

# DIOCESE OF MENEVIA



## Inspection Report on the Religious Dimension of the School

**Head teacher: Mr. Dean Flood**

**Reporting Inspector: Mrs. Juliet Stack**

**Accompanying Inspector: Sr. Angela Murray OSU**

**Inspection dates: Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

**Chair of Governors: Mr. David Evans**

**Type of School: Voluntary Aided Primary**

**Age range of pupils: 3- 11**

**Number on roll: 209**

**Date of previous inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008**

**School Address: Merlin's Terrace Haverford west Pembrokeshire SA61 1PH**

**Tel. No: 01437 762324**

**Email address: head.maryimmaculate@pembrokeshire.gov.uk**

**Parishes served: St. David and St Patrick Church, Haverfordwest serving the community of The Immaculate Conception Narberth**

**Local Authority: Pembrokeshire County Council**

***Canonical inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Menevia 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.

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
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 Diocesan inspectors use and a broad idea of their meaning. It is for guidance only.

<b>Proportion</b>	<b>Description</b>
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.

## Context

Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School is a 3-11 mixed primary school serving the Unitary Authority of Pembrokeshire and under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Menevia. Situated in the town of Haverford west there are currently 209 pupils on roll in 8 classes. Nineteen children attend the Nursery part-time. Currently 55% of pupils are baptised Catholics, 26% belonging to other Christian denominations and 19% with no faith. The socio-economic background of the area is varied 11.9% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the average for Wales. 11% of pupils are on the SEN register. There are no statemented pupils. There have been no exclusions in the previous academic year. 16% of pupils have English as an additional language including Polish, Igbo, Tagalog, Romanian, Bulgarian, Filipino, Malayalam, Telugu and Panjabi. There are no children from a Welsh speaking home.

The building is a modern three storey which was built in 2007 on the site of the original school. There are 8 classrooms including a separate library room/ IT suite and Additional Learning needs support room. There is also a separate PPA room for staff. A well equipped kitchen prepares fresh meals daily. Outside there are three playgrounds and a field. The school has achieved 'outdoor status' and has a well developed school garden and grotto area for spiritual reflection. There has been the installation of a wind turbine and a developed wild area for outdoor learning which consists of a pond and willow garden. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Standard and National Qualification Award (NQA) from the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools.

There is also a separate play area with an outdoor classroom for Early Years pupils.

The current Headteacher was appointed in September 2013 following the retirement of the former Headteacher. The SMT consists of the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and two other staff (Foundation Phase Co-ordinator and RE Co-ordinator). The school was last inspected in 2008. There have been significant changes within the Governing Body since the last inspection with a new Chair and Vice Chair and also several new governors taking up posts. The school maintains close links with the local parishes.

## Summary

### How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

**Good**

Mary Immaculate is a good school because:

- Catholic ethos permeates all areas of school life;
- The RE Co-ordinator is effective in communicating high expectations to all staff and monitoring quality assurance
- The quality of teaching in religious education is generally good;
- Most pupils make good progress and participate constructively;
- Partnerships with parents, the parish and the local community are good.

### What are the school's prospects for improvement?

**Good**

Prospects for improvement are good due to:

- Leadership of the Head teacher and Curriculum leader for RE who continue to drive the mission of the school.
- Action to overcome areas for development has been concerted and effective.
- The Governing body fulfils its statutory and canonical responsibilities effectively.

### Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- R1 To develop differentiation in RE and provide opportunities for a wide range of creative activities to meet the needs of all learner's ( including MAT pupils) and meet curriculum requirements including the use of IT within RE.
- R2 To focus on the development of spontaneous and pupil developed prayer and worship within the school and to encourage the use of the Grotto for prayer and reflection.
- Embed the whole school marking policy within RE and include in it the development of meaningful marking of religious content.

### **What happens next?**

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the Diocese.

<b>Main Findings</b>
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<b>KQ1. How good are outcomes?</b>
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<b>Good</b>
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Pupils at Mary Immaculate make good progress. They work independently at a good pace and are keen to do well. The quality of most pupils' recorded work is consistently good although there is not enough differentiation to extend and encourage all learners. All pupils are assessed at the end of each unit of Come and See. The school has embedded the use of NBRIA levels as part of the 'Come and See' program. Pupils at Mary Immaculate make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. This is reflected in the links with their parish community. Children are involved in the life of the Parish and have many opportunities for developing their spirituality, praying and receiving the sacraments.

