



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

URN 140980

The Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Bicknor Road

Park Wood Maidstone

Kent ME15 9PS

Inspection date: 11th December 2018

Chair of Governors: Mr Rob Sharpley

Executive Principal: Mr Niall Fox

Academy Principal: Mrs Michelle Stenning

Inspectors: Mr Stephen Beck

Mrs Shirley Hulme

EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Director of Education: Dr Simon Hughes



Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is an Academy and part of the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership Multi-Academy Trust. It is situated in the Maidstone Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principle parish which the school serves is Holy Family, Maidstone. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 27%. The average weekly proportion of time given to Religious Education is 10% in all Key Stages.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on role is 184. The attainment of pupils on entering school is generally below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The number of pupils receiving extra support in class is 25%. The pupil premium percentage is 43.5%. The majority of pupils are of White British Heritage although there are a growing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is below average, reflecting the small number of pupils with a first language other than English.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Holy Family is a good Catholic school because:

- It is a very welcoming, improving Catholic school that has inclusion for all as a central goal and shared vision. Pupils enjoy attending school and they have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils deepen knowledge of their faith throughout their time in school and gain a firm understanding of Catholic practice. The school lives out the pupils chosen gospel values, *'Love Jesus, Love Learning, Love Each Other'*.
- The personal faith, leadership and dedication of the Academy Principal, Executive Principal and Religious Education Coordinator, in partnership with an able governing body, provide the vision that continues to take the school forward. Their drive and ambition has already secured significant improvements, particularly in teaching and learning. Pupils make good progress in interesting, well-paced lessons, so achievement in Religious Education is on an upward trend. It is a school that knows itself well. It is clearly committed to developing the whole child and this is reflected in pupils' enjoyment, behaviour and attitudes. They are considerate, polite, well behaved and sensitive to others' cultural and social background. They know they are valued and are encouraged to contribute to improving their school. Relationships in the school are excellent. They are based on justice and dignity of the human individual.



- Pupils are understandably proud of their school. Their behaviour and attitudes are underpinned by their living out the school's mission statement, which the children all know well. The majority of parents, who responded to the questionnaire, and the group of parents inspectors met, were positive about all aspects of school life, one parent writing, *"This school enriched both my child's and our family's Catholic experience. My child has been taught much about the Bible and the Sacraments"*.
- The Catholic Life of the school is good. The school has been through a lengthy period of turbulence that has seen the school undergo many changes. The commitment from the governors, staff, and parish clergy to support pupils in their prayer life and growth in faith has remained a priority over this time. Staff set good examples, are proud of their school and work well together. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good and has a significant impact on their everyday lives.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Securing greater consistency in approaches to assessment to include pupil self-assessment to assist them to achieve their full potential.
- Provide increased opportunities for pupils to recognise and celebrate significant months and events during the liturgical year alongside the planned development of the pupil role in collective worship.
- Implement the planned development of the school's prayer garden in order to extend the variety of worship opportunities available to pupils.



Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

2

Catholic Life

2

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

2

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

Religious Education

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

Collective Worship

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

2

CATHOLIC LIFE

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good

- The Holy Family School has over recent years been on a journey that has seen it face numerous challenges and changes making it difficult to secure consistency of approaches and stable leadership.
- It is highly commendable that during this time it has never lost sight of the primacy of its function as a Catholic school.
- At the time of the last inspection it was described as an improving school, which it continues to be. This is being very well led by the Executive Principal and the Academy Principal who has been in post for almost eighteen months, supported by an experienced governing body. This reflects an ongoing and growing capacity to build on progress made to date at an increasingly rapid rate.
- The school's mission statement is central to the life of the school. It was reviewed so that it was accessible and understood by all and in June 2018 it was further updated to include specific Gospel values linked to the liturgical year. These Gospel values were selected by a group of Key Stage 2 pupils. During Monday morning acts of worship these values are explored with pupils. This helps the children to know the mission of the school, understand the Gospel values and to live out these values in their own lives. Good quality displays help to reinforce the centrality of the mission statement to the life of the school.
- The pupils play an important and active role in promoting the Catholic life of the school. For example, they select the Gospel values for the year which are then discussed in assemblies and classes. Pupils have helped to design and plant the prayer garden which is available for the classes to use during lessons. The Religious Education Council have drawn up a code of conduct for the classes to follow when using the prayer garden.
- The relatively new parish priest has already fully involved himself in the life of the school. He is a regular visitor to the school and leads a range of services including the Carol Service, Reconciliation Service and feast days during the year. He expressed a keenness to develop his role further in liaison with the school. He provides strong pastoral and spiritual support to the whole school community.
- The school council chose the charities and a range of fundraising activities which the school then voted on. There are plans for the Religious Education Council to become more involved with the delivery of acts of worship, maintaining the prayer garden and the selection of charities to be supported by the school.

