



# Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

URN: 140726

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Diocesan Administrator of Plymouth

17–18 April 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

#### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

1

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

#### Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

## What the school does well

- The life and mission of the school are rooted in its Catholic nature and manifested through the quality of relationships within the school and the physical environment.
- The commitment of all members of the school community to welcoming everyone and showing respect for all is demonstrated through the school's culture of inclusion.
- Leadership in the school both generally and of religious education in particular is clearly focussed on ensuring the best outcomes for all pupils.
- Prayer is central to the life of the school.
- Personal, social, health and economic education is a strength of the school.

## What the school needs to improve

- Develop pupils' ability and understanding of how to improve their own work.
- Ensure subject knowledge is consistent amongst all staff leading to improvement outcomes for all pupils.
- Increase the composition and extend role of the chaplaincy team.

## Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

### Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

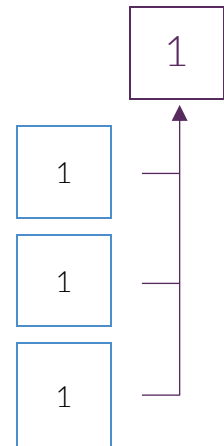
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**Provision**

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

**Leadership**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



All pupils within the school community are happy, confident young people who feel secure and know that their voices are heard and their views valued by staff. One pupil expressed this by saying, 'we trust the teachers and they trust us'. Pupils understand the distinctive nature of the school and can clearly articulate the need to 'be like Jesus' and care for others. The principles of Catholic Social Teaching are embedded in the life of the school and pupils refer to Pope Francis' teaching on the environment and the duty to respond to those in need. Through the various groups within the school, they are offered opportunities to be 'Agents of Change' to make a difference to the environment, the local community and the wider world. For example, the Eco Warriors group are planting trees and caring for the environment in a local park. With a maturity that belies their years they understand that everyone is created in the image of God and worthy of respect. They actively embrace difference and seek opportunities to learn from the different cultures and faiths within the school. Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. The work of the chaplaincy team is highly valued.

The mission statement is known and understood by the community and pupils regularly have opportunities to revisit the statement and say what it means to them. As a result, it is not only lived out within the school community but affects the wider community. One parent commenting, 'I am so lucky to have had all four of my children attend, and the older ones have grown into confident and responsible young adults, who challenge injustice in the world and stand up for what they believe. I firmly believe the school is behind these great attitudes.' The school goes the extra mile to support those in need, for example by running swap sheds in the playground where parents can access food, clothing or toys. The school embeds a culture of welcome, actively supporting those from other faiths or cultures and as a result all members of

the community feel a strong sense of belonging. The physical environment of the school reflects its Catholic nature and capitalises on the fact that part of it was a former church. Chaplaincy provision is a strength of the school and is clearly valued by pupils and staff. Personal, social, health and economic education is extremely well planned, meeting all statutory and diocesan requirements and as a result is highly valued by pupils.

Leaders and governors are passionate about the Catholic life and mission of the school, they are a source of inspiration and support for the whole community and as a result the implementation of the Catholic ethos is seen as a core responsibility by all staff. The school supports and contributes to diocesan initiatives and has a strong relationship with their local priest. The school has a link with a Holy Cross parish elsewhere in the diocese and parishioners actively support the school and provide resources for use in liturgy. The school curriculum is designed to reflect 'Big Questions' which are connected to Catholic social teaching. Through the various groups within the school and pupil voice activities, pupils contribute to the school's self-evaluation. Governors are extremely knowledgeable, highly focussed on the Catholic life of the school and in the light of their accurate self-evaluation constantly seek ways to improve the Catholic life. Mutually supportive relationships contribute to the well-being of staff and through staff training and induction programmes staff are encouraged and supported to develop their understanding of the nature of the school.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

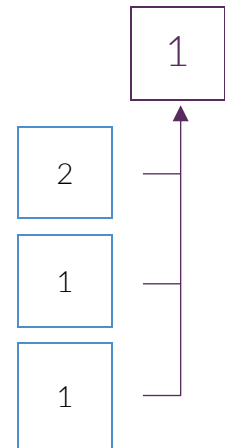
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**Provision**

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

**Leadership**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils are engaged in lessons and eager to learn and develop their understanding. They approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm as a result behaviour is always good. They are offered opportunities to work both individually and in groups and appreciate the tasks which enable them to express their work creatively. All Pupils, including disadvantaged and SEND pupils, are developing secure subject knowledge and make good progress however there is some inconsistency between parallel groups in terms of outcomes. Pupils are becoming increasingly religious literate with early years pupils for example confident in their use of key words. Pupils' ability to be analytical is demonstrated through their use of Art. In one class for example a pupil when sequencing picture of the scripture story 'The Walk to Emmaus' explained that this picture was the beginning of the story because the sky here was really dark and broody and reflected the disciples' sadness and uncertainty over the death of Jesus. Pupils have some understanding of how to improve their work and respond well to challenge questions, recognising that these are to help them give deeper answers and improve, however they are still dependant on staff and at times uncertain about the progress they are making. New systems introduced are beginning to have an impact but are not yet fully realised.