Pupils are aware of the needs of others and the importance of presenting themselves as good role models. Pupils lead class assemblies and school masses. However there is a need to develop pupil involvement in the planning, preparation and organisation of acts of worship as a whole and for it to be less teacher led. Foundation Phase pupils participated in a school liturgy service through singing, answering questions and taking part in readings. They took part in the service with appropriate responses and joined in community prayers with confidence. There was a clear theme and message. Parents and the community were invited to the service.

Pupils take a lead in developing Catholic Values in school life through the School Council and Playground Buddy Scheme. A growing number of pupils are Altar servers within the parish. Pupils lead class masses within the parish and participate as readers and in the offertory procession. Pupils provide instrumental accompaniment in church services. The school choir has sung at weddings and memorial masses and perform to the wider community outside of school. There are effective displays around the school. Each class had a prayer foci area and good resources. Pupils are considerate to others and regularly fund raise in response to the needs of others in the local community and in the wider world. The Welsh dimension is being fostered with a Criw-Cymreig (Welsh Crew ) and the development of a Welsh dimension Assembly every Wednesday led by the Head teacher. There is an active school council in place, which represents all pupils.

<b>KQ 2. How Good is Provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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In Mary Immaculate teachers employ a range of teaching styles and plan very well to enable their pupils to work independently and collectively. A majority of the lessons observed were good. There were positive pupil teacher relationships. Good use is made of resources but the use of technology needs to be embedded further particularly in the teaching of RE to maximise and enhance the teaching and learning experiences of the children. Most teachers gave clear expectations in order to help to create a climate where pupils strive to achieve their best. This was at its best when pupils were given success criteria and used it to move their learning forward. This approach needs to be embedded across both phases.

Opportunities for the development of challenge in a majority of classrooms were limited.

Pupils lacked the opportunity to be able to challenge each-other, and themselves, in order to take their learning to the next level. For a majority learning is too directed. Where good practice was observed teachers were constantly interacting with pupils these lessons had a good pace and included the engagement of all pupils. **In Year 6, after a freeze frame of the Prodigal Son in which pupils displayed emotions of the characters in the story, pupils went on to write detailed responses which displayed knowledge, understanding and empathy of the story. Activities were differentiated for all including the less able, who with support, created a mind map of the story. The plenary session allowed pupils to respond to the story from their own perspective. These two sentences need refining!**

There was effective deployment of teaching assistants across most classes. In Foundation Phase teaching assistants worked well with small groups engaging them for instance in a role play of how they should show love to a baby. After sharing the Psalm 131 as a class pupils were encouraged to care for the dolls in a protective way, sharing photos of others in their class holding and loving babies in order to express that we are all special and God loves us. The extensive outside areas were used during half of the lessons. Work was effectively shared with classes at the end of the lessons. In Year 2 a teacher assistant led activity allowed pupils to use i-pads to film an interview of themselves as news reporters telling everyone that St. Paul had visited Haverfordwest choosing outdoor areas they wanted to film in.

Portfolios of moderated work are well presented. The school's Religious Education scheme

of work is the Diocese of Menevia's recommended scheme 'Come and See'. Planning needs to be more purposefully differentiated, providing further challenge for instance for the more able children in the class to ensure that all pupils' needs are consistently met. Pupils are regularly assessed using the 'Come and See' end of topic sheets.

Pupil self-assessment and peer-assessment needs to become developed more within the school. Pupils are encouraged to present their work to others within class, school assembly and class assemblies. The school has adopted a new marking policy which needs to become embedded and include in it the development of meaningful religious marking. The school is investigating the development of an INCERTS-type package for monitoring and tracking pupil progress.

Prayer and worship are important to the life of the school. There is a strong link with the parish community and links with the wider community. During inspection there was little evidence of spontaneous or incidental prayer. **The plenary sessions were not employed in all class when spontaneous prayer could have emerged. The beautiful grotto within the schools grounds is under-used. This could become a focal point for developing prayer, together with quiet reflective time.** The Foundation Phase Liturgy bore witness to the community involvement of parents and parish which the school actively develops. The pupils read and sang and there was a well developed engagement with the children and the **local curate**.(Parish Priest). Themes are consistent with the Catholic character of the school, reflect the liturgical year and are relevant to the lives of the pupils. The Headteacher delivers an introduction assembly before each unit of 'Come and See' and uses this as a whole school focus. Class based prayer and acts of worship follow a fairly routine structure. Staff accept responsibility for leading prayer and involve pupils in its delivery. More time is needed to develop innovation and encouragement of pupil's leadership within this dimension. The school's Mission statement is attractively displayed in the Hall. All classrooms have displays that reflect the RE curriculum. They are bright and stimulating environments for children to work in. There is a good range of resources to support learning. The school supports charitable works worldwide. Fr Owen McGreal meets parents during the Parents Welcome Evening to reach out and meet families. Regular masses and community events are hosted at the school (including Baptism) to strengthen community links.

