



Holy Cross Catholic Preparatory School

URN: 102609

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

30 April 2026 – 01 May 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

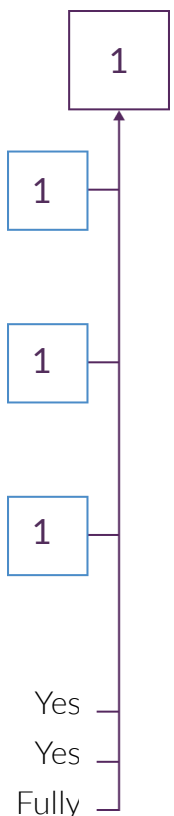
Collective worship (p.7)

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

- The mission and charism of the Holy Cross order are deeply embedded and authentically lived by the whole community, evident in both daily practice and worship, where prayer and liturgy are central to school life.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of understanding, ownership, and application of Gospel values and Catholic social teaching, which is clearly evident in lived experiences such as the Holy Cross Way.
- Chaplaincy and pastoral care are exceptionally strong, supporting the spiritual and personal development of all members of the school community.
- Leadership is inspirational, committed, and effective, ensuring consistency and continuous improvement.
- Religious education is highly effective, with inclusive teaching, strong curriculum sequencing and positive outcomes that enable all pupils to participate fully and make strong progress, regardless of starting point.

What the school needs to improve

- Seek ways to extend the school's impact by sharing its strong practice in religious education and Catholic life with the wider educational community.
- Further enrich pupils' understanding and lived experience of Catholic social teaching by developing more structured opportunities for engagement with recognised Church frameworks that deepen application and reflection across curriculum and Catholic life.

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

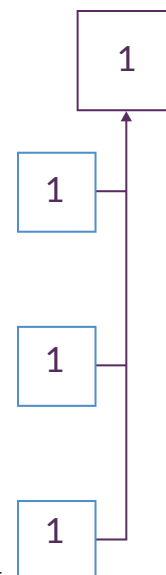
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 at Holy Cross Preparatory School make an exceptional contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit deeply from it. They articulate the school's mission and charism with confidence, clarity and authenticity. Pupils demonstrate not only secure knowledge, but a genuine internalisation of its values. Across all age groups, pupils show a developed understanding of Gospel values and Catholic social teaching, applying these in meaningful and practical ways. This is evident in their enthusiastic engagement in charitable initiatives, including immense support for Holy Cross Convent School in Chalala, Zambia. Pupils demonstrate a strong commitment to caring for creation through the work of Eco councillors, who speak passionately about environmental responsibility. Pupils embrace leadership opportunities with maturity and commitment; these roles are purposeful and reflect a genuine desire to act as agents of change within the school and wider community. Relationships are exceptionally strong, characterised by respect, kindness and inclusivity. Pupils speak confidently about initiatives such as the 'Buddy Bus Stop', demonstrating a shared responsibility for one another's wellbeing. Those from different faith backgrounds speak positively about their experience, reflecting the inclusive and enriching nature of the school's Catholic identity. Parents affirm that the school provides a warm, caring and faith-centred environment in which pupils feel valued, grow in confidence and flourish. As a result, pupils develop into thoughtful, compassionate and reflective individuals who are well prepared to contribute positively to society.

The provision for Catholic life and mission at Holy Cross is highly effective and deeply embedded, reflecting a shared commitment among staff to the school's mission. The

environment is rich in visible signs of faith, thoughtfully created to promote reflection and spiritual growth. Faith leaders are a visible and valued presence, confidently supporting and leading acts of worship and charity initiatives. Chaplaincy provision is a significant strength, offering accessible and responsive support that enables both pupils and staff to engage deeply with their faith. Pastoral care is exceptional and firmly rooted in the Catholic understanding of human dignity; staff know pupils well and provide high levels of support, ensuring that all feel valued and included. Staff are committed and confident witnesses who model Gospel values consistently, supported by ongoing formation and professional development. Parents recognise the profound impact of this provision, noting the positive influence on pupils' character and spiritual development.

