

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Millfield Avenue, East Cowes, Isle of Wight PO32 6AS

Inspection dates

16 to 17 July 2019

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not done enough to improve the school since the last inspection. The governing body has not held leaders sufficiently to account.
- Leaders have not made robust checks on pupils' progress and the quality of classroom provision. As a result, not all pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Too many pupils have made weak progress in phonics and reading. This has had an adverse impact on their learning in other subjects.
- The quality of teaching varies considerably across classes and subjects. Teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough, including for their behaviour in lessons.
- Reception children enjoy learning in their well-resourced classroom environment. However, weaknesses in teachers' assessment practices mean that some of them do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' assessments of children's learning are not used well to match learning tasks. Pupils who fall behind in learning, including disadvantaged pupils, are not helped quickly enough to catch up.
- The curriculum has suitable breadth and balance. However, it does not support pupils' good progress in different subjects. Leaders have not ensured that all teachers have the subject knowledge that they need.

The school has the following strengths

- Current leaders are determined to reverse the school's decline. Suitable plans are in place to ensure that current improvement actions will quickly gather momentum.
- The school is a happy, friendly and caring community that is strongly valued by staff, pupils and parents.
- Leaders and governors do their best to keep pupils safe from harm. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and they learn how to stay safe when they are online.
- Leaders have taken steps so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors hold senior leaders to account for how well they improve the quality of the school's provision
 - leaders implement a rigorous approach to monitor and support the quality of teaching
 - leaders make greater use of the school's assessment information to analyse and respond to the standards achieved by particular groups of pupils
 - the school's curriculum enables pupils in each year group routinely to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by ensuring that:
 - teachers, including in the early years provision, assess pupils' learning accurately and use this information to match the needs of different pupils, including pupils who fall behind in their learning
 - all pupils get off to a good start in phonics and reading
 - teachers have the depth of subject knowledge that they need to plan lessons that enable pupils to make good progress
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve
 - pupils develop consistently positive attitudes towards their learning.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should also be undertaken to assess the effectiveness with which this additional funding is used.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders have been too generous in their view of the school's effectiveness. They have not taken effective steps to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good. Leaders have not promoted clear and consistent expectations of teachers' work. However, leaders appreciate the external support that the local authority is currently providing to move the school forward.
- Parents support the school as a community, but a quarter of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, told inspectors that there has been a decline in aspects of the school's work. A third of parents say that communication is not a strong feature of the school, especially communication about their own children's progress. One parent spoke for many in this group by describing it as 'hit and miss' as to whether their children currently do as well as they should in their learning.
- Other than in English, mathematics and religious education, leaders' work to develop the curriculum has been too slow. The current curriculum does not help pupils to build their knowledge and understanding as they move through the school or to deepen their interests.
- Leaders value teachers having access to appropriate support from their colleagues and external training. Senior leaders have not followed through its impact by checking whether teachers have implemented changes to classroom practice.
- Subject leaders of English and mathematics have good expertise. They are supporting colleagues to develop their practice by helping them to plan lessons that aim to support pupils' progress. As a consequence of their work, key stage 1 pupils are improving their phonics skills and developing their understanding of number.
- Since recently moving into the role, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has been instrumental in helping teachers to understand how to meet pupils' individual needs. Parents of pupils with SEND appreciate the additional help that their children receive as a result of improved procedures to identify and respond to needs.
- A small minority of disadvantaged pupils also have SEND. Additional funding is used effectively to provide a variety of interventions and therapies to vulnerable pupils who need particular, targeted support. Leaders and governors have not been diligent enough to ensure that the funding is targeted to support the larger group of disadvantaged pupils to catch up or exceed academic expectations.
- The school's environment offers a rich resource to help pupils enjoy their learning. Parents appreciate staff members' commitment and the high levels of care that they offer. They organise engaging visits, culminating in a Year 6 visit to France. Staff are proud to work at the school. They want the best for pupils and support their leaders' current efforts to accelerate the improvement actions that have already started.
- Throughout the curriculum, there are opportunities to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils learn about important issues, such as climate change, equality and justice. By the time that pupils leave the school, they know the difference between right and wrong, and they are articulate when expressing their

views.

