



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Stonesby Avenue, Leicester, LE2 6TY

School URN:	120225
Inspection Date:	27 June 2017
Inspectors:	Geraldine Willders and Jane Monaghan

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
	This Inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Requires Improvement	3

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is a good Catholic school.

- Holy Cross has made recent dramatic improvements in putting pupils at the centre of its mission. Under the strong leadership of the recently appointed headteacher the whole school family is joining in the drive to build a positive future for the school community.
- Pupils are proud of their Catholic Dominican School; they enjoy being part of the diverse Holy Cross community. Pastoral care is highly effective and pupils feel supported and looked after by caring and thoughtful staff.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. Pupils enjoy participating and being part of the Holy Cross worshipping community. The chapel of the Dominican saints enhances the prayerful learning environment of the school.
- There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection in relation to the quality of work produced in Religious Education. There is a whole school commitment to raising standards and this is beginning to impact on outcomes for pupils.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is slightly smaller than the average sized primary school.
- 39% of pupils are baptised Catholic, 27% are from other Christian faiths, 5% from other faiths and 29% are from families with no religious affiliation.
- The proportion of pupils from an ethnic minority background is above the national average. Over a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are deemed disadvantaged and supported through the pupil premium is 42%, well above the national average.
- The school serves the parishes of Holy Cross, Leicester, St Edward the Confessor, Ayleston Road, St Mary's, South Wigston and St John Bosco, Eyres Monsall.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Religious Education to ensure that all teaching is at least good:
 - Embed the progress made in planning, marking and feedback to ensure all pupils in the school are consistently challenged and that they know how to improve.
 - Maximise learning opportunities in lessons to ensure pupils can demonstrate their knowledge and understanding independently.
- Improve the quality of assessment and how this is analysed by teachers, leaders and managers to track progress:
 - Develop a system which closely tracks pupil progress in Religious Education over time.
 - Use this system to identify vulnerable groups of pupils and closely track their progress in Religious Education over time.
 - Analyse the data in a systematic way to identify those pupils not making progress and ensure that intervention, differentiation and support is carefully targeted to ensure the gap between pupils at Holy Cross and other pupils in the Diocese is closed.
- Now that that sound basic structures and levels of expectation in Religious Education have been established, further improve the quality of learning in Religious Education by:
 - Developing teachers' skills in questioning and extending pupils' understanding through facilitating pupil dialogue.
 - Increasing the level of challenge through more finely tuned differentiation to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
 - Providing more open ended, high quality writing opportunities.
- To develop further the role of pupils as liturgy leaders by following the detailed timetable highlighted in the school's action plan.
- To further enhance the quality of Collective Worship by focusing on music and creativity.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	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 managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1

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

- There has been recent dramatic progress in the Catholic Life of the school, putting pupils at the centre of its mission and ethos. The impact of this is that an increasing number of pupils are able to articulate and show an understanding of the distinctiveness of their school, one pupil commented, “the mission statement helps us to become independent and inspire others in our community” and another stated, “our Catholic school makes us better people, we are encouraged to be kind to each other.”
- Most pupils fully appreciate and benefit from the community of Holy Cross, one pupil articulated, “we have a spirit of a big community even though we are small”. Pupils are involved in supporting local and national charities, the local food bank and CAFOD. They sing at local care homes and give generously to events such as the Harvest Festival. This again impacts on the pupils’ understanding of community.
- Relationships in the school are a strength, parents are increasingly engaged and work with the school to secure good behaviour outcomes for their children. The school’s behaviour policy is underpinned by the precepts of forgiveness and reconciliation which further enhances the mission of the school. Many parents speak highly of the school in this area and they were particularly impressed by their children receiving letters of apology when hurt had occurred.
- The emergence of the role of liturgy leaders, in addition to the school council further demonstrates a willingness by the pupils to take on responsibilities. They realise the importance of these positions and they are keen to be good role models. Plans are in place to further develop this initiative.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly aware that religious beliefs and values are very important for many people. They appreciate the diversity of the community of Holy Cross and there is a deepening appreciation and respect by pupils of the school family.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – good

