



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LIVERPOOL

Inspection Date Wednesday 7th May 2014

Inspectors Miss Julie Lockett Mr Tony Ford

Unique Reference Number 104633

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3-11

Number on roll 133

Chair of Governors Mr James Doyle

Headteacher Mrs Helen Bannon

School address Fontenoy Street,
Liverpool
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Date of last inspection 1st December 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

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.

Information about this school

- Holy Cross Catholic Primary school is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Liverpool City Centre, serving the parish of St. Sylvester.
- There are 133 number of children on roll of whom 83 are baptised Catholic, 1 comes from an other Christian denomination, and 42 from other faith or religious traditions. Seven have no religious affiliation.
- There are 9 teachers of whom 6 teach Religious Education and 5 have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. Nine teachers are baptised Catholic.
- Since the last inspection there is a new headteacher in post and the Religious Education coordinator now has full responsibility of the subject. There is also a new Religious Education link governor.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Overall effectiveness:

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is a good school in providing Catholic Education.

Inspection Judgements

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

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is good.
- Pupils know and understand the school's Mission Statement and motto, '*Children are our future,*' and understand the part they play within it.
- Pupils are involved in its evaluation. They have produced valuable and well presented work surrounding their mission of, '*I am special and unique. All children are equal. All children are welcome at Holy Cross.*'
- Holy Cross is a truly inclusive school where pupils have a sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. Pupils of all beliefs and backgrounds are invited to share what makes them special and unique.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. They show responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- Pupils are involved in developing the Catholic character of the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school e.g. through the school council and recently formed school chaplaincy leaders group.
- Pupils show wider responsibilities through a variety of fundraising events. Funds are regularly raised for CAFOD, Missio and Nugent Care.
- Pupils are involved in service to their local community by being alert to their needs through sharing resources of food and clothing, donations and local fundraising efforts. They have shared their talents with the community in an annual choir event at the local town hall at the Holocaust Memorial.
- Pupils participate in parish masses with the local worshipping community and share key events in the liturgical year.
- Pupils benefit from participation in residential to Colomendy in Wales and there are regular educational visits. Due to the school's close proximity to the city centre of Liverpool, pupils are often invited and able to access many events, such as an Indian cultural exhibition for pupils and their parents.
- Pupils are invited to take part in transition links with the local high school. The school is keen to plan for retreat days to develop pupils' spiritual and moral guidance.
- Education for pastoral care and personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils and their families. Holy Cross has excellent pastoral support through 'Nugent Care School Support,' working closely with the Educational Psychologist, the headteacher and staff members for an invaluable network of support for many of its families.
- There are plans formulating for pupils to access an Education for Personal Relationships programme that will continue to support and develop their pastoral care.
- Holy Cross praises and acknowledges the contribution of others this is evident in their achievement and celebration assemblies. They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils' achievements and enjoyment in Religious Education is good.
- Their attainment in Religious Education is good.
- They make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are good.
- Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils increasingly attaining appropriate levels for their age and stage of development in each key stage.
- Pupils show good attainment for lower levels. There is some good evidence of pupils attaining higher levels and this can develop by continuing to raise expectations and challenge pupils in their work.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity.
- They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is good as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and behaviour. They are diligent and are keen to do their very best.
- Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively.
- Pupils are anxious to learn and improve their knowledge, understanding and skills as they become independent learners.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good.
- All pupils show interest, respond well and actively participate in Collective Worship.
- Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing.
- They are becoming familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures.
- Pupils sing joyfully and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- On the day of inspection pupils reflected on the fruits and the power of the Holy Spirit. Pupils gathered and listened to the Word with reverence. They responded and reflected with prayers and each child understood the message they were to go forth with.
- Pupils' response is particularly encouraged by the thoughtful and meaningful focus areas and the creative and well presented resources used, such as balloons and prayer cards.
- This good practice, in response to Scripture, will enable pupils to now further develop their deep thought, heartfelt response and silent reflection.
- Pupils respond well and are encouraged to develop their skills in preparing and leading worship in some year groups. This good practice will be further enhanced through the pupils' chaplaincy group, which at present is in its infancy. Once embedded, pupils in the group will have the opportunity to be role models when participating in worship and encourage their peers.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is good. On the day of inspection some of the lessons observed were outstanding.
- It is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make good progress.
- Teachers work hard to ensure there is consistency in behaviour and expectations of pupils.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge and deploy a range of teaching styles to motivate and inspire pupils.
- The curriculum is taught in innovative ways with a variety of activities to inspire and enthuse pupils. Display areas are thoughtfully presented and show quality resources.
- On the day of inspection teachers used a variety of teaching methods and resources such as talking partners, differentiated questioning and table top driver word cards.
- Teachers brought the theme of the Holy Spirit to life through many practical resources. Items such as fruits, super hero masks, lollipop sticks for questioning, ribbons, balloons and even popcorn enabled pupils to remember and enjoy their lessons. This is strength of the school.
- In the Foundation Stage teachers give pupils an inspiring start to their Religious Education. Formative and summative assessments are detailed and used to inform planning. There are well presented portfolios of pupils work and planning. Religious Education is promoting and developing many early skills.
- In an inspiring lesson observed, the youngest pupils were filled with awe and wonder. Pupils were shown how to express their feelings about the Holy Spirit through a variety of ways including soap bubbles and the sound of the wind which surprised children and captured their imaginations to gain understanding of the power of the Holy Spirit. This was revisited in the plenary and pupils took a gift of a bubble machine home to keep spreading the good news.
- Teaching Assistants throughout the school provide outstanding care and support to pupils. They are deployed effectively and show sensitivity to pupils needs. They ensure all pupils in their care reach their full potential.
- Some opportunities for ICT were used including power points, the use of I-pads and the interactive whiteboard maximised pupil learning.
- Effort and achievement at all stages of learning is celebrated.
- Planning is annotated and detailed with clear learning objectives and good evaluations.
- Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and plan differentiated tasks so that the work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding. When planning teachers differentiate using driver words to level an activity chosen.
- Driver words are used when teaching and this good practice can now be embedded across the school with driver words clearly displayed and used as part of a working wall to encourage and challenge pupil expectations further.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively.
- The school has good assessment strategies in place which provides detailed information on the achievement of all the pupils.
- Teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving and tackle underachievement. The school tracks the achievement of all the pupils.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is good.
- The curriculum is good in meeting pupils' needs.

- The school using the *Come and See* programme recommended by the Archdiocese meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. Appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets National and Archdiocesan requirements.
- Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales.
- Planning ensures full coverage of the Religious Education programme. Imaginative and well planned strategies are deployed to enrich pupils' learning.
- The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate.
- The curriculum is customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals.
- The curriculum is linked well with many areas of school life, such as music, drama and ICT.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation. For example, visitors are invited such as, *Ten Ten*, a Christian theatre group, to explore with pupils their actions, choices and consequences
- The subject leader ensures close links for PSHE with Religious Education through detailed mapping of topics throughout the year for all key stages.
- Fundraising for and visits from *Missio* to school develop pupils understanding of the wider and global need of Christian communities.
- Extra-curricular activities through a variety of after school clubs, such as choir, ICT, and Science all have a positive impact on the curriculum.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently. Judaism is taught each year and Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism are taught on a rolling programme. The school has provided trips to a synagogue and a mosque. Outside visitors of other religions and faiths would give further support and first hand experiences for pupils.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good. It reflects the Catholic character of the school.
- Holy Cross is an inclusive school. Pupils are invited to prayer, taking into account the variety of faith backgrounds among the pupils.
- Children are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles.
- Collective Worship has a high profile and is central to the life of the school.
- Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils.
- The school provides opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship. This good practice can be developed by introducing small and gradual steps for pupils to prepare and lead worship across the school in partnership with adults.
- The school has good portfolios of collective worship practice from across the school.
- There are many opportunities provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community. For example, there are regular end of topic *Rejoice* celebrations and whole school Advent and Easter liturgies.
- The parish priest supports and leads many liturgical events including regular class masses and works closely with the school for Advent and Lenten services.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers the local and wider faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the *Come and See* programme and the Church's liturgical year.

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

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- This is reflected in the school's current Mission Statement. All who form part of the school community including parents, clergy, governors and children were involved in the development of the Mission Statement. The Mission is a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness.
- There are plans for a full review of the schools' Mission Statement in the next academic year. This will enable the whole school community, particularly its new members, to create a distinctive mission for Holy Cross and produce clear aims and practical objectives to direct and guide all aspects of school life.
- The Self Evaluation Document is accurate and provides evidence of the schools monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. It provides a basis to celebrate strengths and outlines areas for development.
- Governors have full knowledge and understanding of the Catholic life of the school and fulfil their responsibilities. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school.
- Regular updates are received from the Headteacher regarding the Catholic life of the school.
- There are positive relationships at every level within the school.
- Leaders, governors and managers are proud of their inclusivity and '*diversity and cultural richness.*' All are welcomed into the school family with respect and love for one another.
- The Parish priest, who is part of the governing body, visits school regularly and celebrates with the school community for liturgical occasions, class masses and supports Religious Education topics. Working closely with the school he knows of the '*deep commitment the school has to the Catholic faith and the openness to all faiths, religions and cultures to overcome prejudice.*'
- There are excellent home, school, and parish links through the support for the *With You Always* Sacramental programme.
- Leaders, governors and managers work in partnership with local schools supporting one another and often sharing celebration masses together.
- Leaders, governors and managers use monitoring data well to evaluate the schools performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements.
- Opportunities are provided for the staff to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school. Staff regularly take part in *Come and See For Yourself* reflections prior to topics taught. In-service training has included a 'well-being' day where the school family and ethos of the school has been explored.
- The school provides valuable induction and regular in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it. A high proportion of staff members are studying for or have received their Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.
- The quality of Collective Worship is a priority for the school. It is effectively monitored and evaluated by leaders, governors and managers. An up to date policy is in place which would benefit from outlining graduated steps and expectations of pupils when planning and leading worship.
- Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school e.g. through regular newsletters, the school website and a variety of liturgical liturgies.

- Holy Cross works hard to ensure that parents are cared for and feel a part of the school family. The PTFA is becoming successful through events such as '*Planting Day*' where parents work together with pupils and staff to enhance the school environment. Parents regularly support the school through many fundraising events.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers are good in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- The subject leader is enthusiastic, positive and committed to ensure that all areas of Religious Education are improving and progressing. She introduces new initiatives when appropriate by encouraging staff and having high expectations.
- Training and updates provided by the Archdiocese are attended regularly. Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for staff. Communication with the headteacher, staff, parents and governors is effective.
- The new Religious Education link governor works closely with the subject leader to ensure governors are aware of standards and improvements made. In partnership with the subject leader she has been involved with monitoring and is aware of strengths and areas to be developed.
- Monitoring is timetabled and good practice is shared with appropriate feedback and support given as necessary. Monitoring data is used well to evaluate the schools performance. The impact of monitoring can now enable the school to plan for further future improvements.
- Good documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. Moderation is completed with staff members. Higher attainment levels can improve in detail and content by moderating with partner schools to gain a wider understanding and portfolio of expectations, particularly with the higher levels of attainment.
- Assessment information is collated and tracked by the subject leader and shared with the leadership team, governors and parents.
- Curriculum outlines are provided for parents who are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered.
- Formal written reports give priority to Religious Education and inform parents of their child's achievements.

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Develop the Catholic life of the school by:
 - enabling the whole school community to create a distinctive mission for Holy Cross and produce clear aims and practical objectives to direct and guide all aspects of school life.
- Raise expectations and standards in Religious Education by:
 - continuing to use driver words when teaching and use as part of a working wall to encourage and challenge pupil expectations further;
 - continuing to improve attainment by moderating alongside partner schools to widen understanding and expectations of higher levels of attainment.
- Continue to develop the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school by:
 - introducing small and gradual steps for pupils to prepare and lead worship across the school in partnership with adults;
 - outline the graduated steps and expectations of pupils when planning and leading worship in the Collective Worship policy.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	2
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, Grade 2 good, Grade 3 requires improvement and Grade 4 inadequate