

DIOCESE OF MENEVIA



Inspection Report on the Religious Dimension of the School

St. Illtyd's Catholic Primary School

Headteacher:	Mr. David Lewis
Reporting Inspector:	Mr. Patrick Mansfield
Inspection dates:	2nd - 3rd February 2009
Chair of Governors:	Mr. Andrew Powell
Type of school:	Voluntary Aided Primary
Age range of pupils:	3 -11
Number on roll:	206
Date of previous Inspection:	3rd - 4th February 2002
School Address:	Jersey Road, Bonymaen, Swansea
Tel. No.	01792 462104
E-mail address:	St.Illtyds.school@swansea.edu-net.gov.uk
Parish(es) served:	St. Illtyd's Bonymaen Sacred Heart, Morriston
Appropriate Authority:	City and County of Swansea

*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*

Description of the School

St. Illtyd's Catholic Primary is situated in the Bonymaen area on the east side of Swansea. The area the school serves is described as mainly working class with some social disadvantage and deprivation. The school reports that 73% of its pupils live in the lowest 30% of wards in the City of Swansea when compared on social disadvantage. The parents are described as supportive and as playing an active part in the life of the school.

The main school was constructed in 1976 and is a single-storey building; this houses most of the classrooms, the hall, kitchen, offices and library. There is a more modern two storey extension to the school that accommodates two classrooms for the oldest pupils, a music room and withdrawal/storage areas. The extension was opened in 1998 by the Lord Mayor of Swansea and blessed by Bishop Mullins. In addition to providing this extension, the school's management has worked hard to modernise and redevelop the original classrooms. Smaller classrooms have been combined or redesigned and several security features have been added. The school provides a safe and secure environment for the pupils it serves. The site itself has been further improved with the establishment of a gardening area and a rainwater 'harvesting' system that feeds an artificial stream in the grounds. Large scale play equipment has been provided and there are discrete play areas for the younger pupils. The demands of the recent developments in the Foundation Phase are being considered.

The two hundred and four pupils on roll are drawn mainly from the local area. However, a significant minority of pupils travel to school by bus from the Port Tennant / St. Thomas and Llansamlet / Birchgrove areas.

Forty eight percent of the pupils on roll are Catholic and a further fifty percent are of other Christian denominations. No pupils are withdrawn from religious education lessons or collective worship. Twenty seven percent of the pupils are identified as requiring additional educational support including nine pupils who are in possession of a statement. Twenty four percent are eligible for free school meals however the school reports that of the one hundred meals cooked, fifty two are given free. Three percent of the pupils are travellers and there are eight percent whose first language is not English.

Of the ten full time and three part time teachers, six are Catholics and two hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. Five of the sixteen support staff are Catholics. Six of the governors currently have, or have had, children attending St. Illtyd's and three governors are employed in the school.

Owing to inclement weather, the inspection had to be extended to three days and the act of collective worship was inspected on Ash Wednesday 25th February.

Inspection grades

An overall judgement for each question is made using the following grades:

Grade 1: good with outstanding features

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Grade 4: some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Grade 5: many important shortcomings

Table of grades awarded

Key question	Inspection grade
How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners and why?	2
1. How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	2
2. How good is the provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school?	2
3. How well do learners achieve in religious education?	2
4. How effective are teaching and learning in religious education?	3
5. How well does the religious education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?	1
6. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in religious education?	2

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

Overall Effectiveness

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners and why?

St. Illtyd's is a good school where the headteacher, staff and governors work hard to teach and foster the Catholic faith. In this role, the school is assisted ably by the Marist Sisters who serve the parish community. The strong Catholic leadership is evident in the way the school is run and the headteacher provides a very good Catholic role model. He is well supported by the teaching and support staff who together endeavour to ensure that the pupils develop spiritually, morally, culturally and socially. This endeavour is evident also in the calm atmosphere of the school and the very good behaviour of the pupils.

There has been a significant change in staffing since the last inspection and the school is operating currently with several teachers who are new to the school or whose contracts

are temporary. Their contribution to the ethos of the school is much appreciated by the school management.

