

Archdiocese of Cardiff



Inspection Report St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Tredegar

Inspection dates	9 - 11 January 2018
Reporting Inspector	Mr Lyndon Watkins
Accompanying Inspector	Mrs Sheelagh McCool
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	3-11 yrs
Number on roll	111
Local Authority	Blaenau Gwent
Chair of Governors	Mr Robin Davies
School Address	Ashvale, Tredegar. NP22 4AQ.
Tel. no.	01495 722899
Email address	stjosephs.primary@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk
Parish served	Tredegar
Date of previous inspection	17 – 19 September 2012.
Headteacher	Mr John McMorrow

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archdiocese of Cardiff and Inspection of denominational education under Section 50 of the Education Act 2005

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on prospects for improvement.

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	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	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	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 Archdiocesan Education website: www.rcadcschools.org

Context

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School is situated in the town of Tredegar in the Blaenau-Gwent Local Authority. It primarily serves the parish of Tredegar along with a small number of children from St John's in Rhymney.

At the time of inspection there were 111 pupils on roll, learning in five classes, three in the Foundation Phase and two in Key Stage Two. About half of children at the school are baptised Catholics and a half are from other Christian denominations. No pupils are of other world religions or of no faith at all. Blaenau-Gwent has significant areas of social deprivation. This is reflected in the school's rate of pupils entitled to free school meals (eFSM), which is at 37%. Some 20% of pupils have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and the school has identified 18% of pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

The headteacher was appointed in September 2017 and the deputy headteacher in November 2017. The school employs five full-time and two part-time teachers, 60% of whom are Catholic. There are seven teaching assistants (TAs) working at the school, 57% of whom are Catholic.

The current School Development Plan (SDP) highlights the following areas upon which to focus in Religious Education (RE) during 2017-18:

- To continue to focus on improving standards and on also improving assessment and tracking in RE.
- To raise standards of teaching and learning in RE.
- To have a greater focus on RE throughout the school.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

Adequate

The quality of Catholic education provided at St. Joseph's is adequate because:

- There is a strong sense of community in the school, which is good.
- The Catholic ethos of the school is good and community cohesion is strong.
- The quality of teaching overall is adequate.
- Standards of work produced in RE are adequate. However, at the end of the Foundation Phase they are good.
- Assessment procedures are adequate.
- The quality of leadership and management is adequate.
- The manner in which leaders monitor the Catholic life of the school and academic Religious Education is adequate.

What are the school's prospects for improvement?

Good

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The headteacher has recently been appointed to the permanent role. He exhibits the attitudes and skills required to lead the implementation of the recommendations in this report successfully.
- The subject leader for Religious Education is passionate about her role and she will be able to support the headteacher in his work effectively.
- The chair of the Governing Body (GB) is highly committed to his role, which is relatively new to him. He, and the GB as a whole, will be able to both support and challenge leaders appropriately.
- Staff show the potential to be able to put the recommendations of this report into practice successfully.

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- R1: To develop an increasingly ambitious approach to the planning of learning and teaching in order to allow for appropriate levels of independent and collaborative learning, leading also to high quality extended writing.
- R2: To raise the quality of collective worship so that it develops a sense of awe, wonder and prayerfulness in pupils.
- R3: To develop an analytical system of monitoring, evaluating and reviewing (MER) the work of the school in order to facilitate ambitious target-setting and allow governors to hold leaders to account effectively.

What happens next?

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

KQ1. How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Overall, outcomes are adequate.

When the relatively low baseline entry level of pupils is considered, most make expected rates of progress as they move through the Foundation Phase. This is less evident in Key Stage 2 (KS2), where no clear continuum of progression is in evidence. Pupils become increasingly religiously literate as they mature. However, this is an area for further development in relation, for example, to their role in leading prayer and worship (see KQ2). Some good work in relation to the concept of developing a 'growth mindset' has been done. However, this is not consistently in place and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to improve their competence as learners per se. Many pupils are passive learners: at times, in lessons observed during the inspection, their interest and enthusiasm waned. They would benefit from a more ambitious and challenging approach to the facilitation of learning.

Standards at the end of the Foundation Phase are good. In Year Two, learners benefit from an appropriate range of activities. As a result, standards of writing are good as demonstrated, for example, in the re-telling of the Visitation story and in a reflection on 'how the birth of Jesus into the Holy Family can help us in our families today'. Standards at the end of KS2 are adequate. The structure of the 'Come and See' scheme of work is followed but there is a lack of opportunity for pupils to write in depth or to learn independently. The best writing in evidence related to

information about the lives of Saints Maximilian Kolbe and St Teresa of Calcutta. Overall, the quality of work in pupils' Religious Education (RE) books is below that in their Literacy books, in which there is better evidence of extended writing in place. This discrepancy should be addressed.

