



Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

URN: 146224

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham

28–29 February 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

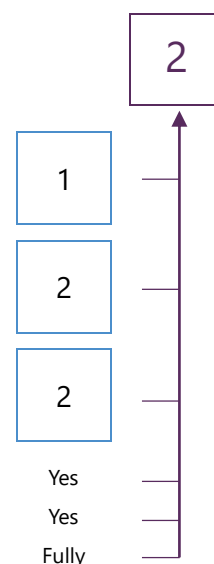
Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



What the school does well

- Pastoral care and outreach are strengths of the school, with staff supporting vulnerable pupils both in school and at home.
- Pupils show outstanding care to one another and express deep respect for those of other faiths.
- Standards in religious education have risen markedly since the last inspection and pupils approach their learning enthusiastically.
- Pupils participate with reverence and interest in prayer and liturgy and willingly take on roles in its planning and leadership.
- Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for Holy Cross School.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that lessons in religious education allow pupils, especially the more able, to work with independence when undertaking relevant written tasks.
- Establish a cycle of monitoring and evaluation that is rigorous and leads to targeted and measurable actions for improvement in religious education.
- Provide opportunities to develop pupil independence in planning and leading whole school and class celebrations of the word.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

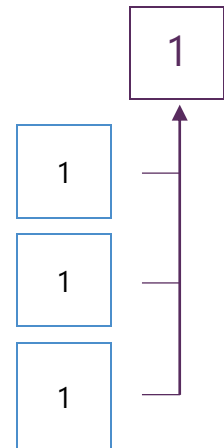
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



Pupils fully embrace the school's mission, 'We live, grow, learn and pray together in faith, showing God's love in all we do and say'. They understand and can articulate the meaning of the bishop's themes of 'encounter, discipleship and missionary discipleship'. Pupils have a clear sense of worth; there is a harmonious and multi-cultural togetherness within the school. Pupils are spiritually and environmentally aware, taking ownership of and passionately supporting the Cafod and eco clubs. Pupils make a central contribution to the school's Catholic life and mission by taking an active part in promoting Catholic Social Teaching principles: for example, the 'Mini Vinnies' prioritise support for the community-based 'Rainbows' charity. Pupils know that there are plans to visit the local mosque and temple, to learn more about a range of religious and cultural backgrounds, embracing people from other faiths and beliefs. Pupils recognise that, 'we are all unique'. In classrooms, pupils value their school's connection with the Dominican order by praying to their own class saint. Pupils regularly attend Mass in school and the choir attends Mass at the parish church, all highly valuing these opportunities.

Staff are fully committed to the promotion of the Catholic life and mission of the school. They are exemplary role models, building and fostering excellent relationships. There is a passion within the staff team for reaching out to the most vulnerable pupils and families, illustrated in the work and attitude of staff: 'We are inclusive, all are welcome and everyone cares for each other'. Prayer focus areas allow pupils the opportunity to reflect and interact with their faith. The school's relationship, sex and health education curriculum meets statutory and diocesan requirements; staff have received the necessary training to deliver the 'Ten:Ten' programme. The introduction of 'mission circles' has been effective in creating a whole school community where the vertical grouping of pupils enables different age groups to meet together in prayer and discuss religious virtues. The indoor school environment is welcoming: there are explicit signs of the school's Catholic character, with the mission statement

proudly displayed alongside a statue of Our Blessed Lady. Outside, a sacred space has been created and developed within the Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) project, where pupils can enjoy a safe space to play and develop strong, lasting friendships. 'Well-being Wednesday' sees the promotion of staff welfare through prayer and acts of kindness.

Leaders and governors are fully committed to ensuring that the Catholic life and mission of the school is evident and lived out in daily practice. The headteacher has established and promotes a nurturing environment for all. The principle of restorative justice has had a positive effect on pupils, who understand the need for sincere apology and forgiveness to one another when there are arguments. Leaders work closely with outside agencies, such as Cafod and the local food bank; they also support international appeals for highlighted causes, such as the earthquake in Turkey. Parents willingly support the 'reverse Advent calendar' initiative, bringing in donations for the local community. Well-being support is a real strength of the school. An open-door approach has created trust and school has become a valuable point of support for parents. Parents are invited to family events throughout the week, such as craft mornings, toddler groups and breakfast times with their children. These occasions are appreciated and well attended. Leaders actively invite parents and the wider community to Mass and times of prayer in school. Governors are highly ambitious for the school. All new staff receive regular support and continued professional development from the diocese and the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

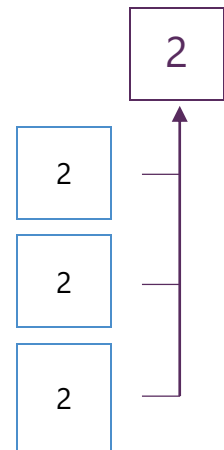
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils enter Holy Cross with little religious literacy. Early Years Foundation Stage provision positively instils in pupils an understanding of religious education which is built upon in Key Stages 1 and 2. Good progress is made as pupils move through the school. Pupils like their religious education lessons: they say that they, 'enjoy learning about Jesus' life'. They listen attentively and they are keen to ask questions. Pupils respond well and work collaboratively with talking partners or within small groups. Pupils share their thoughts with confidence: they are articulate and display a good understanding of scripture. They like to learn about other faiths. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is respectful and focussed. They enjoy undertaking tasks and are eager to be challenged. Coverage in each religious education topic is good and there is evidence of extended written tasks in workbooks. However, pupils are not regularly given an opportunity to work with independence when completing written work, which limits learning and achievement. Assessed pieces illustrate that pupils retain what they have been taught. Pupils show pride in their work, which is reflected in the consistently good level of presentation across the school.

