

# NOTTINGHAM DIOCESAN INSPECTION REPORT ON DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION

**Spring 2011**



**Holy Cross Catholic Primary School**

**Whitwick**

**LE67 5AT**

**Date of Inspection: 13 April 2011**

**(Section 48, 2005 Education Act)**

## SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

<b>Name and address of School:</b>	<b>Holy Cross catholic Primary School Parsonwood Hill Whitwick LE67 5AT Tel:01530 832799</b>
<b>Headteacher:</b>	<b>Geraldine Willders</b>
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	<b>David Ball</b>
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	<b>13.4.11</b>
<b>Inspection Team:</b>	<b>Mrs. Helen Booton Mrs. Joan Stannard</b>
<b>URN &amp; DfS Number:</b>	<b>URN: 120214 DfE No: 8553340</b>
<b>Overall Grade Awarded:</b>	<b>2</b>

### A. DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is an average sized primary school situated in a former mining village in Northwest Leicestershire. The school serves the parish of Holy Cross and shares a site with the church. The school has served the local community since 1903 and will shortly benefit from a large extension for Foundation Stage 2 and Year 1. There are seven single age classes from four plus to year six.

The current number on roll is 183 with 66% baptised Catholic, 21% of other Christian backgrounds and 3% with other faith backgrounds. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals is below National average (7%). The proportion of pupils with special needs is also below average (16%). Most pupils are of White British heritage.

Children enter Holy Cross from a variety of pre-school providers including the privately run pre-school on site. At the end of Year six, a high proportion (88%) of children transfer to De Lisle Catholic Science College.

# INSPECTION SCHEDULE

## B. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Holy Cross school is effective in providing a good quality Catholic Education in a safe, caring environment.

Staff are a great role model for the children, demonstrating strong relationships and supporting one another. A continuing desire to improve standards and to nurture an environment in which spiritual and moral formation thrive, is key to the pupils' success and well-being. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is outstanding.

The Eucharist and liturgy is central to the life of the school. Prayer Life and Acts of Collective Worship meet the needs of the children and are outstanding. There are strong links with the parish. Children discuss religious issues with confidence and sound knowledge of scripture from an early age.

Children are happy at school, are keen to do well and to make good progress. Standards in Religious Education are high especially in Upper Key Stage 2. Children with special needs are well integrated in the classroom and are well supported by teaching assistants who develop skills through good questioning and encouragement.

Leaders and managers promote the Catholic Life of the school to a good standard. Parents are positive about children's experience at school and the education provided. Governors are highly committed to the Catholic ethos, are supportive of the Headteacher. They understand however that the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life needs to be developed and to take place systematically in order for them to gain further insight and plan strategically for the future.

Provision for promoting Catholic Education is excellent. A creative curriculum is well planned, builds on prior knowledge, and is varied and interesting. It is extended through workshops, educational visits and includes valuable insight into other religious beliefs. The mission statement is always at the forefront of provision at the school.

**GRADE: ...2...**

### **B. What does the school need to do to improve further?**

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School the strengths of the school far outweigh the areas for improvement. However, all good schools recognise the need for further improvement. We recommend therefore that:

- Governors develop a systematic process to formally monitor both Religious Education and the Catholic Life of the School in order to inform strategic planning.
- The outstanding practice seen in the school is spread to raise the quality of teaching and learning to the highest standards throughout.

## **D. The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good and morale is high. There is a broad range of expertise to carry on with current developments when the present Headteacher leaves to take up her new post.

There has been significant improvement since the last inspection. The staff have been invigorated by the Senior Management Team and the Religious Education co-ordinator to drive up standards in Religious Education. They have high expectations. Assessment for Learning has been embraced by all staff and there is a passion about the work accomplished in liturgy. Assessment procedures are embedded and by the end of this year further trend analysis and scrutiny of vulnerable groups will be possible using reliable data.

Self-evaluation in Religious Education is well developed and needs to be matched by formal evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school.

With further development of Governor roles and a higher level of Governor involvement, challenge, support and sustained improvement will be assured. Governors are committed to these developments and have received training to accomplish this.

**GRADE: ...2 ...**

## **PUPILS**

### **How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups**

At Holy Cross School, the outcomes for pupils are good.

