



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL

CHORLEY

Inspection Date	Wednesday 17 November 2010
Inspectors	Dcn. Paul Mannings Mrs. Elizabeth Dolan
Unique Reference Number	119803
Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005	

Type of School	Catholic voluntary-aided, mixed comprehensive
Age range of pupils	11-16
Number on roll	832
Chair of Governors	Mr. M. Holt
Head teacher	Mrs W. White
School address	Myles Standish Way Chorley Lancashire PR7 3LS
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Date of last inspection	Wednesday 26 March 2008

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

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 the school

Holy Cross is a Catholic voluntary-aided, mixed comprehensive, situated in the Lancashire Authority. There are 832 pupils on roll drawn from nine feeder parishes in the pastoral area. Baptized Catholics account for 83% of the roll, with 17% from other Christian denominations and 0.2% from other world faith or religious traditions. There are 55 full time teachers of whom 62% are Catholic. The Religious Education department has four full time specialists.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Inspection Judgements

Overall effectiveness:

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main Findings:-

Holy Cross is a good Catholic high school with many outstanding features. The vision of Catholic Life and Education is central to its mission. Leadership and management demonstrate outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

Outcomes in Religious Education are good with outstanding features for individuals and for groups of pupils. Achievement and attainment is good overall. It is outstanding by the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils make at least good progress. Their contribution to the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding due to their living-out of the Mission Statement. Their response to Collective Worship is good with outstanding features.

The provision for Catholic Education is good with outstanding features. The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in religious Education is good with outstanding features. Assessment is good and undergoing continued development. The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding and so too is its contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good with outstanding features.

Leaders and managers are outstanding in developing the Catholic Life of the school. They strategically promote, monitor and evaluate provision for both Catholic Life and Religious Education. Leadership and management of the Religious Education department is good and well focussed on incisive development. The governing body makes an outstanding contribution through its close involvement and by informed consultation and commitment of its members. The promotion of community is outstanding.

Consequently outstanding capacity for sustained improvement is demonstrated by the practical living of the school mission through its links with data for whole school, departmental and Section 48 Self Evaluation.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Continue to provide opportunities for pupils to organise and lead Collective Worship by:
 - Form teachers using prayer time as a starting base;
 - Providing in-service for staff to share good practice from their form groups;
 - Use of this material to further encourage pupils;
 - Offering supervised opportunities for pupils to use existing expertise in areas such as drama and dance, to lead year and other acts of prayer and worship,
 - Use of the existing monitoring process to review development

- Strengthen further the process for Assessment by:
 - Standardised departmental assessment tasks;
 - Consistent practice in recording assessment outcomes though all classes following an agreed system,
 - Wider usage of the praise and advice target sheets, together with the unit review sheets.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils' achievement in Religious Education is good with outstanding features. Both attainment and achievement are outstanding by the end of Key Stage 3. In 2010 83% achieved Level 5 or above, with 25% reaching Level 6 and 2% Level 7. Standards of attainment are above average in all strands of each target. In Key Stage 4 GCSE results in year 10 indicated 72% achieving A*-C with 65% in year 11. The latter whilst showing a shortfall on previous years remains broadly within the national average. Staffing constraints which affected pupils' performance in Year 11 has now been stabilised. Knowledge and understanding of Religious Education (AT1) and an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) is at least good and in some areas outstanding.

The quality of pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education are good. They are making at least good progress. Where progress is outstanding pupils concentrate very well for extended periods. Pupils are keen to do well overall and show interest and enthusiasm. High levels of motivation result in their application to maintain good levels of pace and progress. Their behaviour is outstanding. They value Religious Education, showing interest and enthusiasm.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. Pupils clearly understand the Mission Statement and its impact on their lives. They are encouraged to take responsibility for organising religious activities within and beyond the school. Following the Mission Statement review process they are proud to be involved in shaping the Catholic Life of their school. They are confident to express their beliefs through mutual respect and opportunities for celebration of achievement.

