



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Holy Cross Catholic Voluntary Academy

Leen Mills Lane, Hucknall, Nottingham, NG15 8BZ

School URN:	138812
Inspection Date:	26 March 2018
Inspectors:	Mrs Patricia Hurd and Mrs Ann Glynn Jones

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Good	2
	This Inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Holy Cross Catholic Voluntary Academy is an outstanding Catholic school.

- Holy Cross Catholic Voluntary Academy is a vibrant, caring school community whose mission and motto 'Loved, Valued, Challenged' is reflected in every aspect of school life. The school's forward thinking and relevance to modern society is evidenced by its creative use of technology to enhance participation in the Catholic Life of the school.
- Holy Cross is a warm, Catholic environment where pupils feel safe and happy. They are encouraged to grow in their faith and to develop understanding of their place in the community. Parents highly value the school's ethos and feel that pupils are well supported.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. Worship is central to the life of the school and is highly valued by all stakeholders. Pupils are engaged and enthusiastic, showing reverence and a depth of thought. Staff are skilled in supporting pupils to plan and lead prayer, which they undertake with relish. Acts of Worship are carefully planned to incorporate a range of elements to sustain interest, spiritual growth and a sense of belonging to the whole community.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and good learning is promoted by all. This area is not yet outstanding due to some inconsistencies in teaching and the quality of work within Religious Education workbooks. However, the school is well placed to tackle these development points and has a strong capacity for improvement.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is an average sized primary school. It is a converter academy, established in October 2012 and is a member of the Pax Christi Catholic Academy Trust made up of three other primary schools and one secondary school.
- It serves the parish of Holy Cross, Hucknall and is situated on the northern edge of the city of Nottingham. There are currently 219 pupils on roll of which 51% of the pupils are baptised Catholics. 48% of all pupils are baptised Christians from other denominations, 3% are from other faiths and 20% come from families with no religious affiliation.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the Pupil Premium (additional government funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the Catholic Life of the school by:
 - Developing the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme throughout the school to ensure it becomes fully embedded into the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Continuing to develop further links with the parish.
 - Developing the monitoring and evaluating systems already in place, so that the impact of actions taken to improve the liturgical life of the school is accurately assessed and systematically built upon.
 - Ensuring that the care and prayer group's ability to deliver liturgy is sustained and enhanced so that the chaplaincy group impacts on pupils in all year groups, including Key Stage 1.
- Improve the quality of learning in Religious Education by:
 - Increasing the level of challenge for the more able pupils with greater emphasis on open-ended tasks, higher order thinking and elements of risk taking to enhance independence and research skills during lessons.
 - Adopting a handwriting and presentation policy that is consistently applied across the school.
 - Exploring ways in which written tasks are more creative and less reliant on stuck in sheets and closed tasks.
 - Ensuring the monitoring and evaluating systems identify accurate actions that are followed up by senior staff.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	1
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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- Pupils value the Catholic ethos of the school. They know the mission and motto ‘Loved, Valued, Challenged’, which is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church.
- Ways to live out the mission are very evident across the school and the local community. The school links the motto to awards for pupils and this ensures that it contributes to life in school.
- The high level of pupil engagement in various charity works and events in the parish is celebrated on the liturgical wheel display in the hall.
- Pupils recognise the many opportunities they have to develop personally and spiritually. They are keen to support and serve others through activities such as fundraising for Cafod, Mission Together, Macmillan Cancer, acts of random kindness, and involvement in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the school.
- The school is bright and welcoming. The high standard of religious based displays throughout the school sends a clear message about the importance of its Catholic identity.
- Pupils are respectful of other faiths and understand that to be Catholic means to reach out and respect all others.
- Pupils’ behaviour in and out of class is excellent. Pupils are proactive in ensuring that the schools mission is central to the life of the school. Pupils are welcoming, showing a high level of respect to everyone in the school community.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- All staff live out the mission and motto 'Loved, Valued, Challenged' in the thought and care they show to the pupils, to one another, to the community and to visitors to the school. The staff, governors and parish priest provide strong role models for the pupils. The parish priest has been instrumental in working closely with the school to develop all aspects of the school and improve links with the parish which is an ongoing area for development.
- Leaders and managers have worked alongside staff to plan creatively and carefully for improvement, ensuring that Catholic Life continues to thrive and develop. This has ensured that staff are well placed to support initiatives to enable pupils to explore their place in the world and their own vocations. Older children are encouraged to nurture those younger than themselves and there are structures in place to build and develop pupils' confidence.
- There is a great sense of community within the school. Parents and carers feel welcomed and involved: 'This is a caring family environment', 'the school is very approachable', 'teachers are passionate that my child can succeed', were typical of the comments made by parents.
- The way in which the school works in partnership with parents reflect the staff's understanding of their mission statement and ethos. A senior leader explained, 'When we review a policy we do so through the lens of Catholic Life.'
- The Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme, recently introduced reflects the teachings of the Catholic school. This together with the 'Statements to Live By' and the 'Come and See' programme provides personal, social and health provision that has the potential, once embedded, to be highly effective. Leaders need to develop the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme throughout the school to ensure it becomes fully embedded into the curriculum.
- The schools Website and VSP video links are exemplary practice of the application of modern technology to enhance the Catholic Life. As well as a teaching aid, they are used to enable parents and members of the community unable to attend, access to Collective Worship events that take place in the school. It also provides information to parents about the learning developed through 'Come and See'.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – outstanding

