

Archdiocese of Cardiff



St David's Catholic Primary School, Newport

Inspection dates	12 – 14 March 2018
Reporting Inspector	Mrs J Phillips
Accompanying Inspector	Mrs S McCool
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Number on roll	216
Local Authority	Newport
Chair of Governors	Mr Simon Watkins
School Address	Park Crescent, Newport NP20 3AQ
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Parish served	All Saints, Newport
Date of previous inspection	11 – 13 May 2009
Headteacher	Mrs L Robinson

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 David's Roman Catholic Primary School is on the outskirts of Newport and is a school of the Archdiocese of Cardiff. There are 216 pupils on roll, aged 4 to 11, taught in seven single-age classes. 92.6% of the pupils are Catholic with 5.6% belonging to other Christian denominations, 0.9% following other world religions and 0.9% with no faith.

The school occupies a good site which is shared with the parish church. It is opened daily by the school, making it available for parents to use at the beginning and end of the day. All Foundation Phase classrooms have access to an outdoor covered area which leads to a forest school area. The spacious building houses eight classrooms over two floors.

The average number of pupils eligible for free school meals over the last three years is 9%, which is well below the national average of 19%. The school identifies about 10% of pupils as having additional learning needs. Many pupils are of white British ethnicity and no pupils speak Welsh as a first language. A few pupils are learning English as an additional language. The local authority looks after a very few pupils taught at the school.

The last Section 50 inspection was conducted in May 2009. There have been substantive changes in staff since this time. The previous headteacher retired in December 2015. The current headteacher took up post in June 2017 following a period as acting head. The deputy head was appointed in February 2018. The chair of governors and the Religious Education link governor took up their roles in September 2017.

Of the 9 full-time teachers, 5 are Catholic, 1 holds the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and 1 holds the National Professional Qualification for headteachers. There are 9 full-time teaching assistants and 2 higher level teaching assistants, of whom 6 are Catholic.

The school has the Platinum Green Flag, 5th Healthy schools leaf award, Fair Trade status and is an 'Investors in Families' school.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?	Good
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Catholic education at St David's is good because:

- the Catholic ethos of the school is strong and permeates all aspects of school life.
- the headteacher and leadership team have a clear vision for Catholic education.
- teaching across the school is good, with some variability evident.
- most pupils make good progress in Religious Education.
- pupils' behaviour is very good.
- partnerships with parents, the parish and the local community are very strong.

What are the school's prospects for improvement?	Good
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The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the governors are keen to develop their roles to support and challenge the school to improve outcomes and standards.
- the headteacher and leadership team have the skills and potential to make the necessary developments in order to raise standards further.
- staff exhibit the willingness and skills required to act upon the improvement plans to make a positive impact on provision.
- pupils' attitudes towards learning are good and they will respond positively to increased levels of challenge.

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

R1: Further develop Assessment for Learning in Religious Education to include self- and peer-assessment so that it is firmly embedded in classroom practice and empowers pupils to improve their learning.

R2: Create opportunities to observe, reflect on and develop the practice of teachers and staff, both within the school and with other schools to develop proven pedagogies to support the delivery of ambitious lessons in Religious Education.

R3: Further establish, plan and actively promote opportunities for independent learning in Religious Education lessons.

R4: Continue to implement the development plans for Religious Education and the Archdiocesan Pupil Profile character formation programme.

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?

Good

St David's is a happy, friendly and welcoming school with an inclusive ethos. Pupils display an interest and enthusiasm for Religious Education (RE). They make expected progress relative to their starting points and are keen to do well. Many pupils work competently when provided with appropriate tasks and guidance and as they move through the school, developing their knowledge, understanding and skills, their religious literacy increases.

Outcomes for pupils are good. Pupil attainment on entry into the school is generally low, based on the school's own RE baseline assessment. From this low starting point, many pupils make sufficient progress to reach acceptable standards by the end of the Foundation Phase and by the end of Key Stage 2 are achieving expected levels. Many pupils value Religious Education and consider it an important area of the curriculum.

Pupils demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding appropriate to their background, age and ability. There is a range of evidence showing coverage of topics taught, and in their oral and written responses many pupils use language that reflects the themes and expectations of the *Come and See* programme. The quality of pupils' recorded work is generally good throughout the school as evidenced in their books and in lesson observations (for example: prayer writing, script writing, sequencing bible stories, diary and letter writing linked to topics).

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is good. Most pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to the school community and their relationships with peers reflects the strong Catholic ethos of the school. They value being part of a flourishing Catholic community. Pupils' behaviour observed during the inspection was very good. They show respect for one another and show great care for their school and the local community. Pupils exhibit a keenness to participate in school activities and take responsibility, for instance by acting as peer mediators, playground squad, hall monitors, videographers and assisting in recycling schemes and the school fruit tuck shop.

All lessons began or ended with a prayer and reflection session linked to the RE focus of the lesson. Most children were able to be still and respond appropriately demonstrating empathy and understanding during their journey through Lent.

They articulated an awareness of the importance of key celebrations in school and the parish community throughout the liturgical year. They spoke about the Harvest festival Mass, Christmas celebrations and Sunday Masses with pride.

There is a clear plan for collective worship in the school and by KS2 pupils have experienced many opportunities to contribute to and lead acts of worship. The class collective worship files clearly evidenced pupil planning and preparation of worship linked to RE topics throughout the year. The 'Christian Meditation' programme priority has been successfully implemented throughout the school and pupils are able to reflect on gospel messages. The school is developing a plan to introduce the Pupil Profile. Pupils were able to articulate the importance they place on their school as a worshipping community where parents and parishioners regularly join them for worship and liturgy.

KQ2. How good is provision?	Good
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The quality of teaching in RE is variable but overall good across the school with most pupils making expected progress. Teachers delivered lessons that were planned in great detail and prepared with a good range of resources to support learning. In the best teaching observed during the inspection, lessons were well planned, had good pace, creative ideas were in evidence and pupils were absorbed in their learning, for example using prayer baskets to create their own prayer space, making a Lenten paper chain, using clay and art materials to respond to scripture and writing prayers for the Lenten Season.

The active involvement of learning support assistants in Religious Education lessons ensures support for pupils, although in most classes the high ratio of adult support impacted on independent learning, leaving children limited scope for choice and self-directed learning.

The school tracks pupil progress against targets identifying variance in assessment data and under-performance. The school analyses the data for each class for teacher use. A book scrutiny during inspection highlighted parity in work between RE and English books. The quality and presentation of pupils' work is consistent across the school but there is little evidence of extended writing and differentiated activities observed in lessons were not evidenced in RE books. In most classes, marking and oral feedback affirms how well pupils are doing but it does not identify how they can move forward with their learning. Peer- and self-assessment are underdeveloped.

The Religious Education curriculum and the wider life of the school enable most pupils to achieve well. Teachers provide a range of activities and experiences, within the school and beyond, which contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The teaching of Judaism, and other projects undertaken by children, help pupils to appreciate equality and diversity. Suitable opportunities are planned for pupils to appreciate the school's Welsh dimension. The use of the Welsh language in Religious Education, prayer and worship is developing. The varied extra-curricular activities, including breakfast and after-school clubs, are appreciated and valued by both pupils and parents.

Learner voice opportunities are gathered and provided through a variety of pupil groups, committees and suggestion boxes and made visible on the whole school pupil voice board. The school has been awarded Platinum Eco Status and the fifth Healthy School Leaf Award. The pupils have been involved in a review of the mission statement led by the headteacher and readily recited their school motto "A little school where big things happen" and spoke about the 'Things to do Everyday to be closer to Jesus' list. They stated that they enjoyed identifying the pupils who lived out the 'Mission of the Week Award' at the Key Stage 2 weekly assembly.

Each classroom has a dedicated prayer corner which is changed and updated in line with the Church's liturgical calendar and RE Topics. There are many opportunities throughout the school for pupils to interact prayerfully for example the Wonder Wall, Have Your Say Board and Prayer Trees.

