

Archdiocese of Cardiff



Catholic School Inspection Report Saint Gabriel's Catholic Primary School

Inspection dates	4-6 November 2019
Reporting Inspector	Mrs Jacqueline Phillips
Accompanying Inspector	Mrs Sheelagh McCool
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Number on roll	189
Local Authority	Newport
Chair of Governors	Mrs Claire Heath
School Address	Ringland Circle, Newport NP19 9PQ
Tel. no.	01633 273937
Email address	stgabriels.primary@newport.gov.uk
Parish served	All Saints Parish
Date of previous inspection	September 2011
Headteacher	Mrs Maria Harris

Catholic School inspection aims to assess outcomes, provision and leadership and management in each of the three Inspection Areas:

Inspection Area 1: Catholic Life and Ethos

Inspection Area 2: Curriculum Religious Education

Inspection Area 3: Collective Worship

Inspectors provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on prospects for improvement, both of which are based on the judgements arrived at in inspecting the three areas.

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent or Outstanding	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice or practise that is both consistent and highly effective.
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate and Needs Improvement or Requires Improvement	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory and Needs Urgent Improvement or Inadequate	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The table below shows the terms that Archdiocesan inspectors use and a broad idea of their meaning. It is for guidance only.

Proportion	Description
With very few exceptions	Nearly all
90% or more	Most
70% or more	Many
60% or more	A majority
Close to 50%	Half/around half
Below 40%	A minority
Below 20%	Few
Less than 10%	Very few

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Archdiocese of Cardiff Schools website: www.rcadcschools.org

Context

Saint Gabriel's Roman Catholic Primary School is situated in Ringland, a large local authority housing estate on the eastern fringe of Newport. The school's catchment area comprises a mix of private and local authority housing. The majority of pupils are from the Ringland and Alway estates, which are designated Flying Start areas.

The school caters for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. At the time of inspection, there are 189 pupils on roll. This is made up of 94 Catholic pupils, comprising 50% of the school population, 42 pupils of other Christian denominations, 6 of other faiths and 48 with no religions and no religious affiliation.

Pupils represent the full ability range. 21% of the pupils are identified as having additional learning needs. There is 1 pupil with a statement of special educational needs. There are 62 pupils from ethnically defined groups and 63 pupils for whom English is not their first language. No pupils come from Welsh speaking homes. Currently 21% of the children are eligible to receive free school meals.

There have been a number of staffing changes since the last inspection. The previous substantive Head teacher left at the end of August 2017 and was temporarily replaced by an Executive Head teacher (seconded for two terms) and a newly appointed non-teaching deputy head teacher. The latter was appointed Head teacher in May 2018. The current deputy head teacher was appointed and commenced her role this September 2019. There are 5 full-time and 4 part-time teachers of whom 4 are Catholic and hold the CCRS. 1 teacher holds the MA in Catholic Leadership and NPQH and 2 support staff have completed the CAREC course.

The Religious Education Team is made of the head, deputy and the Religious Education leader who has held the role for 4 years.

In addition, the school has opened two new classes due to increasing numbers, one in September 2018 and the other September 2019.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

Good

Catholic education at St Gabriel's Primary School is good because:

- a Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of school life.
- the Head teacher has a clear vision and drive for the development of the school.
- the school is a welcoming and inclusive community with a central goal and shared vision.
- standards in work produced by pupils are good.
- there are good partnerships with parents.

What are the school's prospects for improvement?

Good

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the Head teacher is highly motivated and has high expectations of herself, staff and pupils.
- there is potential to move teaching to good or better with development planning and CPD.
- systems and structures are in place which enable leaders and managers to monitor, evaluate, analyse and review the impact of school practices on all aspects of Religious Education, prayer and worship.
- the whole school community is committed to the school's mission statement.

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

R1: Improve the quality and variety of teaching by developing a shared pedagogy so that all lessons have pace, challenge and include independent learning.

R2: Continue to develop the role of the Religious Education Team within the school and promote appropriate leadership training for Religious Education Co-ordinator and Deputy Head teacher through CPD and observing best practice in other schools.

R3: Introduce peer-assessment in Religious Education and develop plenary sessions to focus on next step learning.

R4: Continue to develop the sense of awe and wonder within acts of Collective Worship.

The school will submit a Post-Inspection Action Plan to the Director of Religious Education that shows how it will address the recommendations. Submission should be within 45 working days of publication of the report. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the Archdiocese.

Main Findings

Inspection Area 1: Catholic Life and Ethos	Good
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The extent to which the pupils at St Gabriel's contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good.

Most pupils actively participate in the Catholic Life of the school and are ambassadors of their mission statement, "As part of God's family, living, loving and learning together: striving to be the best that we can be". They are involved in its evaluation, fully participating in a dedicated day to reviewing their mission statement through a range of creative mediums and peer partnerships. The School Prayer is known by all pupils and said every day as part of collective worship throughout the school.

