



St Padarn's Catholic Primary School

URN: 400647

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Menevia

03–04 October 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

Compliance statement

- The school fulfils its obligation of 10% teaching time for religious education.
- An authorised programme of religious education study is used and taught according to the *Religious Education Directory*.
- All previous areas of improvement have been addressed.

What the school does well

- St. Padarn's is a warm and welcoming community where children and families identify 'a kind and supportive environment in which children thrive'.
- The commitment to Catholic education at St. Padarn's, shown by leaders, governors and by the head teacher, in particular, is commendable.
- A fruitful and strong school-parish partnership is valued by staff, families and parishioners.
- This diverse community embraces those of all faiths and none, working collaboratively to make sure that all feel welcome and included.
- The school is very committed to the pastoral care of all pupils. Pupils are well cared for and nurtured.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the range of teaching and learning experiences in religious education to provide an enriched, engaging curriculum that develops collaboration, independence and extends learning.
- Continue to develop prayer and liturgy throughout the school so that pupils appreciate and acknowledge the importance of stillness and reverence and enable pupils to plan child led collective worship independently of adults.
- Continue to develop and implement the planning and assessment of the *Religious Education Directory*.

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

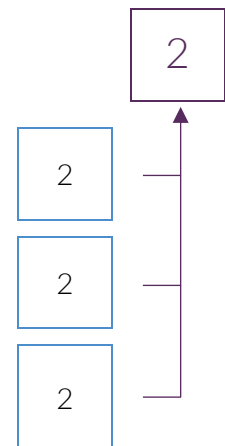
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



St Padarn's is a warm, welcoming, Catholic school, whose values and inclusive nature fully embody its mission, 'as we follow in Jesus' footsteps, we grow in faith, love and learning'. Most pupils know, sign and understand the school's mission statement and can articulate how they can live it daily in their actions and words. Pupils show respect for themselves and others, behave well and know they are unique, loved and precious to God. Pupils understand and value the nature of the school's Catholic identity and spoke enthusiastically about how they actively promote it through their work as Faith Ambassadors, setting up a prayer station to help pupils pray. The Mini Vinnies have strong links to the local parish and articulated the importance of their work by raising funds to distribute food vouchers to those in need. Catholic social teaching is prioritised in the school development plan. Pupils have engaged in some exciting curriculum projects, for example, creating a woodland area and designing climate justice posters on COP 28 for the houses of Parliament. The activities of the Creation Group include gardening and producing food to share, which supports the Cafod 'Live Simply School' award. Pupils value the support of their parish priest. They spoke enthusiastically of his visits and know his work is important in developing and strengthening their relationship with God.

A strong sense of belonging permeates all connected to the school. Staff, passionately led by the head teacher, articulated that they are "very proud to be a part of this wonderful school family" and work as a team to create a spiritual, nurturing and happy environment for everyone. This is evident in the positive relationships and wellbeing support provided to pupils. The work of two Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) supports and enhances the emotional welfare of pupils, providing help and strategies to cope with life's challenges.

The school environment reflects the Catholic identity through inclusive displays, indoor prayer areas and the woodland prayer garden. There are long established and strong parish links and the parish priest is keen to develop a visible presence of the school in the parish community. The parishioner volunteers clearly enjoy working with the school and stated it was a 'privilege'. Their contributions are valuable and valued. School and parish work together to deliver sacramental preparation, and children are offered opportunities for confession in school. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education is carefully planned and meets all statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leadership of the head teacher is praiseworthy, her vision for embedding spirituality into school life is understood and shared by pupils, staff and governors. She is well supported by the assistant head teacher and the shadow religious education leader who are both committed in promoting the school's mission and Catholic life as a core leadership responsibility. Leaders and governors are steadfast and committed in the pursuit of the Church's educational mission in the modern world, and policies and procedures reflect the Catholic identity of the school. Engagement with the diocese is very good and staff and governors attend all conferences and training provided. Parents are recognised as the first educators of the children, and leaders and governors communicate effectively with them, extending the culture of welcome to all. Parent questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school. The self-evaluation document includes pupil voice, is broadly accurate and outlines actions and targets for development. The active chair of governors and religious education link governor care deeply about the school community and are diligent in the way they hold leaders to account for the Catholic life and mission of the school, through governors' meetings, visits and monitoring. Staff place great value on the training and support they receive, and new staff are mentored by a more experienced member of the community.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

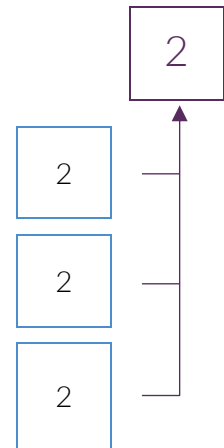
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Overall, standards in religious education are good. Pupils steadily improve their knowledge and understanding in religious education, making expected progress from their starting point as they move through the school. Pupils' religious literacy skills and understanding of the liturgical year are developing appropriately. Pupils could talk about creation and their duty as stewards to protect God's wonderful world. Pupils use and understand religious vocabulary in lessons and are able to answer teacher-led questions, however the use of more open-ended questions to guide learning and stretch pupil's thinking would extend their understanding and progress. Many pupils engaged well in the planned activities and in a majority of classes they are given the opportunity to share and explore their ideas and views with their talk partner. However, there is an over-reliance on worksheets which impacts on creativity and challenge. Lessons should include more opportunities for collaboration, and activities that enrich and extend learning.

