

Inspection of Holy Family Catholic Academy

Wigan Street, Platt Bridge, Wigan, Lancashire WN2 5JF

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Rebecca Crawley. This school is part of the St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Andrew Truby, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ann Connor OBE.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high aspirations for pupils' academic success. It has raised its expectations of what pupils can achieve across a broad range of subjects. Pupils display positive attitudes to their learning. By the time that they leave the school in Year 6, pupils are increasingly ready for the demands of secondary school.

Pupils champion diversity. They help everyone in the school to feel welcome. Many pupils have only recently joined the school. They quickly feel part of this happy school community.

The school provides strong support for pupils' wider development, including their well-being. Pupils access high-quality emotional support. They are kind and caring in return. They want to help others. For example, pupils are active in fundraising for charities and giving the gift of their time.

Pupils are entrusted with a range of leadership roles, such as acting as school councillors. They relish these opportunities, and they enjoy making suggestions about how to make the school even better.

Pupils appreciate the expanded range of activities available to them at lunchtimes linked to themes such as 'mindfulness Monday' and 'well done Wednesday'. Pupils who are playleaders are proud of the part that they play in helping to create harmonious playtimes.

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

Trustees and members of the local governing body know the school exceptionally well. They provide confident, strategic leadership. Working together, trust and school leaders have created an ambitious curriculum. Staff, including teachers who are at the early stage of their careers, embrace the development opportunities that the school and the trust provide to them. This helps them to refine their practice, while ensuring that their workload is manageable.

Children in the early years typically achieve well. However, the school has not built the expertise of staff who teach and support children's learning in the early years equally well. At times, staff do not make full use of opportunities to engage children in high-quality interactions as they learn and play. Occasionally, this gets in the way of how well some children expand their vocabulary and deepen their thinking.

Across several subjects, the school has established a highly effective curriculum that enables pupils to develop deep knowledge and understanding. Teachers explain new concepts skilfully in these subjects. They identify and address misconceptions adeptly so that pupils' learning is unhindered. Teachers ensure that pupils have plentiful opportunities to revisit earlier learning. In this way, pupils build new knowledge on firm foundations and achieve well.

In a small number of subjects, curriculums are either newly implemented or they are undergoing review to ensure that they are suitably ambitious. These recent changes mean that some teachers continue to familiarise themselves with the content that pupils most need to learn. Consequently, they do not revisit and strengthen pupils' previous learning as well as they do in other subjects. As a result, in these subjects, some pupils do not recall knowledge as fluently as they could.

Reading is prioritised throughout the school. Children in the two-year-old provision join in with familiar stories with gusto. Across the school, pupils access carefully selected books that help them to explore the rich diversity among people and families. Parents and carers are invited to play a key role in supporting their child's reading through events such as the weekly 'breakfast with a book'.

Staff deliver the agreed phonics programme well. They focus on checking pupils' knowledge in a timely manner. Staff step in and provide effective support for pupils who find reading more challenging. Pupils read books that are appropriately matched to the sounds that they have learned. This helps them to develop their fluency and confidence.

Starting in the early years, the school identifies pupils' additional needs quickly, including any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Typically, pupils with SEND access learning that is carefully matched to their needs. This helps these pupils to progress well through the curriculum.

Pupils behave sensibly in class and during breaktimes. They look out for one another and support each other's mental health. In the early years, children learn to take turns and to share. This gives teachers more time to focus on teaching and learning.

Attendance remains a high priority. The school has strengthened its approach to improving pupils' attendance. This work is beginning to bear fruit. More pupils now attend school regularly and benefit from the school's ambitious curriculum.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is strong. Pupils are highly respectful of each other. They are tolerant and celebrate the differences that exist within the school and wider world in which they live. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's recent work to refine and implement some subject curriculums means that some teachers are still becoming familiar with what they need to focus on with their class. Some pupils do not build their learning in these subjects as securely as they do

in others as a result. The trust should ensure that, where curriculums are being revised or improvements are recent, changes are implemented fully so that pupils develop a rich body of subject knowledge.

- Sometimes, staff in the early years do not make as effective use of their interactions with children as they could. This means that, at times, some children's learning, including their vocabulary, is not deepened as well as it could be. The trust should ensure that staff in the early years have the necessary expertise to extend children's vocabulary and learning through purposeful interactions.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	149190
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10378037
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ann Connor OBE
CEO of the trust	Andrew Truby
Headteacher	Rebecca Crawley
Website	www.holyfamilywigan.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust.
- Holy Family Catholic Academy converted to become an academy school in September 2022. When its predecessor school, Holy Family Catholic Primary School Platt Bridge, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have been appointed since the school converted to an academy school.
- The school has a religious character. It is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The school has not had a section 48 inspection since converting to an academy school. Its first section 48 inspection as an academy school is due to take place before the end of the 2024/25 academic year.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school.
- An inspector met with trust leaders, including the chair of the trust, the CEO and the director of primary education. An inspector also met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the archdiocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- An inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. They spoke with the leaders of these areas of the curriculum. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects. They spoke with pupils about their learning in these subjects and reviewed a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes and when they moved around the school. An inspector scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- There were no responses to the online survey for pupils. However, inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

Mark Ward

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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