



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LIVERPOOL

Tuesday 1st December 2009

Inspectors Rev Desmond Seddon Mrs Sheila Callaghan

URN 104633

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	102
Chair of Governors	Mr. James Doyle
School address	Fontenoy Street Liverpool, L3 2DU
Telephone number	0151 236 9505
E-mail address	holycross-ht@holycross-st-marys.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of last inspection	14 November 2002
Head teacher	Mrs Angela Holleran

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2006.

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 Cross is a smaller than average Catholic Primary School situated in the Liverpool City Centre. This is an area of high social and economic disadvantage. The majority of the children are drawn from local parishes. There are currently 102 children on roll of whom 91 are baptised Catholics. There are 9 children attending the school from other Christian denominations and 2 from Other Faith traditions. The majority of children come from a white British background. The proportion of children identified with social or emotional vulnerability, or as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. There are 6 teachers of whom 5 teach Religious Education. Five teachers are baptised Catholic and three have a Religious Education qualification. The Religious Education is managed by an effective team using the strengths of the Staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Overall effectiveness of the school

Holy Cross is an outstanding Catholic school. It is a most inclusive community, underpinned by an exceptionally strong Catholic ethos, which establishes a positive climate for work. This is a school where the well being of every child is of paramount importance to the dedicated and hard working staff. The gospel values of love, care and respect very evidently underpin every aspect of school life. As the Mission Statement states it is a community where 'all our children are equal and unique'. Excellent relationships exist at every level. All are made welcome and made to feel that they matter. The school works closely with home, the parish, and the wider community. Standards are good. Learners achieve well consistently and make good progress throughout the school. Overall, teaching is outstanding. Assessment provides clear guidance on learning. The curriculum is well planned. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The Collective Worship is good and contains many outstanding elements. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make a significant contribution to this development. The Religious Education subject leader, supported by the headteacher and Team are exemplary in the manner in which they direct and guide the school. They understand the areas where there is outstanding practice but are realistic in appreciating the hard work and effort that enables such high achievement and standards to be maintained and developed further. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the school has addressed the areas for development outlined and continued to identify areas for ongoing development. New information communication technology have been introduced which significantly enhances the delivery of Religious Education. Monitoring and assessment procedures have been introduced that inform and improve teaching and learning. Policies to support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship and nurture children's spiritual and moral development have been produced. Many new resources have been purchased. These significantly support teaching and learning. The Mission Statement was recently reviewed to ensure ownership by the whole school community. The school environment has been transformed both inside and out to create a stimulating and creative learning environment.

Grade 1

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is excellent. The judgements made in this document broadly match the judgements made in this report. The school and governors are aware of and greatly appreciate the outstanding work being undertaken and the inspirational leadership that directs and guides every aspect of school life. The school will update the self-evaluation regularly and this will continue to inform the improvement plan. Any minor areas for development identified in this report should now be included. The Religious Education Team supports and enables improvements to be implemented consistently across the school. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement as shown by the shared commitment to Religious Education and related whole school issues by all.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- The school should ensure the areas identified in its own self-evaluation document are addressed and recent initiatives are fully implemented.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school is below that expected. Learners make good progress in the school. Standards in Religious Education overall are good, with the majority of learners meeting the learning objectives and outcomes set, according to their age and stage of development. There is no significant difference in performance by learners of different gender. Learners with special needs make good progress in Religious Education with the help provided by excellent teaching assistants and some differentiation of tasks to meet their needs. The school checks on the progress made by all through assessment and positive and challenging marking. The children show confidence in discussion and feedback, showing a real knowledge and understanding of the subject and its relevance in their lives. They show enthusiasm and excitement for the subject and when undertaking their work. Standards will continue to rise and further progress be made by the ongoing use of the information gathered through the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning and scrutiny of the formal assessments made each term.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual and moral development. Children have a very good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus. Many creative strategies, including those using information communication technology are used to enable them apply this teaching to their own lives and experiences e.g. drama, role play, conscience alley. The work undertaken on *Other Faiths* has helped the children understand how others make sense of the world in which we live and also promotes tolerance and respect for those whose views differ from our own. Links with the parish

and local community are excellent. The behaviour of children throughout the school is outstanding. Children have a good sense of right and wrong. Innumerable strategies are in place to support the moral development of all. The school also provides outstanding opportunities for spiritual development. This is very evident in the care that has been shown in creating the whole learning environment appealing to all the senses. Beautiful displays, quiet areas for prayer and reflection and photographs provide evidence of this excellent practice. The children are enabled to make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of provision for Religious Education is outstanding. The learning needs of all children, including those with additional needs are addressed through the use of some creative and imaginative teaching and learning strategies, some differentiation of tasks and by excellent additional support provided by teaching assistants. Sharing outstanding practice through the monitoring process can enable teachers to share where this has been identified and will help the ongoing development of all. Teaching is enthusiastic and exciting, which helps learners engage with the material presented and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Some good use is being made of information communication technology. Well-prepared resources significantly enhanced the delivery of lessons. Teachers and support assistants provide a highly creative and stimulating environment which supports and challenges learners.