- Leaders have used the additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport to increase pupils' participation in activities, including at lunchtimes and during after-school clubs. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of these opportunities and they look forward to their PE lessons.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not checked how effectively leaders have maintained the school's improvement. Until recently, they have not been given an accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching or learning and the impact that this has had on different groups of pupils.
- Governors have not sufficiently held senior leaders to account for ensuring that all pupils receive consistently good provision. In particular:
 - governors have not used information well, including school performance information, to follow through specific lines of enquiry when they make visits to the school
 - governors have not managed some conflicts of interest well and these have been a barrier to the school's improvement.
- Governors are committed to becoming a cohesive and effective team. They are already participating in training to support them in their roles by working closely with the local authority. Individual governors bring many skills to their role from their work outside of the school, and they take the time to visit so as to know its work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The acting headteacher has recently stepped up to be the designated leader for safeguarding. She is supported by a deputy leader, who has undertaken the higher level of training that is required. Leaders provide staff with regular and comprehensive training in line with their roles so that they know how to keep pupils safe. Staff are alert to any concerns about pupils and they communicate these quickly, recording information diligently.
- The designated leader maintains trusting relationships with other professionals, including the virtual school for looked after children. She maintains close links with parents and carers to help families and pupils to access the support that they need. Leaders are thorough when following up the concerns they raise with other agencies. Checks on the recruitment of staff and volunteers are rigorous. Governors have attended training to understand their responsibilities about safeguarding and they carry out their statutory duties effectively to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across year groups, subjects and for pupils of different abilities. Teachers do not consistently use their day-to-day assessments of pupils' learning to adapt activities. In some classes, teachers provide tasks that build successfully on what pupils already know and can do. In other classes, gaps in learning are not identified or addressed with enough rigour. Teaching strategies are not consistently effective in supporting pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who have fallen behind with their learning.
- In spite of effective leadership for pupils with SEND, classroom provision is inconsistent for this pupil group. Teaching assistants provide strong support, but not all pupils with SEND have learning tasks that match their needs. Some pupils made helpful use of concrete apparatus and prompts, while others did not routinely have access to the resources that the SENCo has identified for them. Similarly, the most able pupils are sometimes challenged to think in depth, but not consistently so.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are variable, which is in line with teachers' inconsistent classroom management and the match of learning tasks to meet pupils' needs. At times, groups of pupils are slow to start their learning activity or are too easily distracted, and they are not brought back to task quickly enough.
- Inspectors confirmed leaders' views that the strongest teaching is in upper key stage 2. In Year 6, pupils use their teachers' feedback thoughtfully to improve their work. By the time that pupils move to secondary school, most are confident to solve complex mathematical problems and to write with clear purpose and correct grammar.
- Teachers are determined to improve their practice. In all classes, teachers and other adults engage purposefully with pupils. They support learning by asking pertinent questions that help to reinforce learning.
- Teachers have responded to pupils' low rates of progress in reading. Pupils who do not reach the Year 1 phonics check have extra teaching when they move into Year 2, so that most of them successfully reach the check by the end of Year 2. Lower-attaining pupils read frequently to an adult, which helps them to develop confidence and independence.
- Key stage 2 pupils are developing their enjoyment of reading. They like their teachers reading to them, they are enthusiastic about their class reading books, and they regularly read the library books that they select. Some curriculum subjects, and notably religious education, offer pupils the opportunity to listen to stories and retell them, and respond to thought-provoking questions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' learning behaviours do not contribute towards their good progress. Pupils in

several classes lack independence in their learning and they quickly look to the adults for support. In some classes, this means they are queuing to see the teacher, which has an impact on teachers' good classroom management.

- Pupils do not typically take pride in the presentation of their work, or in their achievements. They like their school but were not articulate when talking about the ways in which they contribute towards its ethos.
- Pupils and parents reported that there are some incidents of bullying. Pupils said that when they report an incident, it is usually dealt with well by one of the adults in school. Leaders have recently enhanced their procedures to prevent and address such incidents. Pupils understand the difference between bullying and falling out with friends. The vast majority of pupils know what to do if they are being bullied.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and how to be healthy. They are enthusiastic about their personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils enjoy an active lunchtime, and there are plenty of apparatus and activities to choose from. The PE coach is on hand to organise some of these activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire indicated that in key stages 1 and 2, just under half of them think that behaviour is good in class. Inspectors agreed with this view. In lessons, there was too much low-level, off-task behaviour.
- Pupils, parents and staff told inspectors that there has been a decline in pupils' behaviour. Leaders have recently implemented an electronic system to track the frequency and types of behaviour. This is helping them to analyse, respond to and improve behaviour. Inspectors did not observe any poor conduct around the school, or at break- and lunch-times. Pupils played together cooperatively, they took an interest in the inspectors' work and were unfailingly polite.
- Pupils attend school regularly. They arrive at school ready to engage with their lessons and they know its routines well.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In recent years, outcomes have been variable across classes and subjects, and for different groups of pupils. This is because teaching is inconsistent, and teachers do not make use of assessment sharply enough to respond to pupils' learning needs.
- Many pupils do not get off to a secure early start in phonics and reading. The proportion of pupils who reached the Year 1 phonics check has been below the national average in recent years. Outcomes in reading at the end of key stage 1 have also been below those of other schools nationally.
- The school's own analysis of its 2019 performance information shows that the current Year 2 pupils have made weak progress. In recent weeks, teachers have begun to implement planned sequences of lessons that aim to help pupils to catch up.
- Current pupils' workbooks show that pupils make good progress in the upper KS2

classes. Pupils' earlier inconsistent progress means that they have a lot to do to catch up on their learning before they move on to secondary school. Some of them do not do so successfully.