The requirement of the Bishop's Conference and local Diocesan requirements are met. The school devotes 10% of the overall teaching time to RE as a core subject.

<b>KQ3. How good are Leadership and Management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The leadership of the school is clearly committed to the Church's mission in education. All members of the school strive to fulfill the aims of the Mission Statement. There is an effective developing governing body. All governors discharge their statutory and canonical responsibilities fully. Catholic principles and values underpin the school's vision. The Religious Education Link Governor provides a good level of support for the development of the spiritual life of the school and curriculum Religious Education. He maintains strong links with the Curriculum leader for RE. Governors meet regularly to monitor and review progress of the RE School Development Plan. A focus for improvement is for the Curriculum leader for RE to present and report in person to the Governing Body annually. Also Governing body participation in evaluation of NBRIA Assessment Data for the 'Come & See' program. Planning in Religious Education addresses key areas of development and builds on areas of strength. Most pupils achieve well and they have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school. Religious Education is monitored regularly by the Head teacher and the Curriculum leader for RE. Termly reports are given to the Governing Body by the Head teacher.

All parents/carers are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the life of the school and encouraged to attend the school assemblies and Class Masses and Family Masses. The Parish priest supports and guides the staff and children in their spiritual development. The First Holy Communion preparation is organised at the school alongside the parishes. The Staff provide positive role models in nurturing the pupils in a knowledge and love of the Catholic faith. This has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils are respectful, considerate and caring of each other. Pupils' behaviour is good.

The Head teacher is committed to the Church's mission in education. He understands and encourages all in the school community to reflect on diocesan guidelines and to put them into practice. Leaders and managers are willing to establish partnerships with other providers. Leaders successfully promote an inclusive vision. Staff and pupils respect each other's differences. Pupils are appropriately encouraged to respect those of other faiths. As well as Catholicism, they study two world faiths annually to this end. Since the last inspection the



recommendations made have been acted upon successfully. However progress needs to be made in relation to developing active learning, the use of ICT in religious education and in pupils taking a less passive role in worship. These areas continue to be priorities for further improvement.

## Appendix 1

### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Many parents agreed that their child was happy at school.

Many also felt that their child had a Spiritual awareness and was able to join in services, being respectful and kind.

Many felt there were opportunities for them as parents to learn about the Religious Education programme being taught at the school.

Around half of the parents worked with their child at home on current Religious topics.

A majority felt that the school had helped their child develop his/ her Christian faith.

Many are encouraged to join in whole school RE activities including Assemblies, Masses, and festivals.

Around half of the questionnaires agreed that they were involved in the preparation for First Holy Communion.

Many believed their child was developing a sense of moral awareness by behaviour and attitude and developing a sense of right and wrong. Many believed that the school develops this directly.

Many are aware of the school policy on education for Personal Relationships including sex education.

A majority were happy with the policy on discipline within the school. A majority were aware of the links which exist between the parish and the school and many were aware of the safeguarding procedures in place in the school. Comments included: "Mary Immaculate is a marvelous school for my children to attend. There are lovely strong links with the parish." "I am very happy with this school my son is also happy and is really confident since attending this school."

## Appendix 2

### Evidence Base

- The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation
- Meetings with the Head teacher and religious education subject leader
- Meetings with representatives of the governing body, including the religious education link governor and chair
- A meeting with parents
- Parent/carer questionnaire returns
- Lesson observations
- Scrutiny of planning and assessment
- Scrutiny of pupils' work
- Scrutiny of displays and prayer foci
- Attendance at whole school acts of worship
- Discussions with pupils
- Discussions with teaching staff
- Observation of daily routines

***The diocesan inspectors wish to express sincere thanks to the governors, head teacher, staff, pupils and parents and also to the ESTYN registered inspector and inspection team for the courtesy and co-operation received during the inspection.***