

Inspection of a good school: Holy Cross Catholic High School

Myles Standish Way, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 3LS

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 September 2022

Outcome

Holy Cross Catholic High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud to attend this school. They value the strong relationships that they forge with staff. Pupils said that these relationships are built on trust and mutual respect. They explained that they feel happy to be part of this caring school community where everyone feels included.

Teachers know pupils well. Pupils understand that staff have high expectations of what they can and should achieve. Pupils try to do their best. Overall, they achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils said that adults expect them to conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. Inspectors found that pupils rise to this challenge and are well-behaved. Poor behaviour rarely disrupts learning in lessons. Pupils described how clear rules and routines contribute to them feeling safe, including during social times.

Leaders have provided a range of appropriate ways for pupils to report concerns about bullying. Pupils told inspectors that they feel confident in leaders' systems. They know that adults will listen carefully, and act quickly, to resolve any incidents of bullying.

Pupils said that they enjoy the range of additional roles and responsibilities designed to develop their wider employability skills. For example, pupils embark on leadership programmes in sports. Many pupils also contribute to the pupil council, or support and guide their peers by becoming a prefect.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and governors have created an ambitious and well-thought-out curriculum. The order of learning has been carefully considered to help pupils to know and remember more of each subject. Curriculum leaders appreciate the voice that they have in designing the curriculum, drawing on their subject expertise. Pupils, including those with SEND,

successfully demonstrate that they understand and remember new knowledge across a wide range of subjects and topics.

Leaders have thought carefully about the assessment systems that they use to check pupils' learning. Teachers get appropriate information about what pupils have learned and what they need to do next. Leaders have built in regular opportunities for pupils to recall past learning across the curriculum. Teachers, through well-designed questions, ensure that pupils fully understand new topics and concepts. Most pupils articulate their responses in depth, demonstrating their learning.

Leaders have identified pupils who may need extra support to read fluently and confidently. Leaders have started to create a detailed programme of additional support for those pupils who are behind in their reading. This is so that they catch up quickly with their peers. Work has also begun to develop more opportunities for pupils to read across the wider curriculum. There is a library available to all pupils, and many pupils in key stage 3 use this regularly. However, some pupils in key stage 4 have not developed a deep enough understanding of the importance of reading. Few pupils read for pleasure beyond the texts required for their key stage 4 subject choices.

Pupils with SEND are quickly identified. Leaders have high expectations for these pupils. Leaders have developed a wide range of skills among the specialist team of staff who support pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum well to ensure that these pupils learn all that they should. Leaders, including governors, target support well, but do not always consider pupils with SEND when reviewing attendance and behaviour.

Pupils, including pupils with SEND, have positive attitudes to their learning. Leaders have ensured that there is a clear and effective policy in place to manage any incidents of poor behaviour. Teachers apply the policy consistently well.

The programme of wider personal development for pupils is a strength. Parents, carers and most pupils value the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and visits on offer. However, the proportion of pupils with SEND who take part in extra-curricular activities is lower than that of other groups of pupils. Leaders and governors do not do enough to monitor the participation of this group of pupils in the wider activities that the school provides.

The careers programme is well designed. It is effective in ensuring that all pupils are suitably prepared to make appropriate decisions about their next steps in education or training. Regular visits from local employers and alumni help pupils to understand the different journeys that can be taken for a range of careers.

Governors are aware of their statutory duties and carry them out effectively. Leaders are aware of the pressures of workload for teachers. They always keep this in mind when developing new policies in school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in this school. Clear and effective systems are in place to report and record any potential concerns that staff or pupils may have. All staff understand when they should note any worries. They are well trained in safeguarding pupils.

The robust pastoral structure means that pupils receive timely help, support and guidance. Leaders make appropriate referrals when needed. They make effective use of external agencies. Leaders review safeguarding cases regularly to ensure that they take effective decisions to support vulnerable pupils.

Leaders build frequent opportunities into the curriculum to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Leaders are aware of the local safeguarding risks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Governors and leaders do not scrutinise, in sufficient depth, the information available about the behaviour, attendance and uptake of extra-curricular activities of pupils with SEND. Consequently, some governors and leaders do not ask enough probing questions about how this aspect of their work can be improved even further. Governors and leaders should ensure that they evaluate more fully the impact of their work to improve the quality of education even further for pupils with SEND.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	119803
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10240389
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	974
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hilary Lunn
Headteacher	Ivan Gaughan
Website	www.holycross.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The chair of governors is new to role since the last inspection.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.
- The last section 48 inspection of this school was on 28 March 2019.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, geography and languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders in other subjects and reviewed their curriculum design.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs team, subject leaders and teachers. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority, the Archdiocese of Liverpool and the school improvement partner.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding procedures, including the recruitment checks made on staff. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader, staff and pupils to discuss wider aspects of safeguarding. They scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including that relating to the curriculum, pupils' behaviour, improvement plans and leaders' self-evaluation summary.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. They also spoke with pupils about behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their programme of wider personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Elaine Mawson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Sharples	His Majesty's Inspector

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