

DIOCESE OF MENEVIA



Inspection Report

St. David's Catholic Primary School Swansea

Inspection dates:	6 th – 9 th June 2011
Reporting Inspector:	Mr. Patrick Mansfield
Headteacher:	Mr. Colin Greenwood
Chair of Governors:	Mrs. K. Myles
Type of school:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Number on roll:	216
School Address:	West Cross Avenue Swansea SA3 5TS
Tel. No.	01792 512212
E-mail address:	st.davids.primaryschool@swansea-edunet.gov.uk
Parish(es) served:	Our Lady Star of the Sea, Mumbles St. Benedict's, Sketty St. David's, Swansea
Appropriate Authority:	City and County of Swansea
Date of previous inspection:	9 th – 10 th May 2005

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 is 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 practice 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.

Description	Proportion
Nearly all	With very few exceptions
Most	90% or more
Many	70% or more
The majority	60% or more
Half / around half	Close to 50%
A minority	Below 40%
Few	Below 20%
Very few	Less than 10%

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the diocesan website.

Context

St. David's Catholic Primary School is located in the West Cross suburb of Swansea and serves the Catholic population living from the centre of the city westward towards, and including, Gower. The school describes the area it serves as geographically wide with a mix of social and economic advantage and disadvantage. The majority of pupils live in private housing but a minority live in rented accommodation; a few in the 1/3 most deprived wards in the city.

St. David's caters for pupils aged 3 – 11 years. Currently (May '11) there are 219 pupils on roll of which 38 are part time. There are 169 baptised Catholic pupils, 30 pupils of other Christian denominations, 11 pupils of other faiths and 9 pupils of no faith.

In recent years the school has experienced an increase in pupils from other cultures. 23% of the pupils come from homes where more than one language is spoken and currently there are 14 different languages and dialects from 12 countries in the school. The school has the 5th highest EAL population of the 84 schools in Swansea. No pupils speak Welsh outside the school environment.

7% of the pupils are eligible to receive free school meals and none are looked after by the county. The pupils represent the full ability range. 37 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and 5 benefit from statutory statements.

The school currently has a non-teaching headteacher and an acting deputy headteacher. The substantive deputy has been seconded to an acting headteacher post at the request of the diocese; the headteacher also undertook a period of secondment in 2008 at the request of the diocese. Of the 6 full time and 3 part time teachers 8 are Catholic and 5 hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies while 1 is studying for it currently. Of the 11 support staff and 2 higher level teaching assistants, 9 are Catholics.

The school's achievements include the Eco Bronze and Silver awards, Swansea Bronze Standard Self Evaluation Award, Healthy Schools and Fair Trade School status.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

Good

St. David's is a good school because:

- a high degree of commitment to Catholic education is shown by the school community
- pupils progress well and achieve high standards relative to their starting points
- the excellent inclusion of all groups is clearly demonstrated
- the very high standards of pastoral care promote pupil wellbeing and ensure very good behaviour
- there is evidence of high staff morale and some examples of very good teaching

What are the school's prospects for improvement?

Good

The school's prospects for improvement are good due to:

- the honest and candid appraisal of the current position by school leaders
- the clear understanding of methods of improvement
- the return of members of the senior management team which will stabilise the staffing complement
- the extent to which previously high standards have been maintained
- the staff being highly committed to the distinctive Catholic nature of the school

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

R1. Fully comply with the recommendations of the previous diocesan inspection.

R2. Establish a formal system of monitoring, evaluating and reporting in Religious Education by staff and governors which will facilitate the sharing of good practice.

R3. Provide good quality resources to support teaching and learning in Religious Education particularly in the formal study of other faiths.

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.

Main Findings

KQ1. How good are outcomes?

Good

The pupils in St. David's clearly enjoy their Religious Education lessons and they respond with interest and enthusiasm. Most groups of pupils make at least good progress and some make outstanding progress. They are keen to do well, generally apply themselves in lessons and work at a good pace. Relative to their starting points, most pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards. The school's results compare well with those from similar schools and when compared with locally and nationally produced data. The quality of most pupils' written work is good and in most books there is a variety of written responses. In the best examples this includes art and collage, individual prayer and ICT work, photographs, diary entries and newspaper articles. However in some classes there is an over reliance on photocopied sheets that limits pupils' independent work. In their Religious Education lessons on Pentecost, the younger pupils interact well with their teachers and respond enthusiastically in written work and dance. The older pupils are becoming skilled in the use of scripture and bible references. In most classes work in Religious Education is well presented and this is encouraged through the classteachers' marking. Their marking is always positive and affirms how well the pupils are doing but does not identify consistently how they can move on in their learning.

