

Archdiocese of Cardiff



Catholic School Inspection Report Saints Gabriel & Raphael Catholic Primary School

Inspection dates	11-12 November 2019
Reporting Inspector	Mrs Caroline May
Accompanying Inspector	Mr Christopher Cherry
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	134
Local Authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Chair of Governors	Mrs Marilyn Liddon
School Address	Primrose Street Tonypandy CF40 1 BJ
Tel. no.	01443 433094
Email address	admin.gabrielraphael.pri@rctbc.gov.uk
Parishes served	Sts Gabriel & Raphael, Tonypandy St Mary Magdalene, Ynyshir
Date of previous inspection	2-3 July 2012
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Lavagna

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

Saints Gabriel and Raphael is a voluntary aided Catholic Primary School in the Archdiocese of Cardiff. The school is situated in Tonypany, Rhondda Fawr in Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Authority. It serves the Catholic community of Tonypany and Ynyshir. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. The areas in which many pupils live are considered to be disadvantaged.

The original part of the school was built well over 100 years ago. Modernisation and extension of the school in September 1997 improved the learning environment. There are currently 5 mixed age classes and a nursery in which pre-nursery, nursery and reception pupils attend full-time.

The school population has grown in recent years. At present there are 150 pupils, aged 3 to 11 years of age. They represent the full range of ability. The socio and economic backgrounds of pupils are varied, including a growing minority of economically disadvantaged families, of which not all are in receipt of Free School Meals. Whole school entitlement to FSM was 14.9% in 2018- 2019, which is lower than local averages. 26% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs. This is above the national average of 21%. No pupils come from Welsh speaking homes and 20% of pupils have English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The proportion of pupils from ethnic backgrounds is consistently higher than that of the local authority and comprised approximately 20% of all pupils in the school. The proportion of EAL pupils on early language acquisition stages below competent is above the local authority average.

In 2016 -2017, a new Senior Leadership Team was formed with the Acting Foundation Phase Leader and the Acting Deputy Head. The ADHT became substantive in May 2017 and the AFPL in Sept. 2018. School has also supported the induction of an NQT during the year. During the absence of the Religious Education Co-ordinator (REC), the role is currently exercised by an acting REC. The majority of staff are experienced practitioners; all staff are provided with the necessary Continuous Professional Development and support in order for them to fulfil their roles.

Of the 6 full-time Catholic teachers 4 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies, 1 holds the National Professional Qualification for Headship, 1 the MA in Catholic School Leadership. 3 of the 5 teaching assistants are Catholic.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?	Good
<p>Catholic education at Saints Gabriel and Raphael is good because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leadership is strong and there are positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents. • the school is welcoming, inclusive and sensitive to the needs of staff, pupils and parents. • the children are very well-behaved, tolerant, polite and happy. They are very proud of being part of the school. • prayer and worship are at the heart of the education provided, which underpins pupils' spiritual and moral development. • the majority of teaching in Religious Education is good. 	
What are the school's prospects for improvement?	Good
<p>The school's prospects for improvement are good because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school leaders are committed to ensuring the best possible Religious Education provision for all pupils. • leaders and staff collaborate effectively. • pupils are increasingly confident in contributing ideas to the mission of the Catholic life of the school. • the work of the Religious Education Co-ordinator and the acting co-ordinator is an asset to the school 	

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

R1: To re-evaluate Religious Education provision and revise the school RE self-evaluation report into the new agreed format within six months.

R2: To agree clear expectations of the range and amount of recorded RE work, to ensure consistency throughout the school and increase the level of challenge.