The shadow religious education leader has engaged with the diocese to ensure ongoing curriculum development and quality of provision. She has developed and introduced a new planning format for religious education using the *Religious Education Directory*. Consequently, teachers are managing the transition from the use of a traditional scheme well and are developing a strong collaborative approach to enable successfully, planning for mixed classes. Access to detailed planning by all on the shared drive ensures progression and coverage across the school and ensures a whole school approach. *Book scrutiny* showed good coverage of the curriculum and progression throughout the school in pupils' religious knowledge, skills and understanding. In general, marking was positive and celebrated achievement. Some classes use the green and purple pen marking scheme to reflect on their learning but there was little evidence of next step learning. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to present their work using a variety of forms, for example diary and letter writing, leaflets, scrolls and posters.

However, there was little evidence of extended writing and an over-reliance on worksheets. The standard of work in religious education books, is as good as, and in some cases better than the work in English books. The school's Pupil Profile Virtues are referred to as 'Habits of the Heart'. Older pupils explained that by being curious about the world they became active in helping others. Pupils enjoy receiving awards to recognise the good work they do in growing in virtue. Appropriate resources support classroom and outdoor teaching and learning in religious education. Information technology was used confidently to support learning throughout the school. Teaching assistants supported and scaffolded learning opportunities for pupils in religious education and they have engaged in professional development opportunities facilitated by the head teacher and outside agencies.

Governors, ensure that the curriculum for religious education fully meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Directory* regarding the allocation of time and the resources given to its delivery. Religious education has a high priority in the school and has parity with other core subjects. There is a regular monitoring programme for evaluating learning in the school through a variety of activities such as learning walks and book scrutiny. The head teacher, who is the religious education leader with a teaching commitment, has a clear vision for religious education and her experience and expertise drives, secures and underpins the good standards within the school. She works with her assistant head teacher, shadow religious education leader and governors to monitor and evaluate religious education which underpins the three year school development plan for improving standards. The school self- evaluation document needs to be revised to be more evaluative and concise.

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

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

2



Pupils throughout the school respond well to the experiences of prayer and liturgy and understand and use a variety of ways to pray. They were observed praying the school prayer, traditional prayers, reflecting and singing joyously in both English and Welsh. During the inspection, class liturgies reflected the social teachings of the church and the liturgical year. Pupils work with adults to prepare and participate in classroom worship. They use and sign the gather, listen, respond, go-forth model to celebrate class liturgies and to put the key messages into practice in their own lives. The oldest pupils planned, gathered resources and created a sacred space for their worship that was reverent and joyous. The personal way in which the head teacher was able to share the message and mission of the worship allowed pupils to see her as a Christian as well as their school leader. Pupils attend Mass and take an active part in various ministries for example, welcomers, readers and choir. The whole school community Harvest Festival, led by the head teacher was enjoyed by the parents. One parent commented that St Padarn's is a blessing in our community. The pupils understood the message and sang well. Moments of silence and stillness need to be developed to ensure reverence and space for pupils to listen to God.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school, has scripture at its heart and reflects the richness of the Catholic tradition. A planned programme for prayer and liturgy provides good opportunities to engage in a range of faith formation activities, such as retreats, confession and Adoration helping develop pupils' sense of belonging and spiritual growth. Prayer is embedded in the daily rhythm of the school making it integral to lessons and gatherings of the school community. The head teacher is an exemplary role model in delivering high quality prayer and liturgy and has provided staff with professional development opportunities in this area. Teachers appreciate the resources and support provided and are becoming more confident in adapting them to suit the

needs of their class. Parents are included in the prayer life of the school through invitations to attend assemblies, prayer services and Masses and the weekly Wednesday Word provides faith-based activities to share at home.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is regularly reviewed. Leaders and governors recognise that prayer and liturgy are central to the school and, as such, allocate appropriate resources, as seen in the school environment and prayer areas. The active involvement of the parish priest provides high quality chaplaincy support which engages and motivates staff, pupils and parents. Priority is given to the celebration of the Eucharist throughout the year and there is a programme of events agreed with the parish priest which includes family and Holy Days of Obligation Masses. Governors are fully informed and updated regularly about the prayer life of the school in head teacher reports, visits and monitoring activities. The subject leader attends training opportunities provided by the diocese, and this enables her to support others in leading prayer and developing pupil skills. Leaders and governors are keen to receive regular responses, both verbally and in questionnaire form, from both parents and pupils. Parent questionnaire responses are overwhelmingly positive.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Padarn's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	400647
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6673318
Full postal address of the school	St Padarn's Catholic Primary School, Llanbadarn Road, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 1EZ
School phone number	001970623862
Headteacher	Enid Brophy
Chair of governors	David Greaney
School Website	stpadarnsrcp.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	April 2014
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Mrs Jacqueline Phillips

Mrs Sheelagh McCool

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