The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is good. Pupils take on responsibilities and participate constructively in the Catholic life of the school. The pupils are proud of their school and are able to articulate how as a community they work hard to live the mission 'With Christ at the centre; Inspire, Believe and so Achieve'. They had played a significant part in reviewing and developing the new mission statement. Opportunities are available for pupils to understand the need to give witness to the Catholic faith in the wider community. The 'Mini Vinnies' actively support the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society through organising Mary's Meals Back Packs, and other pupil leadership groups participate in an inter-generational link with a local Nursing Home and fundraise for a number of charities including CAFOD. These activities offer real opportunities for pupils to understand ways in which they can show support for others, be considerate and make a positive difference in both the local community and the wider world. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school. He works with the staff to support and nurture pupils' faith. Pupils demonstrated in their lessons that they understand the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year and in the parish community. The school supports the parish in undertaking sacramental preparation for Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. These links enhance the Catholic life of the school and help to develop a sense of belonging for pupils.

The extent to which pupils respond to and participate in prayer and worship is adequate. Liturgical formation is planned through a programme led by the headteacher and RE Co-ordinator. Class worship, fortnightly whole-school Masses, seasonal celebrations and visits to the parish church are key areas of this programme. The Archdiocesan Collective Worship resource is used to support prayer and reflection at class level. Year 6 pupils are given opportunities to prepare, plan and organise weekly collective worship, in which they lead prayer and praise for their Key Stage 2 peers. This is clearly enjoyed by all. Another good example was the Godly Play session delivered by the RE Co-ordinator. The experience created a space for children to think creatively and make connections between religious ideas. It offered a real opportunity to strengthen the class as a spiritual community. This should be further developed and used across the school to enhance children's sense of awe and wonder and provide quality opportunities for individual reflection and response. Throughout the school, classroom prayer spaces were thoughtful in nature and supported the Religious Education topic learning journey. These important religious focal points should be used more fully to enhance pupils' faith, support the growth of personal prayer and reflection and further develop in their religious literacy. All staff would benefit from engaging in training and the opportunity to view the practice of other schools to support the growth of prayer and collective worship at all levels throughout the school.

KQ2. How good is provision?	Adequate
------------------------------------	-----------------

Overall, the quality of provision is adequate.

The quality of teaching is inconsistent in nature, ranging from good to adequate. The evidence available during the inspection indicates strength at the conclusion of the Foundation Phase (FP) and in early Key Stage 2 (KS2). In general, teachers' subject knowledge is good and this allows pupils to build their understanding. The range of teaching approaches and strategies employed is limited. Pupils would benefit from a broadening of this range in order to enhance their skills as independent and collaborative learners, so that they could enjoy a more engaging programme of learning. At times, during observed lessons, pupils' concentration and application waned. This issue would be effectively dealt with through an increase in the levels of challenge being presented by teachers. In particular, this is the case for potentially high attaining children, whose motivation would be significantly increased as a consequence. This work would involve teachers having higher expectations of pupils. There are some good examples of differentiation in place in the FP. However, in KS2, differentiation is mostly through outcome. Pupils would therefore benefit from a more targeted approach to the planning of learning. Teachers plan using the grid provided by the Archdiocese; this does create the opportunity to develop practice in the recommended way. Teachers ensure that IT is well used in lessons and pupils benefit from this as a result. This was particularly the case, during the inspection, as it facilitated success for those pupils need support in their learning in Upper Key Stage 2. The school has sufficient resources to support RE and the Catholic life of the school. The general work of teaching assistants observed during the inspection was good and their approach caring. Their role during RE lessons, in relation to deepening pupils' understanding has the potential to be further developed.

The school has established an appropriate tracking system in relation to assessment data in Religious Education. This is, as yet, in its infancy and as a result its impact to date is limited. However, it has the potential to be effective in relation to the measuring of pupil progress and in effective target-setting across the school. The quality of marking is adequate. It is completed promptly by staff and it is positive in nature but it needs to inform pupils more effectively about how well they are doing and about what they need to do to improve. Some good self-assessment procedures are in place in the FP; they need to be refined and developed in KS2, in which some good discussion about how well pupils had achieved was in evidence.

The extent to which Religious Education and the wider life of the school meets pupils needs is good; fulfilling the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The school uses the 'Come and See' programme for Religious Education, which meets the needs of learners and provides opportunities and activities to promote academic and spiritual development. The school is actively involved in serving the Common Good through charitable works and fundraising events. Conversations with pupils indicate that they felt that in supporting these organisations they were putting the teachings of Jesus into practice. Pupils spoke with pride about their involvement as part of the School Council and 'Mini Vinnies' groups and the effect their work has the welfare of

others. Pupils are becoming more fully involved in parish life through the use of a school notice board displaying news and celebrating pupils' work achievements. Other religions are appropriately studied and examples of work relating to Judaism are evident in pupils' books.