The children at Holy Cross enjoy their learning in Religious Education and make good progress. Where teaching is good or better, pupils are well motivated, show very good commitment to the task in hand and make rapid progress; working with high levels of initiative and independence. In order to bring about further improvements, the use of a consistent approach to more diagnostic marking will provide pupils with a well-focused critique of their work. This will in turn, offer challenging targets and thus serve as an incentive for all pupils to reach their highest possible standards in Religious Education.

Standards in Foundation Stage are good. From an earliest age, pupils show interest, enthusiasm and engagement with all of the early learning goals and are developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in Religious Education. The children are able to explain confidently what they have previously learned. They demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus. This was observed as the pupils worked collaboratively to make an Easter garden.

Standards in Key Stage One are somewhat variable but systems are in place to tackle any inconsistencies. Pupils in Year 2 make rapid progress so that by the end of the key stage, standards are in line with age-related expectations. Providing more detail, in both oral and written feedback, will give the clear guidance which the children need to help them improve and thus make the required progress in order to meet and indeed exceed the expectations in Religious Education.

Standards in Key Stage Two are good overall with evidence of outstanding achievement in the upper Key Stage two classes. Pupils use a wide range of skills, to work fruitfully, within the allocated time, producing work which shows originality, insight beyond their

years and great attention to detail. Pupils with particular learning needs are well-supported and are keen to produce their best work. They can articulate their ideas and demonstrate increasing levels of religious literacy.

Pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life at Holy Cross School to an outstanding degree. Relationships within school are very good and behaviour is exemplary. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of their school taking full advantage of the many opportunities that the school provides for their personal support and development. Currently, the school is working in partnership with its local and Catholic schools to review and develop their sex and relationship policy in line with national and Diocesan guidelines.

Achievement and success at every level within and beyond the classroom are celebrated so that all pupils have a strong sense of personal worth. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and play a part in developing the Catholic character of the school. They are encouraged to plan and organise many events and fund-raising activities including their Lenten project; purchasing CAFOD world gifts for those in need. The pupils value their school, they show respect for one another and engage with spiritual, moral and ethical issues. The school is aware that it now needs to foster links with others so that the pupils have opportunities to develop relationships with peers from different backgrounds and faith communities.

**GRADE: ...2...**

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

### **How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils**

The leadership of the school is good with many outstanding features. The Headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator, along with governors and all members of staff, are passionate in their commitment to the mission of Holy Cross Catholic School. The mission statement, created by the Headteacher, staff and governors, is shared with pupils each year and is the foundation for the work of the community.

The spiritual and moral development of pupils is given high priority in weekly planning and everyday school life. Special events such as Mass, the Big Assembly with the Pope, Easter Liturgies, Advent retreat with Reach 4, Shelter Assembly etc. give children chance to take an active role and the opportunity to reflect, discuss and contribute independently.

Senior managers promote strong links with the local parish. Fr. Cahill is supportive in his priestly ministry. The parish leads First Holy Communion preparation with staff from the school in a supporting role.

Whilst senior leaders have a strong knowledge of the Catholic life of the school through the support they give and by talking to staff, pupils and parents, there is no systematic monitoring and evaluation that is analysed and informs school improvement planning.

Holy Cross provides a broad and balanced curriculum with Religious Education at the forefront. The creative nature of the curriculum and the flexibility which has developed, has enabled an exciting Religious Education curriculum that children describe as 'fun'. The planning of the curriculum is supported by the well-informed and energetic Religious Education co-ordinator to ensure consistency across the school and to support new staff.

The school has robust systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' achievement. This has been effective over a two-year period. Training from the Diocese and staff training by the Religious Education co-ordinator has standardised the levelling of work and has introduced a reliable system for this. As a result, attainment and achievement are high across the school. Further analysis of different groups of vulnerable children will enhance monitoring to inform improvements.

Development of assessment for learning through the use of 'learning challenge' and 'signs of success' is very effective with children being stretched and teachers having high expectations. This is used effectively right across the school.

School improvement planning for Religious Education is strong with clear priorities. Outcomes are monitored by the co-ordinator to assess impact. There has been clear improvement in standards since the last inspection with a greater proportion of children working at above average levels.

