

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, Slough, SL3 8NF

DFE School No: 871 5202
URN: 110090

Headteacher: Mrs Anne O'Connor
Chair of Governors: Mrs Doreen Donovan

Reporting Inspector: Mrs Marion Betts
Associate Inspector: Mrs Maureen Everington

Date of Inspection: 25th March 2014

Date of previous Inspection: 18th November 2008.

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

Information about the school

Holy Family is a two form entry school for pupils aged 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils on roll is 478, 97% of whom are baptised Catholic. Two thirds of teachers and 84% of support staff are Catholic. The majority of pupils are from the parish of Holy Family, Langley but the school also draws pupils from a wider area. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils who are of minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language.

Key grades for inspection

1. Outstanding 2. Good 3. Requires Improvement 4. Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

Holy Family school is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. The extremely strong Catholic identity permeates the school's daily life. The committed leadership of the headteacher is instrumental in inspiring a strong spiritual purpose which very effectively promotes the pupils' personal development and faith awareness. This is reflected in their good behaviour and positive attitudes. Pupils benefit exceedingly well from the work of the chaplaincy team which makes a powerful and creative contribution to the spiritual development and well being of pupils. Relationships within the school are good and reflect Christian love and concern for others. Pupils are proud of their school describing it as a place where 'everyone cares for each other'. Prayer and worship are of pivotal importance in the school's life. Staff are committed to the high profile given to religious education. Pupils make good progress throughout their time at school in knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 2

In the areas highlighted during the last inspection, the school has made good progress. Religious education (RE) assessments now take place after each topic and teachers assign levels linked to the national RE Levels of Attainment. This data will be used to inform future planning. There is evidence of good developmental marking which leads pupils to improve or extend their work but this practice is not yet totally consistent throughout all classes. Religious education is monitored well and feedback to teachers leads to improvements being made. Prayer, liturgy and worship are evaluated by the school's senior leadership.

The inspectors concur with the judgements made by the school. The headteacher has a good overall view of the school's strengths and development needs. The school's self-evaluation is comprehensive and accurate. Appropriate improvement actions are fed into the whole school development plan. The governors and the chaplaincy team evaluate their roles and plan well for future Catholic life developments.

The school communicates a clear vision for maintaining its ethos. The mission statement, which is regularly reviewed, is based on gospel values and trying "to make the world a better place". All pupils understand what this means for their actions and behaviour and strive to achieve all aspects of the vision. Future plans are based on a sound analysis of the views of staff, parents and pupils. Staff are willing to improve their RE teaching skills through training opportunities. The school's senior leadership, the RE subject leader, the governors and the chaplaincy team are all actively involved in maintaining and developing the Catholic ethos. They are very aware of the need to sustain the school's strong Catholic identity in the light of the future retirement of the present headteacher.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching by teachers adapting the RE programme plans in a more creative and imaginative way so that input and tasks fully engage and motivate pupils.
- Devise learning opportunities that challenge the more able pupils and encourage them to research independently to extend their learning.
- Continue the planned development of RE assessment so that pupils' progress can be tracked in more detail using sublevels and the data gained analysed to identify any groups of pupils underachieving.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 2

Pupils benefit very well from the school's Catholic ethos. They are proud of their school and can articulate how, what they are taught especially the eight gospel values, has an effect on their lives. They mentioned that they learn to forgive others. These values impact very effectively on pupils' personal, spiritual and moral development. Pupils willingly undertake responsibilities and are involved in a project to provide people access to clean water. They demonstrate an awareness of the needs of others undertaking fund-raising for local and global charities including supporting an orphanage in Thailand. Pupils praise the caring attitude of the teachers who listen to them, help to solve any problems and encourage their learning. Pupils' achievements are recognised, praised and valued. Their views and ideas are sought through the School Council and through regular questionnaires. A recent questionnaire sought pupils' views of the impact of their spiritual life.

All pupils respond well to worship and the prayer life of the school. They participate respectfully and with ease. Pupils create their own prayers and participate well in reflections linked to RE learning. Pupils enjoy worship especially the songs, which they sing extremely well, and when they have opportunities to listen to or present class assemblies. They are encouraged to apply the message to their own lives and experiences. This was evidenced when the younger children at the Stations of the Cross were helped to link the picture to their future actions and decisions. Worship contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and its celebrations. They contribute to the presentation of Mass. At the weekly voluntary prayer sessions where pupils pray their own intentions, attendance is high.

