

Appendix to diocesan inspection report on Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, London SW6 4BL, dated 22nd September 2021.

### **The Fulham Bilingual**

The Fulham Bilingual is a section of Holy Cross Catholic Primary school, set up in partnership with Charles de Gaulle Lycée, a French private school, to provide a primary bilingual education. For alternate weeks, the children are fully immersed in French or English, learning only in that language. It is a two-form entry school: 1 form (28 pupils) per year is admitted through Holy Cross and 1 form (28 pupils) per year is admitted via the Lycée. There is no requirement for the pupils admitted through Holy Cross Catholic school to be Catholic. The curriculum is a combination of the English and French national curriculums however, religious education is only taught to the Holy Cross enrolled pupils due to the secular ethos of the French education system. The pupils who are enrolled via the Lycée are not permitted to study religious education or to be involved in acts of worship. Those who are admitted through Holy Cross are required to do so, and are taught religious education on Wednesday afternoons when the French pupils are not timetabled to be in school. They also have acts of worship during this time.

### **Classroom Religious Education**

The leadership and staff of the Holy Cross section of The Fulham Bilingual school aims to provide a religious education curriculum that is ambitious and rigorous. This is a commendable vision which demonstrates evidence of their commitment to religious education in what is a unique situation and delivered within a very specific time frame. They work collaboratively with partner schools to plan, moderate and assess their pupils.

In a discussion with pupils, it was clear that they enjoy religious education and value its place in the curriculum. Pupils' comments included, 'we learn about religious education and life as a Catholic,' 'We learn about other faiths,' 'We learn about stories in scripture and can retell these stories in our writing,' and 'we can learn new information.' Pupils are proud to belong to the Holy Cross section of The Fulham Bilingual and feel it is a privilege to be part of a 'unique' school.

During the inspection, every year group was observed. The pupils are keen learners and are inspired by opportunities to learn about religious education. Their knowledge is generally good but, as a result of limited learning time, deeper theological understanding at all ages, is limited. In the most effective lessons observed, pupils were engaged in high quality discussion with opportunities to ask questions and challenge their thinking. For example, in the Reception class where the classroom was set up to explore the concept of God's family, pupils engaged with the teacher in small group discussions where one explained to the group a photo of their baptism saying, 'they put water on my head to welcome me to the Church.' In a Year 4 lesson, the pupils worked collaboratively on discussing beliefs found in the Exodus story of the 'burning bush.' In a Year 6 lesson, the pupils were learning about nature of God expressed in some Biblical metaphors. They then reflected on these metaphors and made links to current social justice issues to include in a prayer.

Teachers' planning is clearly collaborative and this was evident from the progressive content observed through the school.

### **What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?**

- Continue to evaluate the content of the current curriculum provision to ensure the basic principles of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory are secure.
- To involve parents in religious education through home learning activities and dialogue

## **Catholic Life of the Bilingual Section**

The Leadership team and staff have worked very effectively with the Lycée to provide a values based ethos and vision that complements the Catholic life of the school. They have a very good understanding and expression of their ecclesial identity, however, due to pupils of Holy Cross at The Fulham Bilingual only experiencing religious education on a Wednesday afternoon, pupils do not receive their weekly entitlement of 10% curriculum time for religious education. This restriction naturally limits the school in offering a wide range of opportunities for experiencing Catholic Life. The school aims to provide opportunities for increasing participation in Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy however due to the restricted timetable and the recent Covid-19 pandemic and resulting national lockdowns this has affected the school's plans to make visits to the local parishes and for children to participate in sacramental experiences. The leadership team are aware of this and have plans to improve this. The strongest experience of Catholic liturgy is currently evident in child – led collective worship. Pupils said that they really valued the opportunity to plan, prepare and deliver a prayerful and reflective session for their peers. The collective worship observed was authentically planned by a group of children who confidently led the rest of the year group on the theme of 'kindness.'

Pupils are aware of their call to action for social justice. Linking this to the Church's call and the theological underpinning of this action is less secure. Pupils were able to talk about a range of charitable initiatives they had been involved with and this is clearly something the school places value on. Pupils are articulate and capable of now being able to choose charities which have meaning for them and to work with one another on leading initiatives.

There was an excellent response to the parent questionnaire and it is clear parents are very supportive of the school. They were honest about the school's current restricted provision of opportunities for Catholic worship and expressed a hope that the children and parents could become more involved in the life and worship of their local parishes.

It was evident from discussions with the executive head and leadership team that, despite limitations on the school for religious education, they are ambitious for the school as a Catholic community and committed to the call of human flourishing. This vision is clearly shared with staff and was seen in the respectful and caring relationships between teachers and pupils. It is due to this vision and commitment that The Fulham Bilingual has a clear identity as a Catholic community.

### **What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?**

- Pupils need to take the initiative in a sustained project which will highlight their understanding and appreciation of the Church's call to action for justice and peace.
- To actively engage pupils and parents in the experience of Catholic worship.