Pupils show a good level of response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship. There are outstanding features, namely their keen interest and participation. There is respect for different viewpoints expressed. Where appropriate they respond to the challenge of putting their beliefs in action. Pupils are experiencing increased involvement in prayer and worship not least through the mediums of drama and dance. This will continue to develop through more opportunities for their contribution to planning and leadership both in form time and year groups.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
How well pupils achieve in Religious Education	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education 	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is good with outstanding features. Where it is outstanding, teaching is consistently effective in enthusing pupils for prolonged periods. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which they use confidently to inspire and challenge pupils. Good and creative use is made of resources specifically in technology. Learning support assistants are very well deployed. Pupils are consistently interested in learning and maintaining good progress through independent and group learning. They are encouraged to do well through positive feedback and by clear progression routes. This adds to their overall confidence and motivation in Religious Education.

The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education is good. The department is developing detailed and accurate data to enable effective identification of any under-achievement. There is regular end-of-task assessment. Formative written work is given detailed feedback. Pupil progress is monitored systematically and frequently. They know how well they are doing and how to sustain good progress. Departmental assessment should be further developed by drawing together the good practices in various assessment procedures, to formulate one consistent process.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs is outstanding. There is 10% curriculum provision for all pupils, which meets the requirements of the Bishops Conference. In Key Stage 3 Icons is supported by programmes of study that focus on the process of research, revelation and response. In Key Stage 4 all pupils undertake a GCSE specification well-suited to their needs. The department is, however, monitoring the content and success rate of one particular unit. GCSE is delivered either as a full course over two years or a short course for the minority of pupils pursuing the work related curriculum. In both key stages the curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good with outstanding features. Since the last inspection prayer and worship has continued to gain a higher profile due to effective monitoring by school leadership. There are outstanding themes and resources to support the Liturgical Year. In addition to daily form and weekly year group provision, Collective Worship is now expressed through frequent voluntary Eucharistic celebrations, other services and increased opportunities for shared prayer. These occasions include parents where appropriate. Continuing to skill and equip students in organising leading prayer will enhance existing development.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the school

Leaders and managers are outstanding in their promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Catholic Life of the school and in their planning and implementation of improvement to outcomes for pupils. They are committed to the mission of the Church. This is expressed not least in their support of the diocese. It is equally evident in the thorough review of the Mission Statement. Its aims are supported through a three year plan together with key priorities. The whole process is clearly and expressly linked to whole school and departmental development plans. Consequently both staff and pupils are keen to actively live-out the mission of this school. The recently appointed full-time lay chaplaincy is currently developing the chaplaincy team to ensure co-ordinated support for every sphere of Catholic Life.

Senior leaders and managers provide outstanding monitoring and evaluation of their provision for Religious Education, together with planning and implementation for improvement to outcomes for pupils. Their analysis of the new S48 Self Evaluation document provides them with knowledge of both strengths and areas for development. Leadership and management of the Religious Education department are good. Staff are motivated to work as a highly professional team. The subject leader has been in post since summer 2009 and has a clear focus on celebrating and building on areas of strength. Consequently planning is founded on sound evidence and data. This should now include use of the S48 Inspection Handbook grading as a focus for continued progress.

The governing body provides an outstanding level of effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are addressed decisively and responsibilities met. Their highly significant contribution is both organised and thorough. It is based on both their access to performance documentation and by their own commitment to the school as a whole and to the staffing, resources and curriculum provision for Religious Education.

Leaders and managers provide outstanding promotion of community cohesion. The school is inclusive in every sphere. Pupils and staff participate in wide-ranging national and global activities for the wellbeing of others. There is close interaction with the parishes in the pastoral area. This interaction crosses cultural, faith, social and economic boundaries. Two key examples of this are expressed through the St Vincent de Paul (SVP) group and by links with another Christian denomination in a neighbouring diocese. Acts of Collective Worship are inclusive in their presentation of a range of themes and issues of social justice and compassion. Religious Education promotes knowledge and understanding through Gospel values linked to citizenship. Other world religions are studied to reinforce mutual understanding, respect and where appropriate, opportunities for celebration. Parents are positive about their involvement in the life of the school and in decision making about future development.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders 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 and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are addressed decisively and responsibilities met	1
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion	1