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is good

- Pupils fully embrace the school's mission statement 'Love Jesus, Love Learning, Love Each Other'. They refer to it in discussions and articulate how it applies to their daily lives and the way they respond to others.



- It is noteworthy that Ofsted saw the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values as a strength and the inspectors concur with this.
- A culture of mutual support is evident throughout the school between adults and pupils and these were evidenced by the inspection team, who witnessed very positive and nurturing relationships between adults and pupils during lesson observations and around the school.
- Leaders provide a clear programme of support for new staff. Every opportunity is used to extend this support beyond the school through both the Diocese and Deanery.
- The school provides high levels of pastoral care within a learning environment that reflects the school's Catholic character and tangible Catholic ethos.
- A parent commented on their questionnaire return, *'There have been lots of improvements academically and spiritually in the last year. The children are well behaved and sing beautifully.'*

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good

- Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that The Holy Family continues to grow and move forward as a school.
- The school ensures it follows Diocesan policies and implements guidance provided by the Education Commission. Leaders adopt Diocesan approved schemes of work for Religious Education and sex and relationships education (SRE) along with the Curriculum Directory to support teaching and assessment.
- The school works hard to engage with parents and carers and does so very positively for the benefit of all pupils. This has been developed through a range of initiatives where parents are invited into school every half term to participate in curriculum-based events as well as attending termly showcases. They are invited to all school Masses and class assemblies and are asked to provide feedback from these events which are then recorded in a book by the Academy Principal and actioned as appropriate.
- The Academy Principal has a clear understanding of the provision for the Catholic life of the school and takes the lead on a day to day basis. Governors are aware of the development priorities at the school and, with leaders, have rightly identified the need to include a more rigorous and detailed evaluation schedule and Religious Education action plans.
- The Academy Principal is acknowledged by parents as being a proactive leader with an open door policy. She is leading the school forward with a clarity of vision supported and shared by the whole school community.
- The school has benefitted from being part of the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership (KCSP), and the support of an Executive Principal who, jointly with the Academy Principal and Religious Education Coordinator, provide a strong capacity for ongoing improvement.
- The knowledgeable and experienced Religious Education link governor makes regular visits to the school, meeting with the subject coordinator and school leadership. Together they are able to both monitor and input into developments and thereby provide a good information link to the governing body.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good

- Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and can clearly explain their value.
- They are keen to do well and apply themselves diligently at a good pace.
- With a relatively low Catholic intake, pupils generally enter school with a low baseline in learning and this is particularly true for Religious Education.
- The school works hard to support pupils and to ensure they make good progress to achieve at least expected standards.
- The standards of attainment of the vast majority of pupils by the end of each Key Stage are in line with national expectations. The school is working to provide increasing levels of challenge to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential and ensure they make increasing levels of progress over time with a particular focus on the more able and the impact of this is beginning to show as evidenced in books and discussions with pupils.
- Although pupils enjoy their learning they may benefit from more active engagement in some lessons. Increased opportunities to ask questions and for independent learning could impact on further increasing pupils' achievements.
- Pupils demonstrate a secure level of religious literacy and an increasingly strong knowledge of scripture, which is developing as a strength of the school.
- Pupils provide thoughtful responses to their work. A year one pupil commented in response to the symbols that form a 'Christingle Candle', saying, *"Our world is a gift from God because it is not like Mars or Mercury"*.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good

- A variety of teaching was observed during the inspection. Teaching is mainly good. In the strongest lessons observed, teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge, skilful questioning and appropriate pace and there were examples of differentiated tasks set to meet the variety of pupils' needs in what are very mixed ability classes.
- Marking and constructive feedback are mostly consistent in line with the school's marking policy and pupils are given time to respond to advice on improvement. The school is currently working to develop a tracking system to include the new language of emerging, expected and exceeding and link this to age-expected standards. It is planned for this to feed into and become embedded in planning with a view to identifying more clearly pupil potential.
Where teachers use a range of activities in lessons, for example, reflection time, hot seating, role play and looking at art work etc. to support engagement pupils say they are excited and spurred on about their learning.
- Good work has been done in securing greater consistency across the school that sees good practice in marking and very strong behaviour for learning established. It would be appropriate now to ensure all pupils are fully aware of their next steps to learning. There are a number of examples of excellent classroom practice and opportunities could now be provided for these to be shared.



- Teaching in Early years is particularly strong providing pupils with an excellent start to their education. A Reception lesson observed saw pupils considering the 'characters' of those involved in the Nativity story. The lesson began with pupils setting up their own focal point in the centre of a circle, providing a reason for their choice as they did so. Questioning was of a high order with pupils being provided with time to provide answers whilst a strong pace to the lesson was maintained. The lesson provided strong cross curricular links without any dilution of the religious focus for the lesson.
- The Teaching Assistants are excellent, supporting the integration of pupils with a range of learning needs. Consideration should be given to widening their involvement in lessons particularly at the start by them engaging in the questioning and discussion to maximise their impact.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good

- Religious Education compares favourably with other core curriculum subjects in terms of staffing, resources, budget and curriculum.
- The curriculum enables pupils to gain first hand experiences of the liturgical life of the Catholic Church.
- Good links are forged with other agencies to promote pupils' learning and engagement with the subject. These include both Deanery partnerships and the Diocese. The Academy Principal and subject leader recognise the needs of their staff and know the school well.
- The school has rightly identified a need to develop even more consistent and rigorous monitoring of Religious Education and assessment procedures and is currently working on this.
- Governors provide good support for the school and are aware of their need to monitor and challenge the school.
- The school meets its statutory requirements for the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum in accordance with the Bishop's Conference.