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school has seen major improvements. The mission statement has involved staff, pupil and governor dialogue and drives the agenda of building a positive future for the school community.
- Staff morale is high and relationships are increasingly harmonious with colleagues working together and providing stability for the pupils.
- Major improvements in the school's learning environment provides further evidence that the school is a place where people care, impacting on the security and wellbeing of pupils. The recently refurbished chapel of the Dominican saints and well-chosen religious artefacts on display around the school are further signs of the school's Catholic character. Dedicated focus areas for 'Come and See' displays are in each classroom and further remind the pupils that they are part of a Catholic community.
- Pastoral support systems and policies afford the highest priority to the most vulnerable in the school community. Personal, Social and Health Education are developing with 'circle time'; nurture and family learning groups complement this programme. Inclusion systems are rigorous, robust and driven by a highly effective senior leader.
- The Behaviour Policy has involved pupil consultation providing them with a coherent set of positive rules understood by many. Personal responsibility and restorative justice are features of the policy and pastoral support colleagues provide pupils with help where understanding is lacking.
- High expectations from the adults in the school community feature greatly in promoting the Catholic Life of the school and pupils respond to these.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Leaders and managers are deeply committed to the Catholic Life of the school, their guidance role is crucial as the school journeys to a positive future.
- They are highly effective role models and driven in their quest to nourish the Catholic Dominican ethos of Holy Cross.
- Leaders are engaged in a range of monitoring activities related to provision and outcomes for the Catholic Life of the school. They are visible and accessible ensuring Catholic Life underpins all the work of the school. High levels of stakeholder consultation impacts on the increasingly positive engagement of parents with the school.
- Leaders and Managers are proficient in identifying areas of development within the Catholic Life of the school; they act on outcomes of parental and staff surveys providing tangible proof of their commitment to the school's mission. The school's Action Plan highlights all Catholic aspects of school life as a priority.
- The chair of governors and governing body are pivotal in guaranteeing the Catholic Dominican character of the school. Governors have availed of training opportunities provided by the diocese, their time is focused, generous and instrumental in moving the school forward. The governors are a welcome and reassuring presence in the school. Their knowledge and commitment to Catholic education impacts effectively on the aims and mission of Holy Cross.
- Governors are well versed in their monitoring role and they work hard at driving the strategic plan of improvement for Holy Cross.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	2
-----------------------------------	---

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

2
2
2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship – good

- There is recent marked improvement and development in this area and pupils are responding positively to the prayer life of the school. Pupils are generally reverent, they gather in the hall respectfully, they are courteous and listen well and most respond appropriately. The atmosphere during the observed Act of Worship was conducive to prayer.
- Younger pupils are developing confidence in leading liturgies. They are given guidance in reading prayers and in choosing scripture passages and music. There is good role modelling from staff.
- Many pupils participate with mime and acting and plans are in place to extend the musical repertoire for liturgies.
- The impact of the increased focus on Collective Worship leads to pupils developing liturgical sensitivity. Many upper Key Stage Two pupils talk about events in the cyclical calendar of the church. Pupils shared their understanding of having Mass in school for the major seasons of Advent, Lent, Easter and the First Holy Communion celebrations.
- There is a mixed picture of pupils gaining experience of other faiths and plans are in place to develop this area. Pupils have a growing awareness and are developing their knowledge and understanding of other world religions while at the same time appreciating the Catholic Dominican traditions of Holy Cross.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – good

- Great emphasis on the prayer life of the school ensures that it is central to the school day and beyond.
- Staff voluntarily meet throughout the school week to pray together. These along with other quality opportunities at training sessions and staff Masses impact on the school's sense of community.
- Increasingly pupils are provided with the tools to enable them to lead their own Acts of Worship. They speak about the helpfulness of having a plan which highlights the elements of good liturgy. They could articulate the essence of 'gather' 'the Word' 'Pray and Mission'. The role of pupils as liturgy leaders is to be extended in this area.
- The school chapel of the Dominican saints provides a wonderful setting for all forms of Collective Worship. This impacts on the pupils' sense of worth and extends their knowledge and understanding of the importance of prayer.
- Families and often parishioners welcome the invitation to attend class and whole school liturgies and an increasing number avail of these opportunities.
- Senior leaders and indeed many colleagues have a thorough understanding of the church's liturgical heritage. They provide further support to pupils in this area acting as good role models.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – good

