



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

URN 138459

The Holy Cross School

25 Sandal Road

New Malden

KT3 5AR

Inspection date:	9-10 July 2018
Chair of Governors:	Anna-Marie Boyd
Acting Headteacher:	Andrea Lucas
Lead Inspectors:	Peter Ward
Associate Inspector:	Therese Feighan

EDUCATION COMMISSION

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR
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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 situated in the Kingston Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parishes which the school serves are Our Lady Immaculate, Tolworth; St Cecilia's, Cheam; St Agatha's, Kingston and St Joseph's, New Malden. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 78%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 8% in Key Stage 3, 10% in Key Stage 4 and 5% in Key Stage 5.

The school takes pupils from 11 to 18 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 950. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly below the national average. Around 3% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The pupil population is ethnically diverse. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above the national average but below the average for schools in London.

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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

The Holy Cross School is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

- Pupils are enabled and encouraged to grow and flourish as full members of a Catholic Christian community in which all are welcome. It recognises and celebrates its Holy Cross and Franciscan heritage while pursuing a contemporary Catholic education mission.
- The sound and well-informed leadership of the acting headteacher, working in concert with the school leadership team and supported appropriately by the Governing Board is successfully focused on promoting the integral education of each member of the school community by reason of its vibrant Catholic life. The school provides outstanding pastoral care and support to all pupils allowing each one to flourish as members of a remarkably secure community.
- Progress and attainment in Religious Education are both outstanding. Improvement continues to raise consistently high standards in each key stage. The practice of assessment is outstanding. 'Deep marking' by staff combining with accurate peer assessment enables pupils to understand clearly how to present their own work. Written work is of a high standard reflecting the high expectations and positive attitude of committed staff which motivates pupils. Excellent relationships between pupils and staff further support student learning.
- Collective worship is outstanding. Pupils embrace the wide variety of opportunities for prayer and collective worship. Positive relationships with local clergy enable Mass to be celebrated regularly throughout the year. The lay chaplain and school leaders collaborate to provide opportunities for a well-planned range of timetabled and voluntary opportunities for pupils in appropriate settings. Pupils are encouraged to learn how to plan and to lead prayer and worship in a variety of imaginative ways. Pupils speak authoritatively and enthusiastically about celebrating their faith.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- By sharing good practice and effective professional development, ensure all teachers of Religious Education are able to deliver outstanding teaching on a regular basis.
- Increase curriculum time in Key Stage 3 to ensure that it is in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in order that the content of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory may be appropriately taught in full.
- To extend opportunities to ensure that Key Stage 4 pupils may be as involved in the development of the spiritual life of the school as other pupils in the school.



Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

1

Catholic Life

1

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

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

1

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

1

Religious Education

1

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

1

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

1

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

1

Collective Worship

1

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

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship

1

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

1



CATHOLIC LIFE

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

- Holy Cross School is a vibrant Catholic educational community manifestly motivated by its mission statement, reflecting its Holy Cross foundation, which reads in part: “We aim to create a happy family environment....so that we may live life to the full and joyfully share this life with others, especially those who are in anyway disadvantaged.” Pupils in each key stage and staff at all levels made reference to these statements as they enthusiastically described the school community including its pastoral care.
- Pupils deeply value and respect the Holy Cross Catholic tradition of the school, the strong sense of community and its links with the Church universal, Holy Cross communities worldwide, and with the diocese and local parish and school communities. Consequently they are enthusiastically and regularly involved with parish, diocesan and Holy Cross celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments. Pupils are confident in expressing pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs.
- Pupils, parents and staff speak positively of their school and of the many opportunities the school provides for its members to grow spiritually, socially and academically which in turn underpins a strong commitment to social justice displayed through significant personal service and fundraising.
- Pupils embrace the range of ways they are able to exercise leadership roles in school life and contribute to its evaluation so that it continues to engage successive generations. Inspectors witnessed pupils working enthusiastically with staff to prepare a school Mass and tutor groups demonstrating high quality research and preparation for presentations to a charity for a grant to address a local need that they had identified.
- Pastoral care is a particular strength of the school. One parent wrote that it is “absolutely amazing”. Pupils clearly feel highly valued and safe. Staff at all levels actively strive for the wellbeing of pupils and monitor behaviour unobtrusively in order to provide support if necessary. St Theresa’s, the student support area, is a safe place for pupils in need and at risk where great care is taken to promote their welfare and to enable them to progress with their studies.
- Relationships between and among pupils and staff are very positive. They are characterised by mutual respect, forgiveness and affirmation. Behaviour in class and around the school is excellent and the environment is respected and well cared for.



