



# Diocese of Westminster

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **St Cross Catholic Primary School**

Upper Marsh Lane, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire. EN11 8BN

Telephone: 01992 467309

e-mail address: office@stcross.herts.sch.uk

D/ES Number: 919 3408

URN: 117483

Headteacher: Mrs K. Hall

Chair of Governors: Mrs M. McKnight

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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Date of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Date of previous inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2006

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M. Betts

## **Description of School**

St Cross School is a one form entry primary school. There are 204 pupils on roll, 92% of whom are Catholic. The school's main feeder parish is St Augustine's, Hoddesdon but a few pupils attend who live in surrounding parishes. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds. For just over a third of pupils English is their second language and some of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are 15 teachers in the school of which 7 (46%) are Catholic.

### **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1: Outstanding;      Grade 2: Good;      - Grade 3: Satisfactory;      Grade 4: Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

St Cross is a good school with a strong Catholic ethos. The committed leadership from the headteacher, parish priest and governors is effective in maintaining and promoting the school's Catholic identity. Pupils' personal development and the growth of their faith have a central role in the school's activities. Relationships within the school are good with staff creating an environment where pupils are respected, listened to and encouraged in their learning. A pupil explained "Everyone here is really friendly to each other". Pupils are proud of their school and are enthusiastic about the varied enrichment opportunities that they are offered. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Religious education has a high profile within the school's life.

**Grade 2**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

The last inspection report described the school as "a good school". Areas for development were related to improving the quality and quantity of written work and increasing the teachers' background knowledge in this subject. The school has made good responses to both these areas. Written religious education work now evidences an adequate coverage of the curriculum in all classes and good coverage in most. Regular staff meetings are held to ensure teachers' knowledge is sufficient for good delivery of the curriculum. Staff have regular access to the religious education subject leader, the parish priest and other Catholic staff if they do not understand certain aspects of the faith.

**Grade 2**

### **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop**

The school has a very good capacity to continue to improve. The headteacher has a clear vision and is well supported by staff and governors. The self evaluation of the school is accurate and involves staff, governors, parents and pupils. The leadership team has a good overall view of the school's strengths and development needs. All staff are committed to the success of the school and to further developing their skills through training. The school improvement plan includes religious education targets.

**Grade 1**

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Include more creative, cross-curricular pupil tasks in religious education lessons.
- Use assessment information in future planning to challenge the more able pupils to achieve the next level.
- Involve pupils more in the preparation and delivery of class worship.

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## **The Catholic Life of the School**

### **Leadership and Management**

The leadership of the school is strongly focused on the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards and promoting the well-being of every member of the school community. The mission statement "Together we grow in God's love" is known and understood by pupils and permeates all daily activities. Attractive displays around the school and the prominence of the school badge reflect the school's Catholic identity. The governors are supportive and kept well informed about the school's religious life. The pupils praise the caring attitude of the staff who listen to them and fully support their learning. They appreciate the opportunities given for many fun enrichment activities and the staff's commitment of their own time to providing these. Pupils' views are taken into consideration and class councils enhance the development of pupils' responsible attitudes. The leadership promotes well pupils' spiritual and moral development. The pupils' achievements are recognised and valued. Pupils say that classes mix well together and older pupils befriend younger ones. Good links exist with parents. Parish links are strong. The parish priest visits the school regularly and is well known to the pupils.

**Grade 2**

### **The Prayer Life of the School**

Prayer is an integral part of each school day. Worship is appropriate to the age of the pupils with visual presentations to aid understanding for the youngest children. Older pupils have the opportunity to reflect on how they could apply the theme to their own lives. Attractive prayer tables in each classroom provide a focus. A variety of prayer suggestions are available for class use. Pupils compose their own prayers and Lenten promises as part of their religious education learning. The school has identified a need to develop the prayer life of the school and has involved ideas from the parish priest in this training. Mass is celebrated regularly and pupils are actively involved in readings, prayers, serving and offertory procession. Parents and parishioners are invited. The parish priest contributes well to the school's liturgical life and offers Reconciliation during Lent. Worship and prayer contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual and moral development. During worship pupils listen attentively, are interested and behave well.

**Grade 2**

### **How effectively does the school /college promote community cohesion?**

The school is a welcoming inclusive community where all members are valued. Diversity of language is effectively promoted by giving pupils the opportunity of learning two European languages using staff and parents' expertise. Pupils are given opportunities to collaborate with others from different faith backgrounds through sporting and curriculum events. Links with local schools are strengthening. Pupils show compassion for others by giving to local, national and global charities and invite representatives to explain their work. Pupils participate well in local

community activities such as planting bulbs in the local park and a litter poster campaign. Pupils are taught to respect other world religions and occasionally visitors are invited to share their expertise. Provision for spiritual development within worship provides opportunities for pupils to link the theme with their own experiences. Pupils invite parents and parishioners to share celebrations. Pupils sing to the local elderly at their residential home and invite them into school to receive Harvest gifts.

**Grade 2**

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## **Religious Education**

### **Achievement and Standards in Religious Education**

Pupils make steady progress in religious literacy during their time in the school. Nearly all pupils achieve age appropriate levels of attainment and some exceed these. Religious education attainment does not at present compare favourably with English attainment at the end of both key stages. Pupils are beginning to understand the life and teaching of the Catholic Church and to be able to apply this to their own experience. They are acquiring an increasing depth of thought as they progress through the school. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and this is reflected in their behaviour and attitudes. Pupils take a pride in their religious education work and the books are well presented. They evidence a good coverage of the curriculum with a variety of written activities including Scripture work. Most pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially those linked to stories about Jesus and when given opportunities to illustrate their work.

**Grade 2**

### **Teaching and learning in Religious Education**

The quality of religious education lessons overall is good. Teachers plan well with clear learning intentions and success criteria made explicit to pupils. Teachers use visual presentation, pictures and artefacts to interest pupils in the learning. Open questioning and talk partners effectively develop discussion and give pupils confidence in their ideas. Teachers mostly differentiate tasks using pupils' literacy abilities. Tasks given consolidate and develop the pupils' thinking. Assessments are made and compared with national levels of attainment. Teachers record the criteria they have used to establish this attainment. All work is marked, mostly by praise and appropriate comments, and some marking suggests improvement points. Occasionally these improvements have been made. Parents receive information of future religious education topics and how they could help with the learning at home. Homework is given regularly and is devised to involve families with their child's religious education learning. Religious education curriculum meetings for parents are held.

**Grade 2**

### **Quality of the Curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is good, and suitable for the age and abilities of the learners. It fulfils the requirement of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following the "Here I Am" programme with extra work linked to the faith development of pupils. Pupils are encouraged to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Religious education is sometimes linked to other curriculum areas such as literacy, drama, and information and communication technology (ICT). The priest is used extremely well as an extra resource for learning. The curriculum contributes well to pupils'

spiritual and moral development. Religious key vocabulary is reinforced during each lesson. Two other faiths are studied each year. Attractive religious education displays using pupils' work reflect the importance of this subject.

**Grade 2**

### **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

The headteacher as religious education co-ordinator ensures the high priority of religious education in the school and its contribution to the educational mission of the Church. She leads training and provides individual support and guidance to ensure that non-Catholic teachers fully understand the religious education programme. Religious education is effectively monitored and feedback to individual teachers is given. Evaluations feed into the whole school improvement plan. Appropriate religious education action plans have been devised. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and the school is sensitive to anti-discriminatory practices. Three teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification and the Chair of Governors is planning to undertake this training. The budget for religious education is in line with that allocated to other core subjects. Religious education is well resourced.

**Grade 2**