The quality of prayer and worship provided by the school is adequate. The requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is met. Worship is planned and inclusive and there is opportunity for daily prayer. Pupils stated that prayer is an important part of their lives; that they enjoyed visiting the church to pray and that prayer was a sign of their faith. Parents are encouraged to support their children in prayer by learning and sharing prayers at home. The school has purchased resources to support this important area and these are making a positive impact on the prayer and worship experience offered to the children. However, the acts of collective worship and prayer observed would have been enhanced by the use of a variety of ways of praying and opportunities for stillness and reflection to enable pupils to hold on to the sacred, spiritual experience. Pupil-led worship was evident in upper KS2, but is generally underdeveloped throughout the school and needs to continue to be a focus for whole school improvement to develop staff and pupils' ability and skills in this area. The RE Co-ordinator should share the good Godly Play practice observed during the inspection throughout the school to deepen and enrich pupils' religious experience.

KQ3. How good are leadership and management?

Adequate

Overall, the quality of leadership and management is adequate.

Governors fulfil their canonical and statutory responsibilities. The chair exhibits a passion for his role and a high level of commitment to the school. Governors have set up a 'Catholic Life of the School' committee which meets regularly. They receive updates from the RE Co-ordinator on these occasions. Governors would benefit from receiving more thorough analysis of the progress made by pupils in RE from leaders. As the tracking system (referenced in KQ1) becomes fully established this should become possible. As a result, they will be able to hold leaders to account more effectively. Governors set the strategic direction of the school in that they approve development plans, but there is potential for them to be more fully involved in this process. The same is the case with regard to their role in the self-evaluation work of the school, which is adequate. The headteacher is dedicated to his new role and is highly valued by the whole school community and the RE Co-ordinator shows a hardworking approach. Therefore governors and leaders, in partnership, have the potential to implement successfully the recommendations made in this report.

The manner in which leaders promote, monitor, evaluate and review (MER) the Catholic life of the school is adequate. Processes in this area are in their infancy and therefore, as yet, they have not made a significant impact on standards. The new Senior Leadership Team shows the potential to implement the recommendation made in this report in a way that will raise the quality of the school's work. The same is true with regard to the MER of outcomes for pupils. The tracking system established by school leaders now needs to facilitate in-depth

analysis of pupil progress in order to allow leaders to hold teachers to account and to create targets for development which flow from accurate empirical evidence. These developments would greatly enhance the quality of the school's self-evaluation work.

Leaders and managers have established a range of good partnerships with other providers. The school has an active Parents and Friends Association which meets every term to organise activities and fundraise for the school. Pastoral care is good and the school promotes and support pupil wellbeing through the ELSA and Thrive programmes. Pupils clearly feel safe in school and valued by staff. Families are supported by the provision of a range of extra-curricular activities for example, French, Zumba and Coding Clubs. Parent questionnaires indicated their support for the work of the school and appreciation of the quality of care their children are given and the commitment of the headteacher and the staff in nurturing the Catholic life of the school. The school also benefits from links with Brace's Bakery to promote healthy eating, a Tesco link to support Fairtrade school work and a Heritage link with Bedwellty House. The partnership with the secondary school is good and transition activities include visits for pupils to experience curriculum activities, opportunities staff professional development and joint liturgical celebrations. Parish links are good and parishioners join the children at school each fortnight for Mass.

The promotion of community cohesion is good. There is a shared vision in the school, where everyone is valued and included. The headteacher has successfully ensured that there is a common sense of belonging amongst staff, pupils and parents. The school plans well to meet the needs of all pupils and there is equality of opportunity for all. Pupils form friendship bonds across cultural and denominational boundaries. Parents are supportive of the work of the school and one summed up the views of many, stating 'St Joseph's is a family school where all are welcomed'.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires.

In total, seven questionnaires were returned. They were all positive in nature. They referred to:

- The strong sense of community at the school.
- The caring, open door approach experienced.
- The strong Catholic ethos at the school and
- Good standards.

Appendix 2

Evidence Base

- Pre-inspection team consultation.
- Self-Evaluation documents.
- School Improvement Plan.
- School Information Form.
- Lesson observations in five classes.
- Observations of collective acts of worship.
- Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks.
- The school environment.
- Foci for prayer and reflection.
- Discussions with staff.
- Interviews with the headteacher, the RE Co-ordinator and the chair of the governing body.
- Meeting with parents.
- Meeting with a representative group of pupils.
- Parental questionnaires.
- A range of portfolios provided.