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

- The school mission statement is understood and embedded in the life of the school. It is included in school planners and widely displayed and quoted in order to demonstrate how the extensive provision of activities and initiatives contribute to the core rationale of the school. This is shared with staff on their appointment and through regular specific professional development provision.
- Excellent pastoral care exemplifies the realisation of the mission statement in practice, supporting the well-being of all but with a particular concern for 'those in any way disadvantaged'. This includes those who are identified as young carers for whom a member of staff has particular responsibility. The school is mindful that there are probably young carers in the school community of whom it is unaware.
- Already extensive opportunities for pupils' service to the school community have recently been expanded by the introduction of a new House system. Pupils spoke of appreciating these opportunities to serve and of the imaginative and meaningful way in which leadership roles are transferred from one pupil leadership team to the next.
- Chaplaincy provision has been enhanced in recent years with the appointment of a lay chaplain who continues to devise effective new ways of engaging pupils in the religious and spiritual life of the school irrespective of their personal faith or belief.
- The school celebrates its distinct character throughout the built environment. The school chapel is at the heart of the school and the stations of the cross are situated in a nearby corridor. A range of displays and artefacts including statues populate the common areas of the school which also house plasma screens that include information and reports on the Catholic life of the school.
- The pattern of the school day and school year at Holy Cross reflects its Catholic character with daily prayer, weekly gatherings for prayer and worship and annual events including the celebration of Mass on key occasions
- The Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum is provided through the National Curriculum science programme, Religious Education and health units taught by staff members within the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programmes, overseen by the Head of Religious Education. It is well co-ordinated in a way that meets the needs of pupils in line with the school policy which reflects Catholic teaching. It is regularly reviewed and evaluated in order to ensure that it remains appropriate. The PSHE programme addresses contemporary life and exemplifies the way in which the whole curriculum is designed to support the spiritual and moral education of all pupils.

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



- The school's leadership is passionately committed to the Holy Cross Catholic vision for education. The energy and determination of governors and leaders at all levels is reflected in the structures and operation of the governing body, the significance of the Faith Mission and Ethos Committee and the priorities of the Strategic Development Plan. Governors regularly visit the school in order to inform themselves of school life.
- The strong commitment to Catholic education shared by senior leaders is the touchstone for all they do. School policies deliberately include reference to the school's Catholic character and to gospel values because they are constitutive of the life of the school. Their realised vision is lived out in the daily life of the school community so that the spiritual, pastoral and academic development of pupils is always to the fore.
- Accurate self-evaluation derived from rigorous monitoring informed by various staff, student and data sources enables well-targeted and planned improvements to be made in a measured and realisable way. This further enhances the contemporary Catholic Life of the school in harmony with its Holy Cross foundation.
- Staff induction and regular well-chosen professional development provision complemented by the routine support of prayer and worship by the school chaplain enables staff to fully appreciate and promote the mission of the school.
- The school values its links with parents/carers and is constantly exploring ways of improving them, most recently through various forms of social media. They are welcomed to progress meetings, briefings and liturgical celebrations and invited to contact the school with any concerns. Parents take advantage of these opportunities, with one parent writing "Staff are good at responding to and dealing with any issues; very approachable."