- The new headteacher is highly qualified in the area of liturgical development. The RE subject leader is a good role model and the forthcoming appointment of a Catholic deputy headteacher will make Collective Worship even more accessible to pupils.
- The timetabling of Collective Worship has raised the profile of the prayer life of the school and staff ensure pupils have the skills and knowledge to participate fully.
- Leaders and managers give the highest priority to training staff in liturgical formation. Staff have participated in the many training events delivered by diocesan colleagues.
- The headteacher is instrumental in the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship ensuring feedback is given and targets for improvement are set. These 'non-negotiables' establish high expectations thus impacting on pupils' experiences.
- Leaders and managers including priest colleagues are ambitious in their quest to forge good relationships between Holy Cross and the parishes it serves. They attach great importance to the liturgical heritage of the church with the school at its centre. They are generous with their time and instrumental in ensuring Collective Worship is relevant to the pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	3
------------------------------------	----------

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2
3
3

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

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning is good.
- Pupils speak highly of Religious Education and enjoy their learning. This was clear when speaking to the pupils when they were eloquent in expressing their enthusiasm for the subject.
- Pupils are keen to do well. They know what they need to do in order to improve and have a good understanding of 'driver words' and these are used to support pupils in making progress.
- In the majority of lessons observed, pupil behaviour was good. This was largely as a result of the positive relationships and high regard for RE that is shown by the pupils and adults.
- Pupils begin school well below pupils nationally in the EYFS profile and this is reflected in the data relating to pupils' starting points in Religious Education. Although attainment is below Diocesan averages, based on their starting points progress over time is good and the gaps are closing.
- The school has made great strides to improve pupil achievement; this now needs to be embedded to demonstrate that pupils make rapid and sustained progress over time.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education – requires improvement

- Although the majority of teaching observed across the key stages on the day of inspection was good, the improvements made since September are not yet having the impact to ensure that teaching and assessment over time is good overall.
- The strongest teaching ensured that pupils acquired the knowledge required to be able to make progress over time. It ensured that pupils were challenged and given the opportunities to broaden their experiences which led to enjoyment and purposeful learning.
- There were examples of teaching where the pace was not appropriate and this led to low level disruption and pupils not being fully engaged in their learning.
- Pupils need to be provided with greater opportunities to apply the knowledge they acquire independently; in some lessons there was too much teacher talk and not enough opportunity for pupils to be active learners.
- Assessment of pupils' work, including marking and feedback, is not yet consistent. There is a lack of focus on assessment to inform planning for pupil progress. Where pupils made the most progress, marking and feedback was strong and there was a strong sense of building on prior learning through tasks and pupils having a clear understanding of what to do to improve.
- There is evidence of improvement since September. This now needs to be embedded to ensure that teachers have a confident level of expertise in order to plan, teach and assess consistently well for all groups of pupils.

The extent to which leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – requires improvement

- The recently appointed headteacher has an accurate view of the areas that require improvement and has begun to put in place the steps required to ensure that the necessary actions are taken to improve Religious Education.
- She has ensured that the previous underperformance of pupils has been halted and begun to put in place the systems and personnel required to move Religious Education towards good. In time, with the continued support of staff and governors, the school is well placed to move from requires improvement to good.
- The RE leader is enthusiastic and is proactive in seeking support from the Diocese. This has led to a renewed enthusiasm among staff and the training provided is beginning to have an impact on improvement in teaching.
- The recently appointed RE Governor, along with the Chair of Governors, has a clear understanding of why the school requires improvement. They are supportive of leaders and managers and are passionate to fully undertake their role to ensure that standards in Religious Education move to good and ultimately outstanding. They now need to gain the experience to monitor and evaluate accurately the provision for Religious Education.
- Although there are some systems for assessment in place, they are not used to rigorously track progress. Furthermore, assessment is not analysed sufficiently to identify gaps in attainment. Therefore leaders do not have an accurate picture of attainment and progress of cohorts or vulnerable groups of pupils.
- Work in pupils' books indicate that leaders and managers ensure that there is adequate time allocated to the teaching of Religious Education and is in line with the requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
Unique Reference Number	120255
Local Authority	Leicester

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the Evaluation Schedule for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 7 Religious Education lessons and 1 Act of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, two governors including the parish priest and the Inclusion lead. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the Governing Body, action plans, the School Development Plan, monitoring forms, assessment data and tracking and parental response forms and examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Fr David Rocks OP
Headteacher:	Ms Gail Neill
Date of Previous School Inspection:	19 March 2014
Telephone Number:	0116 283 3135
Email Address:	gneill@holycross.leicester.sch.uk

WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

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

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 12 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.