



Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

URN: 104633

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

25 February 2026 – 26 February 2026

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

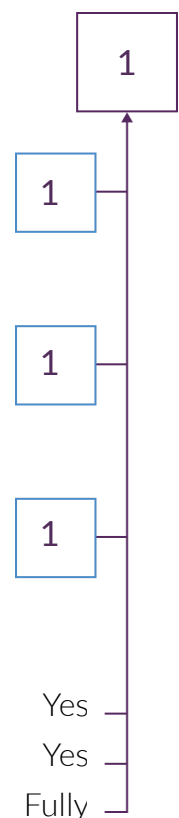
Collective worship (p.7)

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

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 to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



What the school does well

- Leaders, staff and governors know the community they serve and they work together seamlessly to ensure there is a warm welcome for all.
- Leaders have a clarity of vision for their school and lead with compassion, forgiveness, service and respect; this is rooted in their personal faith which is shared and celebrated with anyone who joins the school.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary; the work they produce is of the highest quality and they consistently model their best towards others in the school.
- Staff are skilful in their use of questioning to assess pupil understanding and to challenge them to delve further, extending their knowledge and understanding.
- Prayer and liturgy is central to daily life at Holy Cross; it is enhanced greatly by the use of well chosen pieces of music, resources and artwork which lead pupils to participate and respond with the greatest respect and reverence.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase pupils' rates of response to the demands of Catholic social teaching.
- In religious education, maintain and enrich the clarity of provision for pupils' self-assessment skills.
- Leaders and pupils should create a dedicated outdoor prayer space which allows all members of the school community to sit and reflect in God's natural world.

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

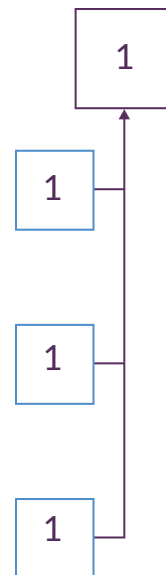
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



Holy Cross is a place of welcome and sanctuary; pupils thrive in this loving, safe and caring school. They are happy, confident and feel secure. They live out the school mission in their everyday lives showing respect to all members of the community and a desire to help anyone in need; their behaviour is exemplary. The weekly mission award celebrates pupils who demonstrate the school mission. One pupil explained, "It is a really special award, it makes sure we know that we are living out the school mission when we help others". Strong relationships exist at all levels and pupils play a vital role in ensuring that all members of the school community feel welcomed and that they have a sense of belonging from the moment they join the school. Pupil groups such as Faith in Action demonstrate commitment to working for the good of their school, the local community and their wider global family. They have organised food and clothing collections for vulnerable families and hold 'crazy hair days' to fundraise for Cafod. However, pupils would benefit from being supported to be more pro-active in deciding how to respond to the demands of Catholic social teaching.

There is a deeply embedded culture of welcome at the school and parents report it is a place of real community. One parent commented, 'It is a beautiful school, they take care of our children'. Staff are passionate in their support of pupils, their families and each other. Everyone demonstrates love and respect; this is led in an inspirational manner by the headteacher who is relentless in her pursuit of the best for all members of the school community. One staff member explained, 'At Holy Cross, no one is left behind; the Catholic life and mission of the school is at the heart of everything we do'. This is evidenced by members of staff in the school office ensuring that there is a well-stocked selection of items of clothing

and a school foodbank area that families can and do access. Other members of staff identify new members of the school community who may feel isolated and they instigate meetings between groups of parents to enable friendships and support to develop beyond the school gates. The concept of service is truly embedded within the fabric of the school. The relationships, sex and health education curriculum is in line with archdiocesan guidance and supports pupils' personal, moral, and spiritual development effectively.

Leaders and governors are heavily invested in supporting each other and the wider school community. The governing body's depth of experience in Catholic education enables them to offer both support and mission-focused challenge to school leaders, ensuring that the school's Catholic identity remains a central priority. They are truly committed to ensuring that their own faith and the mission is at the heart of all decisions they take and they consistently act with integrity and purpose in guiding the school forward. Relationships are built on a platform of trust and a culture of seeking clarity in all aspects of school life; this means that governors are well informed and able to shape the strategic path of the school in a highly effective manner. The leader of religious education works tirelessly to ensure that pupils at Holy Cross thrive. She is a key figure within the wider network of schools which Holy Cross belongs to, and her expertise is recognised beyond the school in modelling best practice. One governor commented, 'Because of the leadership of the headteacher and subject leader for religious education the school is filled with faith and love – it is a beacon which shines out to all'.

Religious education

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

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

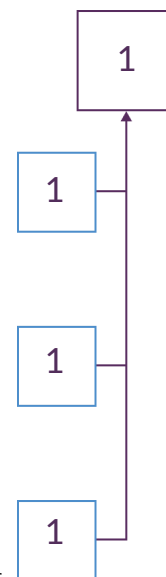
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 passionate about their religious education; they enjoy lessons and are self-motivated to learn. Pupils can explain their work with confidence and can talk about their knowledge using increasing subject specific vocabulary at an appropriate standard for their age and capacity. Adults have very high expectations and as a result, pupil behaviour and the work they produce is of the highest standard, especially when measured against the starting points of most pupils. Pupils can identify and talk about scripture they have read and are able to describe how these scriptures have influenced them. A pupil in Year 5 spoke about how the parable of the Good Samaritan had led them to action, 'I went home and told my mum that we should show care and compassion to everyone we meet and we donated to a foodbank'. A pupil in Year 1 spoke about how the story of Zacchaeus taught them how to be kind to everyone like Jesus was to Zacchaeus. Pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with attainment in other core subjects. In order to further develop pupils' self-assessment skills, teacher feedback needs to be further enriched to clearly identify the progress pupils have made and what they need to do to improve.

