

# St Cross Catholic Primary School

Upper Marsh Lane, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, EN11 8BN

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 27 April 2018



## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### A. Classroom religious education is good

- This school offers a creative religious education curriculum based on the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Pupils are engaged in their learning; art and music enhance curriculum provision.
- The subject leader effectively ensures that there is clear progression of the delivery of religious education across key stages.
- Pupils make good progress, enjoy religious education and are well behaved in lessons.
- Feedback is detailed and helps pupils understand what they need to do next to improve their outcomes.
- Leaders ensure that their judgements are validated by moderating externally as well as internally.
- Teaching is never less than good in this school ensuring pupils are engaged in lessons.
- Good feedback is provided for pupils and pupils use this to identify their next steps in learning.
- School leaders have provided an accurate evaluation of the strengths and areas for development.
- Governors' involvement and support is a strength of this school. Visits by the parish priest enhance the delivery of the religious education curriculum.

### Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- The more able pupils are not yet provided with challenges that allow them to apply a wide variety of skills.
- There are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to be involved in collaborative learning.

### B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The commitment of school leadership including the religious education leader ensure that pupils at St. Cross experience a Catholic life that is vibrant, engaging and dynamic.
- The school ensures that all pupils receive religious education for 10% of the curriculum, as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- It is evident to all who enter into this school that Christ is at the centre.
- Pupils confidently lead prayer and worship, grounded in the knowledge that they are learning from the legacy of the school's founders, the Sisters of Our Lady.
- Pupils are actively engaged in supporting those in need. They demonstrate an enthusiasm for fundraising as well as an acknowledgement that they are bearing witness to the Word.
- Pupils respond wholeheartedly to their call to serve and have a deep understanding of the theology underpinning their actions.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the contribution this school makes to the development of pupils' faith.
- There are excellent systems in place to support staff and also to induct new staff.
- The head, together with the subject leader and governors relentlessly drive the school in its pursuit of excellence, they do this with an energy enthusiasm that is evident to all who enter the building thereby ensuring that every visitor feels Christ's presence.

## A. Classroom Religious Education

### What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no recommended areas to improve from the last inspection. However the school noted from the report that there were some issues raised which would further drive improvement; specifically, that they should continue to ensure that objectives are linked to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD), feedback should be developmental and progress should be monitored closely to continue to ensure good outcomes from pupils in religious education. The school has achieved these objectives by ensuring that planning links to the RECD are in evidence at the beginning of every topic planned. Feedback in books is developmental and there is evidence that feedback improves outcomes for most pupils. The school has developed systems to track progress that are closely aligned with rigorous pupil progress evidence as well as moderation procedures that ensure data is robust.

### The content of classroom religious education is good

This school offers a creative religious education curriculum based on the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Pupils are engaged in their learning; art and music enhance curriculum delivery. School leadership has taken the decision that the leader for religious education, who is also leader for music is non-class based. The biggest benefit of this decision is on the effective induction of new members of staff as well as on coaching staff who are not Catholic in the requirements of the religious education curriculum. The music for liturgy is also enhanced and pupils sing a wide variety of Mass settings. The subject leader ensures the curriculum in the medium term is creative, linked to the RECD and shows progression across key stages. The result is that most pupils make good progress.

### Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Most pupils achieve well in this school in terms of their religious education. Feedback is detailed and helps pupils understand what they need to do next to improve their outcomes. Pupils are aware of their targets in religious education and value teachers' comments, they say it helps them improve their work and know what to do to further improve. More able pupils are not yet provided with enough opportunities for sustained pieces of writing and nor challenged with feedback that is more closely aligned with their ability. Pupils are well behaved and engaged in lessons which are thoroughly planned and well resourced. This impacts positively on the good progress made. Opportunities for collaborative working which provide learning experiences for research and peer to peer learning are not yet fully embraced so the deeper understanding which would enhance outcomes for all pupils and in particular the most able is not embedded. The school has developed a rigorous tracking system that ensures progress is measured accurately; this is used effectively alongside pupil progress meetings to target pupils and inform planning. The school moderates internally and externally to ensure levels of attainment are measured against appropriate benchmarks. Most pupils make good progress, their religious literacy is good and they are confident in their use of religious language.