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in all aspects of worship; they are able to answer questions confidently and demonstrate good religious vocabulary.
- Prayer is woven into the fabric of the school day. Shared opportunities for prayer are preserved and highly valued. An inclusive ethos allows for all pupils to participate in worship. Prayer is alive and valued in challenging situations by pupils, staff and families.
- Pupils know traditional prayers well. Opportunities for private, personal reflection were observed. Spontaneous prayer is encouraged.
- An assembly observed by the inspection team on the topic of Advent being a time of preparation and an opportunity to right wrongs a pupil in response to questioning thoughtfully reflected, *"It is like when Jesus died on the cross to right wrongs"*. Pupils were reflective, respectful of each other and engaged with talk partners. All staff engaged with the assembly particularly in talk partner periods and during signing and singing.
- Within each class there is a prayer area and the cloth on the table changes with the liturgical season. There was a liturgical year display with art work created by Year 6.
- Pupils are encouraged to notice the colours in church for Mass and discussions about the liturgical seasons happen through the Religious Education scheme as well as in assemblies and they develop a good spiritual and moral understanding whilst at The Holy Family School.
- All pupils participate in acts of worship, including those of other faiths and those who do not practise any faith. Most are respectful of other faiths and the school's Muslim children are able to speak about their faith within Religious Education lessons and in cross-curricular topics where appropriate.
- Key Stage 2 pupils go and speak to the children in Key Stage 1 classes about their faith when those classes are learning about other faiths.
- Leaders plan to invite some Muslim families to come into school and talk to the pupils about their faith. They are also looking into inviting representatives from the local Synagogue and Mosque to speak with the children when covering other faiths. When enacted these plans will form the basis of a strong other faiths curriculum.
- Pupils are reminded that they are all different and unique.
- As the prayer garden becomes more established the aim is for classes to say prayers there and have periods of reflection, not only during lesson times but also during break times so that prayer becomes fully integrated into the school day.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good



- There is evidence that Collective Worship centres on clear themes and messages. Collective Worship is part of daily school life. Prayer in all its forms is included in all assemblies and liturgies where appropriate. Praying together occurs in classrooms at regular times of the day with staff and pupils participating.
- Pupils pray together regularly throughout each day.
- Some worship opportunities allow for cross-age group participation and some pupils are involved in the planning. These would now benefit from involving pupils more consistently in the planning and delivery of collective worship. There is clear evidence of this beginning for pupils in Key Stage 2 where opportunities are given to plan and lead class worships independently.
- A parent stated, *"Having brought my child to The Holy Family from a non-Catholic school abroad, I am thrilled with the quality of the Catholic education and the progress my child has made in this area, My child thoroughly enjoys the Gospel values-based assemblies and repeats these to her two year old sibling"*.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.

- Leaders and managers are very skilled in how to plan and deliver quality experiences of Collective Worship and are using these skills to develop this across the school.
- The leadership team, a number of whom are quite new to their roles, have a clear vision, enthusiasm, sense of direction and understanding of what is required to bring about improvement and they communicate this enthusiastically to staff.
- The dedication and commitment of leaders are instrumental in the drive to provide high quality Collective Worship and quality prayer life throughout the school.
- The calendar for Collective Worship allows for pupils to take part in a range of Masses and liturgical celebrations. These acts of worship reflect the pupils' positive attitudes and demonstrate their ability to empathise and apply Gospel values to their daily lives. The use of scripture is carefully planned to develop pupils' knowledge. This is having a positive impact on the standards in Religious Education.
- Leaders and managers, including senior leaders, provide opportunities for Collective Worship, which enable pupils to develop in their spiritual lives. They provide models of good practice for staff and pupils. They are highly visible as leaders of Collective Worship.
- The Religious Education coordinator provides a solid springboard for the development of the subject. She is very supportive of staff, has well-presented documentation with evidence she is responding positively to advice. There is clear documentation reflecting the progress that has been made in developing the Religious Education curriculum.
- The Chair of Governors recognises the journey the school has been on, is proactive in supporting ongoing development and progress to ensure improvements are sustainable. He is an influential partner in monitoring the ongoing development of the school.
- On the questionnaires a parent wrote, *'This school has been amazing in so many ways. My three children are at The Holy Family School and I could not ask for more from a school.'*