Staff have secure subject knowledge and are skilful in their use of questioning to assess pupil understanding. They use these skills in a highly effective manner to reinforce new learning or to challenge pupils. The open-ended nature of the questions leads to periods of reflection during which pupils are given the opportunity to pause and consider what they have been taught. Planning in all year groups is aligned to the Religious Education Directory and teachers have taken a leading role in the creation and sharing of resources to enable the best possible

outcomes for all pupils, including those who experience some form of disadvantage or other barrier to learning. Staff make excellent use of technology to enhance their teaching; this is particularly evident from the support of the many pupils who arrive at the school with English as a second language. This leads to rapid progress and success for pupils even when their understanding of the English language is limited. Strong practice is shared between staff and there is an open-door policy which is used frequently, to visit each other's classrooms to offer support to less experienced members of staff. Other adults are utilised very successfully to offer support and enable good progress for pupils with special educational needs.

Leaders and governors work closely together to monitor and review religious education. They ensure it has equal parity with other core subjects and their part in the self-evaluation process is rigorous and reflective. Governors know the school well and are able to identify strengths and areas of development with accuracy. Regular opportunities for staff development are sought to ensure that all members of staff feel supported and confident with their teaching of the Religious Education Directory. The subject leader for religious education provides regular training and ongoing support for staff, including arranging input from external specialists. This professional development led to the introduction of *Golden Stories* which has significantly enhanced the teaching of religious education across the school. The headteacher and governors prioritise other training opportunities for example through their promotion of the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies for new staff. Governors are kept fully informed of standards in religious education and it is given a high priority within governor meetings as well as in reports to parents. As a result, the Catholic Self Evaluation Document is an accurate assessment of the strengths and areas for improvement for religious education at Holy Cross.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

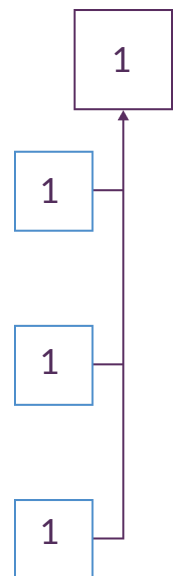
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

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



Pupils engage deeply in prayer and liturgy. They are able to articulate how their experience of prayer shapes their lives and actions, and they enjoy taking time out of their daily lives to pray. Pupils are able to talk in detail about their class focus tables or discuss the relevance of a chosen scripture to the identified theme. A pupil in year 5 explained that an image of Christ on the cross placed on the focus table was there to remind everyone that Lent is a time to remember that Jesus sacrificed himself for us. The many leadership opportunities presented to pupils have enabled them to develop understanding of their own faith; they are able to articulate this in their own words with confidence and a high level of maturity. Singing, led beautifully by pupils, and music are integral parts of prayer and liturgy; this leads to moving, joyful and prayerful experiences for all. Pupils participate with the highest level of reverence and respect in setting the mood for prayer and liturgy. They do this by lighting candles, collecting the Bible and sharing scripture and prayers. These dedicated classroom prayer spaces reinforce the significance of moments of prayer and enable pupils to experience prayer both communally or at an individual level.

Prayer and liturgy is an embedded, central aspect of daily life at Holy Cross. It is enhanced greatly by the use of well-chosen pieces of music, resources and artwork which lead everyone to respond in a highly respectful and reverential manner. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of the traditions of the Catholic faith which together with the provision of carefully designed planning frameworks, quality resources and explicit professional development, ensures that they are well prepared to lead prayer and liturgy with confidence and authenticity. Prayer and liturgy at Holy Cross is marked by dignity and active participation

from all who have been invited to gather together and these liturgical celebrations are joyful expressions of faith which nurture and connect all members of the school community. Staff are extremely well supported by the leader of prayer and liturgy in selecting scripture that is seasonally appropriate and rooted in the liturgical year. As a result, the prayer and liturgy consistently and faithfully reflect the themes, symbols and expectations of the Church at different times of the year. This in turn, leads to increased staff confidence and a consistent, cohesive approach across the school.

Leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the school's provision for prayer and liturgy. They have ensured that there is a well-formulated prayer and liturgy policy with clear guidelines and identified steps of progression. These actions, combined with a strong commitment to offering regular and varied opportunities for communal prayer, ensure that pupils enjoy high-quality and enriching experiences. Leaders recently hosted a *Messy Friends* session, inviting families to join pupils in prayer and to create celebratory artwork for the school's prayer spaces. The parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school, celebrating Mass at key points such as the start and end of the school year and feast days, as well as supporting the sacramental preparation *With you Always* programme, which is led by the school. The link governor for religious education alongside other governors, together play a pivotal role, providing invaluable support and constructive challenge through regular classroom visits, thereby enhancing the overall prayer life of the school. Spaces for prayer and liturgy are maintained to a high standard however a dedicated permanent outdoor prayer space which allows all members of the school community to sit and reflect in God's natural world would enhance the schools' prayer and liturgy provision even further.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	104633
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3413512
Full postal address of the school	Fontenoy Street, Liverpool, L3 2DU
School phone number	0151 236 9505
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Helen Bannon
Chair of Governors	Mr Stephen McElroy
School Website	www.holycrossliverpool.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	13 March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Melanie Lockley Lead

Sue Leck

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