



Holy Family Catholic Primary School

URN: 148111

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Brentwood

13–14 November 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

2

Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Pupils clearly and passionately articulate and live out the mission statement of Holy Family through their actions so that they are 'living, loving and learning together with Jesus'.
- The highly committed staff provide the highest level of care for pupils and parents, making Holy Family a really welcoming, inclusive community where all feel valued and loved.
- There is an exceptionally strong partnership between the school and the parish and the parish priest has a visible presence in the school.
- Pupils' religious education knowledge is of a high standard and well developed so that they know and remember more, enabling them to actively engage in lessons.
- The pupil prayer partners experience allows all pupils to grow their understanding of the importance of praying, supporting their spiritual formation.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure pupils contribute, in a planned and systematic way, to the school's evaluation of its Catholic life and mission and take a lead in planning improvements.
- Ensure pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and of what they need to do to improve, and that they can fully articulate how they have made progress.
- Provide professional development opportunities for all staff to support pupils in planning, leading and evaluating prayer and liturgy.

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



Pupils have an excellent understanding of the school's mission statement and clearly articulate how this enables them to live out Gospel values in their daily lives. One pupil described the school, 'we are a family and we are holy'. A parent wrote that, 'Catholic values and religious education are the main focus at the school; they give the children the confidence and tools to develop their Catholic faith and understanding'. Pupils know they are valued and their parents know children are happy and confident in school. Pupils are exceptionally keen to embrace all aspects of taking responsibility for caring for our Common Home. The *Laudato Si'* group enthusiastically discuss their initiatives to encourage walking to school and litter picking to help care for the environment. Pupils explain that they even completed homework creating posters to help others know we need to care for God's oceans. Pupils have a clear understanding of the principles of Catholic social teaching. They can give examples of how these principles help their relationships with others and the community. A Year 6 pupil explained how the principles are 'ideas from God and we hear them in the Bible'. Behaviour is excellent in lessons. Around the school pupils show great respect for each other, particularly in the way older pupils care for the younger ones.

The mission statement is whole-heartedly embraced by all staff. They consider its meaning and relevance regularly. Staff form a close-knit team who work together for the benefit of the whole community, demonstrating their exceptional commitment. One member of staff wrote, 'I truly believe that the strong school ethos permeates our whole school community. We keep the love and respect of Jesus close to our hearts as we navigate the challenges of modern times.' There is an extremely strong sense of community and inclusivity within the school, which is highly valued by pupils, staff, parents and governors. Staff are exemplary role models for pupils,

showing care for all pupils and parents. The staff well-being policy is clearly put into practice and given a high priority with staff benefitting from acts of kindness. Great attention is given to the pastoral needs of pupils, which is much appreciated by parents. There is a rich religious environment celebrating pupil work, Catholic social teaching in action and faith formation. Chaplaincy is strong, although further creative opportunities could now be provided within this provision. Relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned and timetabled. The recently reviewed policy meets diocesan and statutory requirements, and is available on the school website.

Leaders and governors have an exceptionally clear vision of the Church's mission in education, which they articulate eloquently and with a passion. Christ is at the heart of policy and practice. The Bishop's vision for the diocese is promoted with active participation in a range of services, including training and induction for new staff. There are extremely strong links with the parish, with promotion of parish events. Parishioners are welcomed to the weekly class Mass. The partnership with parents is highly valued by parents who offer many examples of school staff providing a 'listening ear' and 'time and a cup of coffee' when they need support. Leaders are unwavering in their commitment to Catholic social teaching. This is evident in their support for those in greatest need, where the school offers practical help with uniform and signposting to a variety of services, including those of a trainee social worker. Governors clearly have the greatest respect for the dignity of the workers within the school, including the well-being of the headteacher. The Catholic curriculum is at the core of teaching at Holy Family and connections are made between different subjects. Governors' ambition for the highest standards and strong faith formation is clearly evident. Their commitment to the school is seen in the time they invest in annual development days, which help them to have an in-depth understanding of Catholic life.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

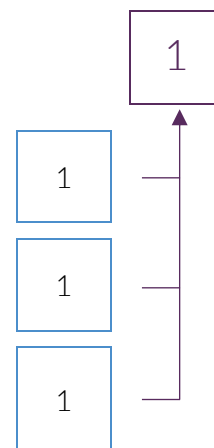
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 developing excellent knowledge, skills and understanding in religious education. Key Stage 1 pupils know the difference between Old and New Testament stories. In Year 6, they can maturely reflect on the feelings of characters in the parable of the Prodigal Son, and are able to review their progress during each unit of study. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs, make consistent progress over time. Pupils apply their religious education knowledge to develop their ability to think ethically. For example they know Jesus helped the poor and they can do this by donating to the local food bank. Pupils can speak fluently about their religious education. In a Reception lesson pupils recall the names of the Holy Family and know they travelled to Bethlehem. In Year 4 pupils are able to quote from scripture regarding Jesus calling the Disciples. During most lessons pupils concentrate exceptionally well and are able to work independently. They are motivated to actively engage in their learning. Pupils are exceptionally proud of their work and consequently produce work of a high quality. Their enjoyment is evident in lessons, in pupil surveys undertaken by the school and in their discussions. One parent writes, 'my child really enjoys being at Holy Family. He loves learning about Jesus' life and particularly enjoys his religious education lessons.' Pupils' attainment in religious education is high and in line with, or better than other core subjects.