Pupils appreciate the importance of coming together as a worshipping community and the need to include all. The recently developed Prayer Garden provides a focal point for pupil prayer and reflection in the outdoors. The prayer garden was used by pupils to explore and enjoy the wonder of prayer and a moving examination of conscience. The Chaplaincy Area and Mission Together Display provide a quiet space for children to sit and pray. The current Creative Schools Mosaic project is based on scripture and when completed will provide a visual focal point for reflection.

KQ3. How good are leadership and management?	Good
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The Catholic life of the school is given high priority by the governors and the recently appointed headteacher and leadership team, who are dedicated and keen to develop the Catholic mission and direction of the school within a 21st century context.

The headteacher is committed to Catholic values and principles and these lie at the heart of the school's vision. She leads the school well. Staff development is promoted and the school provides training and support to enable all staff to understand the Church's mission in education and play their unique part in contributing to the ethos and character of the Catholic school community.

Governors discharge their statutory duties and ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The newly appointed link governor is motivated to support the Catholicity of the school and is involved in monitoring the provision for curriculum Religious Education. The newly appointed chair of governors is passionate about St David's school and has a clear understanding of his role as critical friend. Together they expressed their total commitment to support the school's journey of improvement.

The Religious Education Co-ordinator is a member of the leadership team and leads the improvement of provision and standards in Religious Education. A range of monitoring evidence scrutinised during the inspection indicated that informal and formal monitoring of the Catholic life of the school result in priorities for improvement being identified, planned and evaluated to ensure long term

school improvement. Suitably detailed action plans have been developed to address these. The RE Co-ordinator works closely with the deputy head to set targets and analyse RE data. The school is currently working with the local cluster and school improvement groups to improve provision and develop more ambitious teaching and learning in Religious Education throughout the school. The school should seek to visit other settings and observe best practice, make fuller use of ICT and encourage independent, collaborative and reflective learning to support this journey.

Relationships within the school community are good. Parents were overwhelmingly positive about the school and spoke very highly of the school, describing it as a safe, secure and happy environment for their children. They stated that “The staff are an extension of the family and any problems are dealt with promptly” and “the school supported children and their families when experiencing difficult situations”

Good partnerships exist with other providers, agencies and organisations. Good transition links exist with the receiving Catholic secondary school and feeder nursery schools. The school offers quality pastoral care and guidance to enhance the well-being of the pupils and their families including family learning courses, and nurture programmes.

Staff provide positive role models for nurturing in pupils a knowledge and love of the Catholic faith and key staff support parish sacramental programmes. Pupils are encouraged to play an active role in their parish and the local and wider community. There is a Mini Vinny and Chaplaincy Group link with the local St Vincent de Paul Society. Carol Services, concerts and Masses, led by the school, are well attended by parishioners. The parish priest visits the school, providing support for the development of the spiritual life of the community, enriching the Catholic ethos.

Community cohesion is good and there is a common sense of belonging in the school where all are welcomed in a spirit of equality and respect. Pupils are developing an awareness of the common good and spoke about their fund raising activities for agencies such as Macmillan Cancer Support, CAFOD, Mission Together and the Yemen Toy Sale Project. Through the various committees and clubs pupils are beginning to understand the role they have as leaders in the school and wider world. Through the work of the Eco Committee they have a good awareness of their responsibilities as global citizens.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

Parental/Carers' Questionnaires.

41 questionnaires were received. 100% of these were highly positive in nature.

Common references made were:

- It was a family school where everyone was cared for.
- Parents are happy with the values and attitudes that the school fosters.
- Parents are made to feel welcome in school.
- The school seeks the views of parents/carers and takes account of their suggestions and concerns.
- They are happy with the help and guidance available to children.
- The school enables children to develop spiritually through prayer, worship and school Masses.

Appendix 2

Evidence Base

- Pre-inspection team consultation
- The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation
- Meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher
- Discussions with the religious education link governor and chair of governors
- A meeting with parents
- Lesson observations
- Scrutiny of planning and assessment
- Scrutiny of pupils' work
- Scrutiny of prayer foci and displays
- Attendance at phase and class based acts of worship
- Discussions with pupils
- Discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff
- Parent questionnaire returns
- Observation of daily routines