R3: To ensure coverage of other world religions as stated in the 'Come and See' 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

Inspection Area 1: Catholic Life and Ethos	Good
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The behaviour of nearly all pupils is exemplary at all times. Most pupils participate in the school's evaluation of its Catholic life and mission and are part of planning improvements to it. This is evidenced in whole-school displays and school documentation. Most pupils accept the responsibilities of living within a Catholic school community, as a result, they are regularly involved with those activities which promote the Catholic life and mission of the school and the wider community. They are aware of the need of others as evidenced in a wide variety of charity work including Foodbank, Missio and Tenovus. Pupils have achieved the Young Carers award for the last two consecutive years, for their work and empathy with young carers. Pupils have been awarded the Achievement for All quality mark enabling all children to be the best that they can be regardless of background, challenge and need.

Most pupils respond well to the opportunities the school provides and as a result they are happy, confident and feel safe. The school mission statement clearly expresses the educational mission of the church. All staff are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They enthusiastically participate in activities which reflect the Catholic life and mission of the school.

The school actively promotes the continuing theological and spiritual development of the staff. All staff are encouraged and supported to achieve the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. There is a strong sense of community at all levels, clearly evidenced in the high quality of relationships that exist between staff, pupils and parents and the centrality of prayer to the whole community.

The school is a supportive and joyful community. All staff promote high standards of behaviour and are good role models. The school environment reflects its mission and identity through obvious signs of its Catholic character.

The school has developed an innovative approach for its chaplaincy provision having strong links with the parish and the Sisters of St Joseph in residence in the parish, promoting the Catholic life of the school.

Policies and structures are in place which provide good pastoral care to pupils and their families. The school has strategies for engaging with parents and carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. As a result parents/carers have a good understanding of the school's mission and are supportive of it. The school is equally attentive to the pastoral needs of staff. The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Leaders are well regarded by staff as models of Catholic leadership. Staff understanding of the school's mission statement is good, staff are involved in shaping and supporting it. The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archbishop's vision for the Diocese.

Inspection Area 2: Curriculum Religious Education
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Good

Most pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage. It is clear, from both responses and direct questioning, that most pupils are religiously literate and use their knowledge and developed skills to reflect spiritually and to think ethically, relating this to the demands and challenges of everyday life. An example of this was a class who used the commitment being shown by a couple from their wedding video to develop a mature discussion on the importance of making a lasting, permanent life choice. They were able to draw on previous learning to identify important signs and symbols of an emergent, enduring relationship.

Most pupils are actively engaged in their lessons and indicate their desire to further develop as active learners. They were willing to discuss their work and to articulate how they felt they were making progress.

Most pupils approached their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy being challenged, as in a lesson where they were presented with the practical task of responding to a request from the daughter-in-law of a member of staff, seeking information on organising the Baptism of her new baby.

Behaviour in lessons is predominantly very good because most pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptive behaviour in lessons is rare. However, a minority of lessons lacked challenge and inhibited independent learning. The best results were achieved by pupils who were given clear instructions and given the freedom to attempt the task set independently within a given time.

There are established systems to monitor and evaluate pupil progress. Assessment involves all teachers and governors are increasingly encouraged to become informed by becoming engaged in the process. Pupil attainment in Religious Education is comparable with that achieved in other subjects and the enthusiasm of non-Catholic teachers is commendable. Non-Catholic teachers are afforded the same continuous professional development opportunities as Catholic teachers.

Although the majority of written work is good there is a significant variation in the amount of recorded work. There is a need to give greater clarity on expectations to ensure consistency throughout the school.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment observed across the school is varied. This factor is acknowledged by the school in their self-evaluation and forms a high priority to promote the sharing of the good practice already in place.

Teachers consistently produce comprehensive lesson plans, providing a range of differentiated activities that take account of current pupil assessment. The quality of teaching is mainly good and as a result most pupils learn well. Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies. Best practice illustrated an inclusive learning environment, high levels of pupil enthusiasm, realistic, practical, fact-based tasks, that fully engaged pupils. Pupils were well versed in strategies of how to get “unstuck” and

consistently given very clear instructions and expectations. Pupils were, in effect, entrusted to act as independent, autonomous learners. Overall most teachers encouraged pupils to be reflective self-assessors. Peer-assessment is also encouraged and increasingly pupils are provided with opportunities to do so. This has contributed to pupils growing in confidence to set themselves increasingly challenging targets. Good quality feed-back leads to increased engagement, interest, achievement and progress of most pupils. Genuine, effective praise is used to celebrate achievement and effort, this leads to increased motivation from most pupils. All teachers used Welsh effectively in lessons and throughout the school.