The headteacher is supported by a governing body who are committed to promoting the Catholic life of the school. Sadly there is no Parish Priest in residence and the lack of a priest regularly visiting the school is unfortunate. However, the school is fortunate in having Father Pius to celebrate Mass each term. The regular link between the school and the parish is maintained through the good work of the Parish Sisters.

Collective worship and other liturgical services are well planned and appropriate for the age and ability of the pupils. The good teaching in RE ensures that all the pupils are involved in the lessons.

The Section 50 Religious Education Self-Evaluation Form was drafted by the headteacher and RE Co-ordinator and agreed by the governors. The outcomes are in line with the inspector's judgements in four of the six key questions.

Improvement since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the school has worked to address the three key issues.

Extra resources for RE have been purchased and are accessible in the classrooms and library.

The staff have introduced formal and informal prayers during the RE lessons and an area for quiet prayer and reflection is a development priority for this academic year.

The whole school planning and monitoring activities have been continued and are seen by the school as requiring further development.

Capacity to improve

The good and in some cases very good aspects of the Catholic life of the school have been continued since the last inspection. The capacity to improve further is good.

Grade: 2

In order to improve further the school should:

- ❖ Review and make more public its Mission Statement.
- ❖ Ensure progression in standards of achievement and presentation in RE.
- ❖ Develop a system of marking that ensures a consistent approach by all staff and provides informative comments to point the way forward for the pupils.
- ❖ Agree and implement a policy for monitoring the standards of RE in all classes and reporting to the teachers the findings of monitoring exercises so that good practice may be shared.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and Management

1. How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?

Good features

Leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of St. Illtyd's are good.

The strong Catholic leadership is evident in the way the school is run and the headteacher provides a very good Catholic role model. He is well supported by the teaching and support staff who together endeavour to ensure that the pupils develop spiritually, morally, culturally and socially.

The governing body is very supportive of, and fully committed to, the Catholic life of the school. Six of the governors currently have, or have had, children attending St. Illtyd's and three are employed in the school. They receive regular reports from the RE co-ordinator and other subject co-ordinators. Representatives of the governors attend the training provided by Swansea County Council and the Diocese of Menevia. The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and staff.

Of the ten full time and three part time teachers, six are Catholic and two hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. Five of the sixteen support staff are Catholics. All the teaching and support staff endeavour to ensure that the pupils develop spiritually, morally, culturally and socially. This endeavour is evident also in the calm atmosphere of the school and the very good behaviour of the pupils. Good relationships were observed between pupils, between staff and pupils and between the staff themselves. Mutual respect was shown by all members of school community. The latter was exemplified in the support quietly offered to a supply teacher during the assembly.

The main entrance to St. Illtyd's indicates quite clearly that this is a Catholic school. The display of statues and religious art work here is continued throughout the rooms and corridors of the building. The connecting theme through all these areas is the pupils' good quality collaborative work on the Stations of the Cross.

The Parish Sisters and the RE Co-ordinator organise the Sacramental Preparation Programme that takes place in the parish. This results in a joint celebration for the parishes of St. Illtyd's and Sacred Heart. The parents are welcomed into the Catholic community of the school through attendance at assemblies and Masses. All the parents and pupils are invited to these celebrations including those from other faiths and those of no faith. This inclusion was described positively at the Parents' Meeting.

Areas for Improvement

The school community should review its Mission Statement and display the new wording more publicly.

Grade: 2

Collective Worship

2. How good is the provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school?

Good features

The provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school is good.

Most of the RE lessons observed started or finished either with communal prayers or an act of collective worship. In one class good use was made of the interactive whiteboard to display appropriate images; in another, reflective music was played to create a prayerful atmosphere. In most classes a candle was lit before prayers were started and at this time the youngest pupils were asked to think of Jesus as the light of the world. In all the classes the pupils were encouraged to make their own prayers to God either in silence or aloud.

A focus for prayer has been established in each classroom. The focus often featured crucifixes, statues or rosaries and these were often backed by colourful displays of pupils' work. In all classes the pupils were encouraged to concentrate on the prayer focus while praying.

The *'Other Faiths'* section of the RE scheme is followed and very good pupils' work was seen in the lower Key Stage Two class. This included written work in the pupils' books and work displayed on the walls for *'Judaism'*.

Assemblies and Acts of Collective Worship are well planned in the school and are based on the *'Here I Am'* topics, the liturgical year or the other faiths studied. The RE co-ordinator's folder provided evidence of assemblies undertaken. During the inspection, Fr. Pius led an assembly to mark Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent. All the pupils were involved in the singing of hymns and the responses to the bidding prayers. The well organised assembly had a calm and reflective atmosphere. It finished with distribution of ashes by Fr. Pius and the two sisters for the start of Lent. The pupils' behaviour throughout was very good. They were fully involved in the assembly and joined their hands as they processed to receive ashes and when leaving the hall.

In St. Illtyd's, Masses are celebrated once a term in school and the pupils also attend Mass in the church. All members of the school community as well as the parishioners are invited, and the pupils play a full part in it.

Areas for Improvement

The school should encourage the pupils to pray in both English and Welsh. This has been identified as a priority in this year's school development plan.

Grade: 2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards

3. How well do learners achieve in religious education?

Good features

The standard of achievement in RE ranged from satisfactory to very good and was good overall.

In the lessons observed to be good, the lively teaching styles and appropriate pace ensured that all the pupils were fully engaged and made a contribution. These lessons were enjoyed by the pupils who joined in enthusiastically. The pupils' verbal responses were good over the range of ages and abilities. They showed positive attitudes towards their RE lessons and were confident to give their opinions. They exhibited a very high standard of behaviour throughout.

Recording of RE work in the pupils' exercise books ranged from over/underwriting, emergent writing or scribing in the younger classes to original pupils' work in the older classes. Differentiation was usually by outcome and support, however in some classes the task was differentiated to more than two levels. In all the classes the pupils were completing work on 'Journeys', the current 'Here I Am' topic. As the first day of inspection was also the feast of 'The Presentation', the younger pupils were taught about the journey to the temple. They were reminded about their own journey to the parish church. The oldest pupils were asked to consider the decades of The Rosary as milestones on a journey. Younger Key Stage Two pupils produced good work on a particular decade of 'The Joyful Mysteries'; 'The Annunciation'. However in some classes, the pupils' standards of achievement and presentation do not always show progression from one year to the next.

The pupils make a positive contribution to the life of the school. There is a school council made up of Key Stage Two pupils who were very positive and articulate about their role. They explained that their decision-making is generally supported by the staff. They were particularly pleased that the play equipment, buddy stops and fruit and toast initiatives had come about at their instigation.

The older pupils in St. Illtyd's play a supporting role for their younger peers as mediators during break and lunch times. These pupils have received instruction from the staff and attempt to solve quarrels before they are referred to the teachers. In the classrooms, the

'Helpwr y Dydd' undertake many tasks to assist their teachers such as the distribution of books. The pupils in St. Illtyd's actively support international charities such as CAFOD and community events such as visits to the local old people's home.

Areas for improvement

In order to further improve, the school should take action on the following points:
The standard of achievement and the amount of written work produced do not always show progression from one year to the next.
The standard of care and attention to the presentation of written work in the RE exercise books was inconsistent in some classes.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision for religious education

4. How effective are teaching and learning in religious education?

Good features

In several of the lessons observed, good use was made of technology to support the teaching and learning in RE. Teachers employed interactive whiteboards, CD players and computers to enrich their lessons. Across all the classes there was a good range of individual, pair, group and whole class work. In the youngest class, good use was made of role-play to explain the gospel story. In another class, the pupils used their computers to draw a map of their journey to church. While the oldest pupils worked collaboratively to sequence the *'Decades of the Rosary'*.

Generally there was a good spread of questioning that ensured the pupils were fully engaged. In most lessons, the support staff were deployed successfully to provide individual and group support. The pupils' work was differentiated by task and outcome and the pupils questioned knew what was expected of them. In one class very good use was made of the *'Clicker'* software to facilitate a pupil's access to the written work.

