



INSPECTION REPORT

Holy Cross Roman Catholic Primary School

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

Unique Reference Number	109244
Inspection dates	15 th and 16 th November 2005
Date of Previous Inspection	June 2000
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake
School address	Dean Lane, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 1DB
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Chair of governors	Mrs Rebecca Fleming
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Newport

Description of the school

Holy Cross is an average size primary school set near the centre of Bristol. It draws pupils from a very wide area including some parts of Bristol with high levels of deprivation. Sixty one per cent of pupils are baptised Catholic. In the last two years the headteacher, deputy head and all but two teachers are new to the school. Many have been there for just over a year. The staffing is now more stable. Around one third of the pupils come from minority ethnic groups and twenty five pupils have been identified as having English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average but the percentage of pupils identified with learning difficulties or disabilities is similar to that found in most schools.

Parents are generally very supportive of the school and there are good links with the Parish.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners and why?

This school provides a satisfactory Catholic education with some elements that are good. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and their standards in religious education match their standards in literacy. The leadership and management are good at providing a positive Catholic ethos. School leaders set a good example in Catholic issues although the school acknowledges that more could be done to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The strong lead from the governors who share the vision of the head and deputy has created a team of people committed to providing good quality Catholic education.

The quality of Collective Worship is good overall although whole school worship is better than class worship. Resources are used well but the amount of resources for religious education needs to be improved. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but too few teachers have a recognised qualification in religious education.

Grade 3

Improvement since the last Inspection

Given that the head and deputy have been in post for less than two years, the issues for improvement raised at the last inspection have been successfully addressed.

The Capacity of the School Community to Improve and Develop

Governors and Staff have a strong sense of shared purpose and the school has the capacity to improve further. It is honest in its own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses.

What steps need to be taken to improve the provision further?

- Set up effective systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning
- Provide professional development to enable more teachers to obtain a qualification in religious education
- Improve the resources available for religious education

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

1. How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?

The leadership and management in this area is good. The governing body is effective and well focussed on the importance of the Catholic Life of the school. They monitor this well through regular visits to the school and attendance at Masses and assemblies. A really good exercise is the annual school day which allows all governors to spend a whole day in the school experiencing every aspect of school life. The head and deputy have a clear vision for how the school needs to improve and share this with governors and staff. All governors staff and parents were involved in the re-writing of the school Mission statement which guides all that the school does. This is a key factor in the improvements that have taken place over the last two years. Very clear guidance is given to pupils on how they should live and the role of prayer in their life. The school promotes pupils spiritual and moral development well. The senior management of the school make regular checks on how well pupils are following the gospel values set out in the school's behaviour policy.

Grade 2

Collective Worship

2. How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

Many good quality opportunities are given to pupils to engage in prayer and collective worship. Regular assemblies and Masses provide good quality occasions when pupils can pray and worship as apart of a community. Pupils

enjoy this and are keen to take part in Masses and assemblies. In the assemblies observed during the inspection, pupils were well behaved and reverent.

Pupils experience Mass in both small class groups and as a whole school community in the adjoining church. This allows both intimate and child focussed celebration alongside experience of parish worship. Parents and governors join pupils on these occasions helping pupils understand the Church community and see the example set by adults.

In class assemblies pupils share their own prayers and thoughts. They show respect for one another and develop an understanding of how God's word teaches us how to treat others and how to lead our own lives. Suitable opportunities are taken to compare our worship with that of others. Pupils are helped by their study of other faiths to appreciate how others worship God. Their prayer life helps them develop an understanding of and a respect for all members of the community in the way that Jesus taught.

The school has identified that collective worship in classrooms could be even better and has started to provide professional development for teachers in this area. More training is planned with the support of the Diocese to enable teachers to provide high quality opportunities for prayer and reflection within the classrooms.

Grade 2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The standards attained in religious education are similar to their standards in literacy which shows some variation from year to year. Attainment is broadly in line with that expected although school records show that the attainment of the current Year 6 is affected by some gaps in their knowledge from earlier in their school career. The school's assessments supported by inspection observations show that the achievement of pupils is getting better.

Attainment has clearly dropped over time following the last inspection but has risen over the last year due to the hard work of the teachers. This improvement is continuing as the changes made to the school over the last eighteen months begin to take effect. Examination of pupils' work shows that children of all abilities make similar progress in their learning.

Most pupils say that they enjoy religious education. They respond well in lessons and make suitable contributions. In the lessons observed pupils behaved well and in the best lessons shared their knowledge and understanding with others.

The impact of what children are learning is evident in the life of the school. For example the high emphasis on friendship and community can be seen in the way that pupils behave and treat each other. The citizenship badges are valued by pupils and demonstrate that pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is good. Pupils value the contributions made by pupils of other cultures within the school.

Within the wider church community more pupils are taking part in the Sunday Masses sharing their skills and talents and learning with the parish and developing their understanding of community.

Grade 3

Quality of provision for Religious Education

3 How effective are teaching and learning?

Teaching is satisfactory overall with some areas of strength and some areas for development. Teachers have good relationships with pupils that keep the pupils interested in what they are learning. In some classes teaching is of a high quality with interesting and stimulating lessons that encourage pupils to learn. Teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils are included in lessons. Some teachers are making their own worksheets based upon the scheme of work to meet the needs of all pupils. In many classes teachers make helpful comments when marking that enable pupils to see how well they are doing, but this needs to happen more regularly.

Grade 3

4 How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?

The RE Curriculum meets the needs and interest of learners. The school follows the approved Diocesan Scheme for RE. The Senior Management are aware that some students have gaps in their Religious Education knowledge; this is being addressed through regular assessment procedures to improve the quality of learning. The school is fully inclusive in dealing with its special needs pupils and ethnic groups.

Grade 3

Leadership and Management

5 How effective are leadership and management in supporting all learners in Religious Education?

The headteacher and subject leader check teachers' planning and the work in pupils' books regularly. This allows them to know that the correct work is planned for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. However, they do not monitor lessons regularly enough to make sure that all teachers are teaching in the most effective way. The headteacher and subject leader have identified the monitoring of lessons as something to develop this year in order to make sure that all pupils receive the best possible teaching.

The accommodation is satisfactory and the public areas of the school have suitable resources available but these are limited. The library has only a small quantity of religious books. Additional money has been allocated to religious education this year to help improve resources. Only one teacher has a recognised qualification in Religious Education. The headteacher and subject leader are currently discussing how teachers can obtain a qualification through diocesan courses in order to give teachers suitable professional development aimed at achieving high standards in religious education.

A link governor meets regularly with the senior management to discuss religious education and governors are well informed about the strengths and areas for improvement.

Grade 3