



# Diocese of Westminster

---

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **Holy Family Catholic Primary School**

Wade's Place, Poplar, London E14 0DE

Telephone: 0207 987 3066

e-mail address: [office@holyfamily.towerhamlets.sch.uk](mailto:office@holyfamily.towerhamlets.sch.uk)

DfE Number: 2113667

URN Number: 100964

Headteacher: Ms E J Slack

Chair of Governors: Mrs T Parker

---

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

---

Date of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Date of previous inspection: 12 July 2006

Reporting Inspector: Mr D Scott

## **Description of School**

Holy Catholic Primary School is a one form entry primary school with a full-time Nursery situated in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets within the Diocese of Westminster. The majority of pupils come from the local parish of St Mary and St Joseph. Of the 235 pupils on roll, 78% are baptised Catholics. There are 12 teachers in the school of whom 67% are Catholic. Two teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is almost three times the national average at 50.0% (118 pupils). The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is almost three times the national average, at 62.5% (147 pupils). The largest groups are of White British and Black African heritages. A third of all pupils speak English as an additional language which is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements is 19.6% (46 pupils), which is average. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average.

### **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

Holy Family Catholic Primary is a good school with a strong Catholic ethos. It strives successfully to include each individual and to make every child feel valued in accord with its mission statement, 'We are followers of Jesus who show Love, Care and Respect for everyone. We meet every challenge by growing and learning together'. This can be seen in all aspects of its work. The headteacher, together with senior leaders promotes effectively high expectations for staff and pupils alike to ensure that all children have the very best opportunities for future success. There are very close links with the local parish and the school works well with parents and carers. Overall, from average starting points in Year 1, pupils make expected progress and their achievement is satisfactory. Attainment overall is average in religious education which is similar to the performance in English. Pupils progress is beginning to accelerate because they enjoy their work in religious education classes where teaching is satisfactory overall, but improving. Religious Education is well planned within the overall good curriculum. Prayer and worship underpin the Catholic life of the school so that pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Attitudes to learning are effective and pupils really appreciate the school's warm family atmosphere. As the Parish Priest commented, 'When children from Holy Family attend Mass they engage well with the liturgy and their behaviour is really good'. Pupils have a mature appreciation of the Church's mission at home and abroad through their support for a number of good causes, including for national charities and overseas projects such as supporting victims of the Japanese earthquake. The school is well led by the headteacher, senior team and governors who are dedicated to nurturing and developing this Catholic community. As a group of pupils commented, 'Holy Family is a religious, friendly and caring school where everybody shares their gifts with each other'.

**Grade 2**

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

Holy Family Primary has made good progress since the last inspection in addressing the areas for improvement. Regular scrutiny of the pupils' work has ensured that at each Key Stage, pupils' work is recorded regularly, through end of topic assessments. There is a regular cycle of monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice with a whole school focus on assessment

practice. Other positive developments also include the improvement in the quality of Collective Worship throughout the school by embedding carefully chosen themes and combining them with resources from the SEAL programme.

**Grade 2**

### **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop**

The school has demonstrated its good capacity to improve further through its progress since the last inspection. The dedication of its predominantly Catholic staff, the commitment of its non-Catholic staff to support the school's ethos and the close links with the local parish all support its current drive for improvement. There is clear evidence of on-going efforts to raise and maintain the quality of teaching and to pursue strategies to widen even further the pupils' understanding of their position within the universal Catholic Church. Provision in religious education is reviewed regularly as part of the on-going self-evaluation. The school is confident to seek the views of its families and of the wider community in order to discover how best to share its talents both within the Catholic community. Nevertheless, it acknowledges that more needs to be done to formalise the process of monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship and the Catholic life of the school.

**Grade 2**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make, so that they are consistently good or better by:
  - asking more probing questions in lessons which give pupils opportunities that challenge, develop and explain their ideas fully, especially for the more able
  - setting and reviewing targets more systematically with pupils so they clearly understand how to improve
  - ensuring that lessons are active with an emphasis on pupils taking the lead in their learning in order to increase the pace and in turn accelerate progress
  - ensuring that tracking and monitoring information is analysed robustly by setting quantifiable measures against which to evaluate success.
- Distribute amongst leaders the responsibility for the formal monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship and the Catholic life of the school.

---

## **The Catholic Life of the School**

### **Leadership and Management**

Holy Family is well led and managed. The headteacher's quietly determined leadership of this Catholic community is ably supported by the senior leadership team, Parish Priest and members of the governing body. The head and deputy headteacher complement each other well and actively promote a shared sense of commitment to promote the Catholic identity of the school that extends beyond classrooms to link with homes and the parish. The Parish Priest regularly celebrates Mass for staff, pupils, parents and carers and is involved in other whole-school liturgies. Regular monitoring and honest and accurate self-evaluation underpin the school's improvement since the last inspection. Members of the governing body visit the school regularly and have a clear and accurate understanding of the impact of its provision for the advancement of this Catholic community. It knows the strengths and areas for improvement well, for example the refining of the school's assessment procedures in religious education. Close contact with the parish helps the school to keep in touch with families within the community, including those

that have experienced challenging histories and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

**Grade 2**

### **The Prayer Life of the School**

Prayer and worship are at the centre of school life. The Church's liturgical cycle is well integrated into its daily work. The provision for prayer life, liturgy and collective worship is good. Pupils were able to recite the school's mission statement, which provides a unifying moment at the end of the assembly. Formal and informal daily prayer was observed in classrooms. Pupils participate fully in assemblies through reading, singing and music. The prayer tables in each classroom reflect the colours of the season and are an increasingly positive focus for pupils to recall the theme of the week. The whole school assembly theme of 'Confidence in God's love' allowed children to listen and meditate on what it means to believe in themselves. The school environment is increasingly enhanced by art work and other religious artefacts, including Our Lady's statue in the front corridor. A calm and peaceful ethos permeates throughout the school and is reflected in the pupils' good behaviour and consideration for others. As a group of pupils commented, 'Religious education is a time when we reflect, calm down and focus on Jesus'. Parents and carers have attended a prayer group in order to develop strategies to support their children when they pray.

**Grade 2**

### **How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?**

The school is good in its promotion of community cohesion. It works very effectively to ensure that there is a welcoming community atmosphere, where pupils' respect for those less privileged than themselves is clearly evident in the high levels of personal commitment to working together for the common good. Fund-raising activities support a number of pupil nominated charities including, St Joseph's hospice and St Francis' playgroup where pupils raise money through their Lenten alms-giving. At Christmas they entertain the senior citizens by singing carols at Aspen Court – a residential home. Close links have been forged with St Matthias' centre which has enabled the children to gain a better appreciation of what it is like to grow old in the community. Pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds, difficulties and challenges are able to integrate successfully which fully supports the school's philosophy on inclusion. Pupils are encouraged to gain a global perspective as part of their spiritual journey. For example, faith leaders from other traditions have been invited to speak at assemblies on such festivals as EID. All pupils are taught to respect other faiths and cultures and study the teachings of Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. This has enabled pupils to gain a greater understanding and tolerance of cultural differences. The school has developed a successful overseas partnership with a school in Zambia.

**Grade 2**

---

## **Religious Education**

### **Achievement and Standards in Religious Education**

The achievement in religious education is satisfactory. Most learners make expected progress given their prior attainment. There is an improving trend at Key Stage 2 with results broadly comparable to those in English. The 2011 test results showed a marked improvement on the previous year's performance. However, the school acknowledges that the achievement of more able pupils is an area for improvement. In discussion, pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of

Catholic faith but also of some of the traditions of other major religions. Pupils' written work is well presented and pupils of all age groups and abilities engage well in learning. Key vocabulary is well promoted. Progression in understanding aspects of the Mass and traditional Catholic prayers is effective because of the carefully constructed curriculum. Pupils, at their own levels, know the pattern of the liturgical year, are familiar with the scriptures, and are clear as to what is expected of a Catholic community. Pupils with special educational needs and / or disabilities achieve as well as their peers, because of the one-to-one support they receive.

**Grade 3**

### **Teaching and learning in Religious Education**

Pupils are positive in their attitudes towards religious education and they behave appropriately in class. As a group of pupils commented, 'Teachers are very nice, kind and generous and always help you to improve'. Overall the quality of teaching and learning in religious education is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Teachers often have a good grasp of subject knowledge and of current issues, but some activities observed in lessons lacked challenge. A characteristic of some lessons was an over-reliance on teacher-led activities, where pupils tended to be passive learners, and as a result, their pace of learning slowed. A focus on developing opportunities for independent learning and assessment for learning is to be encouraged to support and accelerate pupil progress. While the quality of assessment has improved since the last inspection, learners were not always aware of their own level and the next steps needed to make significant progress. There is scope for more tailored resources that help pupils engage with their learning at the appropriate level and the school has put in place additional training for teaching assistants to support pupils more effectively in the classroom.

**Grade 3**

### **Quality of the Curriculum**

The religious education curriculum is good as it provides a systematic study of God, the life and teaching of Jesus and the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold and the relationship between faith and life. The time allocated to Religious Education meets diocesan requirements and in addition, is supplemented daily by the way prayer permeates the school in class and assemblies. Schemes of work follow the 'Here I Am' programme which ensures appropriate progression through the year groups. Work is generally well matched to pupils' earlier learning and contributes very effectively to promoting their Catholic faith. All pupils are taught to respect other faiths and cultures and study the teachings of Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. They also visit places of worship such as St Paul's Cathedral, Hindu temple and the local mosque. The curriculum also supports pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They express this through the way they look after each other and through their thoughtfulness for those less fortunate than themselves, for example for the local hospice.

**Grade 2**

### **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

The leadership and management of the subject are good, and are improving steadily under the positive leadership of the deputy headteacher. Following a period of considerable staffing instability the school is fully staffed with experienced religious education teachers. Progress has already been made in making structural changes to the curriculum that will ensure improvements in standards and achievement. In addition, improvements have been made in assessment practice. Staff are supported well with appropriate resources and curriculum

materials. A shared sense of mission among the staff has been established between those teaching religious education. Teaching and learning are monitored increasingly effectively and there are clear priorities for improvement, which drive the school development plan.

**Grade 2**