The school's assessment procedures are based on the Diocese of Westminster's assessment sheets for *'Here I Am'*. The pupils are assessed three times each term at the end of each topic. Copies of these assessments are forwarded to the RE Co-ordinator and reported to the governors.

Formative assessment through the marking of work is positive and sometimes is written bilingually. However, in two classes, several pieces of work had been left unmarked and there needs to be more consistency in approach of all the teachers to marking in RE.

In the older classes, there was little written work completed while the pupils prepared for the production of *'Joseph'*. At that time, the school did fulfil the Bishops' Conference requirements that ten percent of curriculum time is devoted to RE. Parents are informed of the RE topics to be covered during the term through two newsletters. One is the parents' newsletter provided by the *'Here I Am'* scheme and the

other is produced by the school. During the course of the year, parents are given three opportunities to discuss their child's progress in RE with the classteacher.

Areas for improvement

In order to further improve, the school should ensure that there is a consistent approach by all staff to the marking of work in RE. The marking should be informative and point the way forward for the pupil.

Grade: 3

5. How well does the religious education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?

Good features

The religious education curriculum in St. Illtyd's very successfully meets the needs and interests of the pupils.

The provision for RE meets the requirements of the '*Curriculum Directory*'. All the lessons observed were planned from the RE syllabus '*Here I Am*' which is the RE scheme recommended by the Diocese of Menevia. During the inspection, the pupils were undertaking the current topic of '*Journeys*'. The first day of the inspection was also the feast of '*The Presentation*' and this was incorporated into several of the lessons observed.

In all the lessons observed the work provided was appropriate for the ages and abilities of the pupils. The work set was matched to the pupils' abilities and the pupils were successfully encouraged to co-operate and to work collaboratively. The extent to which pupils with additional learning needs were included in the lessons was very good. The tasks these pupils were set and the amount of support provided ensured they were able to produce work commensurate with their abilities. Very good use was made of the '*Clicker*' software to support pupils.

The pupils appeared happy and secure in their surroundings and throughout the inspection their behaviour was very good. They were eloquent in their responses and confident to enter into conversation. The staff continue to work very hard at this aspect of school life and, when necessary, outside agencies such as the LEA's behaviour support personnel are invited to school. The pupils avail of the Breakfast Club and the school promotes healthy eating amongst the pupils by providing fruit.

The school's PSE curriculum includes drug education through '*Project Charlie*' a programme aimed at the oldest pupils and delivered by the police. Sister Carmel delivers the '*Rainbows*' bereavement and counselling programme to small groups of the younger pupils. This was provided following tragic events in the local community. It was felt to be a vehicle through which the current pupils would be informed and influenced. The school is also very supportive of the pupils' home life. Home visits have been made for some pupils.

In St. Illtyd's, RE is considered a way of life rather than a subject.

Areas for improvement

There are no important areas for improvement; this is a strength of the school.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management of religious education

6. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in religious education?

Good features

The efforts made to raise achievement and provide support in RE by the leaders and managers are good.

The strong Catholic leadership is evident in the way the school is run and the headteacher provides a very good Catholic role model. The RE Co-ordinator has been in post for eighteen months. She has monitored the standards in RE in some classes and reported the results to the governors. Monitoring is planned for all classes and this will ensure that good practice is shared.

Of the ten full time and three part time teachers, six are Catholics and two hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. Five of the sixteen support staff are Catholics. Six of the governors currently have, or have had, children attending St. Illtyd's and three are employed in the school.

The teaching resources for RE are distributed throughout the school and generally are of good quality. The newer and more often used resources are kept in the classrooms where they are easily accessible to the staff and pupils. The older materials and those for the teachers' reference are kept in the school's library. There are more resources, particularly for the celebration of Mass, in the hall.

There is a good standard of display for the pupils' art and written work in RE. The pictures and photographs serve as reminders for the pupils of the work they have undertaken. There was a very informative display of the parts of the Mass and good quality pupils' work in the creation of the '*Stations of the Cross*'.

Areas for improvement.

