

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**  
SPIRITUALITY, FORMATION & EDUCATION SERVICE



**Section 48 Inspection Report**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE  
SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION**

---

<b>School:</b>	Holy Cross RC Primary School
<b>Address:</b>	Coniston Road Howdon Wallsend NE28 OEP
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	0191 2007357
<b>Email address:</b>	holycross.primary@northtyneside.gov.uk
<b>School URN:</b>	108623
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mrs Angela Burns
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mr Nigel Huscroft
<b>Inspector:</b>	Mrs Christine Lynch
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	5 and 6 July 2011

This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham, the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese, (c.f. Code Canon Law, 804, 806), and for the Governing Body of the school (Education Act 2005, Section 48). The inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

The inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Holy Cross Primary School is an above average sized school situated in Wallsend in an area of socio-economic disadvantage, where most of its pupils live. It serves the parish of Our Lady and St Aidan's. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, whilst the number with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of pupils are baptised Catholics. However a large proportion are from other Christian denominations or of no religious affiliation.

## **FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: 255

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 62%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 21%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0.3%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 16.7%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 7.5%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 30%

### **Staffing**

Number of full time teachers: 9

Number of part time teachers: 5

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 87%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 26%

### **Percentage of learning time given to RE:**

FS	10%	Yr 4	10%
Yr 1	10%	Yr 5	10%
Yr 2	10%	Yr 6	10%
Yr 3	10%		

### **Parishes served by the school:**

Our Lady & St Aidan's, Wallsend

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**How effective the school is in providing Catholic education**

2

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

2

### MAIN FINDINGS

Holy Cross is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. It is led by a strong, dedicated headteacher and senior staff who share the vision to develop the Catholic life of the school by promoting dignity, respect and equality for all. This is reflected in the Mission Statement which is acknowledged by everyone involved in the school every day through prayer. Positive relationships are a key strength of the school and everyone feels that they have a voice. Parents say they are very happy with the school's Catholic ethos and believe their children benefit from a good Catholic education. The school's capacity to improve is good due to the determination of the leaders and managers to succeed. All priorities since the last inspection have been addressed successfully.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very positive about their learning in Religious Education lessons. All groups of pupils make good progress especially when compared to their low starting points on entry to school. Standards are improving year on year and are presently average at the end of both Key Stages. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities given to develop the Catholic life of the school. They take on the role of prayer leaders in their classes each day and Key Stage 2 pupils have their own prayer journals. They are becoming more confident in preparing and leading acts of collective worship.

The school's provision for Catholic education is good. Teaching and learning is good and all pupils make good progress. Assessment, monitoring and tracking are well established and are being used well to ensure progression and improvement. The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils and is reviewed regularly. It is focussed on providing opportunities for pupils to improve and on raising standards. Collective worship is good and pupils enjoy the responsibility of preparing and leading liturgies and assemblies.

Leaders and managers work well together and are highly effective in developing the Catholic life of the school. They have systems in place to promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school. These systems provide information and data which is analysed thoroughly and in turn drives the improvement of provision and standards. Religious education is recognised as a core subject in all aspects of school planning. The governing body are well informed and totally committed to supporting the school and as a result make a good contribution. The development of partnerships is outstanding and the promotion of community cohesion is good.

### What the school needs to do to improve further

- raise standards in Religious Education by ensuring;
  - consistency in the quality of teacher's planning to include appropriate differentiated tasks which enable all pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment
  - a consistent approach to quality marking and feedback so that pupils know how to improve

## PUPILS

### **How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups**

2

The majority of pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons. They achieve well and progress and learning are good. Pupils behave very well in their religious lessons and take an active part in the tasks provided. Pupils generally want to do their best work because of the enthusiasm and encouragement from their teachers. From below average starting points on entry to school the majority of pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the support and intervention provided. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is average, although the number of pupils achieving Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 and Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2 has declined over the last 3 years due to the more rigorous assessment. Pupils are eager to learn and are able to speak confidently about what they are taught and how this impacts on their lives.

Pupils contribute well to the Catholic life of the school and they gain much from it. The vast majority of pupils are eager to take on responsibilities around school for the benefit of other pupils. Pupils are reflective and enquiring during their lessons and ask searching questions. Pupils are very interested in finding out about their own religion as well as that of others. They know and understand major celebrations in the liturgical year and speak confidently about them. They have a strong sense of caring for those less fortunate than themselves and see it an important responsibility to fundraise and pray. Pupils see forgiveness as an important aspect of their school. They see the headteacher and their teachers as the main drivers of the ethos of their school.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good. They are eager to prepare and lead acts of worship. They have very good role models in the staff. The pupils act with reverence and respect during liturgies and assemblies and they are confident and at ease talking about their beliefs and those of others. They understand the importance of prayer and how it affects and influences their everyday life. Resources are rich and varied and used effectively during acts of worship. Pupils are becoming skilled in using scripture for collective worship and Year 6 pupils are now training Year 5 pupils to take over the responsibility of preparing and leading liturgies and assemblies. Collective worship contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

## PROVISION

2

### How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

Teaching and learning in Religious Education is good overall. Nearly all of the teaching is effective in ensuring pupils are interested in their learning and are making progress. Teachers have a good subject knowledge which inspires and challenges pupils to ask questions and reflect on their learning which enables them to make good progress. They generally plan lessons well; however, planning does not always include enough appropriate differentiated tasks to enable all pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment. The school ensures all staff benefit from a well planned professional development programme. Teachers use resources effectively to engage pupils' interest and maximise learning opportunities. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are provided with positive oral and written feedback and this is being developed to ensure consistency across the school and to include information that will enable pupils to know how to further improve their work.

Assessment and academic guidance is good. The school has an accurate picture of how pupils are achieving through established assessment systems where pupils' achievement is tracked regularly. Leaders and managers use this information effectively to ensure improvement. The information enables teachers to set pupil targets and meet the needs of different groups of pupils. However, assessment procedures need to be further developed to ensure higher levels of attainment are achievable. The school is committed to raising standards in Religious Education.

The Religious Education curriculum meets the needs of most of the pupils and prepares them very well for the next stage of their lives. The curriculum reflects and responds to local, national and international issues and pupils are able to make links between what they are taught and how it impacts on their lives. Pupils are confident to speak about what they see as right and wrong and they have a strong sense of equality and fairness. The curriculum and the enrichment activities provide many opportunities for the pupils' spiritual and moral development. The curriculum meets all of the statutory requirements.

The quality of collective worship throughout the school is good and it ensures that the spiritual needs of the pupils are met. Prayer is central to the life of the school and pupils speak confidently about the opportunities for prayer each day. Worship is given a high priority in the school and is well resourced. Staff regularly review and plan for collective worship and are focussed on giving pupils more opportunities to prepare and lead prayer. Parents are actively encouraged to attend masses, liturgies and assemblies. The school acknowledges and recognises different religious beliefs and treats everyone with dignity and respect.

## LEADERS AND MANAGERS

### **How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School**

The leadership and management team are outstanding in promoting the Catholic life of the school and they are deeply committed and driven to promote the Church's mission in every aspect of school and parish life. The headteacher and staff provide excellent role models for the pupils. Staff training and awareness ensures a strong commitment to the Catholic mission. There is explicit evidence that the Catholic mission of the school and the pupils' spiritual and moral development are seen as priorities for the school. The school's Catholic mission lies at the heart of all school development planning. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the school's mission and are actively engaged in developing its purpose and promoting its success.

The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is excellent. Leaders and managers ensure that monitoring, assessment and tracking systems are in place and are having a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. The monitoring accurately informs areas of strength and contributes positively to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. The headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator are focused on raising standards and improving teaching and learning. Leaders carry out a range of systematic monitoring activities to evaluate the provision and outcomes for pupils. These lead to actions being identified by the school to accurately plan the next step for improvement.

The work of the governing body is good and governors provide effective challenge and support regarding the Catholic life of the school. They are committed to the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas to develop. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively. Their relationships with staff are constructive and governors show an eagerness and determination to ensure the school moves forward and that any areas for development are tackled effectively. The governors have a good understanding of their roles and they are well informed by visiting school frequently. Every governor has a link with a subject co-ordinator or a class to ensure continued support and evaluation.

Through the dynamic headteacher and senior staff the school has made some outstanding local and national partnerships. These partnerships have a positive impact on the pupils' learning and understanding and they make an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of all pupils. Pupils benefit immensely from strong links with local primary and secondary schools as well as being involved with a local old people's home. Leaders and managers seek out opportunities to develop partnerships that provide experiences for the pupils that the school would not be able to provide alone. The development of these partnerships and opportunities are a strength of the school.

Leaders and managers promote community cohesion effectively. There is a strong sense of belonging around the whole school. Leaders and managers positively promote their shared vision through respect for all and by celebrating differences. They value diversity and equal opportunities for all. The school Mission Statement permeates every aspect of school life where pupils are taught to respect difference and diversity and are given opportunities to work with pupils from different backgrounds. Leaders ensure that pupils have a global awareness and this is promoted well. Collective worship is truly inclusive and religious diversity is recognised, respected and celebrated. The relationships amongst pupils are positive and this contributes significantly to the ethos of the school.

## SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 **Outstanding**      Grade 2      **Good**      Grade 3      **Satisfactory**      Grade 4      **Unsatisfactory**

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The school's capacity for sustained improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</b>	<b>2</b>
• how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	<b>2</b>
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	<b>2</b>
❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education	<b>3</b>
• the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	<b>2</b>
• how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship	<b>2</b>
<b>How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education</b>	
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	<b>2</b>
• the quality of collective worship provided by the school	<b>2</b>
<b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School</b>	<b>1</b>
• how well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils	<b>1</b>
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	<b>1</b>
• the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met	<b>2</b>
• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being	<b>1</b>
• how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	<b>2</b>