Leadership at Holy Cross is highly effective, providing clear direction and ensuring that Catholic life and mission remain central to all aspects of the school's work. Leaders demonstrate a deep passion for the school's charism, which is reflected in strategic decision-making and daily practice. They have established a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement, underpinned by a strong commitment to the spiritual and moral development of both pupils and staff. Staff are well supported through high quality professional development and ongoing formation, and speak positively about the nurturing and affirming culture within the school. Self-evaluation is rigorous and draws on a range of evidence including pupil voice, parental feedback and systematic monitoring. Trustees provide both strong support and appropriate challenge. The school community is enriched by the presence of members of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross on the trustee board and staff. Their leadership provides a powerful and authentic witness to the charism of the order. Through her work, the Chaplain nurtures and sustains the spiritual life of the school, including leading the highly valued 'Time for God' parental formation group. She also plays a key role in strengthening the relationship between the school and St Ann's parish, fostering a visible and meaningful connection. This strong partnership has had a notable impact, supporting families in deepening their faith.

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

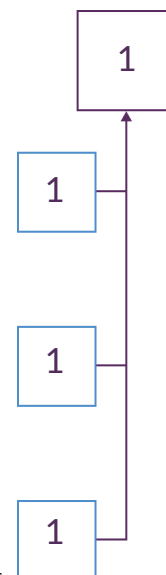
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 at Holy Cross achieve very highly in religious education and demonstrate secure, and increasingly sophisticated, knowledge of key theological concepts. They make meaningful connections within their learning, explain their thinking clearly and apply their understanding to relevant contexts. Across the school, pupils engage enthusiastically in lessons, responding thoughtfully to questions of meaning, belief and purpose. They speak confidently, using appropriate religious vocabulary, and show an ability to reflect on how their learning relates to their own lives and experiences. Older pupils, in particular, demonstrate developed skills of reasoning and justification, often extending their responses beyond recall to include personal insight and theological reflection. The effective use of 'Building Learning Power' supports pupils in becoming more analytical and reflective learners. Outcomes are strong; assessment indicates that attainment in religious education is in line with, and in some cases exceeds, that of other subjects. Pupils' work shows clear progress over time, both in knowledge and depth of understanding. The quality of presentation is consistently high, reflecting pupils' pride in their work, and feedback is responded to thoughtfully. Pupils value opportunities to share their learning with their families; religious education books are regularly sent home, enabling parents to celebrate pupils' successes and engage with their development. Pupils are developing as confident, reflective and articulate learners, well equipped to continue their theological and spiritual journey.

The quality of provision in religious education is consistently strong, enabling pupils to achieve well and engage deeply with their learning. Teaching is effective across the school,

underpinned by strong subject knowledge and a clear understanding of how to deliver the curriculum in an engaging and challenging way. Lessons are carefully structured and incorporate a range of strategies that promote discussion, reflection and active participation. High-quality questioning is a particular strength; teachers skilfully probe understanding and extend pupils' thinking. This was evident in a lesson on Pentecost, where pupils engaged in thoughtful art analysis, responded to high-level questioning and were given time for personal reflection. Pupils were able to make strong connections to prior learning, including the principles of Catholic social teaching. Assessment is purposeful and embedded, supporting teachers in identifying next steps and adapting teaching to meet pupils' needs. Feedback is effective and contributes to pupils' improving depth of response. The curriculum is well planned, progressive and securely rooted in the *Religious Education Directory*. It is carefully sequenced to build on prior learning and supports pupils in developing both knowledge and deeper understanding over time. Strong links are made between religious education and the wider life of the school, particularly through Catholic social teaching and the school's mission, enabling pupils to see the relevance of their learning in practical and meaningful ways.