- The headteacher provides a strong lead in ensuring the catholicity of the school is given the highest priority. Governors are robust in holding the school to account for its Catholic Life. The parish priest is a strong presence in the school and his support is valued by pupils, staff and governors alike.
- The school leadership team keep abreast of and act upon the bishop's directives and the diocesan advisors guidance putting policy into practice. They work closely within a very supportive MAT (Pax Christi) where generating and sharing ideas for further development is appreciated by all and ensures strong support for all members.
- Senior leaders and managers consider the Catholic Life of the school a priority and are keen to ensure that the mission and motto 'Loved, Valued, Challenged' influences every aspect of school life and is lived out on a daily basis.

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- The headteacher and subject leader for Religious Education actively promote the governors and all stakeholders' role in improvement planning. The range of different ways of monitoring ensures that all viewpoints are heard and can initiate forward planning.
- Continuing Professional Development for Catholic life is given high priority. The subject leader is given the opportunity to attend all diocesan training. Teachers are encouraged to take the 'Bishop's Certificate for Teaching.' The headteacher is currently completing the Catholic Certificate for Religious Studies and shares his ideas from this within school.
- The headteacher and subject leader for Religious Education systematically record and analyse provision for the Catholic Life of the school, they use a range of strategies to ensure that all views are taken into account.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	1
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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship – outstanding

- Acts of Worship engage all pupils, who are inspired to participate fully and contribute thoughtfully during liturgies. They show reverence and respect: prayerful silence is observed; questions are answered and communal prayers are said with enthusiasm. Behaviour throughout Collective Worship is excellent, as one pupil said, ‘Collective Worship makes me feel included, I like making prayers.’
- Pupils have good knowledge of scripture. They make links, volunteering their understanding and insight with confidence. This was evidenced during whole school worship and in classrooms.
- Pupils value the prayer life of the school and the role they play in developing it. The ‘Prayer and Care Team’ are beginning to take ownership of leading Collective Worship and now need to continue to develop their skills to be more creative and spread their good practice to all year groups.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of religious seasons and feasts. The liturgical wheel displayed in the hall reminds the children about the importance of each season and highlights their involvement in it.
- Other faiths are respected and celebrated; Collective Worship makes a powerful contribution to all pupils’ spiritual and moral development.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- Holy Cross is a vibrant prayerful community, as a result Collective Worship is of consistently high quality. They follow the liturgical year of the Church and effectively link in special strategies. For example, pupils were able to explain how a 'Heart that Sees' influences their actions and enables them to reach out to others.
- Collective Worship is central to school life at Holy Cross. Staff pray together as a team; pupils pray in class, in key stage groups and within whole school gatherings according to a clear and detailed plan.
- Collective Worship is well resourced with good class resources, a variety of religious artefacts, beautiful school designed Stations of the Cross, and music resources such as John Burland.
- Recently the school has introduced weekly Mass, celebrated by the parish priest. Parents and parishioners are invited to attend and many parents spoke positively about this opportunity and the difference it has made to their own faith.
- School staff and the parish priest are skilled in helping their pupils to deliver quality worship experiences for the benefit of others as well as themselves.
- Photographic evidence from these times is recorded in books and on the liturgical wheel in the hall, reflecting the pride and high priority of Collective Worship in the eyes of the whole community. These records provide a glimpse into the heart of a school community which strives to continually update and revive its Collective Worship practices.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship – outstanding

