

Catholic Diocese of Northampton



Inspection Report of Denominational Character and Religious Education

(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

Holy Family Catholic Primary School High Street, Langley, SL3 8NF

DCSF School No: 871/5202
URN: 110090

Headteacher: Mrs Anne O'Connor
Chair of Governors: Mr Kieran McKeown

Reporting Inspector: Mrs Marion Betts

Date of Inspection: 18th November 2008

Date of previous Inspection: 17th May 2004

The School is in the Trusteeship of the Diocese and in partnership with
Slough Local Authority

Description of the School

Holy Family school is a two form entry primary school for pupils aged 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils on roll is 480, 80% of whom are baptised Catholic. The majority of pupils are from the parish of Holy Family, Langley but the school also draws pupils from the wider area of Slough and from Datchet, Iver and Wexham. The majority of pupils are White British, although about a third, which is well above average, come from a very wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Many pupils speak English as an additional language with 22 different first languages represented in the school. However a very small proportion of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is low when compared nationally. The number of pupils who require extra learning support is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

Holy Family School is a good school with many outstanding features. It has a strong Catholic ethos with dedicated leadership from the headteacher, leadership team and governors who are instrumental in effectively maintaining and developing the school's Catholic identity. Relationships and respect between all staff and pupils are very good and demonstrate the school's Catholic ethos. The pupils' pastoral care is a strength of the school. One pupil explained "We feel really happy and safe here". The Eucharist, worship and prayer are central in the school's life. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and this is reflected in their behaviour and attitudes. Pupils are proud of their school and feel valued, respected and listened to. The school's provision for religious education is good. The school is committed to promoting the high profile of this subject. Pupils make steady progress throughout their school life.

Improvements since last inspection

Grade 2

The school has improved well since the last inspection. Areas for development were related to developing monitoring procedures; improving lesson planning including the use of support staff; communicating religious education topics to parents; and developing liturgy and worship. The school has made good responses to these areas. Monitoring of pupils' books takes place regularly. Lessons are now thoroughly planned and more creative teaching has led to investigative and critical skills being promoted. Support staff are used extremely well to support individual pupils or groups. Parents receive information about religious education topics and how they can support this learning at home. They are also invited to a religious education information meeting which gives a deeper insight into their child's learning. Improvements in liturgy and worship have been outstanding.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

Grade 2

The self evaluation of the school is comprehensive and accurate and involves staff, governors and the views of pupils and parents. The headteacher has a good overall view of the school's strengths and development needs. Targets relating to the catholic life of the school are first priority in the school improvement plan. All staff are committed to the success of the school and the importance of its Catholic life and are willing to improve their skills through training opportunities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop assessment further so that the information gained informs future planning and developmental marking, and is used to set pupil targets and track pupil progress.
- Continue to develop monitoring of religious education to include lessons and devise monitoring procedures for class prayer, liturgy and worship.

Leadership and Management

Grade 1

The headteacher, leadership team and religious education team provide clear direction for promoting the Catholic life of the school with a strong focus on its spiritual and pastoral role to all members of the school community. The mission statement is known and understood by pupils, staff and parents who strive to “Try to make the world a better place” and this can be seen in action in the school’s daily life and activities. Attractive high standard displays around school celebrate pupils’ work and confirm the Catholic identity. Governors are very supportive and actively involved in the work of the school. Relationships within the whole school community are very good. Pupils display respect and sensitivity towards each other and to adults. Older children support younger ones in extra curricular and playtime activities. Pupils value the friendly, caring attitude of the teachers who give them time, listen to them and encourage their learning. Leadership promotes pupils’ spiritual and moral development very well. Pupils appreciate the very good range of interesting activities on offer. Parents are extremely supportive of the school.

The prayer life of the School

Grade 1

Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school community. There is a good range of worship opportunities including prayerful reflection times as well as the contribution of pupils’ own intentions. Pupils write prayers either as part of their religious education learning or to use in their acts of worship. Pupils recognise the importance of prayer in their everyday lives. They are involved in leading acts of worship and the school plans to involve them more with the planning of these. During worship drama, scripture and visual presentations are used effectively to engage learners’ interest and develop their thinking. High quality singing and well chosen music enhances the worship. Worship and liturgies are well planned. Pupils are very respectful during prayer and enjoy these experiences. Worship makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. The very attractively arranged prayer tables effectively provide a focus for quiet thought and reflection. School Masses and non eucharistic liturgies are held regularly and parents and parishioners invited. The priest and parish worker make a significant contribution to the prayer and sacramental life of the school. The school has very strong links with the local parish.