In order to further improve, the school should agree and implement a policy for monitoring the standards of RE in all classes and for reporting to the teachers the findings of monitoring exercises so that good practice may be shared.

Grade: 2

The School's Response to the Inspection

The Governing body and all members of staff at St. Illtyd's Primary school are pleased that the schools recent Inspection report recognised the many good features of the school, which may be found throughout the report. To state that, St. Illtyd's R.E. Voluntary Aided Primary Schools is a very effective school with an outstanding ethos that permeates all aspects of its life, is extremely rewarding.

The skills, dedication and talent of all the school's teaching and non-teaching staff have been recognised. It was pleasing to note that the 'teaching within the school is consistently good in all classes with many outstanding features and that the care and support provided for learners is exceptionally good'. In addition, the work of the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Curriculum Leaders was recognised.

The whole school community was delighted that the Inspection Team recognised that St. Illtyd's provided, 'a very effective environment where children made good progress and where spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has outstanding features with PSE being an outstanding feature of the provision'.

The professionalism and courteousness of the Inspection team was welcomed by all members of the school community. The team was well lead by Mr Patrick Mansfield and the school appreciated the care taken by the team to ensure that the inspection process was open and professional. The school would like to thank Mr Patrick Mansfield and his team for their positive contribution to the future improvement of our school.

The Headteacher, staff and governors will ensure that the recommendations, outlined in the report will be incorporated with the School Development Plan. We will seek to monitor and improve on the high standards achieved consistently over the years. Parents and the Diocesan Authority will be informed of our action plan and of our progress in achieving these aims, through the governors' annual report and through the schools review process.

Evidence Base of the Inspection

Pre-inspection meetings with the staff, governors and parents.
Scrutiny of the school's self evaluation report and other relevant documentation.
Scrutiny of planning and assessment procedures.
Examination of each pupil's RE exercise book.
Observation of RE lessons in each class.
Attendance at Collective Worship.
Interview with Headteacher and RE Co-ordinator
Interview with Sisters Carmel and Mary
Discussions with pupils and the school council.
Scrutiny of religious education resources and artefacts.
Scrutiny of displays of pupils' work
Observation of the daily life of the school.

Total Teaching Time

Key Stage 1	2 hours 30 minutes
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Total RE Teaching Time

Key Stage 2	2 hours 30 minutes
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Total RE Teaching Time

% of time given to RE teaching overall	10%
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Financial Data

Total expenditure on Core Subjects

	Religious Education	Mathematics	English	Science
Last Financial Year	£2000 + £1241 other funding	£1050	£1950	£500
Current Financial Year	£2000 + £1490 other funding	£3000	£1500	£1500

Section 50 Inspection

Parents' questionnaire – summary results

Numbers of forms returned: 88

Date of Inspection : 2nd – 3rd February 2009

Not all parts of the questionnaires were completed
consequently the figures do not total 100%

Percentage of responses:	Agree strongly	Agree	Not certain	Disagree	Disagree strongly
The standards of work in religious education are very good	60%	34%	1%		
The school promotes Gospel values	53%	41%	3%		1%
Opportunities are provided for religious and spiritual development	53%	40%	3%	1%	
I am pleased with the quality of the information the school provides regarding the RE programmes	58%	40%	1%		
I am pleased with the quality of information the school provides regarding Personal, Social, Health Education (including sex education) programmes	43%	44%	10%	1%	
I am pleased with the information I receive about my child(ren)'s progress in RE	45%	47%	2%	1%	
I am happy with the help and guidance available to my child(ren)	57%	40%	2%		
I am given opportunities to assist with my child(ren)'s learning in RE	44%	42%	8%		

Summary of parents' responses to the following questions:

Why did you choose this school for your child/children?

**I went to the school as a pupil.
Because it's a Catholic school.
Christian values teaching and high standards.
Highly recommended by other parents.
It's a good place for academic, spiritual and moral development.**

What is distinctive about this school?

**It is a small school, very family & community orientated.
They are very caring about their pupils.
Our child is progressing very well as a result of the high quality of teaching.
This school I feel welcomes all.
The emphasis on bringing the whole school together.**