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

- Pupils' attainment as indicated by teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 and GCSE examination results is outstanding. 56% GCSE Religious Studies grades A*/A and 93% A*-C achieved in 2017 continues a pattern of sustained high attainment and places Holy Cross well within the top 10% of all Catholic schools. Religious Education progress is also significantly above the national average at +1.01. 100% of GCE A Level RS achieved grades A*-C, broadly similar to recent years. Thus, almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, from their varied starting points, make good or outstanding progress in each key stage.
- Pupils show that they are religiously literate at an age-appropriate standard in the way in which they can discuss religion and belief. Sixth form students spoke fluently and engagingly with an inspector when they surveyed the spiritual life of the school and as they explained devising a whole school liturgy.
- Pupils confirmed the judgement of inspectors that they enjoy Religious Education. They apply themselves diligently, come prepared for work and work at a good pace. In all lessons observed behaviour for learning was excellent. Most pupils seek to engage with their teacher and peers in promoting their knowledge and understanding and make good progress within lessons and over time.
- Exercise books display thoughtful reflection, are well presented and carefully marked. Peer marking is undertaken regularly and with a high degree of accuracy as demonstrated by the teachers subsequent validating marking. Thus pupils understand both how to demonstrate learning and also how to assess work. Pupils have a good understanding of their own progress and how to make progress to achieve their next target. Pupils display a range of skills including logical reasoning, interpreting religious sources and applying religious ideas in their personal and community life.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is Outstanding

- The quality of teaching is good with some examples of outstanding teaching. At its best it enthuses pupils and fully engages them enabling pupils to make sustained and rapid progress. All lessons observed were good or outstanding.
- Teachers are highly committed to teaching Religious Education and effectively communicate its value to pupils. Their subject expertise and pedagogical experience enables teachers to plan lessons linked to pupil's current assessment and targets. As a result lessons are consistently good and pupils learn well.



- Teachers use a wide range of resources and appropriate teaching strategies including individual, pair and group work, which engages pupils and enables almost all pupils to make thorough on-going progress. Questioning is used well to monitor clarity of teaching and to provoke understanding.
- Assessment for learning is embedded in lessons which enables teachers to adapt tasks and explanations to support the learning of each pupil. The 'deep marking' undertaken regularly by teachers provides pupils with a thorough appreciation of the standard of their work. Peer assessment is regularly used for written tasks and enables pupils to assess and comment on work against clear criteria. Pupils are assisted in this by PowerPoint displays with which pupils become increasingly confident and accurate in using. Peer assessment and each pupils' written response is reviewed by teachers, the whole process enabling pupils to develop a good understanding of how to maximise their own achievement.
- Teacher assessment is accurate and supports target setting for pupils and monitoring of pupil progress over time, enabling appropriate interventions to be made in order to maximise pupil achievement.
- Regular pupil assessment is complemented by a range of celebrations of praise and affirmation in school and shared with pupils' families that are appreciated by and motivate pupils.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is Outstanding

- Leaders and governors have a very thorough knowledge of the Religious Education department and provide appropriate challenge and support to ensure that it continues to be a leading subject department in this high achieving school. The link governor is chair of the Governor's Faith Mission and Ethos committee and regularly meets with the Head of Department who is line managed by the Deputy Headteacher.
- The experienced Head of Department leads a team of three specialist subject teachers who are very well supported by others committed to teaching Catholic Religious Education. There is a strong shared commitment to enabling each pupil to maximise their potential through high standards of pedagogy using departmental teaching resources developed collaboratively.
- A robust and rigorous system for tracking, monitoring, analysing and evaluating pupil progress enables initiatives and developments to be carefully and realistically assessed.
- Most teaching takes place in a suite of three dedicated and well-equipped classrooms centrally located near the school chapel and subject leader's office.
- The curriculum covers the curriculum requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has evolved from the structure of *The Way, the Truth and the Life* programme in order to meet the needs of all students and to prepare for the new GCSE Religious Studies (RS) AQA specification B qualification with Judaism as the second religion. An



appropriate Sixth Form General Religious Education programme is based on the former NOCN assessed qualification complemented by a new Edexcel GCE A Level qualification covering Philosophy of Religion, Religious Ethics and New Testament Studies. The curriculum offers opportunities for pupils to engage with the sacramental and liturgical life of the school.

- The school teaches a diocesan approved GCSE RS course and meets the Bishops' Conference requirement for 5% of Curriculum time for Sixth Form General Religious Education and 10% for Y10-11 GCSE. In Key Stage 3 the school provides 8% of classroom curriculum time and complements this with specific identified activities in related subjects and activities to bring curriculum provision up to 10%.