Teachers plan lessons well and follow an agreed structure to lessons. Lessons begin prayerfully; teachers use 'flashback' revision questions before sharing a learning challenge. Knowledge organisers contain key vocabulary and explanations, which aid pupils' understanding. Tasks are clearly outlined and opportunities to reflect, wonder and respond are incorporated into the lesson structure. Where teaching is strongest, teachers demonstrate in-depth subject knowledge and use appropriate pitch and pace to allow for good outcomes, leading to better pupil engagement. 'I can' statements and 'driver words' are introduced in each lesson. These are used well in feedback to pupils and to assess successful outcomes. Feedback takes place in line with the school's policy. Teachers take time to explore pupils' answers and, in stronger lessons, tease out more fulsome answers using careful questioning and encouragement to make links, thus extending thinking. Pupil effort is celebrated

through frequent praise, helping to motivate pupils to do their best. The 'Come and See' programme of study is followed with fidelity. References to the bishop's theme of 'encounter' enhance the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Teaching assistants work well with pupils, supporting them to participate in lessons and encouraging them through scaffolded support.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils and want them to achieve more. Their aspirations are high. The religious education subject leader has worked hard to establish a clear protocol for the structure and delivery of lessons. Opportunities to discuss progress and expectations are in place. Although there is a structured timetable for monitoring, this is not rigorous enough and therefore opportunities are missed to make a significant impact on teaching and learning. Leaders have worked tirelessly to raise standards, which have seen a marked increase since the last inspection and are now securely good. Standards are not yet outstanding because there is not a consistency of high expectation across the whole school. Moderation takes place both internally and externally, involving the diocese and the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. The governor with responsibility for religious education meets regularly with the subject leader to review pupils' work and consider outcomes. Although progress from low starting points is good, leaders and governors rightly identify that raising attainment and improving outcomes in religious education is a school focus. Training for staff is provided, including through diocesan courses. The religious education leader allocates time to give verbal guidance and advice to staff, who confirm that they feel well supported in their work.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

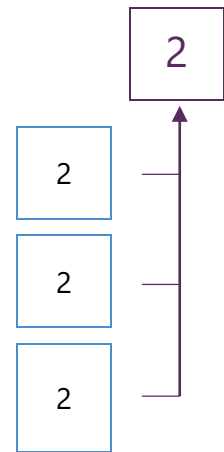
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school’s collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



Pupils are engaged, participating with enthusiasm and reverence during all times of prayer and liturgy. They sing joyfully alongside the choir in whole school liturgical gatherings. Pupils enjoy being part of celebrations of the word and are eager to be selected to be part of the preparation and delivery. The chaplaincy team has been developed under the guidance of the lay chaplain, who meets weekly to oversee and support pupils as they develop their skills. Pupils invite peers to prayer times both indoors and outdoors using the chapel and the newly established outdoor sacred space. A common planning format for class-based celebrations of the word is in place, followed under adult guidance. The ‘LetUsPray2gether’ boxes have been introduced as a key planning tool and pupils are becoming more confident in using this resource to shape celebrations of the word. Whilst pupil-led celebration of the word is becoming increasingly embedded, pupils express an eagerness to take on greater independence in planning and leading these times, as they have the knowledge and understanding to do so.

There is a daily pattern of prayer throughout the week, allowing pupils to pause and spend time together in focussed reflection. The liturgical year is followed with reference to the diocesan ordo, ensuring that scripture is carefully chosen to reflect the liturgical season. As a result, teachers ensure that pupils have an awareness of the religious seasons and are able to make links to current ‘virtues to live by’, choosing and making links to relevant hymns and formulating spontaneous prayer which enhances worship. The introduction of ‘lectio divina’ and ‘visio divina’ helps pupils to pray together and discuss scripture, providing prayerful and reverent experiences. All classes use liturgical prayer books which capture previous liturgical celebrations and include pupil evaluation. Each classroom has its own prayer focus area space which reflects the liturgical year. A common planning format for celebrations of the word has been established. Although staff are beginning to give pupils some autonomy and increased ownership when leading times of prayer, members of staff still tend to take

the lead. This prevents pupils from gaining greater independence in planning and directing celebrations of the word. Mass is celebrated throughout the year including feast days of the Church. The use of lighting and music helps to create a prayerful atmosphere. Careful planning has gone into creating space for prayer. Classrooms, the hall, the indoor chapel and the newly established outside sacred space are used effectively for prayerful gatherings.

Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that quality provision involves all pupils participating and taking more ownership of prayer and liturgy. Since the last inspection, much work has been undertaken by leaders to establish a clear planning structure for celebrating class and whole school celebrations of the word. Pupils have therefore been well prepared to take charge and lead, though they do not have many opportunities to do so independently. The school liturgical calendar and timetable is carefully planned. The school has invested in religious artefacts and liturgical cloths to create a focal point for celebrations of the word. Leaders and governors work closely with the local parish priests to ensure there are eucharistic celebrations on important feast days and significant times, such as Advent, Lent and the close of the school year. Staff have received professional development in relation to liturgical formation and they demonstrate knowledge and confidence. Self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy is conducted regularly, with teachers, governors and pupils all contributing. There is a collective vision and drive amongst leaders and governors towards ensuring that this aspect of school life becomes outstanding.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	146224
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8563425
Full postal address of the school	Stonesby Avenue, Leicester, LE2 6TY
School phone number	01162833135
Headteacher	Karen McVea
Chair of Local Governing Body	Hilari Chetwood
School Website	https://www.holycross.leicester.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	27 June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

The inspection team

Greg Hughes	Lead
Bernadette Nesbit	Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement