

Archdiocese of Cardiff



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Newport Inspection Report

Inspection dates	11th – 13th November 2019
Reporting Inspector	Mr Lyndon Watkins
Accompanying Inspector	Ms Julie Beaumont-Rees
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	4 – 11 years
Number on roll	215
Local Authority	Newport
Chair of Governors	Mrs Andi O'Brien
School Address	Fairoak Avenue Newport NP19 8FW
Tel. no.	01633 258801
Email address	jospri@newport.gov.uk
Parish served	All Saints
Date of previous inspection	20th – 22nd June 2011
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Beckett

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

St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School is situated in the east of the city of Newport. It serves a diverse local community. There currently 215 pupils on roll; 58% of them are baptised Catholics, 28% are from other Christian denominations, 5% are from other world religions and 8% have no religious affiliation. Some 20% have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and 14% are identified as having Additional Learning Needs (ALN). The three-year average figure for pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals (eFSM) is at 9%, which is below the national average. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2016 and the deputy headteacher a year later. The majority of staff have joined the school since the last inspection in 2011, therefore, there has been a substantial amount of change. Two thirds of teachers are Catholic and two of them hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS).

The recommendations from the last inspection were to:

‘R1: Develop the role of the Religious Education co-ordinator.

R2: Undertake regular moderation sessions to refine the accuracy and consistency of teacher assessment using *NBRIA Levels of Attainment*.

R3: Further differentiate activities to challenge more able pupils to achieve the higher levels of attainment and provide more scaffolding to support the less able.

R4: Develop the use of the Welsh language in prayer and worship, supported by *Canllaw Addoliad I Ysgolion Catholig*.’

In relation to Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school, the following has been identified in the School Development Plan (SDP) as being the priority for 2019-20:

To embed the Catholic Pupil Profile and the RSE [Relationships and Sex Education] scheme across the school and the introduction of the Fertile Heart programme in Years 4-6.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?	Excellent
---	------------------

Catholic education at St Joseph’s is excellent because:

- the quality of leadership is excellent. This has made a significant impact on the work of the school.
- the Catholic life of the school is excellent. It is a very strong, inclusive and welcoming community.
- the quality of collective worship is excellent. Staff and pupils plan and lead a range of innovative and inspirational acts of worship across the school.
- standards attained in Religious Education are consistently good and a minority are excellent.

What are the school’s prospects for improvement?	Excellent
---	------------------

The school’s prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- the progress made over the last three years has been rapid, due to the excellent work of leaders and the positive responses of teachers and support staff. There is every reason to expect this process of improvement to continue.
- leaders have clear ideas about the areas to be developed in the short and medium term. They have the full support of a committed governing body.

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

R1: Improve the quality, range and depth of extended writing in Religious Education in order to facilitate academic excellence.

R2: Ensure that assessment procedures are put into practice consistently across the school.

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

Inspection Area 1: Catholic Life and Ethos	Excellent
---	------------------

The quality of the Catholic Life and Ethos of the school is excellent.

The manner in which the school actively encourages pupils to contribute to the development of its Catholic Life is outstanding. This is facilitated by the Chaplaincy Group within the School Parliament which functions smoothly and effectively. The children are justifiably proud of the responsible roles that they play. This is producing concrete results such as the development of a Prayer Garden, a ‘stained glass window’, charitable works including supporting poverty-stricken people locally and in making donations to Mary’s Meals and CAFOD. Pupils have regular opportunities to share their views about the school and its work. As a result, they feel that they are valued members of the school community. Pupils report that they value greatly the chaplaincy work and pastoral care provided for them. This includes the work of the parish clergy who are linked to the school. Nearly all pupils benefit greatly from this work which contributes towards them being happy, confident and secure in their emotional and spiritual growth. An innovative approach towards giving pupils a real and active experience of pilgrimage has been taken, culminating with a pilgrimage to visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Penrhys, which clearly had a positive impact on those taking part. Many pupils understand the concept of having a vocation in life in an age-appropriate manner. They are able to relate this to their own lives and to those of people such as priests, nuns, teachers and doctors. Nearly all pupils at St. Joseph’s are proud to be a part of the school and they appreciate the work of the staff who help them.

The school’s Mission Statement *‘loving God through our love of learning and our love of one another’* is modelled with commitment by leaders and it’s lived out by staff in day to day life. The sense of community across the school is palpable. This is something referenced by the parents who contributed to the inspection process; they appreciate the openness of staff and the welcome that they receive. St Joseph’s is clearly a very supportive community. The school environment fully reflects its Catholic nature and its Mission Statement. This includes many impressive displays throughout the building. The commitment of staff towards developing the Catholic life of the school is very strong and, as a consequence, its Catholic ethos and identity are clear both to its members and to visitors. This, in turn, effectively promotes the very good behaviour

of nearly all pupils. The school provides many opportunities for the promotion of pupils’ moral and spiritual development. The manner in which each child is seen and treated as a precious creation of God is an outstanding feature in the life of the school. Pastoral care is therefore very strong. It is provided by staff, a link governor and by clergy. Leaders exhibit a caring and understanding approach towards all staff in their daily dealings with them. Appropriate pastoral programmes are in place and leaders have ensured that they follow Archdiocesan guidance in relation to current developments in this area. The school has made an impressive start to the implementation of the Catholic Pupil Profile as directed by the Archdiocese and it plays a prominent role in the life of the school, featuring in collective worship and in lessons.

Leaders have a deep level of commitment to the Church’s mission in education and to the continual development of the Catholic life of the school. This is seen as a core responsibility by leaders and governors. Consequently, leaders have a clear vision in relation to their work and well thought through priorities are in place. In the 2019-20 academic year, for example, the School Development Plan references work relating to the *Catholic Pupil Profile*, the *Relationships and Sex Education Policy* and to the *introduction of the Fertile Heart Programme*. In-Service Training (INSET) provides appropriate support for the professional development of staff. Governors show a deep level of commitment to and pride in the school. They are able to offer a very good range of expertise from which the school benefits. They display impressive and honest levels of knowledge in relation to the quality of the school’s work and to its future priorities. The governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic life of the school. They are fully supportive of the innovative approach of leaders. The headteacher is deeply committed to her role; her diligent and determined approach to her work is admirable and she has clearly had a very positive impact on the life of the school and on standards in her relatively short time in post. The Religious Education Co-ordinator (REC) is inspirational in her role and she provides an excellent model for her colleagues. This partnership provides excellent leadership for the school and the potential for further growth and improvement is clearly in place. The headteacher and the REC, in partnership, have an excellent sense of vision from which the school will benefit greatly. The manner in which leaders’ work ensures that Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school are not only given equal status with other core subjects but, that they enjoy pride of place in terms of their priorities is particularly impressive. The manner in which leaders engage with and welcome parents and members of the wider family is excellent. A particularly strong example of this is the ‘Grandparents’ Day’ initiative in which children’s grandparents spend time in school enjoying taking part in art, cookery and coding activities with their grandchildren. This is greatly appreciated by the families involved.

Inspection Area 2: Curriculum Religious Education	Good
--	-------------

The quality of Curriculum Religious Education is good.

There is sound evidence in place to suggest that most pupils make good progress from their varied starting points as they move through the school. Teacher assessment in 2019 identified that 97% attained the expected Level 2+ at the end of the Foundation Phase and 93% did so at the end of Key Stage Two. The proportion of pupils attaining at above expected levels was 26% in the Foundation Phase and 28% in Key Stage Two. Groups of pupils such as those with EAL, ALN and eFSM status make appropriate progress. Leaders have identified that they aim to raise the proportion of boys who are able to write at above expected levels. Most pupils are religiously literate and engaged young people. The high quality of the Catholic life of the school and of collective worship contribute significantly to this through the work of the School Parliament and due to the impact of Godly Play. Many pupils show the ability to reflect spiritually and to think ethically. Most pupils are actively engaged in and enjoy lessons although a few lost their focus in lessons observed during the inspection and therefore did not learn to their full potential. The quality of work in pupils’ books overall is good and there is evidence of excellence in a minority. In the Foundation Phase for example excellent learning involving the signs and symbolism related to the Sacrament of Baptism is particularly impressive. In Key Stage Two, inspirational learning on the theme of All Souls’ Day allowed pupils to increase their understanding of the Church’s teaching about eternal life.

Teachers plan learning to a good standard in a consistent manner. This contributes well to the standards attained. All teachers exhibit at least good subject knowledge and some have excellent knowledge. Overall, the quality of teaching is good with a minority of it being excellent. Rarely, adequate levels are in evidence. In the excellent teaching observed during the inspection, the positive traits in evidence were: very high quality of teacher-pupil relationships, high expectations of pupils, deep subject knowledge and spirituality, expert questioning and probing of learners and an ambitious approach to teaching and learning. The few adequate elements of practice observed related mostly to the pace and timing of lessons. Overall, the quality of teachers’ assessment work is good. Marking is positive in nature and many examples of pupils being asked to respond to it in order to further their learning are in evidence. In some classes, good use is made of end of topic self-assessment but a fully consistent approach to this is needed. In order to encourage consistency of teacher assessment a good portfolio of samples of pupils’ learning is in place for teachers to use for reference. The quality of informal, verbal feedback to pupils is good and sometimes excellent. Teaching Assistants are well deployed and their work contributes significantly to the quality of lessons.

Leaders and governors ensure that the work of the school meets the requirements of the Bishops’ Conference in both Key Stages. The school’s self-evaluation document is good and it provides a fair reflection of its work. It results in appropriate targets for development being identified. The school’s assessment tracking system is good. It

enables leaders to analyse data and to identify rates of pupils’ progress as they move through the school. The monitoring, evaluating and reviewing of standards in Religious Education and of the quality of teaching is good and the results of it are fed-back to governors and staff.

Inspection Area 3: Collective Worship	Excellent
--	------------------

The quality of the school’s collective worship is excellent.

Acts of Collective Worship engage nearly all pupils’ interests and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response. This feature is excellent because it is of a consistently high standard across the school. There is a genuine enthusiasm for collective worship, reflected in the quality of prayerful silence and depth of reverent participation in communal prayer. A wide range of celebrations including the use of Godly Play contribute effectively towards pupils’ spiritual development. During the inspection period ‘Godly Play’ on the Sacramental theme of Baptism, which was rich in symbolism, allowed nearly all children to reflect deeply, to make links in their learning and to form questions which inspired a sense of awe and wonder. Pupils in Year 3 reflected deeply on the relative importance of the Holy Trinity, giving thoughtful support for their views.

Pupils readily take the initiative in leading worship, displaying confidence and enthusiasm. They are creative and resourceful in their planning of liturgy and want it to be the best it can be, embedding Catholic virtues. Year 4 pupils planned and confidently led collective worship on ‘being called by Jesus’. Nearly all children made a commitment for the day, to go forth and bear witness to Jesus’ example.

Most pupils are visibly uplifted by the worship opportunity created by their peers. Appropriate to their age and ability, they are able to prepare acts of collective worship, which fully reflect this understanding. Pupils display great confidence in their use of a variety of traditional and contemporary approaches to prayer, which uses scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music. In Year 2, for example, they led an impressive act of worship on the theme of Baptism, during which they displayed very good knowledge about the signs and symbols related to the Sacrament. Staff supported pupils skilfully throughout.

The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a deep sense of respect for each other and this is reflected in the manner in which pupils prepare and participate in prayer, liturgy and year group assemblies. Year 3 presented an inspirational assembly

during the inspection in which pupils acted with reverence, sung joyfully and led community prayer with confidence. A large group of family members were in attendance. They were moved by the manner in which their deceased loved ones were remembered and prayed for as the feast of All Souls Day was celebrated.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

Sixty-one parental responses were received from parents. Nearly all were very positive in nature. Common references were made to:

- The warm, welcoming nature of the school.
- The strong Catholic ethos in evidence.
- The involvement of the whole community in school life.
- The excellent behaviour of children.
- The fact that each child is valued highly as an individual and
- High academic standards.

Appendix 2

Evidence Base

- The Religious Education Self-Evaluation document.
- The observation of seven Religious Education lessons.
- Parental meeting.
- Meetings with the headteacher, governors, the REC and with pupils.
- A sample of children’s books.
- The School Development Plan for 2019-20.
- A range of portfolios and booklets provided by the school.