Teachers demonstrate a deep commitment to improving religious education by developing their own knowledge and fully embrace the opportunities provided by the school and the diocese to enhance their understanding. They have high expectations for the subject and communicate this effectively to pupils. Lessons are planned well and incorporate a variety of activities. The use of the 'Big Books' in class enables activities like discussions or drama to be recorded. They recap previous knowledge to ensure the pupils have a secure base in order to move forward. They are responsive to, and encourage the pupils to ask, questions. At the start of every unit key vocabulary and key learning are identified ensuring the pupils are confident in using key words.

Lessons are adapted towards the needs of pupils. For example, one pupil who could demonstrate orally a good understanding of the work was struggling to express this in written form. The use of an adult to support them by scribing their comments ensured they were able to demonstrate their knowledge and become more confident. Lessons are planned to reflect the connections between faith and life and allow time for reflection. One parent commented, 'The teaching of RE and Gospel Values are embedded in the children's learning and they are having a positive effect on my child and his moral compass'. Staff are also respectful of different faith and cultural perspectives.

Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring religious education is constantly developed and improved. It receives full parity with other curriculum areas and as a result is highly valued by staff. The school has supported the diocesan initiative to implement the new *Religious Education Directory* with the coordinator and a member of staff part of the early years working group. The subject leader has an inspiring vision for the subject and their expertise is willingly shared with staff who appreciate and value and benefit from, the depth of their knowledge. Together with the link governor for religious education they have a variety of techniques in place for self-evaluation including lesson observations, book looks, and pupil surveys. This forensic monitoring and analysis results in well targeted interventions and support aimed at improving outcomes for pupils. Through well thought out links with other organisations like Cafod the curriculum is enhanced and connections with other areas of school life are made. Opportunities for high quality professional development for staff are provided on a regular basis in order to both help them increase their subject knowledge and implement the new *Religious Education Directory*.

## Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1

Pupils are fully engaged in and by the prayer life of the school. They are attentive and respectful and sing enthusiastically and joyfully. They respond to questions asked during celebrations with thoughtful responses. They understand the Church's liturgical year, appreciate the use of colour and symbols and are able to say why these are important. The provision made by the school enables pupils to appreciate a wide variety of prayers and traditions including Stations of the Cross, May processions, and Advent traditions. Pupils work with others to prepare well-constructed experiences of prayer for other pupils. They use a format based on 'gather, listen to the Word, respond and mission' and chaplaincy team members in particular use this format in a very reflective way. They study the reading beforehand and are confident in asking other pupils if they have any questions and in their responses to the questions posed. They also evaluate the liturgy afterwards and suggest ways of improving. Members of the chaplaincy team explain that they see their role as 'serving others' and also actively seek ways to include pupils of other faiths in the prayer life of the school. Through prayer pupils are able to reflect on issues of the day and make links between this and their actions. One parent commenting for example that their child 'can relate the stories learnt at school to his own life and family celebrations e.g. Reminding us of the true meaning of Christmas on Christmas morning'

Prayer is central to the life of the school. There is a naturally embedded pattern of daily prayer that is appropriately differentiated to suit the needs and age of the pupils. The liturgical cycle of the Church's year is fully reflected in the activities that take place and pupils have opportunities to experience and lead traditional Catholic practices. Each week the Gospel for the Monday assembly mirrors the reading in church from the previous Sunday and throughout the week this reading is referred to and its meaning enhanced. Relevant staff are highly skilled in both leading prayer themselves and helping pupils plan and lead prayer. Part of the building was previously

a church and the school incorporate features of the church into its prayer spaces. Every class has a focal point, there is a chapel which is well used by pupils and a prayer garden for use when the weather permits. Members of staff contribute through their musical and artistic talents and one member of staff organises a weekly prayer group for staff. The priest from a nearby parish is a frequent visitor to the school and his contribution and support welcomed by staff and pupils.

The school has recently renewed its policy on prayer and worship in the light of the new *Liturgy Directory* making clear its expectations and helping staff and parents appreciate the nature of prayer. The school calendar is planned in advance to incorporate all relevant Holy Days, and special celebrations. The school celebrates Mass on a weekly basis and the calendar also informs parents when their child's class will be taking part. Opportunities for reconciliation are provided and pupils have responded in increasing numbers to these opportunities. The school also supports the parish First Communion programme. Leaders, including governors place the highest priority developing the understanding of all staff with regard to prayer and provide both training and resources to support this. Staff feel well supported and value the induction training they received. Leaders and governors are committed to constantly improving pupils' experience of prayer and worship through their monitoring and self-evaluation.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	140726
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8793761
Full postal address of the school	Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, 2 Beaumont Road, St Jude's, Plymouth, PL4 9BE
School phone number	01752225420
Headteacher	Finola Gill
Chair of Local Governing Body	Lisa Martin
School Website	<a href="http://www.holycross.plymouth.sch.uk/">http://www.holycross.plymouth.sch.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Plymouth Cast
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Ann Fowler

Anne Barrett

Lead

Team

## Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement