

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, Berkshire, SL3 8NF

DfES School No: 871/5202  
URN: 110090

Headteacher: Mrs Sara Benn  
Chair of Governors: Mrs Maura Appelbe

Reporting Inspector: Mrs Pamela Brannigan  
Associate Inspector: Mrs Margaret Shinkwin

**Date of Inspection: 03 July 2019**  
Date of Report Issue: 17 July 2019  
Last Inspection: March 2014

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

## Information about the school

Holy Family Catholic Primary School and Nursery is situated in Langley, Berkshire and is part of the diocese of Northampton. The school serves the parish of Holy Family, Langley with some pupils coming from nearby Slough. The school is two form entry with 454 pupils aged 3-11 on roll. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds with a number speaking English as an additional language. 92% of pupils are Catholics with the remainder coming from other Christian denominations, other faiths or none. 74% of the teachers are Catholics and four have the CCRS or similar qualification. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. The school has good links with other local Catholic and local authority schools. Since the last inspection in 2014 a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.

## Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding

2: Good

3: Requires improvement

4: Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

**Grade 1**

Holy Family is an outstanding Catholic school. Strong and effective leadership at all levels gives a clear sense of purpose and direction to the Catholic life of the school which is shared by all staff and governors. Prayer and collective worship are an integral part of the school's daily life and central to the spiritual and moral development of pupils who have a sense of belonging to a community where helping and supporting each other is part of their faith journey. Outcomes for pupils are very good. They have a good level of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and are rapidly acquiring skills to plan and prepare liturgies. Members of the senior leadership team offer excellent support to new teachers which has led to good levels of attainment and provision for all abilities and needs. Governors are well informed and provide effective challenge and support. Pupils say they enjoy school and appreciate the many opportunities given to be involved in its life. Parents' questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the Catholic life of the school and the good level of communication.

## The school's capacity for sustained improvement

**Grade 1**

The school has an excellent capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2014 identified areas for development linked to raising the quality of teaching, improving the level of challenge for abler pupils and developing assessment to enable pupils' progress to be tracked in greater detail. These areas have been well addressed and are constantly under review. There is evidence that senior leadership carefully analyse data and use it to support pupils and plan further improvement.

The school's lengthy self-evaluation documentation is accurate, detailed and includes evidence to support judgements. The religious education action plan identifies areas linked to Catholic life and collective worship which need further development. It includes the provision of a prayer corner in the playground built with the help of the school's faith ambassadors and the establishment of prayer partner links with another Catholic school. Home-school-parish links are given a high priority through invitations to assemblies and Masses, newsletters and the Wednesday Word.

The headteacher is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and shares her vision with the whole community. Along with senior leadership, subject leader and governors, she ensures the school's mission statement, 'Trying to make the world a better place through creating a learning environment based upon gospel values where all adults and children become better people,' is well known by pupils and regularly reviewed with all stakeholders. Pupils spoken to were able to apply it to aspects of their own lives in school and at home.

School leaders have an excellent capacity to maintain effectiveness and put in place further improvements. Along with the governing body they constantly review areas for development and implement appropriate actions. The parish priest and pastoral assistant from Holy Family visit regularly and contribute to the chaplaincy provision along with school staff.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to make cross curricular links between religious education and English to ensure all aspects of the curriculum are covered in depth.
- Review the music used in assemblies and Masses to include a wider range of hymns.

## **Catholic Life**

## **Grade 1**

At Holy Family, pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school to a very great extent. They have an excellent understanding of the mission statement which is included in prayers. They are given many opportunities to take on responsibilities to develop the Catholic character of the school through membership of the school council, as faith ambassadors and as buddies. Pupils spoken to have a strong sense of belonging to a Catholic community and feel responsible for caring for each other. They value the ethos of the school and the many opportunities they have to contribute to its Catholic life through service to the school and care for the environment. Pupils are given opportunities to help the wider community through raising money for charities. These have included Mission Together, CAFOD and Bags2School. Charities are often chosen by pupils who plan the activities and carry them out. Pupils visit a Baptist church as well as a synagogue and are developing links with a local Hindu school. They value the diverse backgrounds of their classmates and appreciate opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures.

Provision for the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The school's values underpin the behaviour of all members of the community. A wide range of assemblies and collective worship are part of the school's provision where key celebrations in the Church's liturgical year enable pupils to develop their faith journey. There is a daily prayer group run by faith ambassadors which is well attended. Pupils are given opportunities to understand global issues and the importance of recycling. They help to plan and prepare Masses which are school-based or at Holy Family parish. Pupils visit the church each term to learn about the sacraments and explore aspects of Catholic worship. All staff promote high standards of behaviour and are excellent role models for pupils. Pastoral care includes meeting the needs of staff as well as pupils and families. Safeguarding ensures all vulnerable pupils and families are cared for and weekly briefing meetings enable early identification of concerns. Parish links are excellent with regular visits from the parish priest and pastoral assistant who both help to prepare Masses and liturgies and act as additional teaching resources. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the Catholic life of the school. One parent wrote, 'Holy Family is a school which practises and promotes Christian values. Children are taught to love and respect one another; the teachers are very loving and supportive and really care about the pupils.'