Pupils value highly the work of the chaplaincy team and respond enthusiastically to the liturgical and pastoral experiences provided. Pupils are aware how to access any help if they have a problem. They are certain of a positive response. The individual needs of children are well-catered for by experienced staff who commit wholeheartedly to their responsibilities. All staff understand their pastoral and spiritual role and contribute effectively to the well-being and spiritual development of pupils. The new roles of the chaplaincy team have been explained to parents as part of an RE information evening.

Pupils know RE is an important subject and through it develop a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith. They achieve age appropriate RE levels of attainment and progress is in line with expectations. Most pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when given practical tasks to extend learning such as role play and devising an Easter garden. They work well together. RE books are well presented and evidence a good variety of written work and a full coverage of the curriculum. Pupils demonstrate a growing depth and maturity of thought as shown by one child's reflection after work connected to Holy Week who said that because of all Jesus did for us, we should do as much as we can for Him.

Leaders and Managers

Grade 2

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are deeply committed to promoting the school's Catholic life. The mission statement is clearly communicated and inspires all in the school community. A broad range of Catholic enrichment activities are provided for pupils. Their spiritual and moral development and general well-being is of high priority to the school as shown by the outstanding chaplaincy support. Very attractive displays confirm the Catholic identity. Particularly striking is the high quality of the Stations of Cross display created by staff and pupils. Governors provide effective challenge to the school leaders. They are very supportive and kept well informed about the work of the school. The school leadership has conducted a range of monitoring activities related to the school's religious life and this provides a firm basis for areas of development. The school works in partnership with parents who responded very positively to the diocesan questionnaire with 95% agreeing or strongly agreeing with all statements. Parents particularly mentioned the approachability of staff and the school's family atmosphere. The school has very strong links with the church through the close involvement of the parish priest, parish worker and many parishioners.

The religious education subject leader and the school leadership ensure this subject is regarded as important. Teachers have undertaken training linked to the new RE scheme. The RE subject leader provides firm support and guidance to staff. All aspects of religious education teaching and learning are monitored regularly by both the leader and the RE link governor and a clear direction for improvement has been set. RE assessment is planned to be further developed, through using electronic tracking and by more work to verify judgements. Moderation of pupil assessments is undertaken within school and through collaboration with the local pastoral partnership. Parents and governors are invited to RE lessons to see the new programme being taught. The budget provided is in line with that given to other core subjects. Religious education is well resourced and every class has an attractive RE display.

Provision

Grade 2

Worship and prayer are integral to the school's life. Worship uses visual presentations and drama well to develop pupils' thinking. During the headteacher's assembly, pupils were fully engaged. They were encouraged to think more deeply about saying yes to God and to have greater understanding of the Angelus. The pupils learn a variety of traditional prayers. Attractive classroom prayer tables are used well as a focus for worship. Chaplaincy provision is outstanding and provides very effective spiritual and pastoral support to staff and children. Pupils experience a richness of prayer and worship opportunities such as Ash Wednesday liturgies and Stations of the Cross devotions. They attend Mass regularly in the parish church and contribute to presenting the liturgy. The priest and parish worker make significant contributions to the school's spiritual life.

The quality of religious education lessons overall is good. Lessons are planned well with clear learning intentions. Where teaching is best teachers are enthusiastic with their delivery. Also visual presentations; lively pace; open questioning; talking partners; and practical outcomes, were all effectively used to motivate and interest pupils. Reflections at the start and end of the lesson are linked well to the learning. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils. Formal assessments are undertaken regularly and pupils are often advised as to how they might strive to attain the next level. Work is well marked with praise and affirmative comments given. The best marking encourages work improvement or extended learning and opportunities are given for pupils to make their response.

The quality of the curriculum is good, and suitable for the age and abilities of the learners. It fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following the "Come and See" programme with additional work linked to Saints and Big Questions. The Big Questions' activities very effectively challenge pupils to

provide their answers as they work together with another class of a different age. Scripture is used well during teaching. Pupils are encouraged to become aware of the demands of religious commitment. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Religious education is linked to other curriculum areas particularly to literacy, drama, and art. The curriculum raises pupils' awareness of other faiths. Sikhism has specifically been chosen as an informative link to the local community. Other Christian churches are used as extra resources for learning exemplified by the older pupils attending an Easter Workshop at the Free Church.

The inspectors wish to thank the headteacher, staff and children for their very warm welcome and for contributing to their very enjoyable and interesting visit.