Chaplaincy

Grade 1

Chaplaincy provision makes a powerful and creative contribution to the life of the whole community. The team members have varied and different roles and include a teaching assistant who meets parents daily; teachers who have contact with every child and can facilitate time for individual listening and support; staff who manage religious education and the prayer and liturgical life of the school as well as the leadership team. All class teachers are aware of their chaplaincy role. This structure ensures that the full range of chaplaincy provision is available to pupils, staff and families. The chaplaincy role effectively involves pastoral, moral and spiritual provision. Regular exchanges of information ensure that communications are very good. Chaplaincy is highly valued by the whole community and permeates every aspect of school life.

Community Cohesion

Grade 1

The school is a welcoming inclusive community where all members are valued. Pupils are given opportunities to collaborate with others from different faith backgrounds through sporting and curriculum events. They effectively live out the mission statement and show compassion for others by giving to local, national and global charities. Gifts are given to local needy families and the school supports three children in Pattaya, Thailand. The school has very good links with other local schools and staff willingly share their expertise. Pupils are taught to respect other world religions. Links with schools of other faiths are being made. Provision for spiritual development within worship effectively provides opportunities for pupils to link the theme with their own experiences. Pupils invite the parishioners to share celebrations. School facilities are available for parents and parishioners such as the computer suite. The school has been used as a Mass centre for the local Catholic community. Plans to further develop community cohesion are in the school development plan. Parents are kept well informed about what is happening in school. The school effectively facilitates links for families with others of the same cultural heritage.

Achievements and Standards in Religious Education

Grade 2

Pupils are gaining religious literacy at a good rate throughout their school life. Most achieve age appropriate levels of attainment and some exceed this. They are able to apply this learning to their own lives and experience. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The pupils explained that "religious education is very important - we try to do our very best work". Pupils recognise the importance of faith in their lives. The religious education work evidences a good coverage of the curriculum with a variety of written activities including Scripture work. It is well presented. Most pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when doing practical activities such as drama and when they can discuss their opinions and ideas. The pupils behave well and readily offer contributions and thoughts. Pupils' views are taken into consideration through the school council and regular questionnaires. Their achievements are recognised and valued.

Quality of Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

Grade 2

The quality of religious education lessons is good and some outstanding aspects were observed. The teaching styles are age appropriate and encourage active pupil participation. The learning intentions of the lessons are made explicit to pupils. Teachers effectively use visual material and real life scenarios to motivate pupils in their learning. Open questioning is used well to stimulate and interest the pupils. Talking together is effectively used so that pupils gain confidence in their own ideas. Pupils of all abilities make good progress with their learning by extra support given or by challenging extension tasks. The activities planned consolidated and developed pupils' thinking. Assessments are made and compared with national attainment levels. These are not yet used to track pupil achievement or inform future planning. Teachers' marking demonstrates praise and suggests improvement strategies. Opportunities for pupils to make these improvements are sometimes given.

Quality of the Religious Education curriculum

Grade 2

The quality of the curriculum is good, and suitable for the age and abilities of the learners. It fulfils the requirement of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following the "Here I Am" programme with extra learning linked to the liturgical year. Pupils are encouraged to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Religious education is creatively linked to information and communication technology (ICT). Other curriculum areas are also used to stimulate learning such as drama, literacy, poetry, art, craft and personal,

social education (PSHCE). The parish priest, parish worker and the church are used as extra resources for learning. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Attractive religious education displays throughout the school give added value to this core subject.

Leadership and Management in Religious Education

Grade 2

The religious education team, with strong support from the headteacher gives a high profile to this subject and its contribution to the school's educational mission of the Church. They work together well demarking areas of responsibility so that all aspects of the role are covered well. They have devised effective action plans for the subject. Teachers are supported and guided well and regular staff training takes place. Experienced staff demonstrate lessons and jointly plan with less experienced teachers. The governors are regularly informed of religious education developments. Plans have been made to extend the monitoring of this subject. Equality of opportunity is promoted very well and the school is sensitive to anti-discriminatory practices. Several teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification. The religious education budget is in line with the funding of other core subjects. The provision of religious education resources is excellent.