### The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is consistently good and as a result most pupils make good progress. Lessons are creative and well planned. In a Year 3 lesson observed the pupils were working from an abstract painting of Pentecost that generated some good discussion that was linked to scripture. They were further challenged with questions that clearly related to the different abilities of the pupils. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils however, in general, there could be more opportunities to facilitate challenging learning outcomes for pupils. The subject knowledge of all teachers is a strength and this enables pupils to develop discussion away from planned topics to

make links that further aid understanding. Pupils are interested in the religious education lessons, in a Year 6 lesson on the Tyburn Martyrs the lesson was well researched and interesting for pupils. The teacher's strong subject knowledge linked the Reformation period to Pentecost as she explained how martyrs spoke out for their faith as the disciples did at Pentecost. Parents value the homework set in school and in the Reception class a display of last term's Lenten homework takes pride of place. It is clear to see that there are very good home-school links. Parents spoke highly of the school's approach to homework and consider the scripture links that consolidate learning at home to be of vital importance. A parent reported that her child requests that she reads the Bible with her at home as a result of work done in school. Pupils clearly value their religious education books and take pride in their work. Books are well cared for and each child is invited to personalise their books on the theme of the school's mission statement.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education**

**is good**

The subject leader works closely with the head teacher to develop the teaching of religious education in this school. Both leaders are totally committed to ensuring that pupils make good progress in religious education and this is recognised by the whole school community. Governors are heavily involved and reflective. Governors offer outstanding support to the school, a governor has devised the tracking system the school uses to monitor progress in religious education. There are excellent systems in place to support new staff; the subject leader's skills in both her knowledge of religious education and music ensure that staff are well informed, confident and creative in their approach. The parish priest visits each class termly and to further enhance the learning opportunities for pupils, a rigorous system has been established to ensure continuity of topic delivery. The parish priest's work is then evidenced in books so pupils clearly understand how his visits link with the work they are doing in lessons. This highly effective teaching strategy has very positive effects on the religious literacy of all pupils. A child in Year 1 was able to articulate the story of Pentecost in a manner that showed a deep understanding of the theology and another Year 1 child also contributed to explain how the Holy Spirit was living within.

### **What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?**

- The school should provide more challenge for more able pupils by providing them opportunities to apply a wide variety of skills.
- To provide more collaborative learning opportunities for all pupils.

## B. The Catholic life of the school

### What has improved since the last inspection?

The last report did not include any areas for development, however the school identified some key issues for future planning. An issue identified was to provide regular opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship and for pupils' ideas to contribute to the school's future worship plans.

To this effect the school has been successful. A peace garden created to coincide with the 80th Anniversary Jubilee celebrations in 2014 is testament to the vision of the whole school community working together. The place of the Sisters of Our Lady who founded the school, is at the forefront. A display depicting the school's history takes pride of place in the entrance hall and a stained glass window in the peace garden is a reminder for all pupils of the school's very rich history. Pupils are currently designing a mural based on their mission statement and while this is a work in progress, the school is ensuring that pupils play an important role in its development.

### The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

**is outstanding**

The school ensures that all pupils receive religious education for 10% of the curriculum. Religious education is at the heart of this school. Leaders, staff and pupils live out their mission and this is evident to all who enter the building. Parents say that this is a welcoming school; it reflects Catholic values and strongly supports their children in the development of their faith. Parents stated that they would highly recommend this school. Governors are actively involved in promoting religious education, they continue to invest heavily in religious education.