Pupils show an ability to listen, to say thank you and show appreciation and understanding of each other especially through their response to the Catholic Pupil Profile Virtues and the relevance of these to daily living.

There is a clear sense of an inclusive community and the school promotes love and forgiveness for all. This is evident in the excellent relationships that exist within classes where staff members actively promote and teach the importance of love, respect and reconciliation and where pupil's achievements are celebrated.

Pupils show a respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. Most pupils show respect, care and concern for others on a daily basis and understand they are responsible for their choices and actions. During the inspection behaviour throughout the school was generally good but occasional low-level disruption was observed in classes.

Pupils take on roles of responsibility in the school and wider community. The Chaplaincy Team contributes to the ethos of the school and has introduced Values and Virtues Certificates, produced prayer cards for visitors, attended the Monday Club in the Parish and actively participate in the Dementia Friends Awareness Scheme.

Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and the Archdiocese. They celebrate a variety of liturgical events with the parish and Archdiocese such as the Harvest Festival, Thursday Mass, and the Good Shepherd Liturgy. Parishioners are invited into school for assemblies and to act as reading buddies.

Pupils at St Gabriel's embrace a holistic approach to education which prepares them for the demands and the challenges of modern life. They appreciate what it means to have a vocation and understand the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. This was directly explored in upper key stage 2 Religious Education lessons during the inspection and specifically explored with the Mini Vinnies who actively seek ways to fundraise for national charities such as CAFOD and Mission Together. Pupils also recognised the needs of their own community and support local causes such as the Newport Foodbank and the local SVP Charity Shop.

St Gabriel's is an Inclusive school where everyone is valued. Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths, religions and cultures and pupils have visited a local Mosque and Synagogue. This

experience and learning is celebrated in displays around the school. St Gabriel's reflects its mission and identity through obvious signs of its Catholic character. The school is welcoming, friendly and organised. It has many religious artefacts and artworks produced by children displayed around the school.

The staff participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic life and Mission of the school, for example staff prayer times, Archdiocesan training and Inset with the Catholic School Cluster. As a result, staff have a strong understanding of the school's mission and are involved in shaping and supporting it.

Pastoral provision is good within the school, policies and structures are in place and there is a commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. During the inspection the children commented, "We are all friends here and we look after each other".

Governors show a dedication and commitment to their roles and are ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school. They lead by example and are regarded as good models of Catholic leadership by both staff and school community. The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given high priority by leaders. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation which has a clear focus on the Catholic Life of the school and its Mission Statement.

There are effective systems for monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the impact of the Catholic Life of the school on pupils and staff; for example, observations, learning walks, the use of a range of questionnaires and 'Progress on a Page' Reports. The school engages with parents and carers and values the contribution they make to school life. Parents' questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive towards all aspects of school life and leadership.

The school responds well to Archdiocesan initiatives. The Catholic Pupil Profile and Christian Meditation are implemented well throughout the school. Education for personal relationships fosters positive attitudes in pupils. The school uses the Ten Ten 'Life to the Full' and 'A Fertile Heart' resources to implement the Diocesan Relationship and Sex Education Toolkit.

Inspection Area 2: Curriculum Religious Education	Good
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Pupils become increasingly religiously literate as they progress through the school and they use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically as exemplified in the Fertile Heart session and pupil group interviews.

Pupils make good progress from their varied starting points. There are outstanding examples of systems for monitoring and evaluating pupil progress which have been established by the head teacher appointed in May 2018. These have been shared with the consortium as best practice and are used to ensure that pupil progress at St Gabriel's is monitored and tracked effectively through the whole-school tracking system and half termly/end key phase standards scrutiny meetings. School data indicates an upward three-year trend for Religious Education attainment in both phases for all groups of pupils in Religious Education. Variations between groups of pupils are analysed through a 'Venn Diagram' system and targets for improvement are set and thoroughly monitored.

The quality of the pupils' current work in books in Religious Education throughout the school is good and can be seen in a variety pupils' work including, diary entries, letter writing,

posters, thinking skills activities and prayers. Relationships in classrooms are good and pupils clearly stated during the inspection that they enjoyed Religious Education lessons.

Coverage of the Religious Education curriculum and the use of driver words to plan and assess work was evident in pupil books. Teachers marked work in line with school policy and pupils' self-assessed their work using a green pen and Mr Men stickers. Peer assessment was not evident during the inspection and plenary sessions did not focus on next step learning. The development of these aspects would further support pupil progress and maximise learning.

Many links are made during lessons to the Catholic Pupil Profile Virtues and how to practice these in daily living. Teachers use praise and affirmation to motivate learners and teaching assistants show care and consideration for pupils, supporting teaching and learning and the wellbeing of children. Teachers and teaching assistants use See Saw effectively as a tool to record evidence of Religious Education work outside pupils' Religious Education exercise books.

The quality of teaching is variable throughout the school. In the best practice observed, teachers managed time well, there was good pace and challenge and a range of resources and teaching strategies were used to promote good learning. This practice should be shared across the school and form part of the planned action for school improvement. However, some lessons observed did not promote independent learning, lacked challenge and pace and pupil behaviour inhibited progress. The variation in Religious Education teaching has been identified as a priority by the Head teacher and will be addressed through the school and staff development plan.

Pupils' Religious Education work is levelled and moderated by staff and moderation with the school's cluster is well established. Assessment information is shared with parents and St Joseph's RC High School. Children benefit from the long-standing and well-established transition arrangements.

Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and that the required 10% of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key phase. Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, and teachers new to Catholic education are inducted into the school and supported by the Religious Education Team.

Governors are keen to support the Head teacher and Religious Education Leader in continuing to develop Religious Education across the school. The Religious Education Link Governor is aware of Religious Education standards, and since his recent appointment has actively carried out aspects of monitoring within the school. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is broadly accurate, reflects the new framework, evaluates the school's current position and identifies areas for development.

The school is led by a highly committed, spiritual and able head teacher who is proud of her school and has a clear long-term vision for Catholic Education at St Gabriel's. She is supported by a newly appointed Deputy Head teacher who is enjoying her new role and in her short time within the school has enhanced the school music provision in liturgies and Religious Education.

The curriculum leader for Religious Education is making a positive impact on the provision and outcomes for pupils through the implementation of Godly Play and the use of art as a vehicle for learning in Religious Education.

Inspection Area 3: Collective Worship
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Good

Collective worship is a strength of the school. The newly formed Religious Education Team are on a journey of development to ensure that collective worship is a vibrant and important part of the life of the school.

Pupils' response to, and participation in the school's Collective Worship is good and a strength of the school. Acts of Collective Worship observed during the inspection engaged pupils who acted with reverence, were reflective, keen to participate and sang joyfully. Godly Play was used to good effect during the whole school assembly led by the head teacher, the visual focus added to the spiritual dimension of the worship and in class-based Godly Play, pupils fully engaged and encountered bible stories in a experiential way that nurtured faith. The class assembly, led by the children, with confidence and enthusiasm, was joyous and appreciated by pupils and parents.

Pupils take part in preparing and leading worship with a degree of independence supported by adults and were creative and well resourced.

Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer which includes scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer both traditional and contemporary. Christian Meditation and the Jesuit Examen are regularly used as a form of worship and are embedded throughout the school. The pupils' ability to pray spontaneously throughout the school is notable and they have a genuine enthusiasm and love for Collective Worship. Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts. They enjoyed talking about the liturgical display and its meaning and how the Chaplaincy Team used the liturgical year to set up prayer areas in the classroom.

Prayer foci in both classrooms and corridors provide important areas for the development of pupils' faith. They are thoughtful in their theme, display religious artefacts, pupils' responses, key words and scripture extracts. These prayer foci reinforce the 'Come and See' topics and contribute to the ethos of the school, emphasising the importance placed on learning in Religious Education.

Acts of worship reflect the Catholic character of the school and all members of the community speak positively about these worship opportunities. During the inspection, staff prayer provided a quiet reflective time with the focus on the Catholic Pupil Profile Virtues: Attentive and Discerning.

Staff are ensuring that worship is made accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context with the introduction of Godly Play which needs to be fully developed throughout the school, and then developed as best practice with other schools and the RE Support Group.

The priests from All Saints Parish are regular visitors the school and one priest is a member of the Governing Body. They support worship throughout the school

Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship and provide policies and guidelines to plan and deliver this aspect. They are supportive of the prayer and worship that has been established in the school by the head teacher and RE Leadership Team.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

47 parental responses were received from parents and very few parents attended the parents meeting.

- Nearly all parents are happy with the values and attitudes that the school promotes
- Nearly all parents are happy with the help and guidance available to their children.
- Nearly all parents agree that the school enables their children to develop spiritually through prayer and worship.

Appendix 2

Evidence Base

- Pre-inspection team consultation
- The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation
- Meetings with the head teacher, deputy and Religious Education leader
- Meetings with representatives of the governing body
- Discussions with the priest
- A meeting with parents
- Lesson observations
- Scrutiny of planning and assessment
- Scrutiny of pupils' work
- Scrutiny of prayer foci and displays
- Attendance at whole school and class-based acts of worship
- Discussions with the Chaplaincy Group, Mini Vinnies
- Discussions with pupils
- Discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff
- Parent questionnaire returns
- Observation of daily routines