



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

### HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

### CHORLEY

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Inspection Date Tuesday 11 March 2014  
Inspectors Deacon Paul Mannings Mrs. Elizabeth Dolan  
Unique Reference Number 119803

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

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Type of School Catholic voluntary-aided, mixed comprehensive  
Age range of pupils 11-16  
Number on roll 796  
Chair of Governors Mrs. Christine Edwards  
Acting Headteacher Mr. Anthony Perry  
School address Myles Standish Way  
Chorley  
Lancashire  
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E-mail address admin@holycross.lancs.sch.uk  
Date of last inspection Wednesday 17 November 2010

# Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

## Information about this school

- Holy Cross Catholic High School is a voluntary-aided, 11-16, mixed comprehensive.
- The school is situated in the Archdiocese of Liverpool and within the Lancashire Authority.
- There are 796 pupils on roll of whom 71% are baptised Catholic, with 28.25% from other Christian denominations and 0.75% from other world faith or religious traditions.
- Pupils drawn from associated Catholic primary schools in the pastoral area account for 89% of the roll.
- There are 58 teachers of whom 53% are Catholic.
- The Religious Education department has five members; four full - time, one part time (in addition to other subjects). Four are qualified in Religious Education.
- The Chair of Governors has been in post since April 2013.
- The Acting Headteacher has been in post since April 2013.
- The Acting Head of Religious Education has been in post since February 2013.

### Key for inspection grades

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

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

## **Overall effectiveness:**

Holy Cross High School provides outstanding Catholic Education.

## **Inspection Judgements**

### **The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.**

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils show practical knowledge and understanding of how to implement the Mission Statement and so ensure others and themselves “may have life and have it to the full.”
- Pupils are aware of the distinctiveness of their Catholic school and give examples of how this is promoted by Gospel values. They have a concise understanding of how these values underpin the Mission.
- Pupils are quick to articulate how living their mission involves sharing with staff and with the wider community. They give examples of their involvement in wide ranging projects for the needs of others.
- In lessons and interviews pupils are confident to talk about their Catholic Faith. They link faith informed values to the daily living of their Baptism.
- Pupils are clear about how Religious Education is pivotal to their expression of Catholic life. They regard it as essential and relevant to their spiritual and moral development.
- Pupils show respect for other world faiths and religions. Those who regard themselves as having no specific faith feel part of the community. They give examples of how Catholic teaching is relevant to their lives in many practical dimensions.
- Pupils show affection for and loyalty toward their parish communities and wider pastoral area.
- Pupils respond well to high levels of pastoral care. This promotes their feelings of safety. In turn, they are encouraged to succeed. There is much evidence of mutual respect. They are quick to congratulate each other. They regard these traits as essential to living their Catholic life.

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- Pupils show outstanding levels of achievement and attainment in Religious Education.
- Levels of pupil performance are amongst the highest in the school.
- In Key Stage 3 percentages of pupils making three and four levels of progress (from Key Stage 2) are at least commensurate with their age and stage. In the period 2011 - 2013 performance has increased significantly from previous years. Consequently in that period results for three or more levels of progress are 75.7%, 85.5% and 77.1%. In the same period those making four levels of progress or more range from 44.6 in 2011 to 58.5% in 2012 and approximately the same in 2013. The small number of pupils making two levels of progress benefit from targeted intervention. Pupils making five or more levels of progress have increased from 14.9% in 2011, to 22% in 2012 and 23.5% in 2013.

- Consequently this rate of improvement has set similar trends in Key Stage 4. Performance at GCSE in 2010 was 64.8% for A\*-C. There had been some fluctuation in the previous two years from 75.8% (2008) to 60.8% (2009). Results for 2011 were 75.5%, for 2012 were 90% and for 2013 were 79%. For the past three years results have been above the national average. In 2012 and 2013, 42% and 41% respectively gained A\* or A excellence grades. The past three years indicate best performances ever.
- Achievement and attainment in class is enriched by quality teaching and learning.
- Pupils highly rate Religious Education. They are motivated and in turn keen to achieve. Their behaviour in class is outstanding overall and at least good.

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship**

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding.
- They value the resources provided. They are encouraged to use these as their own starting points in shaping their contribution to prayer and worship.
- On the day of inspection pupils demonstrated their skills of presentation which in turn encouraged the involvement of others.
- Pupils spoke about support and encouragement provided by many of the staff in facilitating their contribution.
- Pupils link the importance of quality prayer and worship to the school's Catholic life.
- They are aware of the varying styles of Collective Worship and how these can impact upon their making lead or group contributions. Pupils are confident in discussing issues of faith in the public forum. They feel at ease when praying collectively or personally.
- Pupils have particular regard for the encouragement of their own quiet reflection and personal space.
- Pupils find the content positively challenging. It serves to increase their awareness of world issues. It is inclusive and embraces what they regard as sensitive issues. This reinforces their confidence as maturing young adults.
- They are fully conversant with the Liturgical Year and how this influences their choice of materials and planned participation.
- They relate well to the use of Scripture and to structured prayer. They are willing to construct their own prayers particularly in relation to the needs of others.
- Collective Worship reinforces pupils' understanding of the relevance of prayer.
- Pupils say Collective Worship has something for everyone.

### **The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education**

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is good.
- Outstanding teaching includes subject knowledge applied consistently to challenge and inspire pupils. Time is used very well. Every opportunity is taken to successfully develop skills in Religious Education. Learning and progress is at least good and exemplary for some pupils in relation to their capacity and their prior attainment.
- Good teaching aspires to the above standards. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and high expectations. Teaching generally promotes pupils' confidence and independence. Learning and progress is good for the great majority of pupils in relation to their capacity and starting points.
- Differentiation is well judged and supported by creative strategies which are sharply focused to match most individual needs accurately.
- The department has continued to develop assessment in both key stages. In Key Stage 3 target sheets record each pupil's assessment and the level achieved. It is

accompanied by the teacher's detailed feedback indicating strengths and precise areas for development.