Community Cohesion is outstanding. Leaders and managers have inclusion as a clear goal and all children fully integrated into school life. Although the proportion of pupils from different backgrounds is small their families feel that they are part of the life of the school and that they are leaving their children in a place that 'is happy and safe'. Holy Cross has strong links with schools in the local area and with the Catholic family of schools. They are working together to implement a new Sex and Relationships curriculum and have shared sports events and training days including spiritual development for staff. Children have a good knowledge and respect for other religious views. Visits to a Hindu Temple and synagogue support learning as do planned events such as dance from other cultures and food from different countries linked to Fair Trade. Children said, 'All pupils are really nice- if you don't feel good they will help'. Friendships cross all cultural and economic boundaries. Fundraising for Cafod and other charities reflect the concern of the children for those on the margins of society. Exploring face-to-face links with children from local schools with a high ethnic minority or video conferencing or e-mailing children from other cultures abroad would enhance Community Cohesion further.

The Governing Body has a strong base with expertise in many areas including spiritual leadership and finance. They are in a good position to begin to take a more challenging and strategic role in planning for school improvement through systematic monitoring and evaluation. Governors are increasing skills through attendance at training and are aware of the need to become actively involved. They have strong knowledge of the school's performance through meeting with senior staff and are passionate in ensuring that the Catholic nature of the school has a high profile and that links with the parish are strong. They fulfil the statutory and canonical responsibilities well and have good experience in recruitment. They are a visible presence in the school and are very supportive of staff and pupils. The enthusiasm of Governors and their desire to be more effective is clear.

**GRADE: ...2...**

# PROVISION

## How effective is the provision in promoting Catholic Education?

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, the provision for promoting Catholic education is outstanding.

The quality of teaching is excellent. On the day of inspection the range of teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding, with the majority of teaching being assessed as good or better; with 50% of the lessons observed being outstanding. In most cases, careful planning means that vibrant lessons take place with well-motivated children actively involved in their learning and working with sustained concentration. In the better lessons, skilful questioning techniques are used to elicit and extend pupils' understanding. The needs of all the learners are catered for especially where experienced and highly qualified teaching assistants are well-briefed and focused on maximising opportunities for learning. The on-going dialogue between pupils and other adults ensure that there is optimal engagement with the designated task and outcomes are of the highest possible quality.

The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education is good. The detailed and accurate information of pupils' achievement over the last three years has evolved and is used to celebrate success and identify any shortcomings so that these can be addressed. Pupils know how well they are doing. Improving the quality of marking in Religious Education will help them to know what steps need to be taken to bring about even greater success. The school quite rightly recognises that there needs to be greater consistency in how this assessment information is used to set challenging targets in all year groups.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral development. The school's planning systems ensure full coverage of the Religious Education programme. It is modified to meet the needs, backgrounds and local circumstances of the pupils. This creative approach to the curriculum leads to learning that is both stimulating and memorable. A wide range of enrichment activities are on offer at the school, or are arranged with other providers. This serves to enhance provision and sustain motivation and enthusiasm in the learners. All statutory requirements are met with the school being responsive to Diocesan guidelines and the needs of the children.

The quality of collective worship at the school is outstanding. The school promotes the Catholic character of the school whilst taking account of the local circumstances. Prayer punctuates the school day and the school actively encourages parental involvement in all aspects of school life including its liturgical programme, especially at key festivals and on holy days. Collective worship is central to the life of the school, it is given a high profile and is well-resourced. Prayer opportunities and liturgical formation are well-planned, show progression, and reflect the Church's mission. The older pupils are skilled and equipped to lead prayer. This dimension of collective worship is being developed across all age groups. Collective worship is kept under review informally, but the school recognises that more formal monitoring of provision needs to be built into the overall school improvement cycle.

**GRADE: ...1**

## Common grading scale for all inspection judgements

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how good are the outcomes for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how effective is the provision in promoting Catholic education</li> </ul>	2

### PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1) how well pupils progress and enjoy their learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2) <i>the pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education</i></li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3) <i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress</i></li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4) <i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and / or disabilities and their progress</i></li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5) the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6) <i>how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship</i></li> </ul>	1

### LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1) how well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2) <i>how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion</i></li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3) how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4) the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that areas for development are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities are met</li> </ul>	2

### PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	<b>1</b>
1) The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	1
2) <i>the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious education</i>	2
3) the extent to which the religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
4) the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1