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

- Prayer and worship in its many forms is recognised by pupils as being at the heart of the life of the school community. Numbers of pupils contribute to its vitality, welcoming the many opportunities to devise liturgies together with the school chaplain and other school staff. The Ignite group plays a particular role with the chaplain both devising and leading prayer and worship and encouraging and supporting others to do so. All pupils have the opportunity to lead tutor prayer and weekly group prayer, and did so with confidence and authority during the inspection. Pupils who are present are attentive and responsive. Pupils are familiar with the cycle of the liturgical year because the Sunday gospel forms the context for the weekly theme that informs tutor group and weekly collective worship.
- Major school celebrations often include Mass or a liturgical celebration. Advent and Lent services involve students from every Year contributing to the planning and presentation of the liturgy using a wide variety of creative media to complement scripture reading, prayer, sung worship, music and stillness.
- Voluntary opportunities for prayer and spirituality are embraced by large numbers of pupils who have the opportunity to experience a wide variety of traditional and contemporary approaches to prayer. Youth Alpha has recently been well received by pupils. During Advent and Lent many students seek to take the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Members of Year 12, after appropriate training, have been commissioned as extraordinary ministry of the Eucharist and discharge their ministry during school Mass.
- There is a genuine enthusiasm for collective worship, reflected in the quality of communal singing, in the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer.
- Members of Holy Cross School are part of a prayerful worshipping community that manifestly contributes to their spiritual and moral development irrespective of ability or faith background. Their respect for the faith and belief of others is reflected in the manner in which they prepare and participate in prayer and liturgy.

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

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school for all pupils, whatever their own particular faith background, and forms the heart of every school celebration. Praying together is part of the daily experience of all pupils and staff.
- The lay chaplain is at the heart of a network that support prayer, worship and spirituality throughout the school community. She works closely with staff from a range of departments



and with pupils to promote a wide range of opportunities of varying character and tradition for prayer, worship and reflection and to provide resources that support staff and pupil prayer.

- The school calendar incorporates the school's liturgical calendar which provides the pattern for resources to support the weekly pattern of tutor group and key stage prayer and worship and major school liturgical and eucharistic celebrations which are led by pupils, staff and priests as appropriate.
- There is also a wide range of voluntary opportunities including weekly pupil-led meditation in the chapel, Youth Alpha courses and 'lightfever' which involves lighting a candle and saying a prayer in the chapel.
- The Chapel of the Resurrection with reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is open at all times for pupils and staff to use. A wide range of religious artefacts designed and made by students and of personal prayers add to the religious ambience of the chapel. Inspectors found the chapel used by students both at break and lunchtime.
- Mass is celebrated regularly throughout the year for the whole school on feast days and for individual year groups, sometimes with their parents, on appropriate occasions. It is also celebrated for Years 8 and 9 tutor groups in connection with pupils' Religious Education.
- The school boasts an extensive range of religious artefacts which constitute an integral fabric of the school building and are respected by pupils.
- Inspectors concluded that the 'chaplaincy goal' "to support the Catholic life of the school by ever-increasing student participation which aids them to deepen their spiritual life" was making measurable progress.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Outstanding

- Leaders and governors are fully committed to the key role played by prayer and worship in the life of the school community. It is routinely reviewed by the Governors' Faith, Mission and Ethos Committee who receive regular reports from its chair who is the link governor, scheduled presentations from the school chaplain and frequent reports from governors who attend many school liturgies.
- School leaders have a developed programme of monitoring, evaluation and review of the provision and engagement of pupils in prayer and worship. This has identified that pupils in Key Stage 4 are less actively involved than pupils in other key stages.
- The chaplain and school leaders have a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical calendar and of how a Catholic school community can celebrate significant school events as eucharistic celebrations or opportunities for prayer and worship open to all irrespective of faith or belief.
- School leaders at all levels lead prayer and worship in ways that model good practice which is followed and developed by those pupils who lead prayer and worship.



- A regular feature of staff induction and of the professional development programme is an introduction to prayer, worship and the liturgical year in general and leading tutor group and school collective worship in particular.

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