### The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community

**is outstanding**

This is a school community rooted in prayer, a community who acknowledge the work of their founders and ensure that their valuable contribution remains alive for pupils attending St. Cross today. The head teacher's assembly was purposeful in the introduction of 'Adoremus' for pupils. This was used in the first instance to highlight the group of pupils making their First Holy Communion as their photographs will form part of the monstrance display. Pupil chaplains plan to lead the rosary in the courtyard during the month of May and each year group was gifted a rosary belonging to one of the founding sisters to use during May, ensuring that pupils clearly understand the links between past and present as they grow in their faith. Pupils demonstrate confidence to lead child initiated prayer. In Year 1 pupils proceeded reverently from their religious education lesson to their child initiated prayer using the flames with which they had been working. They then led prayer using scripture effectively and confidently. Pupils have opportunities to pray in the peace garden and have been taught traditional prayer, the Examen, Lectio Divina, they use reflective prayer in liturgies and in an assembly observed. There is a culture of evaluation of worship as evidenced in work seen in a Year 1 class.

### The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice –

**is outstanding**

Pupils in this school clearly understand the theology underpinning their actions. They demonstrated this exceptionally well during a discussion about how they are called to serve. Pupils are actively engaged in supporting those in need and pupils decide for whom to fundraise. Year 5 pupils explained that they had held a tea party and chose to contribute to Turn 2 Us charity as a direct result of their work this half term on the "option for the poor" theme of Catholic Social Teaching. Pupils also recently had a cake sale to raise funds for the Catholic Children's Society and they also

raise funds for a variety of other charities including Cafod, NSPCC, driven by their involvement with Love In Action, a Caritas project.

**The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf**

**is outstanding**

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the contribution this school makes to the development of pupils' faith. Parents value this school and would highly recommend it to others. They feel part of a community of Christ and there is a recognition of the dedication of the school leaders to develop pupils as ambassadors of Christ, equipped with the knowledge they need to go on to the next stage of their education. The work of the parish priest has not gone unnoticed in this community and they appreciate the time he gives to the school. Parishioners are invited to the school on special occasions such as harvest festival and the crowning of Mary.

**The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school**

**is outstanding**

This school is fully committed to Christ's mission in education. This can be seen throughout, a member of staff who works as a lunchtime supervisor has created beautiful display with the children based on the school's mission. The barn used at lunchtimes is a hive of activity with the school site manager encouraging music and dance and the lunchtime supervisor working with pupils to create the new mural. This setting, beside the peace garden where pupils reflect in front of a cross hewn out of stone and where the pebbles reflect past pupils under the stained glass of the founders, illustrates the dedication of leaders to ensure that Christ is at the centre of all that is done in school. This is outstanding leadership, creatively involving everyone to experience the richness of Catholic living. Governors have a thorough knowledge of the school and have robust systems in place to ensure that they are kept well informed of progress. The head, together with the subject leader and governors relentlessly drive the school in its pursuit of excellence, they do this with an energy enthusiasm that is evident to all who enter the building thereby ensuring that every visitor feels Christ's presence.

**What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?**

- To ensure pupils use the wide variety of prayers taught in their child initiated liturgies.

## Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Hoddesdon.
- The school serves the parishes of St. Augustine's Hoddesdon.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 75%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 13 % and from other faiths is 1%. The remaining pupils (11%) are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 38 %.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 2.
- There are 6% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 2 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is below average.
- There is below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 22 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (11 %).

<b>Department for Education Number</b>	91903408
<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117483
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 -11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	209
<b>The appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Cate Company
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kathryn Hall
<b>Telephone number</b>	019920467309
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stcross.herts.sch.uk">www.stcross.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@stcross.herts.sch.uk">admin@stcross.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 December 2012
<b>Grades from previous inspection:</b>	
<b>Classroom religious education</b>	Good
<b>The Catholic life of the school</b>	Very Good

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 14 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 1 assembly and 2 acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

## Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

## Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Ms Evelyn Ward

Mr Daniel Keane

Ms Katie O'Sullivan

Lead Inspector

Associate Inspector

Associate Inspector

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Vaughan House  
46 Francis Street,  
London  
SW1P 1QN

T: 020 7798 9005

E: [education@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:education@rcdow.org.uk)

W: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education>