- The school's leadership team has expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality experiences of Collective Worship. Senior leaders act as role models for other staff who now are all involved in planning Masses for the school community.
- The spiritual and liturgical development of staff is a high priority for all staff and they respond enthusiastically to these opportunities which impact on their developing expertise.
- The Religious Education link governor is a visible presence in the school attending and supporting events, giving and seeking views for the development of Collective Worship in the school. These findings are shared regularly with governors.
- The senior leadership team regularly seek the views of pupils, staff and parents/carers regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship in school and respond to these findings.
- Governors are aware that the school's approach to Collective Worship has a high priority and are keen to support this.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	2
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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – good

- Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons, showing good listening skills. They are keen to do well and are engaged and enthusiastic in their learning. Behaviour for learning is good and even at a young age, pupils remain on task.
- Pupils are encouraged to ‘wonder’ about elements introduced in the lesson and to share their ideas with the rest of the class. This results in good contributions from the pupils.
- For the past three years, attainment has been in line with diocesan averages with a small percentage above. The great majority of pupils are making consistently strong progress within lessons and over time.
- The recent introduction of coloured success criteria has supported pupils understanding of how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. This will become effective when it is consistently embedded across every class.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly skilled at leading worship, sometimes planning for these opportunities in lessons; they can talk about and use what they have learned. The range of resources in each classroom supported the pupils learning and independence.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements and express how much they enjoy using drama within Religious Education to further their understanding.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education – good

- The quality of teaching in Religious Education is mainly good with examples of outstanding teaching. Where teaching in Religious Education is good or better, it is effective in providing inspiration and independent learning activities for all groups of pupils, impacting on the great majority who make good progress.
- All teachers are conscientious in the thought and preparation they put into their Religious Education lessons. Some teachers manage time well and secure good learning in lessons, but this needs to be consistent across all classes.
- Now that some teachers have a good grasp of the basic structures and levels of expectations in Religious Education, they now need to explore ways in which written tasks are more challenging and less reliant on worksheets and closed tasks.
- Some teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, intervening when necessary so that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work, this needs to be consistent across both Key Stages.
- Teachers differentiate tasks well in order to meet the needs of pupil groups but the more able pupils could be further challenged
- Achievement and effort are often celebrated with the whole school community and this enhances the Catholic ethos of the school. As one pupil said, 'I was really happy when I was mentioned for my work'.

The extent to which leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – good

- Religious Education is given a high priority by the school and is treated as a core subject in the allocation of time and staff training. The school leaders ensure that all classes meet the episcopal requirement to devote at least 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education.
- The headteacher and subject leader for Religious Education have ensured that the staff attend diocesan training, this is followed up in school with a planned programme of staff meetings where Religious Education is the focus. Some staff have taken part in the 'The Bishop's Certificate' training over the last two years and this has impacted positively on teachers' subject knowledge.
- Planning is detailed, ensuring differentiation, assessment for learning and in some classes opportunities with thought given to the extension of pupils' understanding and knowledge. This extension of pupil knowledge needs to be consistent in all classes, so that more able pupils are effectively challenged.
- Leaders and managers provide a good support for staff to ensure that the assessment of pupils work in Religious Education is generally accurate and consistent. The headteacher and Religious Education subject leader have established robust tracking systems and use the data to analyse how groups are progressing. Leaders need to ensure the monitoring and evaluating systems for Religious Education identify accurate actions that are followed up by senior staff.
- Under the strong leadership of the headteacher and subject leader for Religious Education, staff share a common purpose to ensure that Religious Education has a prominent profile in the school and makes a positive contribution to the moral and spiritual development of all pupils.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	Holy Cross Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	138812
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the *evaluation schedule* for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed 7 Religious Education lessons and 1 Act of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the subject leader for Religious Education, two Pax Christi Trust governors, the parish priest and two other governors. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including reports of the governing body, action plans, the school development plan, monitoring forms, assessment information and parental response forms. Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' Religious Education books.

Chair of Governors:	Mrs L Edwards
Headteacher:	Mr Robert della Spina
Date of Previous School Inspection:	31 January 2013
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WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 12 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.

In addition to the information above, if any one aspect of the evaluation schedule is found to 'require improvement', the school will receive a monitoring visit within one year of the publication of the report.