Leaders and governors are most effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school. This is demonstrated by the way self-evaluation is explicitly focused on Catholic life and the aim to enhance current provision. Leaders monitor and evaluate provision and outcomes in order to plan future improvements. Continuous professional development is offered to all staff and is engaging, well planned and effective. The RE leader attends diocesan courses linked to the new religious education framework and assessment. She provides a model of good practice by demonstration lessons for teachers new to Catholic education and offers support in planning and assessment. She also uses 'pupil voice' questionnaires to gauge pupils' opinions of their religious education lessons and their understanding of spiritual and moral development. She is working with her successor to ensure a smooth transition as she leaves the school at the end of the term. Governors make a highly significant contribution to Catholic life by their commitment and involvement in school activities. They have a clear understanding of their role in promoting and monitoring the Catholic life of the school and their responsibility to the diocesan bishop. They regularly attend collective worship and whole school services and also discuss religious education at every full committee meeting.

## **Religious Education**

## **Grade 1**

Religious education at Holy Family is very good. There was observed some very impressive teaching, indicative of thorough preparation from teachers. Their lesson plans, energy, liveliness, dynamism and inspiration were praiseworthy, and children exhibited excellent responses and learning. Hence pupils achieve well and enjoy their lessons. They make good progress and behaviour for learning is excellent. Pupils are given a good foundation in Early Years which is built upon as they progress through the school. In lessons, pupils are actively engaged and keen to contribute to discussions often linked to ethical issues and the 'Big Question.' They have a good grasp of religious terminology appropriate to their ages. They enjoy a range of activities including art, drama, music and discussions and say they like religious education. They have an understanding of what it means to be a Christian as well as a knowledge of other faiths. Workbooks are well presented and show coverage of the curriculum and a range of activities. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards in religious education meet diocesan expectations.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in religious education is very good. Teachers have high expectations and adapt their teaching style to meet the needs of their classes. This ensures all pupils are fully engaged. Lessons observed during the inspections were at least good, and many had outstanding features. Tasks and support are differentiated to enable all pupils to achieve well. There are strong cross-curricular links particularly between English and religious education. This could be developed further to

ensure the content of the religious education curriculum is covered in greater depth, especially at the higher levels. Good quality resources including class sets of bibles are used effectively to engage interest and enable pupils to become familiar with scripture as well as engage in research. This enables them to understand the links between scripture and their own everyday lives. Marking and constructive oral feedback point the way to further improvement and lead to a high level of engagement. Teachers new to Catholic education are well supported and encouraged to undertake further training including the CCRS course. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support individuals and groups of pupils. The headteacher and subject leader have put in place the new age related standards in line with diocesan guidelines. The RE leader takes part in established termly moderation of pupils' work and is also engaged in developing moderation of pupils' work with neighbouring Catholic schools to ensure consistency in judgements.

School leaders and governors are strongly committed to religious education. They ensure the curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference with at least 10% of curriculum time devoted to the subject. The religious education curriculum is delivered through the 'Come and See' programme and is enhanced by the 'Journey in Love' scheme. The headteacher, along with senior leadership, ensures that religious education and the Catholic life of the school are central to self-evaluation. Religious education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects and includes provision for professional development and resourcing. The rigorous system for monitoring and evaluation is leading to very good outcomes for all pupils. The subject leader tracks the progress of each year group and presents an annual standards report to the full governing body. She has developed a system in line with Maths and English to track individuals and groups which enables underachievement to be quickly identified and addressed. Governors are aware of developments in religious education and how monitoring data is used for planning. They also observe religious education through learning walks, drop-ins and book looks.

### **Collective worship**

### **Grade 1**

Collective worship at Holy Family is outstanding. It occurs through the week and includes the Monday gospel assembly led by school leadership, class-based liturgies which include pupils' own prayers. On Fridays there are assemblies with music and singing. Each class leads an assembly once a year to which parents are invited; these are also held on Fridays. Each class has a prayer focus which reflects the Church's liturgical year. Pupils participate with respect and interest and play an active role in class prayer. At Mass pupils act as welcomers, altar servers, readers, compose prayers and sing. The Church's liturgical year is celebrated through whole school acts of worship to which parents are invited. Traditional devotions including Lectio Divina, the Rosary in May and October and the Stations of the Cross in Lent are familiar to pupils. Members of the faith ambassador group are taking increasing responsibility for the preparation of Masses and whole school celebrations. Pupils across the school welcome opportunities to plan and prepare liturgies. By the end of Key Stage 2 they can do this with minimal support from adults.

Collective worship at Holy Family is central to the life of the school and prayer is included in every celebration. It contributes to the spiritual and moral development of pupils to a very great extent. Staff have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year which is reflected in assemblies and in classroom display areas. They are confident in leading liturgies and key stage assemblies. A whole school assembly on Pope Francis' Exhortation, 'The Joy of Love' was led by the headteacher and emphasised the link with St Paul's Letter to the Corinthians. Responses during the assembly showed that pupils had a clear understanding of the relevance of scripture to their own lives. They were eager to contribute and showed interest and respect. They sang very well. Pupils are given opportunities to visit places of worship to enhance the understanding of their faith. These have included Tyburn Convent and the Bernadine Sisters in Stroud. Services of Reconciliation are part of collective worship during Advent and Lent. Masses and other celebrations are often attended by governors and parishioners.

Leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship by giving a high priority to the planning of quality liturgies and assemblies. They ensure all staff are given guidance on liturgical formation and the delivery of collective worship. Leaders are visible and committed role models for the whole school and have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year with its seasons and feasts. School leaders and governors, including the local parish priest, regularly review collective worship as part of their self-evaluation process.

The inspectors would like to express their thanks and appreciation to all members of the school community for their welcome and openness during the inspection