Very good planning and a good understanding of the Religious Education programme directs and guides all staff. The lessons observed had good pace and timing, which maintained the interest and concentration of learners and kept them on task and focussed. Work is provided that enables learners to work independently and collaboratively. All teachers need to ensure that learners understand the purpose of the lesson by sharing the learning objective at the start of the lesson. This is then re-visited during the plenary session. Learners' religious literacy is being enhanced by use of the key words for each topic. Assessment procedures have been recently introduced that show clearly which targets have been met. This is in the process of evolving and will inform future planning.

Parents benefit from being invited to school regularly for a variety of celebrations and assemblies. The school intends to develop this further.

Grade: 1

Curriculum

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding in meeting the needs and interests of learners. The school, using the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese, 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 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. Parents are consulted on different issues and are nearly all supportive of the school. Overall, the Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development. Teachers make the curriculum exciting and relevant through use of some stimulating resources and ensure a suitable learning environment is provided. The provision of a link governor for Religious Education is highly commended.

Grade: 1

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on raising standards even further. The Religious Education subject leader is supported by the Team who provide outstanding leadership and effective and efficient support to all staff. Their religious leadership shows enthusiasm, flair and commitment. Excellent documentation guides and directs all staff in their delivery of the subject. This also provides evidence of the quality of practice and achievement in Religious Education and associated whole school issues. Coordinators' meetings have been attended regularly and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. A rolling programme enabling all staff to attend Archdiocesan in-service has significantly supported them in their planning and delivery of the subject and deepened their understanding of the underlying theology. Performance in Religious Education has started to be monitored. The ongoing scrutiny of planning, workbooks and teaching and learning and effective use of the findings will enable greater consistency and raise standards even further.

Holy Cross is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Excellent support is given to those children with additional learning needs. Of the 5 staff teaching Religious Education 4 are Catholic. Three have a suitable qualification. Priorities for the subject are identified and targets set. Funding for Religious Education is outstanding. Resources have been purchased and are deployed

to achieve high standards. Use of 'human resources', visiting speakers and visits to *Other Faith* communities have been an excellent way of supporting Religious Education. The school is making some good use of interactive smart boards. This should continue to develop, in particular making use of the CD Rom for *The Church's Story* and *God's Story*. Excellent use is made of display and photographic evidence, which is annotated in portfolios and all around the school. The Religious Education Team keep the governors informed on matters relating to Religious Education. Governors discharge their responsibilities most effectively and use their own talents in many ways to enhance the life and work of the school.

Grade: 1

Catholic Life of the School

The leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement are outstanding. Holy Cross is a highly inclusive community in which the gospel spirit of love, consideration, care and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work. It is a place that enables every member of the community to be 'valued and encouraged to realise and exceed their potential'. Positive relationships are at the heart of every activity. An atmosphere of joy, tolerance and respect permeates the school. It is a community that believes and lives its mission. The school has a clear sense of its mission in reaching out to those less fortunate than itself. Learners support a variety of local, national and international charities both by becoming better informed and by raising funds and resources e.g. the shoebox appeal. The Mission Statement is displayed in places around the school. The school community is preparing to develop aims and objectives that direct and guide every aspect of school life.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of opportunities and experiences offered for Collective Worship are good. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. A policy that states the nature and purpose of Collective Worship has been produced. Guidelines that support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place have also been produced and included in this policy. A simple format for planning has been adopted. In one class children are using the planning template to plan Collective Worship. This needs to be supported by staff. Collective Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs.

A focus for worship is provided in each classroom using suitable religious objects and artefacts. These are simple but are of a good standard. Focus tables are used effectively for both Collective Worship and also during lessons. Children are encouraged to participate in a meaningful manner both in class and larger gatherings through prayer, poetry, song, dance mime etc.

This enriches their experience. Teachers ensure time is given to individual reflection and are helping them develop skills which enhance this. This is undertaken more effectively in smaller gatherings. Creativity is used to support learners' ongoing spiritual and moral development during acts of Collective Worship e.g. use of different types of prayer, music and symbol. Parents, governors and friends of the school community are invited to a variety of assemblies and services. This is greatly appreciated.

Grade: 2

Community Cohesion

The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. There is a shared vision and commitment to serve the common good. Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the diversity of belief within the school. The use of the Religious Education programme, *Here I Am* supports well community cohesion. Children have explored the beliefs and values of Other Faiths. Children have visited *Other Faith* traditions which enables children to deepen their knowledge and understanding of these communities. This also helps promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently. They show a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of many charities including CAFOD, Christian Aid, The Missionary Sisters of Charity (Seal Street Homeless Centre). The school has also developed links with both Secondary Catholic and Anglican High Schools – The local Anglican parish of St Nicholas have helped them refurbish the Rainbows room.

Grade: 1