Teachers' subject knowledge in religious education is strong across the whole school. This is evident in all lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they plan effectively to ensure they develop their religious education knowledge. Planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, where the *Religious Education Directory* has been introduced, is particularly strong and provides for a range of language, creative opportunities and imaginative resources for pupils. There is a range of effective questioning across the school which is often skilfully used to build on prior learning and to support assessments during lessons. Feedback is provided for

pupils 'in the moment' and the pupil voice captured as a celebration of pupils' thinking. Consistency is now needed to ensure all pupils know what they need to do to make progress in their learning. Class worship books provide evidence of pupils reflecting on their religious education work. For example at the end of their unit on Creation and Covenant Year 2 pupils were given time to reflect. One pupil wrote 'I wonder if God would like me to look after the animals and creatures in the world'.

Leaders and governors are ensuring that the *Religious Education Directory* is being successfully implemented in a phased approach. There is strong evidence of creativity and imagination in the planning, resourcing and experiences for pupils. Religious education is given the same priority as other core subjects. It is notable that religious education homework is given. Parents have opportunities to review pupils' work and receive weekly information regarding the religious education teaching. Professional development for the *Religious Education Directory* is given a high priority and has had a significant impact on teaching and pupils' knowledge. The religious education leader has a clear vision for religious education and she works with the headteacher to ensure all teaching is at least good. The needs of pupils are met and reasonable adjustments are made in lessons, where necessary, including pre-teaching of subject specific vocabulary. The school's leaders have skilfully deployed adults to support the pupils where necessary. A range of agencies, including Cafod and the local food bank, work with the school to provide enrichment activities. Leaders and governors are increasingly using a range of evidence, including data, development days in school, presentations from the religious education and inclusion leaders, and questionnaires from a variety of stakeholders in their self-evaluation processes.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils enjoy the varied opportunities they are given to participate in the prayer life of the school. They are reverent and respectful, joining in with responses as well as using actions, and they sing with enthusiasm. Pupils have a strong knowledge of the traditional prayers of the Church and older pupils clearly understand why they need to pray. One pupil stated, 'praying is not just about praying for ourselves, we need to pray for others as it is what God would want us to do.' Pupils also enjoy writing their own prayers and sharing them with their prayer partners. The chaplaincy pupil leadership team take their roles very seriously and are passionate about sharing and developing prayer across the school, including organising a prayer club. This team now need to work on planning and leading key actions to support how all pupils can undertake liturgical ministries and, in turn, evaluate the quality of liturgy that is planned. Pupils have a good knowledge of daily prayers and are able to make connections with how prayer can be used to help them in their daily lives to make a difference through their encounters with others. In addition, pupils are able to describe parts of the liturgical year, including times of reflection during Advent and Lent, and they enjoy their weekly Masses.

The centrality of prayer and liturgy is evident throughout the school. Pupils and staff pray together at various times throughout the day including a daily reflection time after lunch where all pupils can spend time, as one pupil commented, 'connecting with God and growing in His love.' Scripture passages are used in whole school assemblies and class liturgies and are carefully chosen to be relevant to the season, allowing pupils to engage well and to listen to the Word of God. Staff act as good role models and are active participants providing support and guidance when needed. Staff are currently completing profession development for prayer and liturgy and now must consistently ensure that they support pupils to independently plan, lead and evaluate their own prayer and liturgy sessions. Class prayer areas are given the highest priority in all

classrooms and are well-maintained. The beautiful prayer garden is valued by pupils and staff and is in regular use. The class prayer books, collective worship books, homework and prayer bags further reflect the importance given to prayer allowing pupils to celebrate and develop their own spiritual understanding of why they need prayer in their lives. Families are always included in the prayer life of the school and actively attend liturgies.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is readily accessible on the website. However, this needs to be further developed to ensure that it is a useful tool for staff to use consistently as a point of reference when developing prayer and liturgy experiences for themselves and pupils. Senior leaders recognise this as an ongoing area for development. Leaders, including governors, plan to ensure that there is an effective timetable to celebrate the Eucharist, holy days of obligation and other key times during the liturgical year. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered throughout the year and pupils are able to talk about the importance of significant Masses or services including Ash Wednesday and Remembrance. Leaders and governors also place a high importance on prayer and liturgy when allocating resources and ensure that it is well-resourced. Governors regularly attend Masses and other liturgical celebrations and understand the importance of prayer and liturgy through their reviews of school practice on governor days as well as reports received from staff. They now need to monitor prayer and liturgy to ensure that it is embedded in the school's evaluation cycle, including seeking the views of pupils. This will ensure that self-evaluation is more systematic and robust, leading to sustained school improvement.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Holy Family Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148111
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8813813
Full postal address of the school	Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Maltings Lane, Witham, CM8 1DX
School phone number	001376513418
Headteacher	Ann Kelliher
Chair of local governing body	Anne Wright
School Website	www.holyfamilyschoolwitham.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	The Rosary Trust - A Catholic Multi Academy
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Gael Hicks

Isabel Quinn

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