- Scrutiny of exercise books revealed a need for more consistency in completion of the target sheets. A minority of classes require a more precise and focussed diagnosis of how to improve. In Years 8 and 9 there is much evidence of challenging tasks accompanied by mature pupil response. Peer assessment is highly regarded by pupils.
- In Key Stage 4 the pupils' performance chart is used well overall. In a minority of instances these need to be completed with deeper levels of thoroughness. Pupil progress is monitored systematically and frequently. For the most part, pupils are clear about how well they are doing. They are given clear indicators on how to sustain good progress.
- Progress in class is highlighted and celebrated.

### **The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning**

- The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning is outstanding.
- In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils receive the 10% allocation required by the Bishops of England and Wales.
- The programme of study in Key Stage 3 embodies the process of Research, Revelation and Response. The department has strategically adapted the former Icons content. This in turn enriches the gradual introduction of the new national framework. The content is well differentiated. It is accurately matched to the Religious Education Levels of Attainment. These levels form the tool of assessment required nationally in Catholic schools.
- In Key Stage 4 all pupils are entered for GCSE. Since 2013 this has included the work experience cohort. For both the full and short courses there are high standards of resources. Extra - curricular revision classes are both popular and successful.
- The curriculum well extends prior learning. Key Stage 3 provides a firm foundation for success at Key Stage 4.
- The content is enriched by Scripture and Tradition. There is abundant scope for pupils to reflect on their Catholic Faith. Catholic social teaching is well applied to their contemporary world. It fully supports their spiritual and moral development.
- The study of other world faiths and religions are well embedded in the curriculum. This includes well informed teaching strategies and the use of quality guest speakers.
- Consequently the curriculum fully supports the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales (2012).

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good.
- Outstanding elements include the quality of resources shared amongst staff and pupils. There has been wholesale development of the school retreat programme to emphasise prayer as central to Catholic life.
- Pupils respond readily and enthusiastically to what is provided. This includes their training for leadership and participation.
- A minority of staff, however, require basic or further training in leading or facilitating Collective Worship. Such training should include maximising their use of resources.

Training needs should be identified through the existing monitoring process. The school should consider a key overall coordinator.

- There is comprehensive daily provision for staff, form and year group prayer and worship. Mass is celebrated each week and well attended voluntarily. Other masses and celebrations occur regularly throughout the Liturgical Year, which is at the focus of all planned prayer and worship.
- Other world faiths and religions are included. Their festivals and feasts are celebrated as appropriate.
- Much provision is made for pupils to experience time for reflection and contemplation. This is accompanied by themes and content that is inclusive of key local and world events. Provision makes a strong contribution to spiritual and moral development.
- The content offers challenge to pupils and staff. It enables them to assess their own Catholic Christian lives. It also has a clear ecumenical dimension. Consequently provision enables the school community to appraise its own overall Christian identity.
- Central to Collective Worship is the fulfilment of the Mission Statement. Its content, aims and challenge is embodied in all aspects of planning and delivery.

### **How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.**

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school and show good understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church.
- Outstanding Catholic life remains the key and core strength readily identified in past inspection processes.
- The Section 48 Self Evaluation document expresses is a community effort. Progress is well monitored by governors through a process involving three formal meetings a year.
- Governors and senior leaders are role models through their own faith commitment and by practical involvement.
- In the last academic year the head of Religious Education was seconded to fulfil the post of Director of Mission. Drawing upon many existing facets of the school's life in action, a Mission Week was celebrated in 2013. The legacy was a robust renewal of challenge in the way Catholic life is lived within and outside of school. Pupils were further committed to their involvement. A particular development has been strategic international support for areas of the developing world. of pupils
- The full time lay chaplain continues to make a strong impact. There are vibrant relations with the wider pastoral area. The Chaplaincy team is conscientiously directed and ensures a Catholic outreach within and beyond school.
- Parents express high levels of support for Catholic life.

### **How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.**

- Leaders, governors and managers provide outstanding monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education. Together they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- Since the secondment of the head of department, an acting head of department has been appointed. Leadership and management of the department remain as outstanding and readily meet the raised criteria for this judgement.

- The department is well line managed through commitment to Mission and Catholic life. Consequently Religious Education remains at the core of the curriculum. This is reflected in terms of staffing and budget. It is evident in curriculum allowance.
- Success and development is readily identified through the comprehensive and detailed Section 48 Self Evaluation document. Data is expressed with clarity and conclusions are reached. Other supporting evidence is abundant and includes links with supporting documents.
- Members of the department are committed in their sharing of faith and of teaching strengths. There is wide-ranging continued professional development, which includes diocesan in-service.
- The department is organised, efficient and creative. There is a sense of business involved in all aspects of planning. Good practice is celebrated and shared. Development is a team project. The purpose and place of Religious Education in the curriculum is borne out by professional action. This is intrinsically linked to the department's role in overall Catholic life.
- The high standards achieved and attained secure the place of Religious Education as a lead department. This in turn reinforces the popularity of and respect for Religious Education amongst pupils and parents.

## **What the school needs to do to improve further:**

- Continue the good development of Collective Worship by:
  - providing a main coordinator;
  - using the monitoring process to identify staff who require basic or further training in leading or facilitating Collective Worship;
  - appropriate staff training in maximising the use of available resources.

# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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## **OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS**

<b>How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils</b>	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

## **PROVISION**

<b>How effective the provision is for Catholic Education</b>	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

<b>How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School</b>	
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1

<b>Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 requires improvement and grade 4 inadequate</b>
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