Pupils in St. David's take on responsibilities and participate constructively in the Catholic life of the school beyond routine lessons and activities. They were keen to support the implementation of the recently introduced 'Playground Buddies' initiative and to participate in the enthusiastic school council. The pupils understand that religious beliefs and spiritual values are important for many people. They treat others with high levels of respect and know that their behaviour always has consequences. The excellent level of inclusion for the several cultural groups in the school is one element of the very good overall standard of behaviour displayed by the pupils. They show an understanding of the need to forgive and be forgiven and have a good understanding of right and wrong. They are considerate to others and respond to the needs of people beyond the school through contribution to and support of many charities.

The pupils understand the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year and show a developing understanding of liturgy as they progress through the classes. They are able to make connections between the prayer life of the school and that of the church as a whole. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in prayer and worship. They respond appropriately, reflect in silence and join in community prayers with confidence. They are at ease when praying in both English and Welsh with their class and school communities. Assemblies make use of recorded music and good quality hymn singing to enhance the opportunities for engagement and response. The school reported that pupils are involved in the planning, preparing and organising of acts of worship. During the inspection, however, the leadership and initiative for the assemblies observed came from the staff.

KQ2. How good is provision?

Good

Teaching in St. David's is effective in ensuring that pupils are consistently interested in their learning, are making progress and are developing their understanding of the Catholic faith. The majority of teaching enables pupils to make good progress as learners. Most teachers employ a range of teaching styles and plan activities which enable the pupils to work both independently and collaboratively. In the best lessons, there is good pace and Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies are used to very good effect. Teachers generally have strong subject knowledge which

inspires and challenges most pupils and contributes to their good progress. As a result, in most lessons, pupils are keen to learn, to concentrate and to achieve well.

Learning Support and Language Support Assistants are effectively deployed in all classes to support literacy within Religious Education. Very good provision for pupils in need of learning support ensures that they have every opportunity to succeed. Differentiation is mainly by outcome although in some classes the curriculum is customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals through differentiated tasks, writing frameworks and well targeted support. These activities were evidenced in lesson observations and through the scrutiny of pupils' books. Pupils are informed about their progress and how to improve, individually and as a class, through marking of their work and dialogue with adults. A system of tracking the pupils' progress in their Religious Education work has been introduced recently. Consequently, the school is beginning to form an accurate picture of pupils' achievement and appropriate actions are taken to tackle areas of underachievement which are identified.

There is a very good system of pastoral care and guidance in St. David's and the pupils are looked after well. Even though almost half the pupils travel to school by bus, extra-curricular opportunities are varied, have a high take up and are much enjoyed. The staff provide these opportunities both after school and at lunch time to mitigate travel difficulties. They are concerned for the wellbeing of the pupils and for the wellbeing of their colleagues. Frequent reference was made to the consistent support shown by leaders to all members of the school community; consequently morale is high.

The school's accommodation is clean, well maintained and provides a stimulating learning environment. Staff in the Foundation Phase classes make creative use of their teaching spaces and the gardening club for the older pupils is gradually cultivating more areas. All the classrooms and corridors have colourful and reflective displays and all contained a crucifix. All the classrooms have a prayer table and religious focus that include rosaries, religious icons, statues and pupils' work or prayers. There is an adequate range of resources to support learning although the purchase of further good quality materials would greatly enhance the teaching and learning in RE. This was a recommendation from the previous Section 50 Inspection and needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

The school's Religious Education scheme of work is 'Learning and Growing as the People of God' produced by the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Although this is not the Diocese of Menevia's recommended scheme it does meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. In some pupils' exercise books there is evidence of references to other faiths; for example a Jewish wedding, a Seder plate and a Shalom prayer. However the scheme of work does not formally cover the teaching of other faiths and this aspect of the school's Religious Education curriculum is underdeveloped. The school's Religious Education curriculum does provide opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Suitable opportunities are provided for the pupils to appreciate the school's Welsh dimension and incidental Welsh is used consistently in lessons.

Prayer and acts of collective worship are central to the life of the school. Staff and pupils pray together on the playground at the start of the school day. Attendance by parents/carers and others associated with the school is encouraged at this time and for class assemblies and Masses. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for prayer and some classes have suggestion boxes for topics for individual or whole class prayer. These topics are consistent with the Catholic character of the school and responsive to the diversity among pupils. Staff accept responsibility

for leading prayer and involve pupils in its delivery. Key seasons of the Church's year are celebrated and other religious festivals acknowledged.

KQ3. How good is leadership and management

Good

The governing body has the expertise to meet the school's needs and is influential in determining the direction of the Catholic life of the school. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively. Their relationships with staff are constructive and they show determination in challenging and supporting the school in tackling weaknesses and so bringing about necessary improvements. The chair of governors knows the strengths and areas for development of the school well and understands the challenges it faces. However, generally the governors have limited opportunities to visit the school and are informed of its progress through the headteacher's reports. Governors engage with parents/carers generally and address any significant concerns they may have. They do so particularly through the effective 'Friends of St. David's Association' that organises social events and raises extra funds for the school. 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 Masses. The governors engage with pupils formally through reports from the school council and respond to their views.

Leaders and managers demonstrate commitment to the mission of the Church by providing a rich, broad and balanced curriculum, with priority given to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the Welsh dimension. They fulfil all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference regarding Catholic schools. Generally they seek to put into practice diocesan guidelines and encourage staff to deepen their understanding of these. Since the last inspection, the school has supported the diocese through agreeing to the secondment of two senior members of staff to other Catholic schools; in this way good practice has been shared.

Planning in Religious Education tackles key areas of development and builds on areas of strength. Consequently, outcomes are generally good, the pupils achieve well and they have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school. Leaders conduct self-evaluation reviews in RE but there is limited input from the governors or the staff as a whole. Currently there is no formal system for leaders or governors to monitor, review or report the progress of Religious Education in the school. This was a recommendation from the previous Section 50 Inspection and needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities. There is very good support for the parishes the school serves through sacramental preparation and celebration. Links have been established with the nearby All Saints Church in Wales community. Pupils are equipped with skills which enable them to take a full and active part in their neighbourhood and to develop relationships with people from different backgrounds. There is good provision to enable pupils to develop an understanding of the role they and others play in society and the world. The pupils benefit from these activities which contribute to their good learning and well-being.

The inclusion of all is a central goal and shared vision of the school. Within the school there is concern, respect and hospitality towards others. Pupils' friendship bonds cross cultural, faith, social and economic boundaries and there is a common sense of belonging. All the staff respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Pupils from different backgrounds are given opportunities to work together and relationships among them are positive. This aspect of school life is a real strength of the community in St. David's.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

109 parents/carers returned the questionnaires.

All the parents/carers who returned the questionnaires said they were happy with the values and attitudes the school fosters. All were happy with the help and guidance available to their children and all were made to feel welcome in school.

Nearly all said the school enabled their children to achieve a good standard of work in Religious Education and to develop spirituality through prayer and worship. Nearly all said that the school gave them a clear understanding of what is taught in Religious Education and kept them well informed about their children's progress. Many said that the school gave them a clear understanding of what is taught in personal, social and health education. Most of those who did not agree or felt unable to comment had children in the youngest classes.

Parents/carers are clearly proud of their school. They state that they chose St. David's for the good standard of Catholic education, high moral values and caring ethos. They said the school has a very good reputation as a caring Christian setting amongst parishioners and those in the local community.

Appendix 2

Evidence base

- the school's self-evaluation report and other documentation
- meetings with the headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator
- meeting with the Chair of Governors who is also the Religious Education Link Governor
- meeting with parents/carers
- parent/carer questionnaire returns
- lesson observations
- scrutiny of planning
- scrutiny of pupils' work
- scrutiny of displays and prayer foci
- attendance at key stage assemblies
- discussions with pupils and the school council
- observation of daily routines

The diocesan reporting inspector wishes 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.