- The current Year 6 pupils have made stronger progress than in the previous year, when it was well below the national average in all subjects. Pupils have made good progress in mathematics and a large proportion will transfer to secondary school having attained the expected or higher standard. Outcomes have also improved in writing, although pupils achieved less well in reading. The most able pupils have attained well, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Outside of English, mathematics and religious education, leaders do not have a clear understanding of the progress that pupils make. Pupils' workbooks for the wider curriculum subjects show that learning is not planned progressively.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including looked after children, make good social and emotional progress as a result of the extra help they receive. This group's academic progress is not consistently as well planned to ensure that they achieve as well as they can in all year groups.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Historic information shows that the proportion of children at the end of the Reception Year that achieves a good level of development has been broadly in line with the national average. Attainment in mathematics has been stronger than it is in reading and writing. The early years leader has rightly identified boys' achievement as an area for improvement.
- Most children enter the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age. However, teachers do not make effective use of their assessments of learning to ensure that children make the progress of which they are capable. In spite of the school's performance information, teachers' evaluations of some children's achievement are unreliable because there is not enough evidence to support their assessments.
- The early years leader was new to her role at the start of the academic year. She has not been well supported by senior leaders to understand how to lead and evaluate the overall quality of the provision. Senior leaders have not evaluated closely enough the difference that teaching makes to children's progress across all areas of learning. They have given careful thought to the provision for vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND. However, leaders do not have a precise enough understanding of the progress that each pupil makes.
- The unreliability of assessments means that some children are not well prepared for their transfer into Year 1. Current leaders have taken steps to address this so that any gaps in learning will be quickly identified and addressed. They have arranged training for the early years leader to support rigour in teachers' assessments of children's learning. This will help them to adapt provision as the year progresses.
- During the inspection, children enjoyed preparing for a teddy bears' picnic, to which next year's Reception children were invited. The teacher and other adults carefully guided activities to make sure that the children prepared well.
- Children engaged well in activities, particularly where these were child-initiated. Adults

asked effective questions that helped children to explain their learning. Children were able to work out that 'the paper boat floats because the (wax) crayon makes it waterproof'. Children were less enthusiastic about teacher-led activities, such as writing. Most children enjoyed listening to the class story 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch', although, as in the remainder of the school, there was some off-task behaviour.

- Teachers and other adults who work in the early years have a good understanding of the particular safeguarding needs of young children. Parents of children in the Reception class say that their children enjoy school and get off to a good start with their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	118198
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	10088188

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian Tomlinson
Headteacher	Tim Eccles
Telephone number	01983 292885
Website	www.holycrossrcpri.iow.sch.uk
Email address	admin@holycrossrcpri.iow.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 to 9 July 2015

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school, with one class in each year group.
- There has been some very recent staffing turbulence. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was unwell and the assistant headteacher had recently stepped up as acting headteacher. She was being supported by a local headteacher for one and a half days a week. Two class teachers had also been absent for an extended period of time.
- The percentage of pupils with SEND is lower than in other schools nationally. However, the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is greater than the national average.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than that found nationally.
- This is a Roman Catholic voluntary-aided school. The school was inspected under

section 48 of the Education Act in May 2015.

- There is a breakfast club that is led and managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classrooms. They talked to pupils and reviewed pupils' work. Some of the observations were carried out with the assistant headteacher. Inspectors also carried out some focused learning walks to explore classroom provision for particular groups of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with six members of the governing body, including the chair. She also met with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the school's published information for the past three years and information on its website. They examined a wide range of school documents relating to safeguarding, attendance, disadvantaged pupils, the school's self-evaluation and its current raising attainment plan, and the minutes of governors' meetings. Inspectors discussed the school's own assessment information, and, with leaders, they reviewed an extensive range of pupils' books in English, mathematics and the wider curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors listened to key stage 1 and 2 pupils reading, either with a teacher or teaching assistant, and they discussed reading with pupils in Years 3 and 6.
- To gain their views of the school, inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons, at breaktime and met a group of them more formally.
- In addition to speaking to a number of parents at the start of the school day, inspectors considered 83 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 53 written comments. They also took account of the views of 120 pupils and 22 staff who completed Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Linda Jacobs, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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