School Leaders and governors and those who have stepped-up to cover additional responsibilities have ensured that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in each key stage. The school has been able to show that, despite the demands of the new Curriculum for Wales the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage. The school does, however, need to ensure that this commitment is maintained across all classes. The full range of requirements of the Archdiocese, regarding the continued development of Religious Education are effectively implemented. These include the use of the Archdiocesan Catholic Pupil Profile (Virtues and Values), the daily use of Christian Meditation and the Examen.

Governors are increasingly involved in monitoring the quality of Religious Education provision and its impact on the general life of the school.

The headteacher and current acting Religious Education co-ordinator share a common vision to further improve the quality of Religious Education teaching to ensure that overall it is likely to be consistently good. Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is effectively planned to meet the needs of different pupil groups and the specific needs of pupils with additional educational needs, to ensure coherence across the different key stages and to enhance levels of inclusion. Learning support assistants, where appropriate, are deployed effectively to support learning within religious education.

Inspection Area 3: Collective Worship	Good
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Acts of collective worship engage the interest of all pupils and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response.

Collective worship has a purpose, message and direction. Themes chosen for worship reflect a good understanding of liturgical seasons and the Catholic nature of the school, for example, Remembrance Day being linked to All Saints and All Souls. There is a genuine enthusiasm for collective worship, reflected in the quality choir and communal singing, in the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer. Especially impressive was the joyous rendition of the school song. Pupils display confidence praying a wide variety of traditional and contemporary prayers in both Welsh and English. The vast majority of pupils value and regularly participate in voluntary acts of worship, prayer and meditation.

Pupils pray regularly throughout the day and confirmed that Examen at the end of the day is beneficial to their prayer life. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff. The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development, irrespective of ability or faith background. Collective worship is part of the life of the school and prayer is included in all school celebrations, many of which include the parish and wider worshipping community.

Leaders know how to plan and deliver quality collective worship. They provide excellent role-models for pupils who are increasingly confident in organising and leading liturgical celebrations in both in class and for the whole school.

The school and parish communities support each other in Sacramental preparation; pupils are prepared for Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in liturgical services including an annual Passion Play, Christmas Carol service and Harvest Festival. Pupils celebrate a Leavers' Mass and participate by reading, singing and praying.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

102 parental responses were received from parents.

- Nearly all parents said they were happy with the values and attitudes that the school fosters.
- All parents said they are made to feel welcome in the school.
- Nearly all parents said that the school seeks the views of parents and takes account of their suggestions and concerns.
- Nearly all parents said that the school gives them a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education.
- All parents said that the school enables children to achieve a good standard of work in Religious Education and they are well informed about progress.
- Nearly all parents said that the school enables their children to develop spiritually through prayer and worship.

Parents chose the school because of the size, the inclusive, community atmosphere and the quality of leadership and education.

Appendix 2

Evidence Base

- School self-evaluation form and other relevant documentation
- Meetings with the head teacher and acting Religious Education co-ordinator
- Meeting with the representatives of the governing body
- Meeting with parents
- Parental questionnaires
- Listening to learners
- Meeting with the Religious Education council and pupil representatives
- Scrutiny of pupils' work
- Scrutiny of planning
- Scrutiny of RE co-ordinators file including monitoring, tracking and assessment
- Lesson observations
- Learning walk of school environment, displays, prayer area and resources
- Observation of collective worship and meditation
- Scrutiny of portfolios
- Observation of daily routines
- Scrutiny of photographic evidence
- School website