Leadership of religious education at Holy Cross is highly effective and ensures that the subject remains central to the mission and life of the school. Leaders demonstrate a clear vision and a strong commitment to maintaining high standards of teaching and learning. Monitoring and evaluation processes are rigorous and well established. These provide leaders with an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for development, enabling them to take timely and appropriate action. There is a strong focus on continuous improvement, particularly in developing greater depth of theological understanding and reasoning within pupils' work. Professional development is prioritised and carefully planned, ensuring that staff are confident, well supported and equipped to deliver high-quality religious education. This results in consistency of provision across the school. Leaders also ensure that assessment systems are robust and used effectively to track progress and inform teaching. The curriculum is thoughtfully designed and regularly reviewed to ensure it remains ambitious, relevant and aligned with diocesan guidance.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

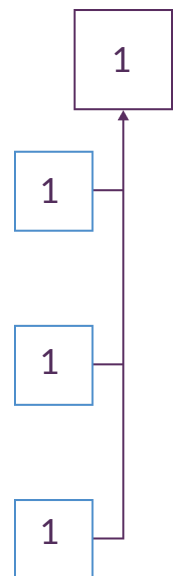
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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 at Holy Cross participate in prayer and liturgy with enthusiasm, reverence and independence. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the purpose and structure of worship and engage with sincerity and respect. Strong systems are in place to train and support pupils in leading different forms of worship. This was demonstrated by Year 5 pupils who planned and delivered a pupil-devised liturgy focused on 'spring cleaning our hearts' and preparing to honour Mary during the month of May. Pupils selected scripture thoughtfully, wrote prayers and created opportunities for personal reflection, demonstrating authentic ownership of worship. During a whole school assembly led by Year 1, pupils reflected on the discovery of a nest within the school grounds and linked this meaningfully to God's creation and humanity's responsibility as stewards of the earth. Pupil singing enhances the quality and prayerfulness of liturgy significantly, exemplified during a Year 1 act of worship through the joyful singing of 'Come Join the Circle, Share God's Word with Me'. Pupils engage confidently with scripture and articulate clearly how Gospel messages are a call to action within their own lives. Liturgy is highly inclusive and pupils from all faith backgrounds feel welcomed, respected and able to participate fully. Pupils develop as reflective, spiritually aware and compassionate young people who understand the importance of prayer and liturgy within daily life.

The quality of prayer and liturgy at Holy Cross is exceptional and deeply embedded within the rhythm of each day, it is carefully planned to ensure that it is meaningful, inclusive and spiritually enriching. Pupils experience a rich variety of opportunities for prayer and liturgy, firmly rooted within the liturgical year, including the Lenten Walk created by Year 6 pupils to

give the whole school community an immersive experience of the Passion narrative. Creative and immersive experiences deepen pupils' engagement and understanding of the Church's traditions. The wider curriculum makes a significant contribution to liturgical life, with departments such as Music, Art, Drama and French supporting and enhancing worship through carefully planned activities, such as the art project on the depiction of Angels. Prayer spaces across the school are thoughtfully designed and contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual development. Class prayer areas, a dedicated prayer room and an outdoor prayer garden provide calm and reflective spaces that encourage encounter with God. These experiences support pupils in engaging prayerfully and reverently with worship.

Leadership of prayer and liturgy at Holy Cross is highly effective and ensures that worship remains central to the mission and identity of the school. Leaders demonstrate a clear vision and deep commitment to developing a culture in which prayer is valued, carefully planned and fully integrated into daily school life. Strong structures are in place and prioritised at the Faith and Education Committee, for example to support participation and sustain high quality provision, including the effective development of pupil leadership in worship. Chaplaincy is a significant strength and is shared collaboratively across the school. Teachers report that they feel well supported with training, guidance and resources. This collective approach ensures that worship is inclusive and responsive to the needs of the community. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and ensure that leaders have an accurate understanding of strengths and priorities for development. Leaders are reflective and forward-thinking, continually seeking ways to strengthen pupil participation and ensure that worship reflects the diversity and richness of the school community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Holy Cross Catholic Preparatory School
School unique reference number (URN)	102609
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3146001
Full postal address of the school	George Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7NU
School phone number	020 8942 0729
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Sarah Hair
Chair of Governors	Sister Margaret Donovan
School Website	www.holycrossprepschool.co.uk
Trusteeship	Religious Order Holy Cross Preparatory School Kingston
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Catholic Independent School
Admissions policy	Selective
Age-range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Girls
Date of last denominational inspection	10 October 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Rachael Shields Lead

Wendy Mcclumpha

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