

Inspection of Holy Family Catholic School

1 Shernhall Street, Walthamstow, London E17 3EA

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils said they enjoy the strong friendships they build here. The school is welcoming and like a family. Pupils appreciate the supportive staff who push them to go the extra mile in their work. Staff promote the values of respect and equality. Pupils learn to treat others as they would like to be treated.

Leaders ensure that pupils' attendance is high. They support pupils to be punctual. Working relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils know that staff will resolve any issues, including incidents of bullying. They are safe and happy at school.

Pupils value liturgical assemblies which encourage them to reflect. Leaders ensure that visitors speak to pupils about important topics, such as keeping safe in the local area. Staff have increasingly high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour across the two school sites. Leaders encourage pupils to be good citizens and to help others. For example, students in the sixth form act as reading buddies.

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

Leaders ensure that pupils receive a broad curriculum. They have clear aspirations for pupils to succeed. For example, leaders have ensured that the number of pupils choosing modern foreign languages as GCSE options has significantly increased. Subject leaders ensure that the curriculum builds on pupils' prior learning. In the sixth form, students read widely and often.

Typically, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Subject leaders have considered how knowledge and skills build over time. This helps to deepen pupils' subject-specific understanding. In geography, for example, Year 9 pupils learned about rivers. Teachers revisited the concepts of erosion and deposition again in Year 10 through the study of coasts.

Teachers use their subject expertise to check pupils' understanding. They revisit key knowledge regularly. Sixth-form students attend dedicated study skills sessions. They develop strategies to help them to recall content. Sometimes, in the younger years, teaching does not check what pupils know securely. This leads to misconceptions in pupils' understanding. It hampers their readiness for future learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get help to access the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers are well informed of pupils' individual needs. They make appropriate adaptations for pupils with SEND.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They identify gaps in pupils' reading and provide targeted support. Some pupils access phonics support. Others work on their fluency

and comprehension. Pupils can read to their sixth-form 'buddy.' Leaders provide pupils with books which match their level of reading.

Pupils behave well. Incidents of low-level disruption are not common. Behaviour is positive in lessons and around the school.

The school supports pupils' personal development effectively. The personal, social and health education curriculum is well sequenced. For example, in Year 8, pupils learn about respectful relationships. In Year 9, they revisit this before learning about sexual orientation. By the time they are in the sixth form, students learn important life skills such as financial management. Sixth-form students act as role models for younger pupils. They carry out community service, including planning for a whole-school culture day. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to reflect spiritually.

Leaders organise regular visits for pupils. For example, they go on outings to the theatre to watch productions such as 'A Christmas Carol'. Leaders organise enrichment activities such as sports and chess clubs. While staff provide these activities for pupils, the take-up is variable.

Pupils receive impartial careers advice and go on work experience. In the sixth form, students are well supported with applications for apprenticeships and university.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel well looked after because leaders are considerate of their workload. The members of the governing body understand their roles well. They provide challenge and support to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They are responsive in recognising the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff report concerns swiftly. Leaders ensure that they provide regular safeguarding training for staff. They have created a consistent culture of vigilance across the two school sites.

Leaders work with a range of external agencies to safeguard children. Pupils are encouraged to keep themselves safe in the local community and online. They are taught the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In Years 7 to 9, teaching does not routinely check pupils' understanding of what they learn. This means that, at times, pupils' misconceptions are not addressed with consistent rigour and accuracy. Leaders should ensure that approaches to checking pupils' learning are used routinely and purposefully in all subjects.

- Although leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils' wider development, they do not oversee these sharply enough. As a result, pupils' take-up of these experiences is variable. Leaders must ensure that the personal development offer is checked rigorously, so that a high number of pupils can build on their individual interests and talents.

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	103106
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10255390
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1277
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Justin Madubuko
Headteacher	Carolyn Laws
Website	www.holyfamily.waltham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the school leadership team, including the appointment of a new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher from September 2022.
- There have been recent changes to the governing body. A new chair and vice chair have been in post since September.
- The school occupies two sites, a short distance apart in the same road. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and students in the sixth form are taught at the Walthamstow House site at: 1 Shernhall Street, Walthamstow, London, E17 3EA. Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 are taught at the Wiseman House site at: 34 Shernhall Street, Walthamstow London E17 3EA.
- The school makes use of alternative provision for a small number of pupils at Belmont Park School and Waltham Forest College.

- The school runs a small on-site alternative provision for the local authority. This offers placements to pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. The provision is used by Holy Family Catholic School and other schools within the local authority.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection 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.
- Inspectors met with a wide range of leaders, including those responsible for quality of education, behaviour and attendance, personal development, safeguarding and the sixth form.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, history, mathematics, media studies and science. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to pupils about their learning, and considered samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding, including through discussions with leaders, staff, pupils and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body, including the chair.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Terry Millar	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Verity Lane Cartledge	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Jatta	Ofsted Inspector

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