



## **Introduction**

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

## **Description of the school**

Holy Family School is a smaller than average Catholic primary school mainly serving the parish of Holy Family. It is situated in Boothstown and is part of the Wigan Local Authority. There are 185 learners on roll of whom 157 are baptised Catholics, 26 come from other Christian denominations and there are 2 pupils from other faith traditions. The catchment area is mixed. The number of learners eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 9 members of staff 8 of whom are Catholic. Seven teachers teach Religious Education 4 of whom have a Religious Education qualification.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

Holy Family is an outstanding school. It is a Christ centred, community where all “live together, work together, pray together”. A very strong Catholic ethos is certainly evident in the positive climate which has been created for work. Outstanding relationships continue to be developed by working closely with home, parish and the local and global community. The development of these relationships is, as ever, a priority for the school. All are valued, respected, cared for and affirmed. Standards are outstanding. Learners achieve well and make outstanding progress. Teaching is outstanding. Assessment is in place and is outstanding. The curriculum planning is outstanding and results in an outstanding delivery of the *Here I Am* programme. Learners’ behaviour is outstanding. The Religious Education programme, Collective Worship and the Catholic life of the school make an outstanding contribution to the learners’ spiritual and moral development. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. The headteacher and senior management team have a clear understanding of the school’s strengths, a vision of how to meet development needs and the enthusiasm to ensure these are met.

**Grade: 1**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

Following the last Inspection in March 2007 the school has taken effective steps to maintain and build on previously outstanding performance. Very close links have been further developed between school, home, parish and local and global communities through relationships, projects and ICT resources. Assessment has been further developed to support raised attainment and achievement. The Monitoring and Evaluation policy has been revised to further support the raising of standards.

**Grade: 1**

### **Capacity to improve**

The school’s self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive. The priorities for both the improvement of Religious Education and the Catholic Life of the school stem from the self-evaluation and the school development plan. The leadership has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed and is committed to improvement. There is outstanding capacity and eagerness for further improvement.

**Grade: 1**

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to implement the targets set out in the school self-evaluation document and development plan.

## **Achievement and standards**

Learners make outstanding progress in the school and by Year 6 meet or well exceed the expectations of the *Here I Am* programme. Standards in Religious Education are outstanding. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different gender. Learners with special needs make outstanding progress in Religious Education with the provision of differing tasks and the help provided by the teachers and learning support assistants. The school checks on the progress made by all through assessment. This work is very thorough and is outstanding. All learners' work is marked with very positive comments that affirm. Learners are very confident and articulate in discussion. They ask deep thoughtful questions which show good knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and a maturity beyond their years. Learners are given opportunities to record their knowledge and understanding and express their own thoughts and feelings in a variety of styles.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual development. The school celebrates achievements in lessons and assemblies. Children throughout the school are confident and obviously enjoy work. They have an outstanding understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and His Church and are able and happy to apply this to their own lives and experiences. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. They have a very good sense of right and wrong. They are very polite and courteous and obviously take great pride in their school. The Gospel values of love, respect, justice, and sharing underpin the provision for learners' moral development enabling learners to make an outstanding contribution to the school community. Teachers and learners show genuine care, concern and respect for each other. All are extremely polite and helpful. The overwhelming feeling in the school is one of happiness, love and care. All are obviously happy to be in the school and have a real passion for everything concerned with Holy Family.

**Grade: 1**

## **Quality of Provision for Religious Education**

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of provision for Religious Education is outstanding. Teaching is outstanding overall. All teachers are exceptionally secure in their knowledge and understanding of the *Here I Am* programme and its relevance to life. This is reflected in their thorough planning and confident delivery of the topics. All teachers are enthusiastic and energetic. *Here I Am* is extremely well used with imagination and enthusiasm and it is obvious that the teachers enjoy teaching the programme, that the pupils share this enjoyment and that all the work is firmly rooted in their lived experience. There are excellent questioning techniques which challenge the learners who respond enthusiastically as they share deep meaningful thoughts. The listening skills of the learners are obviously very well developed. There is some outstanding use made of

information communication technology particularly the Interactive White Board, and PowerPoint of children's own photographs. Outstanding use is also made of role play, talking partners, freeze framing, hot seating and group presentations of learning. Outstanding use is made of praise and affirmation. This encourages the children and enables them to remain motivated and to have confidence in themselves. Children's behaviour is outstanding in all lessons and relationships are warm and supportive. Learners are obviously valued in class and teachers have high expectations of them. They are listened to and treated with respect not just by the teachers and support staff but also by their peers. The children demonstrated great respect for each other's opinions and points of view. This has obviously been role modelled by the adults and has resulted in high levels of learners' self-confidence and self-esteem which impacts on their learning. The pupils enjoyed the activities provided and stayed on task because the tasks were creative, challenging, interesting and differentiated. They catered well for the wide spectrum of learning abilities at both ends of the spectrum in each class. Because of this approach the children are able to learn, make progress and also have fun. There is very good structure to all lessons, which, together with the diligence of the teachers and other adults, helps learners stay focussed. Monitoring of teaching and learning through observation of lessons, scrutiny of planning and learners' workbooks is in place and is very thorough and supportive. Outstanding use is made of support staff who promote positive relationships and encourage children to participate and stay on task. The learning objective is shared at the beginning of some lessons and when this happens it drives the whole lesson. This enables the sharp focus of the lesson to be adhered to. Learners' work is regularly assessed and records are effectively kept. This work is outstanding.

Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education in a variety of ways. Attractive newsletters are sent to the homes regularly outlining the religious topics to be covered and how families can become involved in the learning process. Parents are invited to attend Masses, assemblies and special celebrations and it is hoped to also invite them to acts of Collective Worship in classes. In addition the school also reports on progress in Religious Education. Parents obviously greatly appreciate what the school is doing as shown by the large number of hugely positive questionnaires which were returned. The school also maintains an attractive and user friendly website.

## **Grade: 1**

### **Curriculum**

The school is effective in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of learners. Through using the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese the school meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. A whole school approach is used and appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets national and diocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum

time approximately 10% is allocated to Religious Education, which is a requirement of the Bishops of England and Wales. Religious Education has a very high profile in the school. Strong links are made with home, parish and the local and global community. These links have been further developed since the last Inspection and their development continue to be a priority for the school. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding impact on learners' spiritual and moral development enabling them, above all, to be self-reflective.

**Grade: 1**

## **Leadership and Management**

### **Religious Education**

The leadership and management in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school which is shared by all and is reflected in the very positive relationships throughout the school. The Headteacher, Religious Education coordinator and senior management team are extremely enthusiastic and committed. They are making an outstanding contribution in leading and supporting staff. They are excellent role models and have a clear vision for the further development of the school. An outstanding handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Monitoring through scrutiny of planning, teaching and learning and workbooks is in place. This is very thorough and very supportive. Formal assessment is also in place and is outstanding. A great deal of time and effort has obviously gone into this work. Four of the staff teaching Religious Education have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. All staff are encouraged to obtain the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Teaching assistants are very effectively deployed. The subject leader attends coordinators' meetings and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is well funded and money has obviously been well spent. The Headteacher and Religious Education coordinator keep governors well informed on matters relating to Religious Education.

The Parish Priest, is very much involved in the life of the school. His presence and input are greatly appreciated by all, both staff and pupils. The introduction of termly reflections for staff has been particularly appreciated, as has been the Journey in Faith made with the parents of the First Communion Class. Governors are passionate about Holy Family and are keen to discharge their responsibilities effectively. They are very involved in the life of the school and their contribution is very much appreciated.

**Grade: 1**

## **Catholic Life of the School**

There is outstanding leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. Holy Family is a school in which Gospel values of cooperation, sharing and love permeate every aspect of its life and work. The learners are obviously valued, affirmed and respected. This helps them to be confident and happy. An outstanding Mission Statement, which expresses the philosophy of education in this Catholic school, is in place. The aims of the Mission Statement have practical objectives which show how the aims are to be achieved. All who form the school community have been involved in the development of the Mission Statement, which is at the heart of all that is done in the school. The Mission Statement is regularly reviewed. The learners have a statement which is more appropriate to their age and stage of development. "Live together, work together, pray together". This is displayed in all classes and is well known and understood.

**Grade: 1**

## **Collective Worship**

The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class or whole school gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. An outstanding policy and guidelines support the planning, delivery and nurturing of Collective Worship. Acts of worship are well planned with great attention to detail. Collective Worship included music/song to create an atmosphere which was still, calm and very conducive to reflection. There were outstanding focuses with lighted candles and appropriate artefacts in place. Great use was also made of ICT, pebbles in water and a booklet which children were encouraged to take home and share. A prayer card was also distributed to be shared with 'Buddies'. The themes chosen to celebrate were very much rooted in the children's own experience. Leadership of Collective Worship was outstanding, including the Year 6 pupils who led their buddies from Reception Class. Time given for reflection and imaginative prayer was particularly well used. A powerful and appropriate scripture reading was used to develop knowledge and understanding and to inspire further reflection. The learners present responded positively to the warm, affirming experience. Focus tables and displays in each classroom and throughout the school are colourful, attractive and well presented, expressing well the topic of *Change*. This enhances the delivery of the curriculum and Collective Worship. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the children.

**Grade: 1**

## **Community Cohesion**

The school's leadership and management in promoting community cohesion are outstanding. There is a shared vision and commitment to serve the

common good. Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. It is obvious that every person matters in this school. Close links have been forged with the local community where, above all, efforts are made to bridge the generation gap by inviting the older members of the community to various events in the school. Very strong links have been forged with the local Church of England school and the strength of this relationship is shown when both schools visit the local care home together to sing at Christmas. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the diversity of belief within the school. The use of the Religious Education programme, *Here I Am*, supports community cohesion. Learners have explored the beliefs and values of Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam. All show a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of CAFOD, Nugent Care, NSPCC, Marie Curie and those areas in our world suffering from natural disasters such as Haiti. Speakers have been invited into school from both Cafod and Nugent Care.

## **Grade 1**