. The systems for monitoring absence are now rigorous and effective. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in school. As a result, absence and persistent absence have reduced dramatically over the last two years and are now in line with what would be expected nationally.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves well around school. They are polite and well mannered. Smiling and opening the door for each other and adults is typical behaviour. Leaders have worked hard to establish orderly routines which pupils respond to well. As a result, the school is usually a calm, orderly and purposeful place to learn.

### Outcomes for pupils

### require improvement

- Despite some improvement in the quality of teaching, pupils' progress varies from class to class and is too slow overall. The gains made in one class can be reduced in the next and so, for example, teachers in upper key stage 2 are having to accelerate pupils' progress significantly to improve standards by the time pupils leave to go on to secondary school.
- A large number of children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding well below those that are typical for children of this age and some have very little knowledge of English.
- By the end of key stage 2 most pupils make at least the expected progress in reading and writing and, since the last inspection, an increasing number are making more than the expected progress. This has resulted in pupils now achieving similarly to pupils nationally in reading and writing. These improved results are due to the better quality of teaching in upper key stage 2.
- In mathematics, progress is slower. In key stage 2, pupils' progress is below that expected, and not enough pupils make more than the expected progress. This is mainly because a number of teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough to plan accurately for pupils' learning needs. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of making.
- Work in pupils' books confirms this mixed picture. There are clear indications that writing and reading skills are being taught consistently well and clear signs of progress can be seen from year to year and from class to class. Teachers' subject knowledge is stronger and pupils are enjoying a wide range of opportunities to write and read for a purpose. There are clear improvements in reading and writing, although pupils' progress still varies from class to class.
- Work in most pupils' mathematics books is inconsistent. It indicates that pupils are not being challenged in their learning at the right level. Gaps in teachers' knowledge mean that pupils are not always being corrected and guided on how best to learn and practise new skills.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress in reading and writing that is broadly similar to other pupils nationally. However, as with other pupils in the school, the progress that they are making in mathematics is not as fast.
- The most able pupils, in particular, are not making the progress that they could make. In 2015 at the end of key stages 1 and 2, the proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics were below the national averages and had been so for some years. Leaders have not ensured that this group of pupils is well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Not enough focus is given to helping pupils who speak English as an additional language to gain full access to the curriculum. Some of these pupils have recently arrived at the school and are at the early stages of learning English. Although resources and a good level of pastoral care are provided, teachers do not always meet pupils' learning needs in the classroom.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the national screening check for phonics at the end of Year 1 was below what would be expected of pupils of a similar age. There have been focused efforts to improve the consistency of teaching of phonics in the last year. As a result, the

number of pupils expected to meet the standard has increased considerably and although not yet comparable to pupils nationally, it is much closer.

- A large number of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The vast majority of these pupils make at least the progress expected from their starting points.

## Early years provision

## requires improvement

- Although the majority of children start school with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age, early years provision has not accelerated children's progress sufficiently. Activities are not targeted well enough and learning experiences have not been planned precisely. As a result children do not make enough progress and early years provision requires improvement.
- In 2015, very few children reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year, which is well below that expected of children of a similar age nationally. This represents a significant dip in achievement compared with 2014, where pupils were within 3% of the national figure. As a result, children leave the Reception Year without the necessary skills to succeed in Year 1. The school has put strategies in place to help these pupils catch up.
- The reasons for this dramatic drop in standards were swiftly addressed by the deputy headteacher when she joined the school in January 2016. She has had an immediate impact on improving the learning environment which is now much more purposeful and stimulating. Higher expectations have been re-established and outcomes for children at the end of the Reception Year are set to improve. Inspection evidence from lesson observations, and looking at children's learning journals, indicates that the school's expectations of children's higher achievement are realistic.
- The early years leader now has a clear view about the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Where action has been taken promptly to tackle weaknesses, it has been successful. For example, the information gathered and built up as children move through the Nursery and Reception Years is now more consistent. The information is used much more effectively to plan a curriculum for children that is both interesting and relevant. As a result, adults' ability to know and respond to the learning needs of children has improved for all groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and the most able pupils. Systems for planning are relatively new, however, and are not yet well established.
- Provision is now better organised and offers a varied learning environment for all children, both inside and out of doors. Activities capture the children's imagination and allow them to practise their skills. For example, role-play areas are well resourced and encourage conversation between the children and between children and adults. The activities offered are well balanced to include opportunities for children to develop their physical, fine motor, writing and number skills.
- Safeguarding is effective and accurate risk assessments mean the classroom is a safe environment for children. Children's behaviour is good and adults are quick to provide support to children to help them understand the importance of being polite and treating one another with respect. Children play and learn together well and have a positive attitude to learning.
- The quality of teaching varies but is improving. It is presently stronger in the Nursery, where children make the most progress. Adults have a sound level of subject knowledge and ask questions to support children's thinking and move their learning on. The importance placed on reading, writing and mathematical skills is evident, with children having regular chances to write, practise their letters and sounds and use numbers. Adults challenge children in their learning, for example asking children to count beyond 10 in the Nursery.
- An emphasis on creating a caring and nurturing environment is evident from the relationships adults have with children, and children have with each other. The vast majority of parents are positive about how well their children have settled into school and the progress they have made. They particularly like the 'stay and play' sessions offered to parents of Nursery children and say, 'they are great' and 'they help give you ideas for working with your child at home'. Transition arrangements are effective. New parents are invited to an afternoon meeting, and benefit from opportunities to become more involved in Nursery activities in the summer term.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136062
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012137

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	314
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Melia
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joe Welsh
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 7093672
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.holy-family.co.uk">www.holy-family.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:holyfamily-ht@holyfamily.liverpool.sch.uk">holyfamily-ht@holyfamily.liverpool.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5–6 March 2014

## Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language are above the national averages. Pupils speak a wide range of home languages.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. Some information about governance has not been published.
- There are two specialist units in the school, each catering for up to eight pupils who come from other schools in the local authority. One, managed by the governing body and included in the inspection, supports pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. The other, which is not managed by the governing body of this school and therefore was not part of this inspection, supports pupils who have behavioural difficulties and have been excluded from mainstream schools.
- A new deputy headteacher has been in post since January 2016. A new headteacher will join the school in September 2016 following the retirement of the present headteacher at the end of the summer term.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. Some observations were done jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and in the learning journals of children in the early years.
- An inspector listened to a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, the inclusion manager and curriculum leaders.
- An inspector met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with an inspector, and inspectors also spoke informally with pupils in the playground and around school.
- The inspectors took account of 53 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the 12 responses from the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also talked briefly with parents before, during and at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: minutes from meetings of the governing body; information on pupils' outcomes; the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

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